# When the Sleeping Giant Awakes: The Lived Experiences of Teacher Leaders and Implications for Schools and Education Systems

A thesis submitted by

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# Abstract

At the very heart of our schools lies a potentially powerful resource that often remains untapped – our teacher leaders. Within them resides the power to make a difference in schools and communities in their contribution to the capacity of the education system and the profession. Researchers worldwide have acknowledged that the key to successful school reform lies with teachers, yet the visibility of teacher leadership as an organisational resource is not overtly apparent.

In view of a recent global focus on the current challenges facing leaders in schools, a renewed focus on teacher leadership appears very timely. Media reports cite teacher burnout and stress as teachers struggle to face the demands of external drivers for reform. Capacity is in danger of being lost to the profession as a whole generation of teachers and principals are approaching retirement, while the need to develop leadership capacity in the next generation of teachers is a challenge that must be addressed. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) flagged that developing the next generation of school leaders remains a challenge for all OECD countries, including Australia.

This study was designed to interpret the lived experiences of teacher leaders following their school improvement journey in the Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievements in Schools (IDEAS) project to: (1) develop *images* of teacher leaders once they had been through a process of school improvement; (2) understand what contributed to that image in their post-school improvement *context*; and (3) consider the *implications* for schools and education systems.

Data collection involved two phases: *Phase One*, a written questionnaire survey; and *Phase Two*, semi-structured interviews. Purposive sampling was used for Phases One and Two to select IDEAS teacher leaders cross-sector and cross-system Australia wide. The Phase One survey was used to gather data from 25 teacher leaders. These data were used to narrow the field using criteria to select 10 participants for Phase Two semi-structured interviews and biographical interpretive analysis. Biographical interpretive methodology was employed to analyse the data. In the analysis, five images or categories of teacher leaders emerged from the data. While some of the categories of teacher leaders were empowered in their current contexts and others

were not, the empowered categories illuminated very clearly the conditions for the development of teacher leader capacity within an organisational context.

A *Teacher Leader Capacity Building Model* was developed as an outcome of this study and additionally provides the conditions for growing capacity for teacher leaders to be lead teachers or move into formal leadership roles. Teacher leader capacity is developed within a generative, organisational community context, which comprises three dimensions – *the personal dimension*, *the collaborative dimension* and *the collective intelligence dimension*. When all three dimensions are given priority, teacher leader capacity is sustained and organisational capacity is more likely to be enhanced. This led to a new metaphor for situating teacher leadership within an educational organisation, and proposal for further research: *Leadership for organisation as community.*

Finally, this study has made a significant contribution to the research methodology literature in the use of mind mapping and concept mapping as methods of biographical interpretive data analysis in the accounts of the lived experiences of the teacher leaders.

# Certification of Thesis

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

Student and supervisors' signatures of endorsement are held at USQ.

# Acknowledgements

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# 1  CHAPTER ONE: Introduction to the Study

*Teacher leadership is either dismissed as yet another label for continuing professional development or simply rejected because of the complexities of viewing teachers as leaders within a hierarchical school system where leadership responsibilities are very clearly delineated* (Harris, 2003, p. 314).

## 1.1  Why This Study and Why Now?

At the very heart of our schools lies a potentially powerful resource that often remains untapped – our teacher leaders. Within them resides the power to make a difference in schools and communities in their contribution to the capacity of the education system and the profession. Researchers worldwide have acknowledged that the key to successful school reform lies with teachers, yet the visibility of teacher leadership as an organisational resource is not overtly apparent).

In view of a recent global focus on the current challenges facing leaders in schools (Anderson et al., 2008; Schleicher, 2012), a renewed focus on teacher leadership appears very timely. Media reports cite teacher burnout and stress as teachers struggle to face the demands of external drivers for reform; capacity is in danger of being lost to the profession as a whole generation of teachers and principals are approaching retirement; while the need to develop leadership capacity in the next generation of teachers is a challenge that must be addressed.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) flagged that developing the next generation of school leaders remains a challenge for all OECD countries, including Australia. It is an issue that remains high priority given the "imminent retirement of the post-war 'baby boomer' principals" and the "apparent reluctance of experienced teachers (particularly women) to apply for principal positions" (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 35). Also identified, was the lack of clarity around the type of work that principals are meant to undertake (Anderson et al., 2008), with an increasing focus in recent years on the principal's responsibility as the designated instructional leader in addition to the usual managerial and strategic role. It has been suggested that there may be a number of pathways to becoming a leader, including leadership programs, a university qualification, "on the job experience" and "leadership succession planning" (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 59), which in recent years has been the focus in Australian education systems.

Very few leadership frameworks in existence in Australia prioritise and make explicit *teacher* leadership as an option for succession planning into future formalised leadership roles within the school. Teacher leadership is "fundamental to processes of sustained educational improvement … and should be construed as a distinctive professional quality that has profound educational value in and of itself" (Crowther, 2004, p. iii). It is a myth that teacher leaders are principals in waiting (Crowther, 2004) and there are many teacher leaders who wish to remain connected to students in their classrooms. However there are others, having experienced the success and confidence that empowerment as a teacher leader brings – once their sleeping giant has been awakened (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009) – that are ready to

step into more formal leadership roles . This highlights the case for developing teacher leadership capacity within schools, thus affording teachers the opportunity to experience being a leader in an informal, non-positional sense – in the role of a teacher leader.

The evidence for distributed forms of leadership, and involving teachers as leaders, suggests the benefits are many and will be explored in more detail in the Literature Review. A Queensland study (Hayes, Christie, Mills, & Lingard, in Anderson et al., 2008) found that "dispersed, involved, productive leadership supported the achievement of both academic and social outcomes through a focus on pedagogy rather than management, a culture of care, and related organisation processes" (p. 42). Similarly, an Australian initiative, the Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievements in Schools (IDEAS) project, the context for this study, found that when teacher leaders worked in alignment as pedagogical leaders with the principal as strategic leader, there was a marked change and positive impacts on teachers (Anderson et al., 2008), with increased morale and trust, and improved relationships within the school (Crowther, 2010).

## 1.2  The Focus of the Inquiry

There are a number of cases in the school reform literature which provide clear evidence that where school leadership is a shared experience underpinned by a shared vision for teaching and learning, student learning outcomes are enhanced. This study is not focused on the improvement in student learning outcomes as the ultimate end goal, but the teacher leader journey, the means to an end, in the capturing of what these teacher leaders have been able to do since their IDEAS experience. Therefore, this study further extends the current literature on teacher leadership by illuminating three key areas: (1) what are the experiences of teacher leaders who have been through a process of whole school improvement (the images), (2) what has contributed to this outcome (the context) and therefore (3) what are the implications for schools and education systems (the implications)? With this in mind, the following research questions were developed to capture each of the three areas.

## 1.3  The Research Problem and Questions

**Title**: *When the sleeping giant awakes: The lived experiences of teacher leaders and implications for education systems*

Overarching Research Question: What understandings of teacher leadership emerge from the lived experiences of teacher leaders who have been through a process of whole school improvement?

Research Question 1:

   a) What have been the lived experiences of teacher leaders that have emerged from a process of whole school improvement?
   b) What is the impact of these experiences on their concept of leadership in schools?

 Research Question 2:
    What emerge as supportive contexts for teacher leaders?

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Research Question 3:
What are the implications for schools and education systems?

## 1.4 The Research Context and Significance of the Study

The topic of research for this study emerges from a body of research conducted since 1998 by Leadership Research International (LRI, formerly Leadership Research Institute), a Research and Development team at the University of Southern Queensland. Much research capacity has been built by the members of the research team in investigating the implementation of the IDEAS project in schools across Australia, in Singapore and in Mazzarino, Sicily. Topics and constructs such as the *ideas* process (Crowther, Andrews, Dawson, & Lewis, 2001), Parallel Leadership (Crowther, 2010; Crowther & Associates, 2011), 3-dimensional pedagogy and teacher professionalism (Andrews & Crowther, 2003, 2006), collective intelligence in schools (Conway, 2008, 2009), knowledge creation in professional learning communities (Lewis, 2003), contextually specific meaning making systems (Abawi, 2012), school-wide language for learning (O'Neill, 2013), principal leadership (A. Morgan, 2008), teacher leadership (Crowther, Ferguson, & Hann, 2009; Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, & Hann, 2002), a model for whole school capacity building (Crowther et al., 2010; Crowther & Associates, 2011), and improving literacy outcomes through Schoolwide Pedagogy (SWP) and explicit teaching (Geoghegan, O'Neill, & Petersen, 2013) have been at the centre of investigations to date.

Much of this work has been within the IDEAS school contexts. The need to understand more about the experiences of teacher leaders who have already been through the *ideas* process, and what their newfound capacities have enabled them to do beyond IDEAS, is at the core of this study.

### 1.4.1 Introducing the IDEAS project: The research background.

To understand more about the participants' prior experiences as IDEAS teacher leaders and how this may have influenced their world views, it is necessary to identify the key components of the IDEAS project. As a process of school renewal, it draws on three important developments in organisational and educational research:

(1) Newmann and Wehlage's (1995) work from the University of Wisconsin. Their Circles of Support model (Figure 1.1) is focused on school reform and enhanced capacity through teachers operating in professional learning communities to create agreed principles of authentic pedagogy.
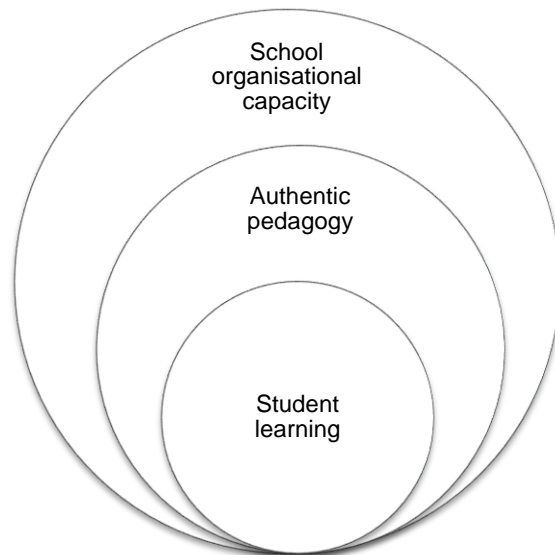
*Figure 1.1.* Circles of Support

Adapted from *Successful school restructuring: A report to the public and educators* (p. 2) by F. Newmann and G. Wehlage, 1995, University of Wisconsin-Madison: Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools.

(2) Kaplan and Norton's (1996) Balanced Scorecard (Figure 1.2) is a strategic framework for action that "highlights those processes that are most critical for achieving breakthrough performance" (p. 11) within an organisation and includes the following:



**Strategic feedback and learning**
- Articulating the shared vision
- Supplying strategic feedback
- Facilitating strategy review and learning

**Planning and target setting**
- Setting targets
- Aligning strategic initiatives
- Allocating resources
- Establishing milestones

**Clarifying and translating the vision and strategy**
- Clarifying the vision
- Gaining consensus

**Communicating and linking**
- Communicating and educating
- Setting goals
- Linking rewards to performance measures

*Figure 1.2.* Balanced Scorecard

Adapted from *The balanced scorecard: Translating strategy into* action (p. 11) by R. S. Kaplan and D. P. Norton, 1996, Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

(3) Hill and Crevola's work (1997, cited in Hill & Jane, 2001) in the Australian context, which was significant in establishing linkages to enhanced literacy outcomes in a whole school approach to reform (Figure. 1.3).

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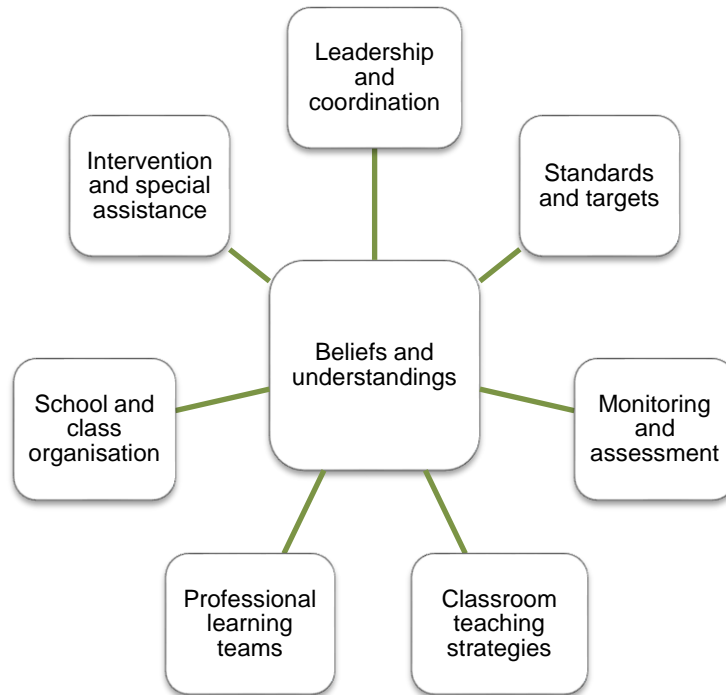
*Figure 1.3.* Design Template for a Whole-School Approach to Improving Student Learning Outcomes

Adapted from 'Early Literacy' by P. Hill and G. Jane, in *School innovation: Pathway to the knowledge* society, (p. 35) by P. Cuttance (Ed.), 2001, Canberra, ACT: Commonwealth of Australia.

Continuing Research and Development work since at least 1999 has seen the IDEAS project grow and evolve so that currently over 400 schools across Australia, with several in Singapore and one school in Sicily have been involved. New conceptual frameworks have emerged out of the developmental work with these schools, with the more recent work being a model for school-wide Capacity Building through parallel leadership (Crowther & Associates, 2011).

### 1.4.2  The IDEAS components.

IDEAS consists of three key components – the *ideas* process, the Research-based Framework (RBF) of organisational alignment, and Parallel Leadership, with each component addressed in turn following:

(1)     The *ideas* process (Crowther et al., 2001; Crowther et al., 2009) includes the following five phase process that schools engage with over a two to three year period  – *initiating, discovering, envisioning, actioning, sustaining* (See Figure 1.4 for further detail).

The *ideas* process

Raising awareness about IDEAS
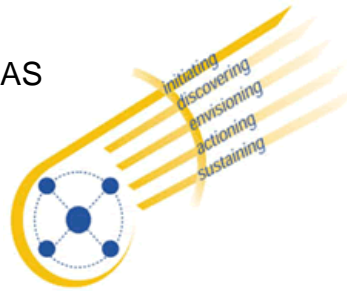
*initiating:*
- How will we manage the *ideas* process?
- Who will facilitate the *ideas* activities?
- Who will record the history of our journey?

*discovering:*
- What are we doing that is most successful?
- What is not meeting our expectations?

*envisioning:*
- What do we hope our school will look like in the future?
- What is our conceptualisation of excellent pedagogy for our school (our SWP)?

*actioning:*
- How will we work towards the enhanced alignment of key school elements in our school (the RBF)?
- How will we refine and enrich our pedagogy (3-Dimensional Pedagogy – 3-D.P)?
- How will we become 3-D.P professionals?
- How will we use internal and external sharing/critique to refine our "products"?

*sustaining:*
- What do our test results and survey results reveal about our achievements and shortcomings?
- How will we use induction strategies, including a School Management Team, to facilitate the sustainability of our successes?

*Figure 1.4.* The IDEAS Implementation Process

Reproduced from *The effectiveness of the IDEAS project in Sydney CEO: A research report* (p. 10), by D. Andrews, F. Crowther, A. Morgan, and S. O'Neill, 2012, Toowoomba, Queensland: Leadership Research International (LRI).

(2)   The Research-based Framework for Enhancing Organisational Coherence (RBF) (Figure 1.5) is a conceptual model for whole school improvement enabling schools to use organisational learning processes to sustain growth and development (Crowther, Andrews, & Conway, 2013, p. 38) The RBF has five Contributory Elements and one Outcomes Element.

The five contributory elements are:

1. Strategic foundations: leadership and strategic management capability
2. Cohesive community: internal and external stakeholder support
3. Generative resource design: includes curricula, spatial arrangements, technologies, marketing, quality assurance strategies.
4. Schoolwide pedagogical development and deepening: pedagogical practices
5. Holistic professional learning: professional learning mechanisms.
   (Conway & Andrews, 2016, p. 121)

## STRATEGIC FOUNDATIONS

- Parallel leadership roles and functions
- A powerful vision and defined values
- Clear systemic/University links and supports
- Recognition of 21st century teachers' professionalism
- An embedded revitalisation process
- Focused resource decision-making processes
- Promotional activities in the community

## HOLISTIC PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

- The school's recognition of the concept of Professional Learning Community (PLC)
- Adequate time, space and support allowances

## COHESIVE COMMUNITY

- Communities of support for the school's vision and outcomes
- High expectations, by the school's communities, for student and school outcomes
- Embedded community engagement processes
- Embedded school-community service links
- Celebratory activities

## HOLISTIC PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

- Nurturing of parallelism in the school's approach to leadership
- Participation in external networks

## OUTCOMES

- Student achievement
- Students' individual wellbeing
- Teachers' sense of professionalism
- Community perceptions and attitudes
- The school's capacity for sustainable progress
- School resourcing

## HOLISTIC PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

- Emphasis on individuals' professional capability
- Embedded protocols for professional practice

## GENERATIVE RESOURCE DESIGN

- Recognition of teachers/specialist teachers'/paraprofessionals' expertise
- Design of learning environments – classroom, schoolwide
- Curriculum development and adaptation
- Technology supports and enriches SWP
- Arrangement of time – enables innovation
- Aesthetic environment
- Curriculum development and adaptation

## HOLISTIC PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

- Networked to systemic PD priorities
- Pedagogical enhancement as the locus of PLC activity

## SCHOOLWIDE PEDAGOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AND DEEPENING

- Exploration/enabling of teachers' pedagogical talents and gifts
- Schoolwide analysis of successful T,L&A practices
- The creation of an SWP framework
- Validation of the SWP framework with reference to authoritative pedagogies
- Intensive expansion of pedagogical principles into implementation strategies
- Specialised adaptation of SWP principles in one or more designated learning area
- Encouragement of student 'voice'
- Linking of SWP principles to emerging systemic policies and innovative programs

LRI Team, March 2010

*Figure 1.5.* The Research-Based Framework for Enhancing Organisational Coherence (RBF).

Note. Reproduced from *Schoolwide pedagogy: Vibrant new meaning for teachers and principals* (p. 38), by F. Crowther, D. Andrews, and J. M. Conway, 2013, Moorabbin, Victoria: Hawker Brownlow Education.

(3)   Parallel Leadership (Figure. 1.6) is a "process whereby teacher leaders and their principals engage in collaborative action to build school capacity. It embodies three distinct qualities – mutual trust, shared purpose and allowance for individual expression" (Crowther et al., 2009, p. 53). It enables the knowledge generating capacity of schools to be activated and sustained resulting in enhanced organisational capacity or value-addedness (Crowther & Associates, 2011). It engages teacher leaders and principals in collaborative action leading to strengthened alignment of the school's vision and teaching and learning, while simultaneously allowing for the fulfilment of one's individual aspirations, motivations and capabilities.
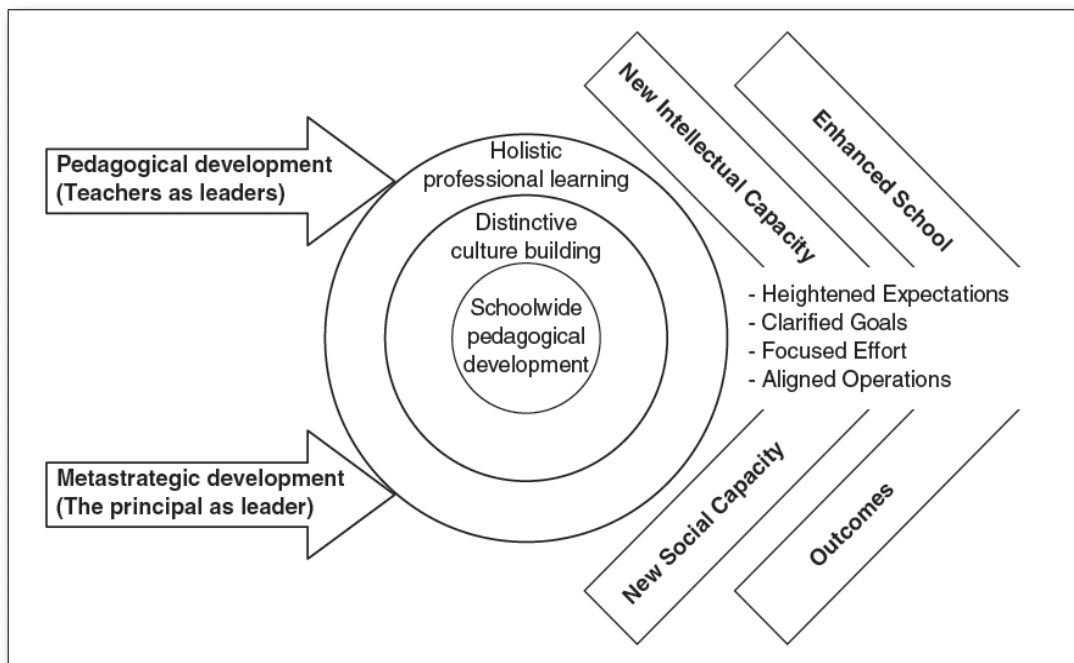


*Figure 1.6.* Linking Parallel Leadership and Successful Capacity Building

Reproduced from *From school improvement to sustained capacity: The parallel leadership* pathway (p. 179), by F. Crowther and Associates, 2011, Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin.

The key principles that enable teacher professionals to revitalise their workplaces within IDEAS are:
- *Teachers are the key* to successful whole school improvement: teachers have ownership of the process and are key players in the alignment of pedagogical practices and the shared school vision;
- *Professional learning* as a collegial process with each individual school (or organisation): a shared collegial process involving mentoring, critique, identification of professional development needs resulting from the shared vision and shared understanding of good pedagogical practices; facilitating understanding across diverse groups; nurturing networks of support;
- A *No Blame* mindset should permeate all organisational problem solving: adopting a No Blame attitude when things go wrong; engaging in Professional Conversations with some specific rules for professional engagement allowing all to participate without fear of reprisal; developing a shared vision and a shared approach to problem solving;

- A *Success Breeds Success* approach should guide teachers' analyses of their professional practices: acting on opportunities for others to gain success and recognition; sharing successful practice; mentoring; critiquing/analysis of practice; adopting a No Blame approach;
- The *alignment* of school processes is a collective responsibility: teachers working as pedagogical leaders in parallel with the Principal as strategic leader (Parallel Leadership) to achieve common goals and purpose − ensuring alignment of pedagogical practices with the shared vision for the school. This requires a significant shift in the traditional leadership paradigm within a school and contributes to enhanced school and community identity. (Adapted from Crowther et al., 2001)

### 1.4.3  The IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT).

The IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT) is made up of a voluntary team of people interested in working together through parallel leadership structures on the school's visionary direction and pedagogical approach to ensure they are in alignment. Generally, this team comprises teacher leaders and administrators, however may include other school community representatives, for example teacher aides and parents. This team also works closely with the LRI University research and development team as mentors in the project.

The ISMT meets regularly throughout the year as an ongoing part of the whole school improvement project. At the IDEAS school where I taught (see section 1.4.6), with a staff of more than 30 teachers, the principal, one of the deputy principals, nine teachers and one teacher aide volunteered for the ISMT. Meetings were held fortnightly after school to plan workshops, gather data, analyse data and use the data to determine professional learning needs for our school's overarching goal of improving literacy outcomes. Where possible, we drew on expertise within the school, with ISMT members facilitating workshops with staff. Fortnightly staff meetings frequently went for two hours and were given over to whole school planning and workshops, while the past practice of principal led delivery mode of information and news was more effectively distributed by newsletters and emails.

It is clear, with these conditions, that IDEAS teacher leaders would be engaged in shared meaning making and significant contributions to new knowledge as parallel leaders in their respective IDEAS school contexts.

### 1.4.4  Methodology.

This qualitative study was framed using a biographical interpretive (Bornat, 2008; Putnam, 1983; Riemann, 2003) research design with a hermeneutical lens (Bleicher, 1980) to observe the context under study. As we operate in systems or structures that contain meaning, I drew on Dilthey's concept of *verstehen* or meaning-contexts (Bleicher, 1980) to observe and co-construct the participants' recall of their social and linguistic experiences within their organisational contexts.

The study involved purposive sampling (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and collection of data in two phases. Phase one was a questionnaire survey that was emailed to 25 IDEAS teacher leaders across Australia in May and June, 2012. Phase two involved the selection of 10 participants for in-depth semi-structured recorded interviews.  For

biographical research, interviews were considered the best method to unearth a life history, or part of it, and reconstruct a participant's experience (Riemann, 2003). For this study, the interviews were framed so that the researcher could illuminate the participant's story and interpret the meaning from the lived experience. The research questions were generative (Riemann, 2003) and formulated to elicit a narrative of the participant's journey as a teacher leader. The interviews, dependent on location of participants, were conducted either face-to-face, via telephone or using Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) technology with webcam, during October and November, 2012.

A biographical interpretive approach was used to analyse the data. This involved the assembling of stories from the participants' past (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997, 2000) to enable the researcher to interpret or glean an individual's perspective within a particular historical, social and linguistic context (Bleicher, 1980; Bornat, 2008). The categories that emerged from the data were not imposed prior to data collection, rather inductive analysis was used to identify any "categories, themes and patterns" from the data (Janesick, 2000, p. 389).

The interpretive analysis drew on the participants' recollections of their lived experiences and thus their recall of the context within which they worked. This involved the interpretation of the social and linguistic context (Bleicher, 1980) – the social, in terms of participants' recollections of their experiences as teacher leaders within their schools, and their organisational context; and the linguistic, in terms of their conversations about their experiences, requiring an interpretive analysis of their *told story* of their teacher leader experiences.

### 1.4.5  Significant contributions to the literature.

There is still much to be learnt about how teacher leadership capacity is developed, utilised and sustained within schools and education systems and there is a significant gap in the literature on this topic. An initial search of the literature revealed that while much had been written about the importance of engaging teacher leaders in school reform efforts, there was no existing literature that highlighted the lived experiences of the teacher leader beyond whole school improvement, hence the decision to pursue this topic of inquiry. There is a call for studies that explore "informal leadership roles (Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996) [and a] demand for studies that follow the thread of leadership generally rather than leadership within specific roles (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1998), [studies that track] leadership in change initiatives and across areas of school operations may prove to be especially productive" (Murphy, 2005, p. 165).

The title for this study was inspired by Katzenmeyer and Moller's writings on teacher leadership in their books, *Awakening the Sleeping Giant:  Helping Teachers Develop as Leaders* (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, 2009). My study, quite simply, seeks to find out what happens when the sleeping giants awaken and what their experiences mean for schools and education systems. Thus, I interpreted the experiences of IDEAS teacher leaders in their post-IDEAS contexts.

This study has produced three significant contributions for the literature:
   (1) Methodological contribution: The use of mindmapping for biographical
        interpretive data analysis

(2) Theoretical contributions:
   a. The Teacher Leader Capacity Building Model
   b. A metaphor for organisational theory – *Leadership for Organisation as Community*, inspired by Gareth Morgan's (2006) organisational theory metaphors.

### 1.4.6 Locating the researcher as teacher leader in the inquiry: A journey of personal significance.

More than 10 years ago at the time of writing, I was a teacher leader in a whole school improvement process at a primary school in a regional city in Queensland, Australia. The process was the implementation of the IDEAS project, an acronym for Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievements in Schools (IDEAS). The IDEAS project was led by the Leadership Research International (LRI) at the University of Southern Queensland in partnership with Education Queensland, the State Education authority. As a Research and Development initiative, the LRI was engaged in a large scale research project at the time of my school's engagement with IDEAS.

My school was involved in Phase Three of the five phase Commonwealth funded Research and Development project which spanned more than a decade. "The Innovation and Best Practice Project (IBPP) was instrumental [in this phase of the research. It] was directed by Professor Peter Cuttance of the University of Sydney and involved a consortium of four Australian Universities: Sydney, Melbourne, Edith Cowan, and Southern Queensland" (Crowther et al., 2009, pp. 155-156).

My school engaged with the IDEAS project from 2001 to 2003. While our intention was to improve student learning outcomes in literacy in particular, teacher leadership in the form of Parallel Leadership was instrumental as a vehicle for change. The benefits of engagement in a reform process however, are much more than just a means to an end.

Something had changed me during that three years – always a collaborative classroom practitioner, I had emerged as a teacher leader in the IDEAS project by being part of the IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT). Opportunities for me to lead my colleagues in developing a shared pedagogical vision and to lead professional development activities presented themselves as my leadership potential was realised. I grabbed them with both hands, somewhat hesitantly, perhaps lacking confidence initially in my ability to step up to the mark, but I did it anyway. It was only later on reflection that I realised that the conditions in which I worked provided a safe and supportive environment for me to take risks – conditions that would not have been possible without the support of my principal, the administrative staff and the IDEAS facilitator. From a leader in my classroom and year level, I became a leader in the school – not a leader in the formal positional sense, but a teacher leader as a leader of pedagogical change in the school community.

At the beginning of 2004, my family moved to another large regional inland city in Queensland. In our newly adopted city, I used these leadership skills to effect in a number of ways and in a number of contexts both before and on joining the Leadership Research Institute (LRI) in 2005 in my new employment at the University of Southern Queensland. In 2008, the LRI facilitated a National IDEAS Learning Forum, then, a biennial event for IDEAS schools across Australia. I was a

co-facilitator in a workshop titled *Enhancing System Capacity: Parallel Leadership and Beyond*. This was my *Aha* moment! I prepared a presentation about my story – my *biography* – a story that traced my journey as a teacher leader, considering what was at my personal leadership core, how I had contributed as a teacher leader in an IDEAS school context, and how I had been able to transfer those skills to a wider systemic and now University context.

The feedback from the teacher leader participants in that session astounded me – in my view, and at that point in time, I was just telling my story – in their view, they said they found it inspirational. From that moment, and as I reflected after the fact, I knew there was a story to be told. A story that went beyond the current literature on teacher leadership; a story that told about the realities and lived experiences of a teacher leader's journey, including the trials, the tribulations, the successes and what contributed to those outcomes – and consequently, what these outcomes might mean for capacity building for schools and education systems. The opportunity to network and share my story in that moment, along with the opportunity to receive feedback from others, also enabled me to reflect on and critique my journey thus far. So, I began to imagine the possibilities for researching this topic. What had happened to the teacher leaders who had been through a whole school improvement process? What had been their experiences? What had they been able to do having been through this teacher leader experience? Where were they now? This PhD dissertation is the beginning of that research journey. The means to an end had been overtly realised – My sleeping giant was awakened!

## 1.5  Organisation of the Dissertation

The dissertation has been organised into eight chapters (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1

*Organisation of Dissertation*

| Chapter One | Provides an introduction to the study and orientation to the dissertation structure. It outlines the rationale for the study, what inspired the study, the research problem and questions, and the context and significance of this study, including the outlining of three significant contributions to the literature. |
|---|---|
| Chapter Two | Provides a review of the relevant literature that has informed this study. The review is categorised into four main areas, and aligned to the three research questions:<br>1. Introduction: Background to the study. Defining leadership and the changing nature of leadership in education.<br>2. The *images*: Teacher leadership defined. This section of the review looks at the earlier beginnings of teacher leadership, to what is being written more recently, the important role of the principal in establishing the conditions for teacher leadership; distributed leadership and parallel leadership.<br>3. The *context*: Supportive workplaces. Conditions and workplaces supportive of the emergence of teacher leadership; managing organisational change; organisational contexts for the work of sustainable leadership.<br>4. The *implications*: For schools and education systems. Sustainable leadership in organisations; a focus on |

| | collaborative cultures, teachers leading learning, the teacher leadership agenda in Australia; gaps in the existing literature. |
|---|---|
| Chapter Three | Outlines the research orientation of this study and the focus of the research. This qualitative study has a biographical interpretive orientation viewed through a hermeneutical lens and used survey and semi-structured interview as methods of data collection, all explained in this chapter. The process of using mindmapping to interpret biographical data, as my new methodological contribution to the literature, is also explained in this chapter. |
| Chapter Four | Contains the presentation of the survey data, with the process for the reduction of data and selection of the final 10 participants for interview explained. The 10 participants are introduced towards the conclusion of this chapter using a thematic approach to conceptual diagrams to demonstrate the data reduction process. |
| Chapter Five | Interprets the voices and lived experiences of each of the awakened sleeping giants. The interviews have been interpreted and presented in the form of a biography and fold-out A3 size mindmap of patterns and themes that emerged from the data for each participant. |
| Chapter Six | Provides a response to **Research Question One** in the presentation of five images of teacher leaders that have emerged from the research and analyses the effect of their experiences on their concept of leadership, as mapped to The Teachers as Leaders Framework (Crowther et al., 2009). |
| Chapter Seven | Provides a response to **Research Question Two**, with the identification of four contextual support factors for the development of teacher leader capacity, concluding with a definition of context. |
| Chapter Eight | Provides two new theoretical contributions to the literature, in response to **Research Question Three** and thus presents: (1) *The Teacher Leader Capacity Building Model*, and (2) a new metaphor for the organisational literature, *Leadership for Organisation as Community*. Four recommendations for schools and education systems are presented, along with five recommendations for future research. |

## 1.6  Stepping Out on the Research Journey

Chapter One has framed the dissertation and prepared the way for an introduction to the relevant literature in Chapter Two. Chapter Three will provide detail on the Methodology for the study. Following this, the research questions will be revealed in subsequent chapters to discover and interpret the lived experiences of the awakened sleeping giants.

# 2 CHAPTER TWO: A Review of the Literature

*Within every school there is a sleeping giant of teacher leadership, which can be a strong catalyst for making change. By using the energy of teacher leaders as agents of school change, the reform of public education will stand a better chance of building momentum.* (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 69)

## 2.1 Introduction

This literature review provides a framework of key literature for the examination of teacher leadership in the context of this study. Using Katzenmeyer and Moller's (2001) sleeping giant metaphor for teacher leadership, the focus for this study was to capture the lived experiences of teacher leaders once their sleeping giant had been awakened and they had emerged from a process of whole school improvement.

The background to the study and the changing nature of leadership is briefly examined as a prelude to viewing the literature on teacher leadership, from its earlier beginnings through to what is being written about teacher leadership in recent times. The role of teacher leadership in whole school improvement is given due consideration. Following this, organisational contexts that support the emergence of teacher leadership have been considered.  Lastly, in view of the literature on organisational theory, the implications for schools and education systems has been given due consideration, along with the gaps in the existing literature. Thus, the literature review is divided into four distinct sections:

1. Background to the study: The changing nature of leadership,
2. The *images*: Teacher leadership defined and its role in whole school improvement,
3. The *context*: Organisational contexts supportive of the emergence of teacher leadership,
4. The *implications*: For schools and education systems as organisational frameworks; gaps in the existing literature.

## 2.2 Background to the Study

The 20$^{th}$ century has been a time of rapid change like no other – the shift from the industrial age in the earlier part of the century to the information technology and knowledge age by the end of the century and into the 21$^{st}$ century has heralded new approaches to work, knowledge, technology, information management and also to education (Drucker, 1994). Managing an organisation in a world of "digitization, globalization, demographic shifts, migration and individualization, as well as the rapid degradation of social and natural capital [would be an ongoing challenge. Organisations and leaders would need to be responsive to change and reinvent themselves to] seize emerging business opportunities [with the task of the leader to] sense and recognize emerging patterns of change" (Scharmer et al., 2001, p. 3). In this "organic and dynamic" business environment there would be a reliance on "intangible resources" where human action and "web-shaped patterns" of relationships move to the forefront (p. 4). The new intangible relationship-focused, networked (Scharmer et al., 2001) business environment becomes central to

maintaining relevance, connectedness and having a vision for a sustainable future (UNESCO, 2005-2014). Education organisations and schools, as primarily knowledge and relationship focused organisations, have a central role in the knowledge revolution (Drucker, 1994) and the new networked environment (Scharmer et al., 2001).

To meet the demands of this environment, modern schooling and education systems would need to move beyond models of industrial bureaucratic control where decision making was the domain of the hierarchical few at the top, to "professional empowerment" (Murphy, 2005, p. 27) through "professional socialisation, purposing and shared values, and collegiality and natural interdependence" (Sergiovanni, 1991, p. 60). Over the past two decades, many researchers have proposed changes that go some way to meeting the vision for whole school improvement, and the role of leadership in that process. The literature demonstrates the need to engage educators at all levels in sustainable reform efforts to improve student learning outcomes and to equip students to be the knowledge workers of the future (Drucker, 1994).

Lovett and Andrews (2011) asserted: "It is a paradox that traditional notions of leadership assume that leadership occurs beyond the classroom rather than being closely connected to it" (p. 720). This premise provides an important space for the work of the teacher leader – those that wish to be engaged in capacity building work beyond the classroom, but still remain connected to their students in the classroom. Investing in the human capital (Smylie, 1997) or the people who are at the forefront of pedagogical decision making on a daily basis and who know their students best makes sense – that is, engaging our teachers as potential pedagogical leaders (Crowther et al., 2009).

While there has been significant research into teacher leadership and the importance of the role of teacher leadership in whole school improvement efforts, there is no evidence of research into the lived experiences of these teacher leaders once they have emerged from a process of school reform and the implications of their experiences for education systems. One such reform effort is the Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievements in Schools (IDEAS) project, which as identified in Chapter One, provides the context for this study.

## 2.3 The Changing Nature of Leadership

> Leadership … the processes of mobilizing, in conflict or in competition with others, institutional, political, psychological, and other resources so as to arouse and satisfy the motives of followers. Thus, a dynamic interactive relationship between members of a group and an individual collectively acknowledged by the group as a leader.
> (Owens, 2004, p. 428)

The task of agreeing on a definition of leadership is seemingly impossible as "researchers who differ in the conception of leadership select different phenomena to investigate and interpret the results in different ways" (Ogawa, 2005, p. 4). As suggested by Ogawa (2005), it perhaps defies definition "because of its conceptual complexity" (p. 4). A number of explanations emphasise the individual nature of leadership in the language of description. Owens' (2004) definition is one such example: "an individual collectively acknowledged by the group as a leader" (p. 428). Ogawa (2005) cited others, for example: Fiedler (1967) claimed "the leader is the individual", while Gardner (1990) asserted that leadership is a process by which

an individual …"; and then Yukl (1998) said "intentional influence is exerted by one person" (p. 5).

Just as the concept of organisation has evolved over the last half-century, the concept of leadership too has evolved, from an individual at the top to a more collaborative effort (Ogawa, 2005). The work of leadership in an organisational context faces evolving challenges, including the impact of technology, the desire for people to work in collaborative teams and the expectation of an experience of work that is more meaningful, all of which will be highlighted in the following section on the changing nature of leadership.

Confucius said: "To become a leader, you must first become a human being" (Senge, 2006, p. 318), a wisdom transcending twenty-five hundred years of leadership perspectives, but according to Senge (2006), a "perspective on leading [that] has almost been lost today" (p. 319). Sergiovanni (2005) posited that "leadership as moral action is a struggle to do the right thing according to a sense of values and what it means to be a human being" (p. 113). He also claimed that there are four virtues at the core of any leadership practice which strengthen the heartbeat of the school "to become stronger and more resilient … to share the burden of leadership with others, to create collaborative cultures, and to be continuous learners" (p. 122) – these virtues are hope, trust, piety, and civility (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1

*The Virtues of Leadership*

| **The Virtues of Leadership** |
|---|
| 1. **Hope** – not to be confused with wishful thinking, but a sense of hope that is grounded in reality. *What are our goals? What are the obstacles? How committed are we to agency – to actually doing something to realise our hopes?* (p. 115) |
| 2. **Relational trust** – the quality and kind of social exchanges. Trust is high when every party … feels supported and safe. Social capital and relational trust are the DNA of community (p. 117). |
| 3. **Piety** – requires people to look inward to their own narrow community affiliations; an important ingredient in building school communities (p. 120), however they should not be held together by piety alone at the risk of becoming isolated. |
| 4. **Civility** – welcomes diversity; builds frameworks within which people can cooperate despite their divergent views and interests (p. 121). |

Adapted from "The virtues of leadership" by T. J. Sergiovanni, 2005, *The Educational Forum, 69*(2), pp 115-121.

If these virtues of leadership (Sergiovanni, 2005) are core to the work of leadership, the challenge for leaders today is to tap into the human dimension and the experience of the people within the organisation (Scharmer et al., 2001). This in itself is a challenge in an organisation competing in a global technological world and faced by the constant pressure to seize opportunities and improve results (Drucker, 1994; Scharmer et al., 2001). The more technology changes and becomes part of our work, the more disconnected we become and our work and organisational patterns do not change: "In order to do well in high-tech-driven environments, leaders will have to develop a new cognitive capacity that involves paying attention to the intangible

sources of knowledge and knowing" (Scharmer et al., 2001, pp. 5-6) through processes of generative dialogue. While technology has advanced the speed of and access to information, "the exchange of ideas does not really speed up … when it comes to knowledge work, the 21$^{st}$ century works the same as the 20$^{th}$ century" (Scharmer et al., 2001, pp. 6-7), that is, processes of dialogue remain important to organisational learning and knowledge creation (Lewis, 2003).

In contrast to top-down bureaucratic, managerial approaches to leadership, Senge (1990, 2006; Senge et al., 1999) advocated for organisational learning to enable the work of leadership in learning and knowledge creation in his concept of learning organisations. As early as 1963, John F. Kennedy said that "Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other" (cited in Swaffield & MacBeath, 2009, p. 32). The human dimension of leadership and the link between leadership and learning are not new concepts it seems, but have come full circle as revealed by the following literature review. For this study, the literature on leadership is viewed in the context of educational organisations, and with the purpose of articulating a place for teacher leaders within an organisational context.

### 2.3.1 Leadership in education organisations.

The focus on leadership in the literature has traditionally been on formal leadership positions and the individual qualities of a leader at the top (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004) – their ability to inspire others and therefore generate followers. If the work of leadership is an organisational quality (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995) then a focus solely on the individual in a formal leadership role within an organisation is "unlikely to generate comprehensive understandings of the practice of school leadership" (Spillane et al., 2004, p. 6). Leadership in the school context, according to Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2004), is "not simply a function of what a school principal knows and does. Rather, it is the activities engaged in by leaders, in interaction with others in particular contexts around specific tasks" (p. 5). It has similarly been described by Gibbs (1954, in Gronn, 2000) as a group quality with leaders and followers as collaborators in the accomplishment of group tasks. The functions that were "carried out by the group … could either be concentrated, monopolized or focused, on the one hand, or dispersed, shared and distributed, on the other" (Gronn, 2000, p. 324).

As early as 1989, Wise advocated for a new model of school management that would "create a system driven by the educational needs of students and of society rather than by the imperatives of management accountability systems" (p. 310). A study by Wasley (1991, cited in Lieberman & Miller, 2004), as one of the early advocates for teacher leadership, highlighted the dynamics of three teacher leaders in different contexts over time. She found that they experienced common problems "working within bureaucratic systems, [with] lack of incentives for teachers to assume new roles, and teachers' resistance to becoming involved in reform efforts" (p. 17). Common problems that may be alleviated somewhat with Louis and Miles' (1990) assertion: "Creating more effective schools requires a significant change in patterns of leadership" (p. 19).

By 1992, no change was observed with Liebermann and Miller's (2004) description of teaching as a flat profession which was "construed as technical work to be managed [with] little support for professional growth [and where] teacher isolation

was the norm" (p. 10). Further, Smylie and Hart (1999) called for a "broader conception of school leadership [that moved from a] role-oriented view to a view of leadership as an organizational [construct]" (p. 428). With this thinking, the concept of schools as democratic communities (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001) began to emerge. This concept is based on the premise that schools are preparing students to be citizens in a democratic society, therefore "schools should model democracy [and that] the complexity of teaching can best be addressed within a democratic community that responds to the uniqueness of the school context" (p. 26). Leadership for this type of community is shared and emerges, sometimes temporarily, based on common concerns, "expertise and personal interest" (p. 27).

Similarly, Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of learning in a community of practice is based on a premise of a democratic learning community involving three processes: learning, meaning and identity. They viewed learning as a social and collective activity rather than individual and social (Lave, 1996).

As described by Lieberman and Miller (2004):

> They learn through practice (learning by doing), through meaning (learning as intentional); through community (learning as participating and being with others); and through identity (learning as changing who we are) … Professional learning so constructed is rooted in the human need to feel a sense of belonging and of making a contribution to a community where experience and knowledge function as a part of community property. (p. 23)

Additionally, Newmann and Wehlage (1995) advocated for democratic, collaborative work cultures when their research found that the most successful schools found a way of working together and took collective responsibility for student learning. The professional learning communities of the 1990s "were touted as organic structures that engage teachers and other staff in collaborative learning and improve student learning" (Louis & Marks, 1996, cited in Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009, p. 134). However, a number of factors "limited the growth of professional learning communities [including] the complexity of context factors, inadequate leadership skills and the little time available in schools" (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009, p. 134).

> While the professional learning community is still a worthy goal, today we know that unless there is job-embedded professional learning, predictably there will be few changes in teaching and learning. The typical afterschool workshops and pull-out sessions without assessment of student needs, collaborative planning, and monitoring of outcomes is a waste of valuable resources, including teachers' time. Within schools, job-embedded learning is enhanced through individualized professional development plans. (p. 134)

Barth (2001) similarly demonstrated the "powerful relationship between learning and leading" (p. 445). When teachers work with others to improve the quality of learning and teaching for their students, "teacher leadership surfaces" (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009, p. 124). Furthermore, "teacher leaders are partners with the formal school leaders in their efforts to improve teaching and learning" (p. 8). They share power, authority and decision making through supportive conditions enabled by shared values and vision, collective learning, application of learning and sharing of personal practice. Professional learning communities can survive in a culture of collaboration where teachers and administrators commit to working together to improve student learning outcomes (DuFour, 2004).

Senge (2006) proposed that leaders traditionally were viewed as "people who set the direction, make the key decisions, and energize the troops" (p. 320), whereas Robinson (cited in Gronn, 2000) claimed that leader-follower views take on a more democratic form: "when ideas expressed in talk or action are recognized by others as capable of progressing tasks or problems which are important to them" (p. 320). Senge's (2006) new view on leadership for learning organisations proposed that leaders were "designers, teachers and stewards" (p. 321): as designers, they were involved in the design of the purpose, vision and values; as teachers, they had a hand in building the capacity for the organisation, as both teacher and learner in a shared space; and leaders as stewards, intended to define a deep sense of shared moral purpose and conserve these deeply held convictions throughout any change process within the organisation.

### 2.3.2 Leading with moral purpose.

The human dimension of leadership emerges more prominently with Sergiovanni's (2005) moral purpose, which was described as "a struggle to do the right thing according to a sense of values and what it means to be a human being" (p. 113). Similarly, the deep sense of purpose has been described by Dempster (2009) as one of three fundamentals of leadership: purpose, human agency and context. Leaders have "a professional commitment to improving the lives of people" (p. 22), in schools, that is, through education. Leadership and learning are inextricably linked. Leaders are "dedicated to the 'life-changing' bigger purpose of what they do" and "there should be no doubt that all of their energies need to be directed to learning as the means through which individuals can change their lives" (p. 22). Improving the lives of others and enabling human agency in an organisational context requires an investment in human capital (Smylie, 1997) to "enhance teachers' knowledge, skills and dispositions" (p. 37).

### 2.3.3 Developing contexts for relational trust.

The importance of the context for leadership emerges: leader[s] … creat[e] the conditions in which people … become agents working towards desired ends" (Dempster, 2009, p. 22). Dempster (2009) proposed the following definition accommodating three leadership fundamentals: "School leaders, understanding and accommodating the contexts in which they operate, mobilise and work with others to articulate and achieve shared intentions to enhance learning and the lives of learners" (p. 22). In this sense, relational trust (Sergiovanni, 2005) becomes important as educators articulate their preferred future and work together to achieve this end. This concept relies heavily on interdependence of the school community and the building of social capital where "no single person has the power to make things work … trust is high when every party … feels supported and safe. Social capital and relational trust are the DNA of community" (see Table 2.1).

### 2.3.4 Shared leadership.

Leadership has moved from being viewed as an "individual action" to a "collective activity" (Dempster, 2009, p. 22) within a community context. Further, Nappi (2014) reported that the school principal "cannot go solo" (p. 33) in the journey to improving school outcomes. "School and student success are more likely to occur when distributed or shared leadership is practiced … leadership is a more

cooperative view of influence and authority" (p. 29). Nappi (2014), building on Gronn's (2002) work on distributed leadership, acknowledged that when individuals share knowledge, "the outcomes are greater than the aggregate of their efforts as individuals" (p. 29). She posited that teachers have a unique understanding of their school and their school community: "When principals share leadership responsibilities and allow teachers to take on leadership roles, the type of collaboration that follows results in productive social capital, which in turn increases the scope of effectiveness of the professional community" (p. 33).

### 2.3.5  What has changed in the work of leadership?

The changing pattern of leadership for the 21$^{st}$ century has moved from a role based authoritarian iteration where individuals at the top of the organisation "set the direction … and energize the troops", as described by Senge (2006, p. 320), to leadership that permeates organizations is nonhierarchical in nature and is rooted in notions of distribution (see Murphy, 2005, p. 29). Swaffield & MacBeath (2009) cite that distributed leadership would necessarily become "more prevalent due to developments in technology that are increasingly facilitating collaborative work" (p. 44). Collaboration in the work of leadership requires a place for the work of teacher leaders.

### 2.3.6  Building capacity for teacher leadership.

Teacher leadership "needs to be fostered, supported and developed and not left to chance" (Flückiger, Lovett, Dempster, & Brown, 2015, p. 60). The following two capacity building models provide some leverage for this work to occur at the school level – Lambert's framework for Leadership Capacity (Lambert, 2003, 2007), and Crowther and Associates' (2011) Capacity Building Model.

Lambert's (2003, 2007) framework for Leadership Capacity focused on "broad-based, skilful participation in the work of leadership" (2003, p. 4). A high degree of participation that involved the principal, teachers, parents and students in the work of leadership, combined with skilful involvement would most likely achieve high student performance. Skilful involvement ensured that the work was focused and productive, and included a shared vision, collective responsibility, inquiry-based use of data, and reflective practice (p. 5). The features of Lambert's leadership capacity model include: (1) principals, teachers, parents, and students as skilful leaders; (2) shared vision resulting in program coherence; (3) inquiry-based use of information to inform decisions and practice; (4) broad involvement, collaboration, and collective responsibility reflected in roles and actions; (5) reflective practice that leads consistently to innovation; and (6) high or steadily improving student achievement (Lambert, 2003, pp. 6-7).

Crowther and Associates' (2011) model for school-wide capacity building, the COSMIC C-B model, "details six process dynamics that school leaders can employ to ascertain the quality of their school improvement processes" (p. xix). In support of the Andrews & USQ-LRI Research Team report (2009), Crowther & Associates (2011) posited that "capacity building is the intentional process of mobilising a school's resources in order to enhance priority outcomes – and sustain those improvements" (p. 185). The six dynamics of the model include:

1. *Committing to school revitalisation*, requiring school leaders to identify the need for revitalising their school;
2. *Organisational diagnosis and coherence*, development of a shared understanding within the school community and alignment of key elements;
3. *Seeking new heights*, creating a projected future manifested in a vision statement and schoolwide pedagogical framework;
4. *Micro-pedagogical deepening*, teachers engaged in pedagogical practice that includes examination of personal gifts and talents, expansion and refinement of the schoolwide pedagogical principles to include strategies for implementation;
5. *Invoking reaction* involves the dissemination of new school-based knowledge through organisational self-critique, strategic internal and external networking, and professional advocacy for refinement of practice;
6. *Consolidating school success* relies on the embedding of the core processes contributing to the enhancement of school outcomes.
(Crowther & Associates, 2011, p. 186).

An inclusive way of working was similarly promoted in Hargreaves and Shirley's *Fourth Way* (cited in A. Hargreaves, 2009) which paved the way for a "renewed professionalism and active democracy" that is not defined by "markets and bureaucracy", but by "inspiration, innovation, social justice and sustainability" (p. 29).

### 2.3.7  The challenge for the future of teacher leadership.

Throughout the educational literature, there is evidence of a drive towards a broader view of leadership which focuses on the growth of human capital (Sergiovanni, 2005; Smylie, 1997) and social capital (Gronn, 2000; Nappi, 2014; Sergiovanni, 2005) to  build leadership capacity (Crowther, 2010; Crowther & Associates, 2011; Lambert, 2003, 2007). A view that additionally links leadership to learning (Hopkins & Jackson, 2003; Senge, 2006; Swaffield & MacBeath, 2009), and thus enhances the professional capital (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012) of the school and organisation.

If 21st century organisational leadership is concerned with building the capacity for leadership (Crowther, 2010; Crowther & Associates, 2011; Lambert, 2003, 2007), is linked to learning (Senge, 2006; Swaffield & MacBeath, 2009) and building renewed professionalism through development of professional capital (A. Hargreaves, 2009; A. Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012) of the organisation, then situating teacher leadership within an organisation framework can easily be justified. As Harris (2008b) identified:

> The challenge for schools is to see leadership as an organisational resource that is maximised through interactions between individuals, and that leads to problem solving and new developments … [and] to find ways of removing organisational structures and systems that restrict organisational learning. (p. 40)

In the following section of the Literature Review, the images of teacher leadership, the contexts for enabling teacher leadership, and the implications for schools and education systems will be examined to justify the place for the development of teacher leadership capacity as an organisational resource.

## 2.4 The Images: Teacher Leadership Defined

In 2001, Katzenmeyer and Moller used a sleeping giant metaphor to describe the power of teacher leadership as a catalyst for change in schools and recognised that teacher leadership would be at the forefront of educational debate for the future: "Teacher leadership – its time has come" (p. 2). Their metaphor was the inspiration for this study, which investigated what occurred once the sleeping giant of teacher leadership was awakened. Around the same period as the release of the second edition of their book, *Awakening the Sleeping Giant: Helping Teachers Develop as Leaders* (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001), research into teacher leadership and forms of distributed school leadership was beginning to emerge in a number of contexts.

In the United States and Canada, advocacy for teacher leadership was evident when Sherrill (1999) called for the need to clearly define teacher leadership roles in view of increased recognition of their role in the reform process; teacher perceptions of leadership was evident in Edwards' (2007) work; and Fullan (1993, 2001, 2005) advocated for teachers as change agents for sustainable reform. Similarly, Lambert (2003, 2007) advanced skilful and broad-based participation in the work of leadership, while Hargreaves and Fink (2006) promoted sustainable leadership. The sleeping giant of teacher leadership emerged with Katzenmeyer and Moller's (2001, 2009) work, while King and Newmann (2001) foregrounded building school capacity through professional development, and Leithwood and colleagues (Leithwood & Riehl, 2005; Leithwood & Seashore-Louis, 2012) linked leadership to student learning. Spillane (2005, 2009) advanced the research in distributed leadership, Lieberman and Miller established the importance of teachers as leaders in communities of practice (Lieberman, 2015; Lieberman & Miller, 2004) and Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) highlighted the link between school leadership and student achievement. Mitchell and Sackney (2001) focused on building capacity for learning communities, Murphy (2005) connected teacher leadership with whole school improvement and Murphy and Meyers (2009) provided sector insights into rebuilding organisational capacity in turnaround schools.

In the United Kingdom, Hopkins and Jackson (Hopkins, 2001, 2006; Hopkins & Jackson, 2003) advocated for dispersed leadership in educational reform, while Frost and Harris (2003) and Day and Smethem (2009) promoted the role of teacher professionalism in school reform. Distributed leadership and its role in organisational change came to the fore with the work of Harris and colleagues (Harris, 2003, 2008a, 2008b, 2009; Harris, Leithwood, Day, Sammons, & Hopkins, 2007; Harris & Spillane, 2008), along with the concepts of leadership for change and capacity building for school improvement with the work of Seashore Louis (Seashore, 2009; 2008) and Stoll (2009). Durrant (2004) focused on the power and potential of teacher leadership through strategies "that enable schools [and administrators] to engage teachers in leading learning" (p. 10).

From New Zealand and across contexts, there was the work of Lovett and colleagues (Cameron & Lovett, 2015; Flückiger et al., 2015; Lovett & Andrews, 2011; Lovett & Gilmore, 2003) on leadership and the critical work of teachers in leading learning for school improvement. Distributed leadership and teacher professional learning was foregrounded with the work of Timperley and colleagues (Timperley, 2005, 2008; Timperley, Phillips, Wiseman, & Fung, 2003). While in Australia, Gronn (2000, 2009, 2015) led the thinking on distributed leadership as a model for the future of

leadership, Sachs (2003a, 2003b, 2014) advocated for the activist teacher identity, the importance of building the learning profession was highlighted in Ingvarson's (2003) work, and Mulford (2007, 2008) advocated for linking leadership and learning in schools. Crowther, Andrews and colleagues (Andrews & Crowther, 2003, 2006; Crowther & Associates, 2011; Crowther et al., 2009; Crowther, Hann, & McMaster, 2000; Crowther et al., 2002) advanced the research on teacher leadership, specifically parallel leadership in whole school improvement for sustained capacity building.

### 2.4.1 What is teacher leadership?

To contextualise Katzenmeyer and Moller's (2001) metaphor for the sleeping giant of teacher leadership, it is important to understand the construct of teacher leadership and additionally, the social and economic reforms that have contributed to how organisations and leadership are viewed. First, teacher leadership is demonstrated by "teachers who are leaders within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders, and influence others towards improved educational practice" (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 5). Teacher leadership is also something more intangible. According to Lambert (2003), it is a fulfilment of their mission as teachers, to be able to dare to dream and the desire to make a difference:

> Teacher leaders are those whose dreams of making a difference have either been kept alive or have been reawakened by engaging with colleagues and working within a professional culture. Those for whom the dream has been kept alive are reflective, inquisitive, focused on improving their craft, and action-oriented; they accept responsibility for learning and have a strong sense of self. They know their intentions well enough not to be intimidated into silence by others, are open to learning, and understand the three dimensions of learning in schools: student learning, the learning of colleagues, and learning of their own. Teacher leaders might be reawakened to their sense of purpose by working within an improving school, or perhaps in a setting outside the school, such as through a network … those who rekindle their sense of purpose outside of the school may not be able to stay long inside it, especially if it isn't compatible with their renewed feelings about their mission as teachers. (p. 33)

Teacher leadership is generally an informal role, rather than an assigned role – "the exercise of leadership by teachers regardless of position or designation" (Frost & Harris, 2003, p. 482) and is about "the right of teachers to fulfil their human potential" (D. Frost, 2008, p. 340) rather than sharing administrative responsibilities. They share expertise and demonstrate leadership by "volunteering for new projects and bringing new ideas to the school … and work for the improvement of the school or school system" (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinback, 1999, p. 117).

Teacher leadership refers to teachers' actions "that enhance teaching and learning in a school, that ties school and community together, and that advances quality of life for a community" (Crowther et al., 2009, p. xvii). This action occurs outside the four walls of the classroom and may have three core components (Murphy, 2005):

1. A *sense of vision* about where an organization should be headed; a creation of a community of practice and new forms of understanding in that community;

discerning the goal of change, school reform and classroom practice; tangible outcomes, such as goal attainment and enhanced student learning.

2. A *relational component*, with a degree of influence and power, exercised more indirectly and in subtle ways; assuming new relationships with administrators and colleagues, required to move organizational participants towards the vision.

3. *Enabling conditions*, in attempts to distinguish a particular pattern of leadership, that is, teacher leadership, as distinct from school leadership in general; descriptions of pedagogical knowledge and collegiality. (pp. 15-16)

Further, Murphy's (2005) description of a teacher leader is someone who

1. is a practicing teacher, not someone who has left the classroom;
2. works and has influence outside his or her classroom;
3. does not engage in managerial and supervisory activities;
4. is chosen by teacher colleagues; and
5. wields considerable autonomy in undertaking his or her work. (p. 16)

Wasley (1991) advocated that teacher leaders have "the ability to encourage colleagues to change, to do things they wouldn't ordinarily consider without the influence of the leader" (p. 170). She maintained that teacher leaders need to "feel supported and understood by administrators [and are largely] unresponsive to top-down efforts to improve their instruction" (cited in Sherrill, 1999, p. 57). Further to this, Sherrill (1999) proposed that a "relationship of trust, cooperation and respect [is crucial between teacher leaders and school administrators to ensure the success of] ongoing professional development" (p. 59). Sherrill further claimed that teacher leaders who engage in ongoing professional development:

- Demonstrate ability to assess, interpret, and prioritize local district and teacher needs and concerns.
- Recognize how to positively affect the broader culture of the school and establish positive relationships with administrators.
- Understand action research and practice-centered inquiry.
- Expand and improve colleagues' basic teaching methods.
- Possess skills needed to facilitate effective workshops and presentations. (p. 60)

An understanding of teacher leadership is somewhat incomplete without due consideration of the impact of social and economic reforms on education and the impact of these on the visibility of, and need for teacher leadership as an organisational construct.

### 2.4.2  Why teacher leadership?

The 20th century has been a time of vast social and economic transformation – we have experienced an "economic order in which knowledge … is the key resource; a social order in which inequality based on knowledge is a major challenge" (Drucker, 1994, p. 53). With an increased focus on individuals having specialised knowledge, the focus shifts from individuals to teams in organisations, as no one individual can have all the knowledge (Drucker, 1988, 1994).

Globally, the focus on knowledge as a collaborative effort (Drucker, 1994; Scharmer et al., 2001) is prioritised in the Millenium Development Goals (MDG) post-2015 for

the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO): "To catalyse critical debate, creative thinking, the sharing and creation of knowledge on education" (UNESCO, 2009-2014, Mission, second bullet point). Their focus on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) promotes competencies including, "critical thinking, imagining future scenarios and making decisions in a collaborative way" (UNESCO, 2005-2014, Education, para. 3). Both of these statements highlight critical visioning principles for all education organisations – the need for educators to be collaborators, networkers, knowledge sharers, critical thinkers and users of feedback mechanisms to critique, in addition to being innovators and creators of new knowledge in the sharing and refining of their pedagogical work (Crowther, Conway, & Petersen, 2011), in the pursuit of improving student learning outcomes.

Reform efforts in schools must therefore focus on a shared approach to knowledge (Drucker, 1994; Scharmer et al., 2001), which in turn will have an impact on how leadership in a school is structured. In this environment, the principal would no longer be the silo font of all knowledge or the sole leader, but the manager of a team of teacher leaders at all levels to develop a shared vision for teaching and learning (Crowther & Associates, 2011; Lambert, 2003). The principal must build capacity (Crowther & Associates, 2011; Lambert, 2003, 2007) to develop a team of people to effectively manage reform efforts – teacher leaders are a potential source.

Historically, teachers have identified as being leaders in their own classroom, however there is evidence that teacher leadership for the 21st century extends well beyond the four walls of the classroom (Lieberman & Miller, 2004; Murphy, 2005). For a number of years, various researchers have been advocating for the changing nature of the role of the teacher and the impact of this change on improving student learning outcomes. One of the earlier examples of the call for change can be found in The Carnegie Report in 1986. The report called for the reinvention of the profession so that teaching could be viewed as a career worth pursuing, thus providing teachers with a "better incentive structure and greater discretion in making professional judgements" (Tucker & Mandel, 1986, p. 24). It argued that "imposing standards and tests was not enough to transform schooling" (Lieberman & Miller, 2004, p. 8), and that "teachers should become leaders in curriculum, instruction, school redesign, and professional development … the real power to improve achievement lay with teachers, who needed to be entrusted with new responsibility and accountability for change" (Lieberman & Miller, 2004, p. 8).

A renewed focus on teacher leadership continued into the final decade of the 20th century and into the 21st century with a number of experts advocating for change. One of these was Smylie (1995), who claimed that "efforts to develop teacher leadership" (p. 3) came through forms of work redesign that included mentoring and participative decision making, and include "three related objectives":

1. First, they seek to enhance the quality of the teacher workforce by expanding and diversifying the nature of teachers' work, providing a wider array of incentives to attract and retain the most talented teachers in the profession.
2. Second, they intend to establish new incentives, controls, and opportunities for professional learning and development aimed to improve the performance of practicing teachers.
3. Third, these efforts seek to enhance the institutional capacity and performance of schools by placing teachers in positions of leadership and

decision making, thereby increasing resources and expertise available for improvement. (pp. 3-4)

Then, Lieberman and Miller (2004) drew attention to the concern from teacher voices in the field in the United States, where both novices and veterans expressed discontent with their profession as a result of policies that supported standardisation, accountability and assessment, termed as the wrong drivers by Fullan (2011) for reform.

> All the trust in teachers has gone. My voice and the voices of my colleagues were totally discounted as unimportant…. Veteran teachers are leaving because there is so much stress. There is no relief from the pressure…. We are showing numbers, not learning…. The atmosphere in my school is so negative. I know in my heart that this is wrong. I don't want to give up. But I feel I am being drowned by a huge wave. (Lieberman & Miller, 2004, p. 1)

Advocates for teacher leadership supported policies that enabled capacity building by engaging teacher leaders and shared pedagogical practice (Lieberman & Miller, 2004) as the *right* drivers for reform (Fullan, 2011). Lambert (2003, 2007) maintained that teacher leadership was "at the heart of the high leadership capacity school" (p. 32). Yet the work of leadership was still perceived as a more formal role, while hierarchical views of authority and power and teachers needing to be coaxed into leadership by way of incentives blocked the emergence of real forms of teacher leadership in schools (Lambert, 2003, p. 32).

A. Hargreaves (2015) advocated for teacher leadership in the Foreword of a new book, edited by Nathan Bond, on the topic at the time of this study, *The power of teacher leaders: Their roles, influence, and impact*. He noted that in the United States, a recent survey found that "large numbers of teachers … do not want to be principals, but are hungry for leadership opportunities (Markow & Pieters, 2012). After years of overtesting and standardization that have tried to bypass the principal's and the teacher's influence by prescribing the instruction, teacher leadership matters now more than ever" (A. Hargreaves, 2015, p. xii).

There is also evidence to suggest that there are large numbers of teachers hungry for informal leadership (A. Hargreaves, 2015) in the Australian context. Teachers want opportunities to lead and collaborate beyond their classroom, but are not necessarily looking for formal leadership positions. That is not to say that once they have experienced informal leadership that they may not step up to a formal leadership role – the experience broadens the scope of possibility or capacity for leadership to either stay in an informal role or extend their capabilities to a formal leadership position. There is potential to build system capacity in leadership by awakening the sleeping giant of teacher leadership.

### 2.4.3  Teachers as collaborators and networkers: Beyond the four walls.

Teaching in the past has been described as a flat and isolated profession where teachers worked within the four walls of their classroom, where practice was not shared, with little support for professional growth underpinned by organisational constraints (Smylie, 1995). Yet, teachers have been described as collaborative individuals (Crowther et al., 2001), and it is acknowledged that student achievement increases with establishment of a collaborative culture (Newmann & Wehlage,

1995). When teachers collaborate and share ideas for the improvement of practice (Barth, 1986, 2006), teacher quality (Hattie, 2003) and professionalism is more likely to be enhanced (Andrews & Crowther, 2006) – this has been shown to have a significant effect on improving student learning outcomes. In Australia, one such example is evident where IDEAS schools that focused on developing school-wide approaches to the explicit teaching of literacy to improve their literacy outcomes reported statistically significant improvements in the NAPLAN (ACARA, 2013, 2014) data for Reading (Andrews et al., 2009; Andrews, Crowther, Morgan, & O'Neill, 2012; O'Neill, 2013).

Teachers would require opportunities to develop professionally through teacher-led development work (Durrant, 2004) in Professional Learning Communities (Leithwood & Seashore-Louis, 2012; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002), along with the opportunity to examine the nature of individual teacher leader roles and current organisational realities. This would require an opportunity for educators to develop collegial relationships (Barth, 1986, 2006) and to talk to each other about their practice (Barth, 2006). Leithwood and Seashore Louis (2012), in their five year study of educational leadership in the United States, found that "promoting [the] will and skill for change [through] collective school leader efficacy . . . at the state, district, school and classroom levels [was] . . . the most powerful . . . influence that districts can exercise on schools and students" (p. 230). Districts can work together with schools to improve student learning and can "create work settings that seem to increase school-based leaders' belief that they can, together, get the job done" (p. 230).

Once sharing practice is established as a within school practice in the form of internal networks, opportunities to tap into further networks of support could be built beyond the school gates for resource sharing and ideas to improve practice (Crowther et al., 2011; Muijs, West, & Ainscow, 2010; Petersen & Conway, 2011). There is support for networking as a strategy for school improvement to broaden opportunities for innovation and to share resources (Crowther et al., 2011; Muijs et al., 2010; Petersen & Conway, 2011). Networks enable teachers to "develop their professional self-concepts" where forums for genuine dialogue are created and teachers are viewed as experts in their field (Lambert, 2003, p. 36). However, this is not without its challenges for leadership in schools and systems, and like the notion of collaborative learning communities, needs careful consideration of the nature of teacher leader roles and the organisational realities before implementation. Genuine engagement of teacher leaders supported by their schools and the education system (Andrews et al., 2012) to ensure the ownership of the learning is turned over to the teacher leader (Lambert, 2003), in addition to increasing the amount of "purposeful interaction … across the tri-levels [of schools, districts and systems]" (Fullan, 2005, p. 17) would be crucial to its success. The challenge for the profession lies in raising its "image and status" (Andrews & Crowther, 2006, p. 534) through: acknowledging individual teacher's talents and capabilities; provision of opportunities for teachers to develop professionally; seeing the teacher as a "self-managed professional no longer an individual in a classroom 'silo' but working more collaboratively in a 'networked', knowledge environment"  (p. 534).

Fostering an environment for effective collaboration is one of several key goals of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) background report, *Building a High-Quality Teaching Profession: Lessons from Around the*

*World* (Schleicher, 2011). This document reported on the International Summit on the Teaching Profession to improve teacher quality. The summit, which brought together education ministers, union leaders and teacher leaders from high-performing and rapidly improving education systems across the world highlighted the importance of the role of teachers in a collaborative role in educational reform.

> Teachers report relatively infrequent collaboration with colleagues within the school, beyond a mere exchange of information and ideas; direct professional collaboration to enhance student learning is rarer. Understanding that collaboration takes time, some countries are providing teachers with some scheduled time or salary supplement to encourage them to engage in such co--operation. Teachers who exchange ideas and information and co-ordinate their practices with other teachers also report more positive teacher-student relations at their school. Thus it may be reasonable to encourage teachers' co-operation in conjunction with improving teacher-student relations, as these are two sides of a positive school culture … closely related to individual teachers' job satisfaction. (pp. 29-30)

The evidence is there within the report to show that teachers can and should be encouraged to go beyond what can be described as the "mere exchange of information" (Schleicher, 2011, p. 29) to a more deep, meaningful and autonomous collaboration (Bauman, 2015) for authentic education reform: first, for personal teacher leader job satisfaction, thus impacting teacher retention, and second, for a positive effect on a school's and system's efforts to increase student learning outcomes.

### 2.4.4  The role of the principal.

The principal has a key role in building a culture that is supportive of teacher leadership (Moller & Pankake, 2006). There is evidence to suggest that the principals' leadership has an effect on student learning (Hallinger & Heck, 1996) within school-level processes that include a shared vision, collective responsibility for students' learning outcomes (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995), norms around instruction, collaboration, and opportunities for teachers to improve their practice (Bryk & Driscoll, 1985). The sleeping giant of teacher leadership can be "a strong catalyst for making change" as part of these school level processes (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 2). However, when schools and systems focus on principal or school administrator leadership, there is little room for teacher voice, thus inhibiting the emergence of teacher leadership. Dawson (2011) found that: "When the principal legitimated the teacher leadership framework throughout the school, the enhanced clarity around the role of teacher leaders proved beneficial to the acceptance of emerging teacher leaders and their work" (p. 16).

Traditional forms of control structured, principal centred leadership will no longer be adequate to meet the increasingly complex challenges of education for the 21st century (Andrews & Crowther, 2003, 2006; Crowther & Associates, 2011; A. Morgan, 2008). Processes of knowledge creation (Lewis, 2003) and organisational learning (Conway, 2008, 2009; Senge, 2006) for whole school improvement require schools and systems to look at new forms of leadership.

Additionally, leadership is relational work and Le Fevre and Robinson (2015) noted in their research that principals were more skilled at advocating for their own

position than at deep inquiry into the position of others. The typical interpersonal principal leadership style focused on:

> Communicating their own viewpoints without consistently disclosing the reasons for those views … asking for facts about what happened and what had or had not been done than for the beliefs or interpretations that shaped parents' and teachers' reactions to those facts. The absence of such deeper inquiry limits the development of trust that comes when the other party recognises that their real views, including their disagreements have been understood and acknowledged. The weak checking for understanding communicates limited interest and respect and further hinders the development of trust. (p. 86)

Leaders "foster a culture based on the assumption that people want to contribute and can be trusted to do so and that the role of a leader is to model a process of learning (Leithwood et al. 1998; Marks et al. 2002)" (Seashore, 2009, p. 135). Additionally, with more teachers than ever before attaining higher qualifications in education, many with their Masters level and some even pursuing doctorates (Andrews & Crowther, 2006), they are looking for opportunities to fulfil their potential as teacher leaders in internal and external networks beyond the four walls of the classroom, while still remaining connected to their students (Petersen & Conway, 2011).

A 1996 School Restructuring Study in the United States by King, Louis, Marks, & Peterson found that principals:

> shifted from more directive to shared approaches … took action that encouraged teacher leadership and contributed to a focus on the intellectual quality of student work. This study suggested that principals in successful schools nurtured decision making by teachers, encouraged experimentation, took entrepreneurial initiative and buffered the school from external demands. (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009, p. 95)

Fullan (2001) similarly noted that "internal commitment cannot be activated from the top" (p. 133) and that principals as leaders have a key role in establishing the right conditions for improvement. Leaders should be able to mobilise everyone's "sense of moral purpose" (p. 21) through the strategies that foster commitment to an organisation's goals. Moral purpose, being both a means and an end – in education, the *end* is to make a difference in the lives of students, but the *means* to the end relies on treating others well and fairly, or "you will be a leader without followers" (p. 13).

### 2.4.4.1 *Building leadership capacity.*

Lambert (2003) posited that while "teachers are at the heart of leadership capacity" (p. 43) the principal's role is crucial in "the work of building leadership capacity, [which] creates meaning and shared knowledge through broad-based, skilful participation" (p. 44). As head learner (Lambert, 2003), the principal must demonstrate the connection between leading and learning through a range of metacognitive processes that include knowledge of self as a leader, building relationships of trust and mutual understanding with others, and development of processes for communication (Table 2.2).

Teacher leaders as part of these schools would be highly committed to their work environment and engaged in the cultural changes that are part of deep change

(DuFour & Fullan, 2013). They would have teacher leader agency (D. Frost, 2006) and thus a degree of ownership and investment in the change process. This type of agency springs from the enabling process implemented by the principal as head learner resourcing the "work of building leadership capacity" (Lambert, 2003, p. 44). Principals enabling this type of "collective responsibility for leading learning [ensure that schools will] develop more robust and sustainable approaches to improvement" (Durrant, 2004, p. 27).

Table 2.2

*15 Leadership Capacity Action Steps for Principals*

| **15 Leadership Capacity Action Steps for Principals** |
| --- |
| 1. Know yourself – clarify your values |
| 2. Extend your understandings to school and staff |
| 3. Assess the leadership capacity of the school |
| 4. Vow to work from the school's current condition and walk side-by-side with staff toward further improvement |
| 5. Build trust through honesty, respect, and follow-through |
| 6. Develop community norms |
| 7. Establish mutual understanding with staff about decision-making rules |
| 8. Create a shared vision |
| 9. Develop leadership capacity in others, including theories about leadership |
| 10. Establish a leadership team as a design team |
| 11. Convene and sustain regular in-depth conversations about teaching, learning, and leading |
| 12. Establish a cycle of inquiry |
| 13. Develop goals and plans of action for student learning |
| 14. Engage in communication processes designed to develop trust, relationships, and leadership; provoke quality performance; and implement community decisions |
| 15. Develop a reciprocal relationship with district personnel. |

Adapted from *Leadership capacity for lasting school improvement* (pp. 50-52) by L. Lambert, 2003, Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

### 2.4.4.2 *Relational leadership.*

Principals need to establish consistency, openness and trust in their relationships with others (Handford & Leithwood, 2013) and focus on establishing "elaborate relational networks of changing persons moving forward together" (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 654). In establishing conditions supportive of teacher leadership (Moller & Pankake, 2006), the principal would encourage shared leadership and nurture teacher leadership through: "actively listening … [and] assuming responsibility for knowing about teaching and learning in the school, and by being consistent in the follow-through on shared decisions made in the school" (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009, p. 98).

A study by Handford and Leithwood (2013) found that leadership trust-building practices established trust among teachers and was related to student achievement. In Leithwood and Seashore Louis' (2012) study on *Linking Leadership to Student Learning* it is also clear that the principal's role in providing the context for

mobilising teachers in the development of teacher professional knowledge and expertise and providing the conditions for good working relationships has a direct relationship with improving student achievement. Conway and Andrews (2016) similarly concur that principals and teacher leaders must work mutualistically in "developing a culture of relational trust and hope with an agreed school vision for leading pedagogical enhancement" (p. 137). Further, in their study of an Australian school system, a culture of relational trust has been established with system personnel to ensure alignment with system requirements and their schoolwide pedagogy.

### 2.4.4.3   *Professional development for leadership.*

Flückiger et al. (2015) promoted the role of middle leaders in fostering "leadership of teaching and learning amongst teachers with whom they are engaged" (p. 60). In this sense, many people are involved in the work of leadership (Lambert, 2003) – it is planned as, "fostered … and not left to chance" (Flückiger et al., 2015, p. 60). Professional development for leadership currently privileges principals' professional learning (Flückiger et al., 2015). A focus on middle leaders' professional learning would leverage teacher leader capacity building across the school. Flückiger et al. (2015, p. 67) suggest that this can be drawn from the work of Clark and Wildy (2011) and Lovett, Dempster and Flückiger (2015) facilitated through professional development programs for middle leaders that generate leadership content knowledge in pedagogy, people, place, system and self. Moreover:

> [M]iddle leadership for most should be seen as a rewarding career choice because its primary aim is <u>clearly focused on fostering talented teacher leadership teams</u> working cooperatively on an agenda committed to the moral purpose of schooling, namely, improvement in learning and achievement for all.… the implication for employers is clear – different types of leadership learning programs are a necessity. (p. 72, emphasis in original)

### 2.4.4.4   *The qualities of a principal leader.*

Principals of schools as change leaders must also demonstrate qualities of what Collins (2001) called Level 5 leaders in the *Good to Great* companies of the world – they "build enduring greatness though a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will" (p. 20):

> Level 5 leaders channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the larger goal of building a great company. It's not that Level 5 leaders have no ego or self-interest. Indeed, they are incredibly ambitious – but their ambition is first and foremost for the institution, not themselves. (p. 21)

These principals would need to catalyse commitment to change, be highly ambitious and compelling in their vision for the organisation and engaging and empowering people as part of the process. This would require a type of leadership that Fullan (2010, p. 76) referred to as motion leadership. It gives the moral purpose of the organisation its wheels and wings as it works with different levels of the organisation to change the context. This type of leadership grows from the energy that is generated from the "capacity to hold creative tension … when people articulate a vision and tell the truth about a current reality" (Senge et al., 1999, p. 16).

### 2.4.4.5   The role of the principal: A framework.

Crowther and colleagues (2009, p. 93) developed a framework summarising the principal's role in promoting teaching leadership which highlights the democratic nature of the principal's role: including the communication of clear strategic intent; involving the aspirations and ideas of others; making space for individual innovation; trusting others and knowing when to step back; creating a culture of success (see Table 2.3).

Table 2.3

*Summary of the Principal's Role in Promoting Teacher Leadership*

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*Communicate a clear strategic intent.*
- Engage in futuristic thinking activities.
- Articulate and justify personal value positions on school-specific and other educational issues.

*Incorporate the aspirations and ideas of others.*
- Demonstrate confidence in teachers' contributions to school visioning and valuing processes.
- Explore with teachers the alignment between strategic goals and teaching and learning goals.

*Pose difficult-to-answer questions.*
- Adopt a motto such as "Leaders of the future will be people who know how to ask rather than tell."
- Heighten the level of professional dialogue and critique regarding "hidden" educational practices.

*Make space for individual innovation.*
- Create opportunities for individual entrepreneurship.
- Encourage identification and confrontation of institutional barriers to teacher leadership.

*Know when to step back.*
- Demonstrate trust in the concepts of teacher leadership and parallel leadership.
- Attest to the central place of teachers' pedagogical work in school planning and decision making.

*Create opportunities out of perceived difficulties.*
- Describe ways in which new knowledge has been created out of problem situations.
- Draw attention to examples of thinking outside the box.

*Build on achievements to create a culture of success.*
- Cite examples of "Success breeds success" in school initiatives.
- Explore with staff the concept of teachers as guardians of the school culture.

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Reproduced from *Developing teacher leaders*, 2nd ed. (p. 93) by F. Crowther et al., 2009, Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.

The important meta-strategic role of the principal in enabling teacher leadership (Crowther et al., 2009) cannot be underestimated. For many, this may require a reframing of leadership for self before they can enable leadership in others: "a personal transformation in leadership must accompany the quest to rebuild schooling to cultivate teacher leadership and efforts to nurture the growth of teacher leaders" (Murphy, 2005, p. 132).

### 2.4.5  Distributed leadership.

At this juncture, the big question for school improvement and capacity building is: What forms of leadership are needed (Crowther & Associates, 2011)? Is effective organisational leadership "concentrated, monopolized or focused … or dispersed, shared and distributed" (Gronn, 2000, p. 324)?

Traditionally, leadership in schools has "centred on the role of the principal" (Crowther et al., 2009, p. 69). A monopolised heroic form of leadership can become problematic: "even in cases where traditional leadership approaches have brought about significant change, such changes are prone to disintegration once the identified leader moves on" (Copland, 2003, pp. 375-376). Huberman and Miles (1984, cited in Seashore, 2009) argued for a mix of both: "effective organizational leadership must sometimes be directive in order to promote … transformations. Both supportive and authoritative methods, used alternatively or together, determine effective organizational leadership in developing professional community" (p. 135).
Frost and Harris (2003) identified that the school leadership discourse in the United Kingdom had been shifting away from control structures to one of capacity building where schools "build the cultures that nourish learning and achievement at all levels in the organisation" (p. 479). For the last 10 years or more, the term *distributed leadership* has been at the forefront, with Gronn, Spillane, Harris and others leading the field of research in this area.

Distributed leadership, with its emphasis on collective responsibility and collaborative working is a way to exercise leadership at all levels of an organisation, hence maximising intellectual and social capital, and the degree of trust that exists within an organisation (D. Hargreaves, 2001). It is "a form of relational leadership … which involves being attuned to and in touch with the intricate web of inter- and intra-relationships that influence an organisation" (Youngs, 2007, cited in Harris, 2008b, p. 34). "Distributed leadership is first and foremost about leadership practice rather than leaders or their roles, functions, routines and structures" (Spillane, 2005, p. 146) and is the "decentralisation of leadership" (Harris, 2003, p. 317). It is a way of looking at the "complex interactions and nuances of leadership in action … patterns of interaction, influence and agency" rather than "leadership as role" (Harris & Spillane, 2008, p. 33). It is "fluid and emergent, rather than … a fixed phenomenon" (Gronn, 2000, p. 324) and does not mean that everyone is a leader, but "opens up the possibility for a more democratic and collective form of leadership" (Harris, 2003, p. 317).

In a complementary relationship to the notion of teachers as leaders, while a teacher leader is generally an informal role and focused on teacher leaders fulfilling their potential, a distributed leadership model works with any individuals engaged in leadership practice: "A distributed model focuses upon the interactions, rather than the actions, of those in formal and informal leadership roles" (Harris & Spillane,

2008, p. 31). It usually requires an organisational redesign for "lateral, flatter decision-making processes (Hargreaves, 2007)" (p. 31). Timperley (2005) cautioned:

> Distributing leadership over more people is a risky business and may result in the greater distribution of incompetence. I suggest that increasing the distribution of leadership is only desirable if the quality of the leadership activities contributes to assisting teachers to provide more effective instruction to their students, and it is on these qualities that we should focus. (p. 417)

A study on distributed leadership by Leithwood et al. (2007) found that "patterns of leadership practice in a school affect organizational performance" (Harris et al., 2007, p. 343). Two key conditions for successful leadership distribution emerged:

> First, leadership needs to be distributed to those who have, or can develop, the knowledge or expertise required to carry out the leadership tasks expected of them. Second, effective distributed leadership needs to be coordinated, preferable in some planned way. (p. 343)

Silins and Mulford (2002, cited in Harris, 2003) also found that where leadership is distributed and "teachers are empowered in areas of importance to them" (p. 318), student outcomes are more likely to improve.

### 2.4.6 Parallel leadership.

Parallel leadership (refer Figure 1.6), a form of distributed leadership practice, emerged in the Australian context with the work of Crowther and others (Crowther & Associates, 2011; Crowther et al., 2009) who asserted that:

> [T]he construct of parallel leadership, with its grounding in values of shared purpose, mutual trust, and allowance for individual expression, and its links to enhanced organizational and community capacity-building, represents recognition of key principles associated with the advancement of democratic practice. (2009, p. 70)

Parallel leadership describes the purposeful alignment of the pedagogical leadership of teacher leaders with the strategic leadership of the principal in schools engaged in the IDEAS (Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievements in Schools) project. "Parallel leadership is a process whereby teacher leaders and their principals engage in collaborative action to build school capacity. It embodies three distinct qualities – mutual trust, shared purpose and allowance for individual expression" (Crowther et al., 2009, p. 53).

The *Teachers as Leaders Framework* (Crowther, 2003; Crowther et al., 2000; Crowther et al., 2002) focuses on the role of the teacher as a parallel leader in whole school improvement. The challenge facing many schools is where teachers possess "capabilities more sophisticated than ever, [yet] the responsibility and authority accorded to teachers have not grown significantly, nor has the image of teaching as a profession advanced significantly" (Andrews & Crowther, 2006, p. 1). The Framework, based on more than a decade of research and development work in IDEAS schools, captures these responsibilities and authority, providing an idealised image of the modern teacher leader (Table 2.4).

Table 2.4

*The Teachers as Leaders Framework*

---

**Teacher leaders …**

*Convey convictions about a better world by*
- articulating a positive future for all students
- contributing to an image of teaching as a profession that makes a difference

*Facilitate communities of learning by*
- encouraging a shared, schoolwide approach to core pedagogical processes
- approaching professional learning as consciousness-raising about complex issues
- synthesising new ideas out of colleagues' professional discourse and reflective activities

*Strive for pedagogical excellence by*
- showing genuine interest in students' needs and well-being
- continuously developing and refining personal teaching gifts and talents
- seeking deep understanding of significant pedagogical practices

*Confront barriers in the school's culture and structures by*
- standing up for children, especially disadvantaged and marginalised individuals and groups
- working with administrators to find solutions to issues of equity, fairness and justice
- encouraging student "voice" in ways that are sensitive to students' developmental stages and circumstances

*Translate ideas into sustainable systems of action by*
- working with the principal, administrators and other teachers to manage projects that heighten alignment between the school's vision, values, pedagogical practices and professional learning activities
- building alliances and nurturing external networks of support

*Nurture a culture of success by*
- acting on opportunities to emphasise accomplishments and high expectations
- encouraging collective responsibility in addressing schoolwide challenges
- encouraging self-respect and confidence in students' communities

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Reproduced from *Developing teacher* leaders, 2nd ed. (p. 3) by F. Crowther et al., 2009, Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.

A grounded theory study on becoming a teacher leader (Dawson, 2010) highlighted the growth and development of teacher leaders in the IDEAS project and found that leading, learning and safety were essential to teacher leader development. Participants in the study were able to experience leading and learning in a safe environment for extended periods, thus boosting their confidence and providing the environment for development of teacher leadership knowledge and skills. Dawson's research established the conditions that enabled teacher leadership growth within their IDEAS school contexts.

### 2.4.7  Teacher leader agency.

The definition of *agent* (Butler, 2014) in the English language context is "a person acting on behalf of another; someone or something that acts or has the power to act", while the definition of *agency* is "the state of being in action or of exerting power; action; operation; a mode of exerting power; a means of producing effects". Transferring this to the concept of agency for teacher leadership equates to the power to act. The means of producing effects is a suitable organisational context that enables teacher leaders to enact their capacity as agents, or grow their teacher leader

capacity, as in Dawson's (2010) study. D. Frost's (2006) research established that "understanding 'agency' is the key to effective school communities' abilities to influence themselves and others" (p. 19) and is about "the capacity to make a difference" (p. 20). He found that human agency is the bridge between leadership and learning.

The concept of human agency is grounded in social cognitive theory and is distinguished by three modes, as described by Bandura (2001): *direct personal agency*, which is the "cognitive, motivational, affective and choice processes through which it is exercised to produce given effects" (p. 13); *proxy agency*, which "relies on others to act on one's behest to secure desired outcomes" (p. 1) where "they believe others can do it better, or they do not want … direct control" (p. 13); and *collective agency*, which acknowledges "many of the things [we] seek are achievable only through socially interdependent effort" (p. 13) and cannot be achieved alone.

There is significant research that already provides an insight into the power of collective agency for 21st century teacher professionals. An Australian study on collective intelligence in school development and improvement (Conway, 2008, 2009) found that "when teachers work together in truly authentic professional relationships, they activate and sustain six forms of engagement that enable significant new meaning to be generated in their work lives" (pp. 229-230): fostering a culture of trust and hope; forming relationships and seeking harmony of differences; recognising, valuing and engaging diversity; planning and monitoring procedure; responding to the unexpected with resilience and persistence; capturing a heightened consciousness of the creation of significant new meaning.

> Collective intelligence in schools is when a discerning community develops capacity to continuously create and advance new ways of thinking and acting in concert and with acumen toward enhancing student achievement. (Conway, 2008, p. 225)

The collective intelligence construct extends Bandura's (2001) social-cognitive concept of collective agency by assigning a highly complex level of metacognition achieved only through collective intellectual pursuits which are "more than just the sum of individual processes or capabilities [but] the capacity of collaborative individuals to collectively grasp, synergise and create meaning together" (Conway, 2008, p. 233). Conway (2008) asserted that collective intelligence "is at the core of sustainability in educational quality [and] manifests capacity that is built on the strength of intelligent professionals collaborating, creating, co-constructing and connecting over time through their personalised professional learning processes" (p. 234). Agency in this regard would require teacher leaders to have the capacity to engage in collaborations in the pursuit of the creation of significant new pedagogical meaning within their school context.

Andrews and Crowther (2003; 2006) proposed professional qualities that would be needed "if the teaching profession is to transform itself" in the form of an image of the 3-dimensional professional, that relies on "continuous knowledge creation" (2003, p. 112) – *Personal Pedagogy*, the particular gifts, talents and world views that one brings to the teaching and learning context; *Authoritative Pedagogy* (ies), or theories that one uses to reflect on our work as teachers; and *Schoolwide Pedagogy*, a school's expression of their consistent approach to learning and teaching that is grounded in their shared vision, values, successful practice, authoritative frameworks

and is illuminated in continuous professional learning and alive in each and every classroom. The Schoolwide Pedagogy as the school's expression of interest in their shared pedagogical approach requires a high level of intellectual collaboration to create new meaning, as highlighted by Conway (2008, 2009) in the form of collective intelligence – and thus, requires teacher leader agency to engage in this manner.

Similarly, a Finnish study (Pyhältö, Pietarinen, & Sioni, 2014) found that teachers' *professional agency* involved "intentional and responsible management of new learning, both at an individual and community level" (p. 306) through "the development of professional community" (p. 307), thus being a highly relational and collaborative concept.

### 2.4.7.1 *Moral purpose and moral agency.*

Moral purpose underpins and drives moral agency, which has been described by Bandura (2001) as a feature of self-directedness, a "self-regulatory process that links thought to action" (p. 8). Moral purpose and conduct is more static in nature than attainment of knowledges and aspirational pursuits, which constantly develop and change (Bandura, 2001), as it is grounded in certain deeply held convictions that do not necessarily change. These convictions if captured within a school organisation, can drive a powerful vision underpinned by shared beliefs, values and a deep moral purpose. Enabling teacher leaders through a collective form of self-directedness, to participate in the formulation of the school's vision, driven by shared values, beliefs and moral purpose enables the context for expression of moral agency. This form of moral purpose is recognition of "the specific needs of their student body [and is] a values-based vision and pedagogy specific to their context" (Conway & Andrews, 2016, p. 135).

### 2.4.7.2 *Self-efficacy.*

Self-efficacy is when people "are motivated by believing that their actions will produce the outcomes they want" (Bandura, 1986, cited in Chalofsky, 2010, p. 33) and is defined by a self-confidence or belief in self. Bandura (2001) acknowledged that a strong sense of efficacy is "vital for successful functioning [and] to manage one's life circumstances" (p. 16). When people have high self-efficacy, they develop the "coping mechanisms to deal with road blocks [and belief that they will] get past the roadblocks" (Chalofsky, 2010, p. 34). Perceived high self-efficacy enables the individual to have a strong sense of self in the world and he/she is therefore able to contribute to the collective efficacy of the group or organisation. Self-efficacy, alongside moral purpose and agency are therefore key components contributing to the image of the collaborative teacher leader.

## 2.5 The Context: Supportive Workplaces

With the image of the teacher leader explored and defined, the focus now turns to the contexts that provide opportunities for leadership development. Leadership, and "teacher leadership specifically, is an organizational phenomenon" (Yukl, 1994, cited in Smylie, 1995, p. 6). An understanding of the organisational contexts in which teacher leadership functions is important to understanding the construct of

teacher leadership (Smylie, 1995). Additionally, "it may be difficult to develop teacher leadership to its full potential without also developing its contexts" (Smylie, 1995, p. 6).

As Murphy (2005) highlighted, "cultivating teacher leadership in a hierarchical and bureaucratic organizational seedbed is problematic at best. New conceptions of organizations provide the foundations for developing the skills to foster teacher leadership" (p. 132). Murphy's premise raises the question about what a new conception of organisation might look like. "Like it or not, schools are bureaucracies – they are structures with hierarchy of authority, division of labor, impersonality, objective standards, technical competence and rules and regulations" (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001, p. 296). Finding the place for a democratic community within the confines of a bureaucracy does present some challenges. As Mulford (2004) highlighted:

> "[D]eep" democracy involves respect for the work and dignity of individuals and their cultural traditions, reverence for and proactive facilitation of free and open inquiry and critique, recognition of interdependence … and the importance of collective choices and actions in the interest of the common good. (p. 639)

In an educational organisation, the place for democratic community is compounded by the fact that educators operate in tri-level contexts – school/community, district and system (Fullan, 2005). Context generally describes "the structure and cultures within which one works [yet is also the] reference to why a particular innovation succeeded in one situation but not another" (Fullan, 2005, p. 16). Fullan (2005) maintained that meaningful change is possible, however it will "take time and cumulative effort … [by increasing] the amount of purposeful interaction between and among individuals within and across the tri-levels [of the system]" (pp. 16-17). In this study, it is the work of teacher leadership as a potentially sustainable model for the work of leadership in education across the tri-level contexts, which will be examined in the following sections of this literature review – the context and implications for schools and education systems. First, the issue of sustainability is considered along with the implications for the education sector.

### 2.5.1  The sustainability agenda and the development of *capital*.

The United Nations 2005 World Summit outcome focused on three pillars for sustainable development (cited in Chick & Micklethwaite, 2011, p. 82):

- People – social development
- Planet – environmental protection
- Profit – economic development

Drawing on their five capitals model of sustainable development, sustainability requires that our capital assets must be maintained and grown to ensure a country's economic success (Chick & Micklethwaite, 2011; Stonecash, Gans, King, & Gregory Mankiw, 2003) – the five capitals being: natural, human, social, manufactured and financial. The *people* pillar as one of the elements for worldwide sustainable development pertains to growing human and social capital and is therefore a crucial focus for the education sector.

*Human capital* consists of people's health, knowledge, skills and motivation. All these things are needed for productive work. Enhancing human capital through education and training is central to the flourishing economy.

*Social capital* is concerned with the institutions that help us maintain and develop human capital in partnership with others; such as families, communities, businesses, trade unions, schools and voluntary organisations. (Chick & Micklethwaite, 2011, p. 95)

Two sociologists that wrote about capital in the 20th century were French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and American sociologist James Coleman. Bourdieu considered the interaction of economic, cultural and social capital, while Coleman "focused on the role of social capital in the creation of human capital" (Dika & Singh, 2002, p. 32). Coleman (1988) defined human capital as "the skills and knowledge acquired by an individual" (p. S100). His concept of social capital is considered less tangible than human capital, as "it exists in the relations among persons [and] comes about through changes in the relations among persons that facilitate action" (Coleman, 1988, p. S100). This form of social capital "highlights the importance of social networks" (Dika & Singh, 2002, p. 34) and consists of three factors that are characteristics of the community: (1) level of trust, as evidenced by obligations and expectations; (2) information channels; and (3) norms and sanctions that promote the common good over self-interest. Coleman's influence on education circles can be found in the Coleman report, *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (1966) (Dika & Singh, 2002). Similarly, social capital has been defined as "combined assets that can be shared in a supportive environment where group members have common goals" (Dika & Singh, 2002, cited in Nappi, 2014, p. 31).

D. Hargreaves' (2001) theory of capital works on four main concepts – *outcomes*, *leverage*, *intellectual capital* and *social capital*. The *outcomes* can be the cognitive and moral and "represent both the extent to which [the school's] overt goals are achieved and any unintended consequences of the processes involved" (p. 488). *Leverage* is about the relationship between teacher input and educational output, with four possible relationships (Figure 2.1).

## OUTPUT
## QUALITY AND QUANTITY

|  | Low | High |
|---|---|---|
| **High** | Exhausted frustration | Short-term effectiveness by burn-out |
| **Low** | Cynical tokenism | High leverage |

INPUT ENERGY (High / Low rows)
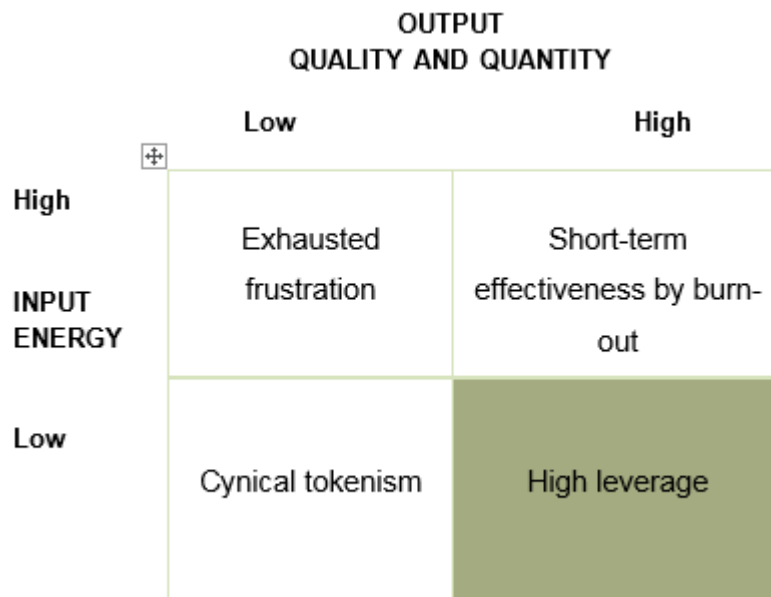
*Figure 2.1.* Hargreaves' Leverage Model

Adapted from "A capital theory of school effectiveness and improvement" by D. Hargreaves, 2001, *British Educational Research Journal, 27*(4), p. 489.

D. Hargreaves (2001) maintains that:

> Many schools do not know how to increase their leverage … Teachers in effective schools share and regularly apply combinations of high leverage strategies and avoid low leverage strategies: they respond to demands for change by working smarter, not harder. Outstanding schools discover how to combine high leverage strategies and to sequence their implementation over time so that the quality and quantity of their outcomes are unusually high in relation to the investment of energy. Understanding school effectiveness involves discovering how high leverage works. (p. 489)

*Intellectual capital* refers to "the sum of everything everybody in a company knows to give it competitive edge. [In schools, it's] the knowledge and experience of the school's stakeholders that [can be] deployed to reach the school's goals [through] the creation of new knowledge and the capacity to transfer knowledge between situations and people" (p. 490).

*Social capital* refers to the cultural and structural components:

> The cultural part is mainly the level of *trust* between people and the generation of norms of reciprocity (mutual favours) and collaboration. The structural aspect is the *networks* in which the people are embedded by strong ties. In a school rich in social capital, the high levels of trust generate strong networks and collaborative relations among its members and stakeholders. High levels of social capital in a school strengthen its intellectual capital. (p. 490)

Effective schools mobilise intellectual capital, or the capacity to create and transfer knowledge, in conjunction with social capital, or the capacity to generate trust and sustain networks (D. Hargreaves, 2001).

Sustainable change in schools becomes an issue with the implementation of top-down bureaucratic control. Mandated policies that legislate and regulate behaviour, for example instructional guidance, limit teachers' autonomy to make pedagogical decisions for the learning needs of their students (Smylie, 1997).

> Building human capital in schools is itself complex, problematic, and potentially contentious. Like regulatory reform, it raises complicated philosophical, political and technical issues concerning content, process, participation and support. However, … building human capital and promoting teacher learning in particular, may have far more potential than bureaucratic controls for bringing about significant and worthwhile changes in our schools … Building human capital means investing in the very people – teachers – who are seen by many as the primary source of the problems we wish to solve. It also means investing in a strategy – professional development – that suffers a long-standing reputation for ineffectiveness. (p. 37)

If schools can mobilise skills of individual teachers rather than calling in external experts to improve student performance, they will utilise individual human capital to strengthen the social capital of the school community (Nappi, 2014). This important shift in organisational thinking highlights the human dimension of the organisation (Owens, 2004). The bottom-up theory favours potential to improve the organisation from within by "fostering the growth and development of the people who inhabit the organization" (p. 153), that is, the human capital.

A study by Spillane, Hallett, and Diamond (2003) examined how 84 teachers constructed "influential others as leaders" (p. 1) and found that they based their constructions on the forms of capital: human capital, or skills, knowledge and expertise; cultural capital, or ways of being; social capital, networks and relations of trust; and economic capital, material resources. School administrators were largely constructed on the basis of cultural capital, while teachers as leaders were constructed on the basis of human and social, as well as cultural capital.

There is a level of uncertainty about how leaders acquire cultural capital or ways of being (Spillane et al., 2003). The evidence demonstrates the need for the development of both human and social capital to build the capacity of an individual within one's workplace. These appear to be reasonably tangible goals to enhance both individual skills in addition to one's capacity to work with others in groups or a community. A definition of community follows to situate organisation and the development of capital within a community context.

### 2.5.2  A sense of community.

In the pre-industrial era, work was part of the community in which people lived and hence, people saw value of the work within the community and how their work contributed to their community (Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009). In the industrial era, the divide between home and work began with the emergence of the bureaucracy as a way of controlling and organising the place where employees worked. Within this structure, hierarchies began to emerge, which separated executives from the workers. Now as people work in virtual teams and organisations in our global world, it is thought that we are "moving work further away from the rest of our lives" (Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009, p. 192). What does this mean for the concept of community and the workplace?

Some argue the need for a sense of self in the workplace (Mitroff & Denton, 1999, cited in Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009) to establish connectedness and meaning. The motivational theorists promoted the need to have a work life that is meaningful – see for example, Maslow (1971), developed further in Chalofsky's work (cited in Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009), who said that "individuals who do not perceive the workplace as meaningful and purposeful will not work up to their professional capacity … individuals are motivated to take certain actions based on fulfilling needs believed to be inherent in all humans" (p. 192).

Nisbet, an American sociologist, argued that the 20th century drive for individualism saw the loss of community, with man's moral estrangement and spiritual isolation. The rise of individualism accompanied the heroic age of laissez faire in the 19th century – the age of free men, free minds, free markets, where man was liberated from throne and altar and the "ultimate criteria of freedom [lies] in the greater or lesser degrees of autonomy" (Nisbet, 2010, p. 207) possessed by individuals. Nisbet argued that this old laissez faire failed because it "mistook for ineradicable characteristics of individuals qualities that were in fact inseparable from social groups [and that we need a new form of laissez faire where] autonomous groups may prosper" (Nisbet, 2010, p. 256).

His book *The Quest for Community: A Study in the Ethics of Order and Freedom* (Nisbet, 1953) was hailed as one of the 20th century's most important works of conservative sociology. The book argued, not for the "revival of old communities [but for the establishment of new forms of community] relevant to contemporary life and thought" (see Nisbet, 2010, p. xxii). The basic unit, as argued by Nisbet, is the social group or community, rather than the individual, and the concept of group is bound by moral cohesion – "community encourages and reinforces moral cohesion" (Carroll, cited in Nisbet, 2010, p. 267) through shared beliefs and values.

> Community is the product of people working together on problems, of autonomous and collective fulfilment of internal objectives, and of the experience of living under codes of authority which have been set in large degree by the persons involved. (Nisbet, 2010, p. xxx)

Where power, function and control of the community is held externally through external administration, the basis of community is lost, leaving people *functionless* and *authorityless* – people lose their capacity to solve problems together on their agreed upon objectives for the group and thus lose a sense of ownership: "We see this in school systems today … which … will make fidelity to letter of the law a transcending objective, making it even more difficult to keep alive the spirit within which good teaching alone can thrive" (Nisbet, 2010, p. xxix). Community provides the "long-term intense mutual engagement [that contributes to something important within the lives of the participants, as opposed to the] shortcomings and inefficiencies of government programs [which provide] sporadic services and occasional interventions" (Schambra, 2013, para. 19).

In the educational context, Lambert (2003) defined community as more than people gathering together in a social setting:

> [T]hey also assume a focus on a shared purpose, mutual regard and caring, and an insistence on integrity and truthfulness.… [W]e are creating an

environment in which we feel congruence and worth. Inherent in this view is the belief that all humans are capable of leadership. (p. 4)

The Leadership Research International's concept of cohesive community is a key contributory element to the Research-Based Framework (RBF) for Enhancing Organisational Coherence (Crowther et al., 2013). This work draws on Nisbet's thinking and work on community and the work of Newmann and Wehlage from the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools, Wisconsin, Madison research in the 1990s, and is conceptualised as:

- the school as a community in and of itself;
- the school as a hub of the wider community; and
- the concept of collaborative individualism.

Teacher leaders have an instrumental role within the cohesive community element of the RBF framework (see Chapter One, Figure 1.5).

### 2.5.2.1  *Teacher leaders in 'school as a community in and of itself'.*

In a cohesive community, the school assumes collective responsibility for students and school outcomes through engaging the school's community in collaborative pedagogical planning processes that support their vision – a vision that reflects the school's unique culture and identity. Teacher leaders have a key role in creating and maintaining internal networks of support and engaging the school community in collaborative planning processes in the creation of new knowledge for their unique context. Their ownership of the process generates high expectations for student and school outcomes, yet celebratory activities remain important (Crowther et al., 2013, p. 38).

Newmann and Wehlage (1995) found that:

> The most successful schools were those that used restructuring tools to help them function as professional communities. That is, they found a way to channel staff and student efforts toward a clear, commonly shared purpose for student learning; they created opportunities for teachers to collaborate and help one another achieve the purpose; and teachers in these schools took collective – not just individual – responsibility for student learning. Schools with strong professional communities were better able to offer authentic pedagogy and were more effective in promoting student achievement. (p. 3)

### 2.5.2.2  *Teacher leaders in 'school as a hub of the wider community'.*

As a hub of the wider community, schools would gain what Kanter (1994) called *the collaborative advantage* in our global economy, through the ability to network and increase organisational effectiveness. Kanter maintained that "a well-developed ability to create and sustain fruitful collaborations gives companies a significant competitive leg up" (para. 1). Fundamental aspects of these partnerships with others:

- … must yield benefits for the partners … [and be] living systems that evolve progressively in their possibilities.
- … involve *collaboration* (creating new value together).… Partners value the skills each brings to the alliance.

- … cannot be "controlled" by formal systems but require a dense web of interpersonal connections and internal infrastructures that enhance learning. (para. 4)

In schools and education systems, strategic networks, both internal and external can be utilised to "enable the various components of an organization to manage themselves as autonomous parts, while collaborating with other components of the organization" (Limerick, Cunnington, & Crowther 2002, cited in Crowther et al., 2011, p. 121).

An Australian study found that where teacher leaders were engaged in *invoking reaction* (Crowther et al., 2011) through networking, advocacy and organisational self-critique, their professional capacity increased. Teacher leaders:

> … demonstrated noticeably high levels of aptitude in articulating complex processes of knowledge creation, sophisticated skills in public presentation, a capacity to accommodate negative and cynical feedback without rancor, and a readiness to provide facilitative assistance to needy colleagues in other schools. (p. 127)

The school as a hub of the wider community includes individuals working together unitedly in collaborative relationships, within and beyond their school contexts. This type of community involves shared leadership at all levels, and a focus on the cultural dimension. Capacity building focuses on human and social capital for the building of intellectual capital to improve overall organisational capacity and outcomes. Growing people and their knowledge and skills improves the overall organisational capacity to respond to increased demands in the future – this is organic and is a generative process (Crowther & Associates, 2011). It takes time, and is responded to in addition to the administrative daily functions of organisational life.

### 2.5.2.3 Teacher leaders: The collaborative individuals.

Collaborative individualism recognises that teachers are individuals with unique styles, talents and gifts, yet they are also collaborative professionals.

> Collaborative individualism stresses the need for individuals to work together with others to achieve a common vision and mission … [It requires] a mature understanding of self [and the individual becomes] concerned with self-mapping, getting to know and understand self, and getting to develop a mature self-acceptance. (Crowther et al., 2001, p. 12)

Development of a mature understanding of self and others requires a significant investment of time and resources to develop their *human capital*, the skills and knowledge of the self, and their *social capital*, as they interact in relationships with others. Additionally, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) advocate that the development of one's professional capital requires an investment in a third capital, *decisional capital*, "the ability to make discretionary judgments" (p. 93).

## 2.5.3 The teacher as a 21st century professional.

It has already been established that self-actualisation and being able to reach one's potential (Maslow, 1971, cited in Chalofsky, 2003) is important to feeling connected to one's workplace. Knowing oneself as a teacher leader and having the scope to do

that within a safe, supportive and professional environment is also essential (Dawson, 2010). Knowing one's personal pedagogy, world views and unique gifts and talents also provides the foundations for engaging in what Andrews and Crowther call *The image of the 21st century professional: 3-dimensional pedagogy* (Andrews & Crowther, 2003, 2006) – where teacher leaders know their personal pedagogical self, the authoritative pedagogies that inform their work, as they engage in collaborative schoolwide pedagogical development work (see Figure 1.6). This is key to developing a teacher's professional identity within the broader organisational context.

Teacher professional identity is a source of meaning for an individual (Sachs, 2003a, 2003b), as opposed to roles, which are defined by social and organisational structures and norms. Sachs' activist identity is "situated in a belief about the importance of mobilising teachers in the best interests of improving student learning and improving the conditions in which this can occur" (2003b, p. 89). Andrews and Crowther's (2006) image of the 21st century teacher professional (Figure 2.2), challenges the individual to think about their unique gifts or talents, their values and motivations and consider how those gifts are utilised within their workplace.

Schools in which democratic discourses are in place provide the environment for the activist identity to emerge, focusing on "participation and inclusion of all involved in the educational enterprise" (Sachs, 2003b, p. 89). In this sense, the individual's contribution is valued as part of a school-wide contribution to learning and teaching, thus providing the conditions for the development of professional learning communities (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006; Wenger et al., 2002) in which "collaborative cultures are integral and teacher knowledge and expertise is recognised and rewarded" (Sachs, 2003b, p. 91).
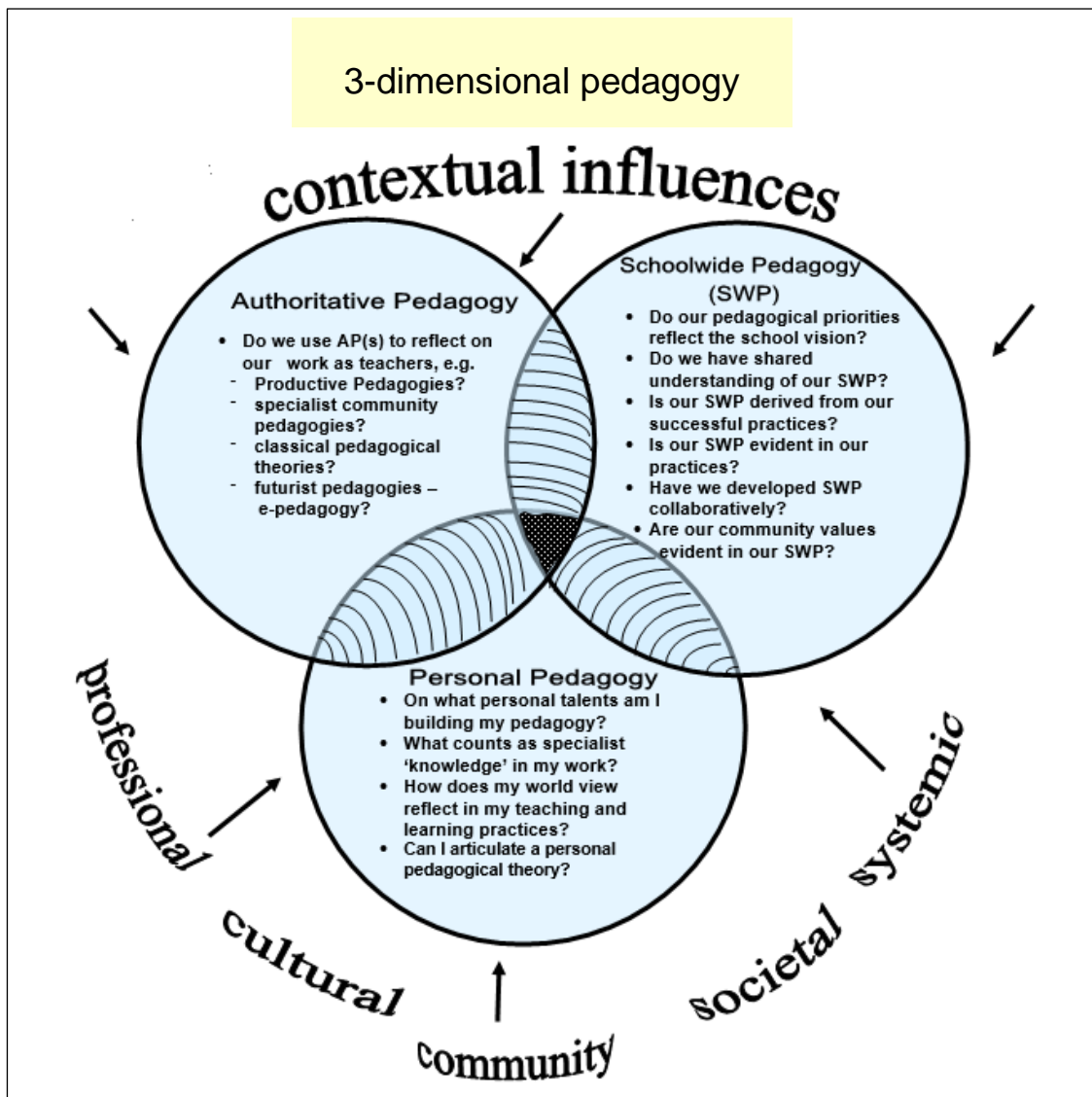
*Figure 2.2.* 3-Dimensional Pedagogy: The image of the 21st century professional.

Adapted from: 3-dimensional pedagogy – The image of 21st century teacher professionalism. In F. Crowther (Ed.), *Australian College Yearbook 2003: Teachers as leaders in a knowledge society* (p. 102), by D. Andrews, & F. Crowther, 2003. Deakin West, ACT: Australian College of Educators.

### 2.5.4 Meaningful work: Connectedness to the workplace.

The Carnegie Report (Tucker & Mandell, 1986) flagged that teaching needed to be made attractive as a profession to build capacity within the profession. Drucker (1994) also predicted that organisations will need people more than people need organisations, which suggests an urgent need to focus on capacity building and that there is a changing focus on the nature of work on two fronts: the role of *work* in people's lives; and a changing relationship with their workplace or organisation – people *are* the organisation.

People need to experience an alignment, both intrinsically and extrinsically, of their purpose and values with those of their workplace through strategies that foster internal commitment (Chalofsky, 2010; Fullan, 2001). This is only achievable if people really care about the workplace and the other people around them (Chalofsky, 2010; Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009). If care about the workplace was not apparent,

they felt a loss of interconnectedness (Mitroff & Denton, 1999, cited in Chalofsky, 2003) and could not bring "their complete self into the workplace" (p. 26).

Chalofsky (2010) suggested that meaningful work was "an inclusive state of being. It is how we express the meaning and purpose of our lives through the activities (work) that make up most of our waking hours" (p. 19). He defined the integrated wholeness (Maslow, 1943, cited in Chalofsky, 2010) of meaningful work, comprising three key factors, in no particular order: first, *the sense of self*, the need for people to bring their whole selves to work – mind, body, emotion and spirit; second, *the work itself*, the joy that comes from doing something worthwhile is what motivates people, accompanied by "the ability to have an impact on the organization's effectiveness [and] self-directed space to be continuously challenged, creative, and learning" (Chalofsky, 2010, p. 22); and third, the *sense of balance*, that "work and pleasure should be so aligned that it is impossible to distinguish one from the other" (p. 22).

Organisational change is a collaborative effort, yet individuals need to be motivated and feel a sense of purpose to engage in the collaboration. Maslow (1971) used the term *self-actualisation* to describe realising one's potential. Chalofsky (2003), drawing on Maslow's work, claimed that "individuals who do not perceive the workplace as meaningful and purposeful will not work up to their professional capacity" (p. 70). When people do not feel connected to their workplace, something has to change within the culture, so that there is alignment of purpose and values.

The importance of the role of the individual in re-culturing the workplace is beginning to emerge: "Organisations don't change. People change. And then people change organisations" (Richard, 1996, cited in Chalofsky, 2003, p. 80). While commitment and motivation is an individual response, the mobilisation requires a sensitive leader who is knowledgeable of change processes and strategies to foster commitment (Fullan, 2001) – in a school; this is the principal.

### 2.5.5 Organisation for the 21st century.

> If organizations are seen as gardens, then leaders cannot command them to grow. They must contend with the unpredictability, environmental influences, teamwork and risk factors that characterize trying to help anything develop. Leaders can only promote growth by "rearranging the conditions and structures" … For gardens, those conditions are sun, moisture, soil, nutrients, and temperature; for schools, they are time, space, materials, money, training, collegiality, respect, trust, and personnel.
> (Louis, Toole, & Hargreaves, 1999, cited in Seashore, 2009, pp. 131-132)

#### 2.5.5.1 Organisational culture.

Organisational culture is defined by a *system of shared meaning* (Robbins & Barnwell, 1989). It is the deep meaning that develops over time through a process of exploring shared understandings of values, assumptions, beliefs, philosophies and ideologies (Owens, 2004, p. 187). It is defined as "those enduring traditions, values, and basic assumptions shared by people in an organization over time that give meaning to the work of the organization and establish the behavioural norms for people in the organization" (Owens, 2004, p. 428). The observable characteristics or distinct dimensions of a culture can be defined and measured (Robbins & Barnwell, 1989), with core values being one such example:

> A strong culture is characterised by the organisation's core values being intensely held, clearly ordered and widely shared. The more members that

accept the core values, agree on their order of importance and are highly committed to them, the stronger the culture is. (p. 313)

Schein's (2004) model of organisational culture (see Figure 2.3) explored the *artifacts and creations*, *values* and *basic assumptions* in three distinct levels. Artifacts are the tangible manifestations of the culture that may include architecture, dress code, or technology and human behaviours such as speech – manifestations that may be recognisable by people outside of the organisation. Values are the stated values and rules and are how members of the organisation represent themselves to others, and are also taught to new members of the organisation – for example, the mission statement, or vision, values and principles of working. Assumptions are the less tangible, deeply embedded behaviours which are the essence of the culture, or the taken for granted aspects – for example, this is "the way things are done around here" (p. 185).
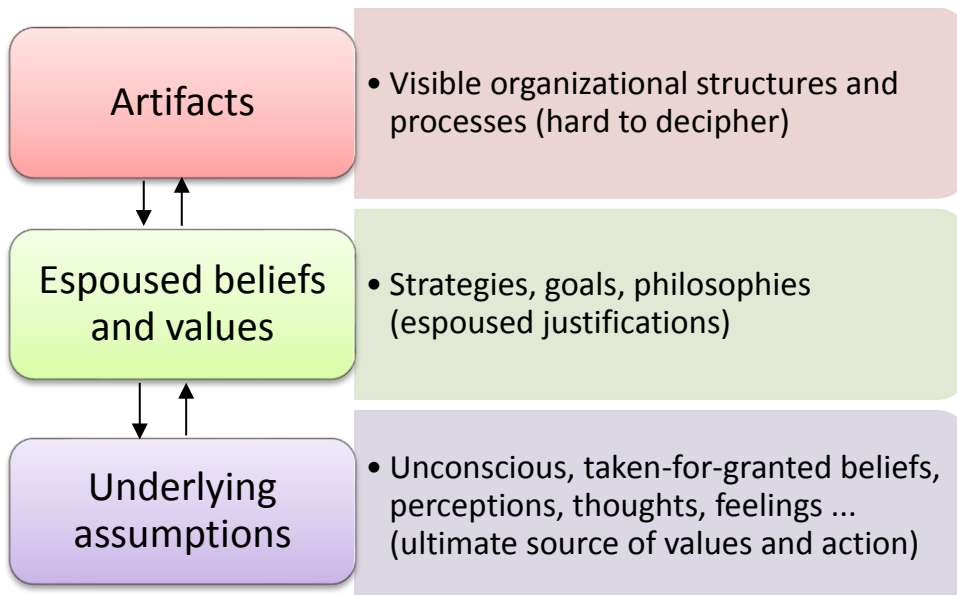


*Figure 2.3.* Schein's Levels of Culture

Adapted from *Organizational culture and leadership*, 3rd ed. (p. 26), by E. H. Schein, 2004, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Copyright E. H. Schein.

While organisations may espouse, this is the way things are done around here, Senge (2006) suggested that no culture is static but is constantly evolving. It is therefore important to engage in cycles of deep learning, so that when things do change, for example new relationships with new people coming into the organisation, all of the elements evolve together. Senge's (2006) *deep learning cycle* has five cultural elements which influence each other: "beliefs and assumptions, established practices, skills and capabilities, networks of relationships, and awareness and sensibilies" (p. 285).

An understanding of the culture and the fact that it takes time to establish would therefore be important for any leader in an organisation. Just as a leader cannot command a garden to grow (Louis, Toole, & Hargreaves, 1999, cited in Seashore, 2009), a culturing and re-culturing exercise takes time and appropriate resourcing,

through the development of respectful and trusting relationships. In organisations, the exercise is reliant on human endeavour to engage, as "we are dealing with human social systems" (Owens, 2004, p. 106).

### 2.5.5.2 Perspectives on organisational effectiveness.

> The main causal factors [of organizational effectiveness or ineffectiveness] are the organizational climate and the leadership behavior.
> (Likert, 1973, cited in Owens, 2004, p. 115)

Organisational effectiveness is influenced by organisational *climate*. This includes a range of considerations, including culture, which has been discussed previously; ecology, such as the buildings or facilities; and the organisational structure, which includes structures for decision making and patterns of communication. The milieu of its people and their behaviours is also a consideration, in particular, the *leadership behaviours* (Likert, 1973, cited in Owens, 2004). These organisational factors warrant attention in justifying a place for teacher leadership as an organisational construct. For the purpose of this section, the focus remains on *climate* as *organisational structure*, and *leadership behaviours*.

#### 2.5.5.2.1    Climate: Organisational structure.

Different perspectives may be utilised when thinking about the structure of organisations – whether they are bureaucratic or non-bureaucratic, and an understanding of the different forms being crucial to shape our perceptions and "understand … commonplace events" (Owens, 2004, p. 107). Bureaucratic organisations are characterised by *mechanical regimentation*, *top-down authority*, and *going by the book*. This type of organisation is concerned with "controlling and coordinating the behavior of people" (p. 108) and as Owens emphasises, it involves:

> Maintain[ing] firm hierarchical control of authority and close supervision of those in the lower ranks; [e]stablish[ing] and maintain[ing] adequate vertical communication; [d]evelop[ing] clear written rules and procedures to set standards and guide actions; [p]romulgat[ing] clear plans and schedules for participants to follow; [a]dd[ing] supervisory and administrative positions to the hierarchy of the organization as necessary to meet problems that arise from changing conditions confronted by the organization. (p. 108)

Many reform proposals in schools identify with the top-down strategy where "decisions are made … in the hierarchy, such as the state education department, and handed down to be implemented by teachers in their classrooms" (Owens, 2004, p. 111). The focus on reform often targets back-to-basics or core curriculum areas, such as English, in particular phonics in Australia; Mathematics and technology through the purchase of more computers; teacher pay, teacher training and rewarding superior teachers (Owens, 2004). Other examples in Australia include prescriptive curriculum and unit plans that include what must be taught, when it must be taught and which texts must be used. This leaves no room for teachers to make professional judgements about the unique needs of their students and to plan accordingly. These assumptions about organisation equate to the "old-fashioned factory, in which management decided what was to be done, directed the workers to do it, then supervised them closely to be sure that the directives were followed in full" (Owens, 2004, p. 111).

The non-bureaucratic view of organisation is represented by a view of organisation that enables participants to identify with the values and purpose – the culture of the organisation, as they also "epitomise … the aspirations of the individual participants themselves" (Owens, 2004, p. 112). This view "uses the conscious thinking of individual persons about what they are doing as a means of involving their commitment, their abilities, and their energies in achieving the goals of the organization" (Owens, 2004, p. 112). It works on the assumption that individuals' identification with the culture provides a powerful motivation for them to stay on and work within that culture towards the organisation's goals (G. Morgan, 2006; Owens, 2004; Senge, 2006). It makes clear "how individuals become and continue to be part of the saga of the organization as it develops through time" (Owens, 2004, p. 113).

Senge (2006) similarly advocated that where "organizations break down, despite individual brilliance and innovative products, [is] because they are unable to pull their diverse functions and talents into a productive whole" (p. 69). This requires what he called *systems thinking* – a framework for seeing the interrelationships and patterns of change, and engages people as "active participants in shaping their reality, from reacting to the present to creating the future" (p. 69).

In educational organisations, this view of organisation creates the space for teacher leadership:

> A view that places the teacher foremost in creating instructional change and, therefore, questions the wisdom of any change strategy that seeks to force changes upon the teacher arbitrarily and without his or her participation in the processes of deciding what should be done. (Owens, 1987, p. 44)

### 2.5.5.2.2   *Leadership behaviour.*

Leadership behaviour appears to have an impact on an individual's contribution to the organisation's goals. The answer to whether an individual decides to stay on and contribute to an organisation's goals (Owens, 2004) may lie in McGregor's (1960) theory. He proposed that there are four assumptions that an administrator may hold about people and how they go about their work. In Theory *X*, the assumption is that people *dislike their work* and need to be *coerced* (Table 2.5).

Table 2.5

*McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y*

| Theory *X* | Theory *Y* |
|---|---|
| 1. The average person inherently dislikes work and will avoid it whenever possible. | 1. If it is satisfying to them, employees will view work as natural and as acceptable as play. |
| 2. Because people dislike work, they must be supervised closely, directed, coerced, or threatened with punishment in order for them to put forth adequate effort toward the achievement of organizational objectives. | 2. People at work will exercise initiative, self-direction, and self-control on the job if they are committed to the objectives of the organization. |
| 3. The average worker will shirk responsibility and seek formal direction from those in charge. | 3. The average person, under proper conditions, learns not only to accept responsibility on the job but to seek it. |
| 4. Most workers value job security above other job-related factors and have little ambition. | 4. The average employee values creativity – that is, the ability to make good decisions – and seeks opportunities to be creative at work. |

Adapted from *Organizational behavior in education: Adaptive leadership and school reform* (p. 113) by R. G. Owens, 2004, USA: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon.

In contrast, McGregor's Theory *Y* assumes that the average person, under proper conditions, will exercise initiative, be motivated and see value in their work (Table 2.5). If a principal, or organisation leader favours one particular mindset over another, this will influence their behaviours towards the people in the organisation. Theory *X* administrators will favour "strongly directive leadership, tight controls and close supervision" (Owens, 2004, p. 113). Theory *Y* administrators will favour developmental work that focuses on "commitment to worthwhile objectives in the work context and upon building mutual trust and respect in the interpersonal context" (p. 113). Principals exhibiting Theory *Y* behaviour would build capacity for developing teacher leadership in an educational organisational context.

### 2.5.5.3 Types of organisation.

G. Morgan (2006) proposed a number of metaphors as a way of explaining the many types of organisations that exist (Table 2.6). While use of metaphor may have its limitations if interpretations are taken too literally, they do provide "a way of thinking and a way of seeing that pervade how we understand the world generally" (p. 4). His metaphor for organisations as machines clearly describes the bureaucratic organisation. If culture is important for establishing a context for teacher leadership and Senge (2006) is right about learning organisations, then some consideration would need to be given to re-focusing energies and shifting bureaucratic organisational thinking to organisations as *brains* or *cultures* to align with current research and ensure a sustainable future for teacher leadership.

G. Morgan (2006) referred to *intra- and inter-organizational relations*, terms used by systems theorists to explain the "configurations of subsystems to depict key patterns or interconnections" (p. 39). Establishing congruencies or alignments is an attempt to "identify and eliminate potential dysfunctions" (p. 39). There would be critical principles that the organisation would need to provide to frame the system's way of working informed by the organisational vision, values and mission. Within these

principles, there would be some autonomy for schools to construct their approach to the principles to suit their context and freedom to evolve (G. Morgan, 2006).

Quite often, there is a tendency to micromanage, overprescribe and over-control instead of just focusing on the key principles – this destroys the potential for any type of innovation or meeting the needs of the context that an organic organisation would require (G. Morgan, 2006). Freedom to evolve within a set of key principles provides the autonomy or agency that schools and teacher leaders require to meet their professional learning needs and the needs of their context.

Table 2.6

*Morgan's Images of Organisation Through Metaphor*

| Metaphor | Description |
|---|---|
| **Organizations as Machines** | Bureaucratic organization made up of interlocking parts, each with clearly defined roles in the functioning of the whole. |
| **Organizations as Organisms** | Understanding and managing organizational "needs" and environmental relations; different species of organizations suit different environments. |
| **Organizations as Brains** | Learning organizations – focus is on the importance of information processing, learning and intelligence. |
| **Organizations as Cultures** | Focus on values, ideas, beliefs, norms, rituals and patterns of shared meaning that guide organizational life. |
| **Organizations as Political Systems** | Organizations as systems of government – the politics of organizational life - focus is on the different sets of interests, conflicts and power plays that shape organizational activities. |
| **Organizations as Psychic Prisons** | A more abstract metaphor which explores where people become trapped by their own thoughts, ideas, and beliefs or by the unconscious mind. |
| **Organization as Flux** | Flux and transformation are examined by focusing on the "logics" of change shaping social life - four different metaphors for studying change:<br>1. Organizations are self-producing systems that create themselves in their own image<br>2. Chaos and complexity – competing "attractor patterns"<br>3. Organization as the product of circular flows of positive and negative feedback<br>4. Organization as the product of a dialectical logic where every phenomenon generates its opposite. |
| **Organizations as Instruments of Domination** | Organizations often use their employees, their host communities, and the world economy to achieve their own ends – focus is on the exploitative aspects of corporate life. |

Adapted from *Images of organization*, revised ed. (pp. 6-7), by G. Morgan, 2006, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

The contingency theory approach of adapting organisation to environment has been flagged by G. Morgan (2006) as "a dominant perspective in modern organizational analysis" (p. 42). Contingency theory "assumes that there is no one best approach to organizing, that organizational structure matters when it comes to organizational performance, and that the most effective method of organizing depends on the organization's environment (Galbraith 1973, Lawrence and Lorch 1986)" (Spillane et al., 2004, p. 7). The leadership task and context is a significant factor in selection of leadership style – "effective leaders draw on a repertoire of styles" (p. 7), from task-oriented, to relationship-oriented, to delegating-style, dependent on the context, the nature of the group, including their level of experience and the nature of the task. Other important considerations in strategy selection include the situational aspects such as relationships between leaders and followers (Fielder, 1970, cited in Spillane et al., 2004), and the "followers' readiness to achieve the leader's goal (Hersey and Blanchard 1977)" (p. 7).

Modern organisations may range from mechanistic to organic – although bureaucratic mechanistic ways of working are said to be more suited to companies employing "mass-production technologies" (G. Morgan, 2006, p. 47). The complexity of education and teaching hardly lends itself to a mass-production style of environment and would surely suit a more organic organisational environment – one that is needs based (Maslow, 1971) with mutually agreeable strategies and structures in place, that understands the relatedness between the organisation and the environment, and allows for innovation (G. Morgan, 2006).

When Welch (2005), former CEO of General Electric, introduced a systematised *work-out* discussion process for employees at local GE sites around the world to bring "every brain into the game [to] discuss better ways of doing things [and] to eliminate bureaucracy and roadblocks" (p. 56), he revolutionised the company. One middle-aged appliance worker who approached him at one of these forums told him: "For twenty-five years, you paid for my hands when you could have had my brain as well – for nothing" (p. 56). Welch led the company to global success year after year until he retired in 2001. He successfully implemented a process for engaging the minds and voices of more than 300,000 employees in different cultural contexts across the world in his vision to create a global, borderless organisation.

Yet, initiatives to improve internal communications such as employee surveys, 360 feedback and focus groups (Argyris, 1997; Senge et al., 1999) reinforce "the view that management is the source of problems and only management has the power to fix them" (Senge et al., 1999, p. 13). Establishing a culture where we move away from telling management what is wrong requires a concerted focus on engaging people – their minds and their hearts, their values and their potential, and an opportunity to engage in a shared visioning process. Retired Hanover Insurance CEO Bill O'Brien said "What people pressuring for management to drive cultural change don't understand is: A value is only a value when it is voluntarily chosen" (cited in, Senge et al., 1999, p. 13). This means engaging people at all levels in the organisation so they share ownership of the process.

### 2.5.5.4 Managing change in organisations.

Managing organisational change requires "unfreezing the status quo [and] moving to a new state" (Robbins & Barnwell, 1989, p. 276). Moving the status quo requires

drivers to manage the change process – some are the *wrong drivers*, while others are the *right drivers* (DuFour & Fullan, 2013). The wrong drivers include accountability, human capital, that is, the talent of individuals alone, technology and fragmented strategies. The right drivers include capacity building, social capital, instruction and what Fullan (2005) called *systemness*, which involves a collective coherence across the system. There are also certain conditions that we need to have in place to make change possible, one of these being to bring teachers in as leaders in change processes (see Crowther, 2004; DuFour, 2004; D. Frost, 2003; Fullan, 1993; A. Hargreaves, 2015; Harris, 2003; Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001, 2009; Lieberman & Miller, 2004; and others).

The dilemma often faced by organisations is in deciding which change approach to use – a top-down or a bottom-up approach – as they appear to be contradictory (Fullan, 2001). In this light, the concept of change appears unmanageable. The top-down approach relies on establishing a sense of urgency, creating a guiding coalition, developing a vision and strategy, communicating the change vision to generate short-term wins, consolidate gains and produce more change (Kotter, 1996, cited in Fullan, 2001, p. 32). The bottom-up approach relies on mobilising commitment to change through "joint diagnosis of 'business' problems" with the people in the organisation and developing a shared vision (Beer, Eisenstat, & Spector, 1990, cited in Fullan, 2001, p. 32).

Sometimes a balance of approaches may be needed. "Leaders who support learning foster a culture based on an assumption that people want to contribute and can be trusted to do so" (Seashore, 2009, p. 135), however sometimes leadership needs to balance supportive and authoritative methods in an organisational context. For some, where the willingness to contribute, or the level of trust has not been established, a more authoritative approach may be initially appropriate. Trust is established over time.

Leading significant change is often the premise of the hero leader (Senge et al., 1999) who comes in, makes significant changes, cuts costs, boosts productivity and then moves on. Most of these changes do not last and people tend to cling to their old ways. In the hero leader environment, people do not "stick their neck out" with new ideas as they are "too intimidated", thus "reinforcing [the] vicious spiral of dramatic changes imposed from the top, and diminished leadership capacity in the organization" (p. 11). Deep change, according to Senge, is change that involves high commitment work environments, engaging changes in how people think and what they believe in. This type of change is cultural change and involves engaging people's minds and hearts.

The IDEAS project (Crowther et al., 2001; Crowther & Associates, 2011; Crowther et al., 2009; Crowther et al., 2002), as introduced in Chapter 1, uses the bottom-up approach to engage teacher leaders in cultural change. It is a whole school improvement framework for development of teacher leaders and the school as an organisation and consists of a process that involves organisational diagnosis and alignment, creating a shared vision for teaching and learning, and sustaining what has been created. The creation of five key principles enables teacher professionals to revitalise their workplaces, through parallel leadership with the emphasis on professional learning, underpinned by a *no blame* mindset and a *success breeds success* approach. Parallel leadership allows teacher professionals to work in an

environment that encourages mutual trust, a sense of shared purpose, and allowance for individual expression (Andrews & Crowther, 2006, p. 4; Crowther, 2010; Crowther et al., 2009; Crowther et al., 2002).

Similarly, Fullan's (2001) description of what is needed for sustainable performance foregrounds leadership at many levels of the organisation. Leading in a culture of change is not just a structural change, but is underpinned by five core capacities to establish leadership at all levels: a collaborative culture with a deep moral purpose and respect for individual differences; understanding of the change process; building relationships; knowledge building; and coherence making. "Achieving such mastery is less a matter of taking leadership training and more a case of slow knowing and learning in context with others at all levels of the organisation" (p. 137). Fullan also concluded that leadership for a culture of change will be judged "… not by who you are as a leader but by what leadership you produce in others" (p. 137).

### 2.5.6  Context matters.

As highlighted earlier, the organisational culture (G. Morgan, 2006; Owens, 2004; Senge, 2006), organisational structures (Owens, 2004) and behaviours (McGregor, 1960, cited in Owens, 2004) at work impact on people's experience and fulfilment at work. These features of context possibly further contribute to their decision to remain in an organisation and work towards its goals (Owens, 2004), or leave. Wasley (1991) found that "the context in which people worked" impacted significantly on a teacher leader's "ability to influence others … one role could not easily be transported to another place without giving careful thought to the impact of the place and its culture" (p. 145).

Another study by Leithwood and Seashore-Louis (2012) identified the construct of *contextual leadership* and how "leaders became expert at working within the settings within which they find themselves" (p. 234). Their study found that this type of leadership affects student learning when: it is targeted at working relationships and improving instruction; formal leaders, teachers and other stakeholders share power and influence; it develops capacity through supporting strong relationships among formal leaders, teachers and other stakeholders that cement a common commitment to student learning; it strengthens professional community for all members of the school community – a special learning environment within which educators work together to improve their practice; it is adaptive to the specific needs of the local setting; it takes advantage of external pressures for change and improvement rather than fighting against them (p. 235).

It is clearly evident there is a need to consider the impact of context on a teacher leader's ability to lead – whether that context is a physical move to another location or whether it is a change of context in the current setting, for example, the arrival of a new principal at the school. Enabling teacher leaders to work with the unique needs of their contexts, to work towards the organisation's goals and strengthen the professional community (Leithwood & Seashore-Louis, 2012) is crucial to enhanced organisational success. My own experience as a teacher leader that had moved from one context to another had been an enabling one. My task was to identify their experiences as teacher leaders within their current or new contexts, and interpret these experiences to develop new understandings for school and systems. Hence the

next consideration for this research – the implications for schools and education systems.

## 2.6   The Implications: For Schools and Education Systems

Images of teacher leadership have been discussed, as has the context for allowing teacher leadership to emerge – all highlighting the important role of teams of people within schools in educating the knowledge workers of the future. New demands on education systems include keeping pace with marketplace demands, new technologies and the way people communicate and use knowledge, thus having significant implications for the work of schools and education systems in rethinking their image for the future (Drucker, 1988, 1994; Lieberman & Miller, 2004).

### 2.6.1   Sustainable leadership: Contesting discourses.

Two decades ago, Kotter (1996) forecast that 21$^{st}$ century organisations would need to be incubators of leadership, building in flatter structures that allow those with leadership potential to learn leadership skills on the job and highlighted that wasted talent within an organisation was going to be costly. "People need to be encouraged to attempt to lead … both to help the organization adapt to changing circumstances and to help themselves to grow" (p. 166).

The focus for education organisations and systems must be on leadership training as well as management. While management deals with structural issues such as planning, budgeting, organising, staffing and problem solving, leadership is about cultural change and creating and communicating visions, strategies and empowering others to lead (Kotter, 1996). They must learn how to learn as an organisational unit (Senge, 1990; Senge et al., 1999), develop new assumptions about how to operate (Schein, 1996) and align their thinking, beliefs about leadership and ways of working to increase overall organisational capacity.

Lieberman and Miller (2004) described the paradox that existed in education systems in the United States with two differing policy stances: first, there were the policies that supported standardisation, accountability and assessment; second, there were the policies that supported good practice and building capacity of teachers to transform their schools. Of these, the most common policy stance was where schools were held accountable for "meeting externally mandated standards of student achievement" (p. 6) with the intention of establishing "guaranteed outcomes for all students, to measure them objectively and efficiently, and to make the results transparent to the larger community" (p. 7).

Managerialist, bureaucratic discourses influenced by market forces, promotion of efficiencies and competition for reduced resources, foster a competitive ethos within their 'pre-defined' spaces rather than a collaborative, innovative space (G. Morgan, 2006):

> … bureaucratization tends to create fragmented patterns of thought and action. Where hierarchical and horizontal divisions are particularly strong, information and knowledge rarely flow in a free manner. Different sectors of the organization thus often operate on the basis of different pictures of the total situation, pursuing subunit goals almost as ends in themselves … employees are usually encouraged to occupy and keep a predefined place

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within the whole, and are rewarded for doing so. Situations in which policies and operating standards are challenged tend to be exceptional rather than the rule. Under these circumstances, single-loop learning systems are reinforced and may actually serve to keep an organization on the wrong course. (p. 86)

In Australia, National standardised testing mechanisms such as the National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) (ACARA, 2013) and National websites such as *My School* (ACARA, 2014), an online source of data to compare school resources and performance, promote transparency and a quality assurance measure. Yet, they also promote competition amongst teachers and schools as they struggle to compete against market forces and decreased resources where they are really needed.  In contrast to Sachs' (2003a, 2003b) activist identity, new forms of control mandated in policy decisions and educational practices have seen the emergence of a new teacher professional – an aligned, yet entrepreneurial identity (Sachs, 2003b, p. 87) – one that is competitive, individualistic, controlling and regulative, externally defined, standards-led and conservative. This notion is cause for concern as it directly opposes what the research tells us really works in getting the best outcomes for students: building the capacity of the profession, including the building of intellectual and social capital; teamwork involving collaborative cultures; and building the capacity of teachers as leaders.

The challenge for Australian education systems is to develop a critical mass to enhance sustainability. Fullan (2005) advocated that there should be a "critical mass of developmental leaders who can mix and match, and who can surround themselves with others across the system as they spread the new leadership capacities to others" (p. 104). In addition to collaboration and lateral capacity building, Fullan (2005, p. 85) also advised that system leaders must: have a strong moral purpose and communicate the big picture, while providing opportunities for locals to interact with and influence the big picture; use intelligent accountability (assessment *of* and *for* learning); and all policies must be designed to build capacity.

A. Hargreaves (2009) predicted that the future for education would focus on what he and Shirley called *The Fourth Way* – a way that is not driven by markets and bureaucracy, but a renewal of "professionalism and active democracy" and defined by "inspiration, innovation, social justice and sustainability … [where] standardization will go into decline and innovation will emerge in its place" (p. 29). He also cited the need to "spread innovation through networks [and] bring community spirit and community responsibility back in" (p. 30).

*The First Way* keeps and renews innovation and removes the inconsistencies that exist. *The Second Way* keeps the sense of urgency, accountability and equity, yet abandons over-prescription and excessive standardisation that takes away professional motivation and engagement. *The Third Way* takes the importance of data and people working together across schools within their communities and bringing their judgement and experience to the data – it is about the personalisation of the learning and narrowing the gap. *The Fourth Way* challenges the nature of learning itself and determines what your contribution to the learning context is – your inspiration, your motivation and innovation to make what has been created sustainable. This of course, is all underpinned by having an inspiring dream of what you want to be as an organisation (A. Hargreaves, 2009).

The vision or big picture thinking becomes clear with Senge's (2006) work in *The Fifth Discipline*. Drawing on Deming's idea of "profound knowledge" (cited in Senge, 2006, p. x), Senge said that his five disciplines could be represented as the three legs on a stool as a metaphor for the core learning capabilities of a team and the "fundamental learning units in an organization" (p. xi):

- Leg one: Aspiration – personal mastery; shared vision
- Leg two: Reflective conversation – mental models; dialogue
- Leg three: Understanding complexity – systems thinking

Noting that the stool would not stand on its own if any of the three legs were missing.

Again, there is a strong body of evidence in Senge's work that *team learning*, engagement in genuine *professional dialogue* and building *shared vision* while contributing to the bigger picture of the organisation – systems thinking – is evidence of what successful learning organisations need to do to ensure sustainability.

### 2.6.2  Teacher collaboration and professional learning.

If the real power to improve achievement in schools lies with teachers, then where managerialist discourses prevail in educational organisations is cause for concern. Teachers should be "entrusted with new responsibility and accountability for change" (Lieberman & Miller, 2004, p. 12). Further, they profess that teacher leaders should have capacity to be leaders in curriculum instruction, school redesign and professional development, lobbying for meaningful professional development that draws on experience, expertise and wisdom of other teachers and thus promoting a professional learning community.

The concept of  a professional learning community allows teachers to view their work as both within and beyond the four walls of their classroom, having a shared concern for all students and where teaching is open to critique and feedback; involves collaborative work on designing curriculum, assessment and pedagogy; includes gaining "collective knowledge, confidence, and power to co-construct alternatives to standardized approaches and measures [and] an expanded view about themselves as professionals, where teachers assume new roles as researchers, meaning makers, scholars and inventors" (p. 11).

When the idea of professional learning communities came into favour in the 1990s, many attempts to implement them failed (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012), as the attempts amounted to what Hargreaves called "contrived collegiality" (p. 118) – they included high levels of micromanagement with agendas, goals and focus discussions set by the principal and/or the system so that administrators had control and "teachers were given little or no opportunity to take the lead" (A. Hargreaves, 2015, p. xi). Rather than having teachers assigned to committees to examine data, professional learning communities should represent a more "organic configuration of trusting relationships [in which] knowledge is shared, 'big questions' about classroom practices are discussed … [along with] the shared professional knowledge that teachers and administrators bring to the table" (Leithwood & Seashore-Louis, 2012, p. 231). The support of the principal is essential in establishing the conditions for a learning community culture to develop and grow: "Strong learning communities develop when principals learn to relinquish a measure of control and help others

participate in building leadership throughout the school" (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006, p. 81).

Efforts must also be made at the education system level to model the inquiry approach and reform priorities required at the school level. McLaughlin and Talbert (2006) observed that many school reform and inquiry efforts had difficulty surviving and conflict arose when they were undermined by district in-service mandates and compliance and reporting demands. Instead, alignment of purpose could be used to inform the needs of teachers in the area: "… district administrators' understanding of the development and contribution of teacher learning communities provides strategic direction for district conceptions of professional development strategies and learning resources for teachers" (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006, pp. 82-83). Similarly, Leithwood and Seashore-Louis (2012) observed in their five year study of American schools, *Linking Leadership to Learning*, that there is an urgency "for districts to reenergize their focus on the development of a district-wide culture of collaboration and change, in which data use, increased emphasis on instruction and accountability are more likely to flourish without heavy-handed sanctions" (p. 231).

An authentic approach to professional community mobilises knowledge creation and management as a collective rather than individual enterprise. It has the potential for system-wide transformation to enhance intellectual capital and "the transfer of innovation" (Hargreaves, 2003, cited in D. Frost, 2008, p. 346). One such example is the *Leadership for Learning* network in the United Kingdom (D. Frost, 2008). The network is committed to the distribution of both leadership and learning and there is a shared accountability for change: "if schools are to learn as organisations, they need to play a more active role in the process and 'speak for themselves'" (MacBeath, 1999, cited in D. Frost, 2008). Deep organisational learning is prioritised, where student, teacher, school and system learning are all important in building organisational capacity. As Fullan (2005) purported:

> … if you want to change people's behavior, "You need to create a community around them, where these new beliefs could be practical, expressed and nurtured" (p. 173) [Gladwell, 2000] … you need to increase the amount of purposeful interaction between and among *individuals* within and across the tri-levels [school/community, district, system], and indeed within and across *systems* (Fullan, 2003a). (p. 17, original emphasis)

It is possible that deep organisational learning can be achieved through *purposeful interaction* between school community, district and system, and strategic alignment of values and purpose. In one significant study of a highly successful Australian school system, Crowther, Andrews, and Conway (2013) demonstrated the powerful effect of when "educative systemic leadership, strategic alignment of resources and structures, school autonomy and within-school parallel leadership" (p. 78) are in alignment. These schools, districts and the system place particular emphasis on the role of teacher leadership across the tri-levels of school culture: "The research makes clear that such schools place teacher professionalism, teacher leadership and teacher pedagogical expertness on a pedestal and view the leadership role of the principal as dominantly metastrategic, facilitative and nurturing" (Andrews et al., 2012, p. 80).

### 2.6.3  Teachers leading learning.

Teachers leading learning is an opportunity to grow leadership capacity while building networks and learning communities with peers (Lieberman, 2015). A Teachers Leading Learning Project in the United States has a focus on teacher leaders engaged in sharing their learning, spreading exemplary practices to facilitate knowledge exchange as leaders in professional development, while paired with outside partners in research. They have ownership of the program ideas, organisation and mode of working: "The impact of these … programs show us examples of how teachers learn to lead and of the different kinds of conditions that support their new roles and responsibilities as teacher leaders" (Lieberman, 2015, p. 17) where teachers are given time and support for self-directed learning and "knowledge and practice on how to develop leadership" (p. 15).

Flückiger et al. (2015) similarly purported "a widespread need for leadership learning programs internationally, to include a focus … on middle leaders' roles as leaders of learning" (p. 72). They claim that the evidence shows that the majority of teachers prefer "to lead 'from within' rather than 'from the top'" (p. 72). The need to focus on promoting professional learning teams for teacher leaders as middle leaders becomes clear.

The OECD background report from the International Summit on the Teaching Profession (Schleicher, 2011) mentioned earlier highlighted the importance of teachers engaging in professional development and the creation of communities of learning. The report identified that time should be provided for teachers to engage deeply with ongoing inquiry and group-based approaches that link with wider goals of the school and system. Feedback practices and time for adequate follow-up and support were crucial for success. The type of professional development that was experienced by teachers at the Summit varied greatly across countries, with most of them being: "one-off events rather than upgrading qualifications or collaborative research, which, teachers report, have the greatest impact" (p. 26).

Barth (2002) identified one the most important elements of a school's, and indeed a district or system's, culture is "an ethos hospitable to the promotion of human learning (p. 11) with "forces that support rather than subvert the school's purposes" (p. 8). He advocated for everyone to develop a yearning for learning. To do this, the challenge for districts and systems was to change the culture from "'Learn or we will hurt you' to 'Learn or you will hurt yourself'" (p. 11), thus doing away with external mandates for professional learning and schools focusing on their unique cultures and learning needs.

### 2.6.4  The teacher leadership agenda in Australia.

The teacher leadership agenda in Australia is of particular interest in this research, as the broader context for this study. The *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008) acknowledges the global changes that place new demands on Australian education identifying broad goals for the education of young people for the next decade of Australian schooling. These goals rely on the quality of teachers and teaching and an effective model of leadership in schools thus calling for the support of quality teaching and school leadership. Two documents will be examined in the following section to determine the extent that development of

teacher leaders is made explicit – the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals: Leadership Profiles* (AITSL, 2014a) and the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (AITSL, 2014b; MCEECDYA, 2011).

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership recently released *Leadership Profiles* (AITSL, 2014a) as an accompanying document to the earlier *Australian Professional Standard for Principals*. The Standards document outlines what principals are expected to know, understand and do to succeed in their work. The Profiles develop the Standard further by "describing the principal role, thereby enabling the leadership requirements and professional practices to be seen in greater detail and at gradually increasing levels of proficiency" (p. 3). Of particular interest in this document are the Professional Practice descriptions in the Profiles, with increasing levels of proficiency within each descriptor:

1. Leading teaching and learning;
2. Developing self and others;
3. Leading improvement, innovation and change;
4. Leading the management of the school; and
5. Engaging and working with the community.

There is a positive and aspirational move towards collaborative practice and real cultural change in this document, however it is important that principals, first, have a clear understanding of the intent of each of the descriptors. For example, it appears that principals are designated as the instructional leaders (descriptor 1), with phrases like *establish systematic methods for collecting and interpreting evidence* and *develop pedagogy*. This is a perfect example of where teacher leaders could be engaged as pedagogical (instructional) leaders, with the principal as the strategic leader providing resources for this work to occur, yet this is not explicit within this document.  Second, principals will need strong networks of support and ongoing professional learning in practice to make it achievable and attain competencies such as *lead and manage innovation and change* (descriptor 3); *build professional learning communities* (descriptor 2); *support all staff to achieve high standards and develop their leadership capacity* (descriptor 2). Again, there is an overarching statement about developing leadership capacity in staff, which may be associated with positional leadership rather than developing capacity within teacher leaders, which is a more informal role.

The second document, originally called the National Professional Standards for Teachers (MCEECDYA, 2011), is now the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2014b). It has implications for the teacher leadership agenda in Australia in terms of how teacher leadership is defined and how it is represented in schools and systems. The Standards identify professional capabilities at four key areas of a career for professional recognition: Graduate Teachers, Proficient Teachers, Highly Accomplished Teachers, and Lead Teachers. The concept of Lead Teacher is of interest in this research.

Within the standards, a Lead Teacher is required to engage in high level professional activity within the school – they advise, share, evaluate, collaborate, negotiate, understand, design, develop, influence and guide, facilitate, promote and lead initiatives such as *processes* to improve student performance (AITSL, 2014b; MCEECDYA, 2011). All of these skills are the types of skills that a teacher leader might engage in, yet in collaboration with others as part of a collaborative whole

school improvement effort. A teacher may also opt to apply for certification as Lead Teacher in which case they go through the process of application and supply evidence of status as required. This type of external reward generally is not part of a sustainable, collaborative school effort where the rewards are internally devised and often intrinsic, with a focus on high leadership capacity (Crowther et al., 2010; Lambert, 2003, 2007) for the greater good of the organisation.

The Standards document has been developed as a tool for teachers to reflect on their practice and is available on the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership website, along with accompanying video clips of Illustrations of Practice for many of the Standards. In addition to viewing the AITSL examples of practice, the website has developed into an inclusive community of practice for teachers as a space to share and upload their own video examples of practice.

*The Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders* (AITSL, 2012) is derived from the Melbourne Declaration (MCEETYA, 2008) and recognises that sustainable change will most likely occur through changes to teacher and school leader behaviour to develop individual and collective capacity by improving the quality of teaching through professional learning. The characteristics of effective professional learning have been described as *relevant*, *collaborative* and *future focused*, with the expectation that teachers will be engaged in "professional learning communities within and between schools [that] promotes teacher and leader ownership of their learning through active involvement in the design, content, practice and evaluation of their learning" (p. 5).

Professional learning will occur "where teachers and school leaders expect … to be active learners … [in a culture] characterised by:

> a high degree of leadership support for ongoing adult learning and risk taking
> collective responsibility for improving practice
> disciplined collaboration aimed at specific and relevant goals …
> high levels of trust, interaction and interdependence
> support for professional learning through school structures, explicit planning and the allocation of time
> a focus on the professional learning that is most likely to be effective in improving professional practice and student outcomes. (AITSL, 2012, p. 3)

This approach to professional learning requires schools and systems to renounce the one size fits all professional development models that have been evidenced in the past. It requires engagement in contextualised professional learning models and networks in an attempt to promote a sustainable model for the future.

In an example of networked learning communities in England, the National College of School Leadership has founded more than 100 networks over a two year period, including school heads that learn from each other, "consortia of districts exchanging ideas" and groups of schools work in "mutually supportive ways" (Fullan, 2005, p. 82) by:

> … utilising the diversity within and across schools as a positive force for knowledge-sharing and innovation … as … professional energy and creativity is unleashed, schools are evolving into dynamic learning communities … taking hold of the education agenda, focusing on values of

partnership and collaboration to create coherence within the ever changing educational landscape. (p. 82)

In the Australian study mentioned earlier, Crowther et al. (2013) reported that the successful schools within the system in the study had "high levels of within-school alignment" (p. 73), nurtured "teacher expertness" (p. 75), and tended to "grow and mature in contexts that balance meaningful school autonomy with high levels of systemic purposefulness" (p. 71) where systemic leadership and coordination was paramount. Of most significance was the systemic focus, which was on pedagogy and the concept of Schoolwide Pedagogy, rather than many other system priorities. Of note here is that this was not a top-down system implementation of pedagogy, but an autonomous attempt by each and every school to draw on their uniqueness and internal expertise to collectively create their own Schoolwide Pedagogy.

### 2.6.5  Teacher leaders engaging in whole school reform.

While the Professional Standards is a useful tool for reflection on individual practice, care must be taken that it does not become just another accountability framework – and it should not be a driver (Fullan, 2011) for authentic system reform: "The wrong drivers will undercut intrinsic motivation and group development. If accountability-driven standards and assessment do not kill you, individualistic appraisal will come along to make sure you are dead" (p. 14). The right driver would focus on collaborative efforts and capacity building rather than individualistic efforts and accountability measures to improve student learning outcomes.

If teachers are to be engaged, the focus must remain on the right drivers – capacity building, rather than accountability; collaboration, or group quality, rather than individual quality; pedagogy, or instruction, rather than technology; systemness, rather than fragmentation (Fullan, 2011). While the standards provide very clear guidelines for expectations of what a Lead Teacher should know and be able to do, one would anticipate that opportunities to demonstrate leadership capacity must be available. Such opportunities would allow a teacher leader to step outside of the traditional model of teacher as a leader within the four walls of the classroom and demonstrate leadership with colleagues and the community.

The OECD report from the International Summit on the Teaching Profession promoted teacher engagement in *Chapter 4 Teacher Engagement in Educational Reform*: "… school reform will not work unless it is supported from the bottom up. This requires those responsible for change to both communicate their aims well and involve the stakeholders who are affected … teachers must be active agents in analysing their own practice in the light of professional standards" (Schleicher, 2011, pp. 55-56). While it was established earlier that it is important for teachers to analyse their practice *individually* on the Professional Standards framework, genuine reform efforts are capacity building collaborative efforts that incur a degree of ownership of the process. The reform effort cited in this report from Australia had a distinct focus on involving Teacher Unions in setting of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) Professional Standards for Teachers.

It would appear that genuine engagement of teacher leaders in whole school reform has a significantly different meaning and goes beyond being supported from the bottom up, as mentioned in the preceding statement and using *big stick* accountability measures, as mentioned by Fullan and others. The research tells us, as

does my personal experience as a teacher leader, that genuine whole school reform is mutually beneficial, it is collaborative, mutual respect and trust are prevalent, capacity building is the focus and teacher leaders *own* the process. These are the motivating factors for building trust and engagement.

In an industrial age paradigm of leadership and organisation (the top-down approach), the achievement of Lead Teacher standards would be untenable. Yet if a school adopted genuine whole school reform processes that enabled professional collaboration and a shared approach to leadership (the bottom-up approach) in a knowledge age paradigm, as identified earlier in this chapter, then it would be achievable. Teacher leaders would be able to advise, share, collaborate, evaluate, facilitate, influence, promote and lead initiatives, as outlined in the Standards (AITSL, 2014b).

Lewis (2003) highlighted the untenable position of teachers that "are expected to move from teacher professionalism in an industrial age paradigm to teacher professionalism in a knowledge age paradigm ... [This shift requires a different way of working where teachers are the] collaborative creators and implementers of contextualised professional knowledge" (p. 264). If a move from an industrial age paradigm to a knowledge age paradigm is an untenable proposition for teachers, then one wonders if others have experienced a move from a knowledge age paradigm to an industrial age paradigm, which would also be untenable. Imagine a teacher transitioning from being a collaborative creator and implementer of contextualised knowledge (Lewis, 2003) to a teacher that is externally defined and controlled by a school system that is competitive, standards-led, and worse, where teacher professionalism is not valued, and teachers were not able to fulfil their missions and dreams as teacher leaders (Lambert, 2003). One does wonder if any teacher leaders have experienced this scenario, and of the diversity of experiences of other teacher leaders.

## 2.7   A Final Word

It has now been more than a decade since the second edition and more than seven years since the third edition of Katzenmeyer and Moller's (2001, 2009) book *Awakening the sleeping giant: Helping teachers develop as leaders* was published, claiming that in every school there is a sleeping giant of teacher leadership waiting to be awakened. If the sleeping giant has been awakened, what are the experiences of the teacher leaders who have awakened and what do these experiences mean for schools and education systems? How many teachers have had their sleeping giant of teacher leadership awakened and are flourishing in that experience? Conversely, how many teacher leaders have had their sleeping giant awakened only to be *seduced* into a coma again to become an *aligned identity* (Sachs, 2003b)?  The literature suggests that the time for teacher leadership has come, with a strong focus on what constitutes teacher leadership, why teacher leadership is important and the need for distributed forms of leadership. The question remains – and the gap still exists in the literature – what is the reality of these teacher leaders' lived experiences once they have experienced an awakening, in particular for this study, within the Australian context?

# 3 CHAPTER THREE: Methodology

> In recent times there has been increasing fascination with biographical methods.
> Yet, there is still a great deal of insecurity around how researchers using this
> methodology proceed when analysing data. (Riemann, 2003)

## 3.1 Introduction to the Research Problem and Questions

This qualitative study investigated the lived experiences of teacher leaders who had
been through a process of whole school improvement. Using Katzenmeyer and Moller's
(2001) sleeping giant metaphor to describe teacher leaders, and a biographical
interpretive methodology, I considered what had happened to these teacher leaders once
they had their sleeping giant awakened. I examined the *images* of these teacher leaders,
the *contexts* that have enabled them to flourish beyond their awakening through whole
school improvement and then considered the *implications* for schools and education
systems. The research questions were designed to include a focus on these three aspects
of teacher leadership – the images, the context and the implications (Table 3.1) – and
were formulated based on a process that was influenced by my own personal history on
this topic (Table 3.2).

It became clear in the formulation of the questions that I would be interpreting
participants' past experiences as they recall them at a given point in time as a snapshot
biographical experience – they may be good experiences, problematic experiences, or
even turning point experiences that have enabled them to change direction. "Interpretive
studies examine how problematic, turning-point experiences are organised, perceived,
constructed, and given meaning by interacting individuals" (Denzin, 2002, p. 351). In
the qualitative research tradition, questions pursued the *what* and *how* line of thought
rather than the *why*.

Table 3.1

*The Research Problem and Research Questions*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Title:** *When the sleeping giant awakes: The lived experiences of teacher leaders and implications for education systems* | |
| *Overarching Research Question* | What understandings of teacher leadership emerge from the lived experiences of teacher leaders who have been through a process of whole school improvement? |
| *THE IMAGES Research Question 1* | (a) What have been the lived experiences of teacher leaders that have emerged from a process of whole school improvement?<br>(b) What is the impact of these experiences on their concept of leadership in schools? |
| *THE CONTEXT Research Question 2* | What emerge as supportive contexts for teacher leaders? |
| *THE IMPLICATIONS Research Question 3* | What are the implications for schools and education systems? |

In framing the research questions, I considered two sources, myself as the researcher, and the subject, my participants (Denzin, 2002). In this case, as the researcher, I used my own life experiences as a teacher leader as the topics of inquiry for this study, and sought out subjects who may have experienced similar. My own personal experience as a teacher leader provided an insider view to my interpretative account, consequently making my own experience part of the research. A researcher can "examine the biographical accounts the participants have given based on their own experiences with the phenomenon in question" (Denzin, 2002, p. 352). It should also be noted that I used the first person pronoun *I* in the write up to describe my engagement with the research process throughout this chapter. In a qualitative study, the use of first person is necessary to describe what was done "in the field [and] to reflect an awareness that the researcher cannot be independent of the field data" (Perry, 1998, p. 78).

*Framing the Research Questions*, (Table 3.2) provides an overview of how the research questions were established and synthesised, as influenced by my own personal experiences of this topic.

Table 3.2

*The Process of Framing the Research Questions for this Study*

| **Framing the Research Questions** | |
|---|---|
| **Within the researcher's own personal history, location of problematic biographical experience to be studied.** | My own personal experience as an IDEAS teacher leader, shared at a workshop titled *Enhancing system capacity: Teacher leadership and beyond,* at an IDEAS National Learning Forum (2008) piqued my interest in pursuing this topic and also highlighted for me the need for research into this area. My teacher leader experience post-IDEAS had been one with opportunities to grow and enhance capacity in other educational settings. The feedback from others at the workshop was that they found my story interesting and even somewhat inspiring – I began to wonder, what was the experience of other teacher leaders? |
| **Discovering how this problem, as a private trouble, is or is becoming a public issue that affects multiple lives, institutions and social groups.** | I had the opportunity to have these discussions with a number of teacher leaders over the following 12 months at various workshops and forums through my work with the LRI. I was also still in touch with a number of teacher leaders that I had met in the past and with whom I had worked in the past at my previous school. On a number of occasions, I was able to talk with them and began to realise that their experiences were many and varied. Some had opportunities to use their capacities in new ways, as I had done, while others were experiencing a level of professional dissatisfaction with where they were. Others had gone on to do quite different and inspirational things with their new found capacities. I knew there was a story to be told and the following questions deserved to be answered: What happened to the IDEAS teacher leaders once they had been through the whole school improvement process? What was their teacher leader experience like? Did they have opportunities to use their newly developed teacher leader capacities? Were there opportunities to enhance system capacity? |
| **Locating the institutional formations or sites where persons with these troubles do things together.** | I knew that I would be able to access the LRI database of IDEAS teacher leaders, as well as my contacts and knowledge of specific cases to locate further suitable candidates for this study. I wanted to capture a range of experiences from education systems across Australia to firstly understand a selection of possible cases that could be used for in-depth study - access to the LRI database made this possible. Where are the former IDEAS teacher leaders now? What are their experiences of teacher leadership? What are they doing now? |
| **Beginning to ask not why but how it is that these experiences occur.** | I knew at that stage I would only want a small selection of participants (possibly 8-12) from a cross-section of education systems for in-depth semi-structured interviews to really understand how their experiences have impacted them, their work, and what they are doing now. How are they operating in their current contexts? What are the opportunities for leadership in current educational settings? What kinds of workplaces provide these opportunities? What is the impact of their experiences on their perceptions of leadership in schools? What do their perceptions/experiences mean for schools and education systems? |
| **Attempting to formulate the research question into a single statement.** | Attempting to formulate the research question involved a synthesis of my ideas and thinking as outlined above to formulate the questions, followed by a process of confirming the research questions were the right questions. This involved identifying the research problem to find out about the *lived experiences* of other IDEAS teacher leaders once their sleeping giants have been awakened. To find out about their lived experiences, I knew I would be examining the *images* of teacher leadership – their biographies, their narratives; then I would surely have to consider the *contexts* that enabled these teacher leaders to flourish; followed by the *implications* – what does this mean for schools and education systems? These three words became the basis for the formulation and framing of the questions – the images, the context and the implications. |
| | I knew I wanted to use the sleeping giant metaphor in my title and as a *theme* throughout the thesis for three reasons: (1) this particular metaphor has appealed to me since reading Katzenmeyer and Moller's book *Awakening the Sleeping Giant: Helping Teachers Develop as Leaders* (2001), (2) I felt like a sleeping giant that had been awakened through my experience as a teacher leader, and (3) as a person who enjoys working with the visual and linguistic semiotic systems, my experience of working with metaphor in a whole school improvement context has always been an empowering one. |

## 3.2  The Research Orientation

Due to the nature of the research, that is, to establish the role of teacher leadership within an organisational framework, I drew on organisational theory to begin my search. It became clear that the paradigm I would be working within would be the Interpretive paradigm, engaging in qualitative research in the Naturalist tradition (see Figure 3.1). Within the Interpretive framework, biographical methodology was chosen: "Because the subject matter of interpretive studies is always biographical, the lives of ordinary men and women play a central role in the research texts that are created" (Denzin, 2002, p. 364). It also became apparent that a biographical interpretive approach should be viewed through a hermeneutical lens, given that hermeneutics involves the interpretation of meaning (Bleicher, 1980). The biographical methods used for data collection included purposive sampling, surveys, semi-structured interviews and narratives through use of metaphor.
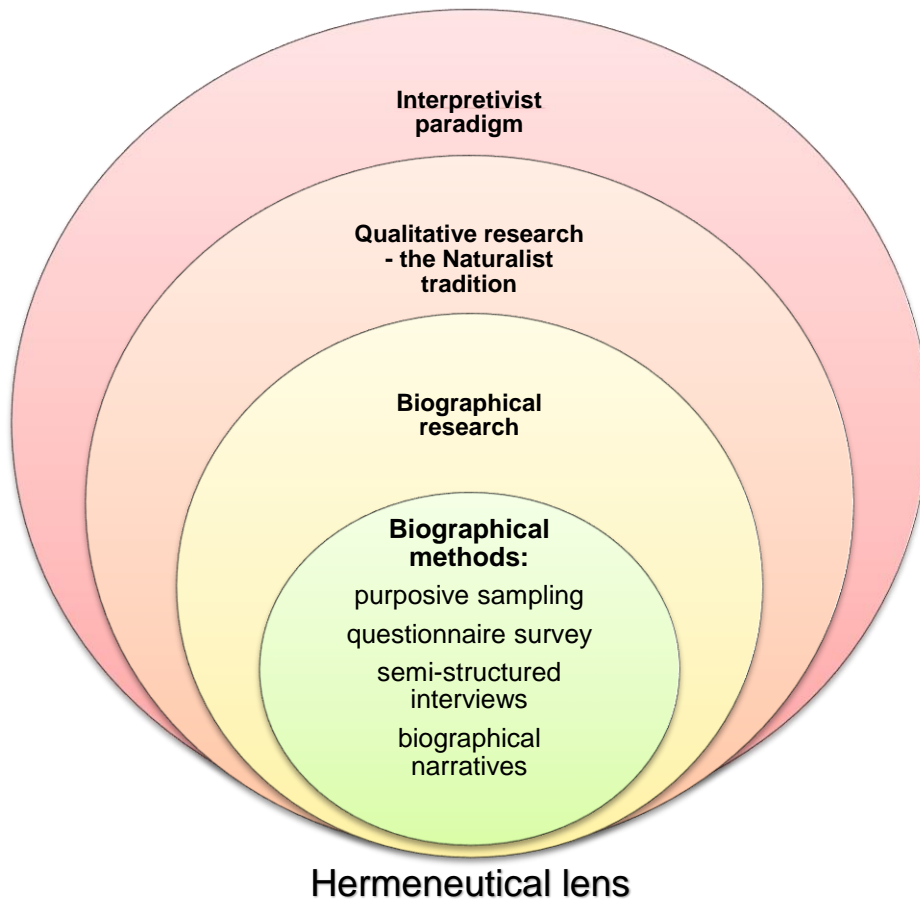


*Figure 3.1.* The Research Design and Methodology

In the following section, each aspect of the research orientation identified in the introduction will be introduced and justified, as a nested component of the diagram in Figure 3.1.

### 3.2.1 The interpretive paradigm.

A paradigm can be described as a world view or a way of "breaking down the complexity of the real world" (Patton, 1978, cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 15). Organisational theory centres on four paradigms (Putnam, 1983), emerging from two underlying dimensions of social science – the objectivists, who observe social reality as external to the individual, and the subjectivists, who believe reality is socially constructed. The four paradigms were all reviewed before a final choice was made to suit the purpose of this research.

Firstly, the *functionalist paradigm* views social reality as objective and orderly where "structures are fixtures that exist independently of the processes that create and transform them" (p. 36) and individuals are "products of their environment, hence they respond to external stimuli in mechanically controlled ways (Burrell & Morgan, 1979)" (p. 36). Secondly, the *interpretivist paradigm* is concerned with social order and there is a belief that society is "constructed through the experiences of its members" (p. 33). It is also thought that individuals create their own environments and have a "critical role in shaping environmental and organisational realities" (p. 36).

Thirdly, the *radical humanist paradigm* adopts a critical stance and views society as constrained by dominant forces hence evolving through conflict and change. There is a view that people create psychic prisons through constructing oppressive realities (G. Morgan, 2006; Putnam, 1983). Similarly, the fourth paradigm, the *radical structuralist paradigm* adopts a critical stance, but with the "focus on materialistic forces—for example, capitalism and wealth—as sources of domination" (Putnam, 1983, p. 33).

Of these four paradigms, the interpretivist paradigm was chosen as the framework for this research as it highlighted the "subjective or consensual meanings that constitute social reality" (p. 32). It emphasises interpersonal and organisational meanings, as opposed "to the dominant functionalist views of organizational life" (p. 31). Interpretation centres on "the study of meanings [and] the way individuals make sense of their world through their communicative behaviors" (p. 31). Interpretivists aim to "reconstruct the self-understandings of actors engaged in particular actions" (Schwandt, 2000, p. 193). The interpretive approach is subjectivist and social construction of reality predominates as the underlying thinking. Due to the social constructivist nature of this approach, it appeared to be useful in defining the importance of human processes in organisational structure and the role of people in creating organisations (Chalofsky, 2010; Fullan, 2001), and hence was considered a good match for this study.

Interpretivism and hermeneutics arose in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as a challenge to the positivist philosophy which predominated at the time (Schwandt, 2000). It was thought that the human sciences were fundamentally different to the natural sciences both in nature and purpose (Schwandt, 2000). Interpretivism aimed to understand human action, while the positivists claimed that for any science, the purpose is to "offer causal explanations of social, behavioural and physical phenomena" (p. 191).

Some of the earlier writings on the interpretive approach can be found in the work of German philosopher Husserl (1895-1938), who claimed that a society's norms and values are a subjective product of the mental processes of the individuals within the given society, and that these mental processes shape the social world. Schutz (1899-1959) expanded Husserl's philosophy by claiming that individuals carry around knowledge that shapes and provides a frame of reference in which they interpret the

world. Through socialisation, the interpretation of the individual's knowledges and conceptions becomes reality for that individual (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Husserl, 1965; Schutz, 1967).

If the interpretive approach aims to understand human action, then in order to grasp the meanings and hence understand particular actions, the researcher must consider the *intention* and the *context* – each has a key role in the meaning making process. The Naturalist researcher "begins with the assumption that context is critical" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 200) where investigations focus strongly on contextual factors. Understanding the meaning of human action requires "grasping the subjective consciousness or intent of the actor from the inside" (Dilthey, 1958, cited in Schwandt, 2000, p. 192) which they claim involves getting inside the head of the participant to understand their motivations, beliefs, desires and thoughts. Human action is intentional in terms of the kind of action performed, but the meaning can only be grasped if the action is examined in the context in which it is performed. For example, in raising one's arm, it could be interpreted as asking for permission to speak, voting or hailing a taxi or bus, dependent on the intention of the person performing the action and the context in which it is performed (Schwandt, 2000).

Similarly, Geertz (1975; 1979, cited in Schwandt, 2000) argued that understanding comes from acquiring an inside understanding and drawing on the participants' definitions of the situation. The interpretive approach views human action as meaningful; there is respect for the life-world of the individual; and the interpretive approach acknowledges the contribution of human subjectivity to knowledge (Schwandt, 2000). If "meaning is negotiated mutually in the act of interpretation [and is not] simply discovered" (Schwandt, 2000, p. 195), then it would suggest that the meaning making process is a co-construction of the narrative between the researcher and the participant.

For this research, the researcher and the participants were co-constructers of the participants' narratives or biographies through the recreation of their experiences as teacher leaders. The realities of their experiences were shared with me, as they were perceived and remembered and socially constructed through their experiences in an organisational context. These realities were then interpreted by me through a shared conversation with each participant via a semi-structured interview recalling and reconstructing the participant's experiences as a teacher leader.

### 3.2.2  Qualitative research – The naturalist orientation.

Within the Interpretive paradigm, the naturalistic orientation framed this research as it required the researcher to deal with emergent data and themes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) deals with human inquiry – an inquiry into the realities co-constructed by the researcher and the participants so that "some level of understanding can be achieved" (p. 37). Qualitative methods are "adaptable to dealing with multiple realities [as these methods] expose more directly the nature of the transaction between the investigator and respondent and hence make easier an assessment of the extent to which the phenomenon is described in terms of the investigator's own posture" (p. 40), making it easier to identify any biases or influences of the researcher. Naturalistic inquiry enabled me to examine the importance of the human experience within a given context and investigate people's perceptions by

accessing their internal beliefs and knowledge to understand the world from their viewpoint.

In this study, I assisted participants to construct their narratives or biographies thus promoting the notion of researcher as co-constructer rather than "researcher as neutral observer" (Gardner, 2001, p. 186). This approach relies heavily on relationships and a certain level of trust needs to be established and maintained between the researcher and participant (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Trust leads to credible data as "respondents are much more likely to be both candid and forthcoming if they respect the inquirer and believe in his or her integrity" (p. 256). My prior experience as an IDEAS teacher leader gave me some authority in the sense that it provided researcher credibility and assisted with the trust relationship with participants, yet it could also introduce potential bias to the study in terms of my particular experiences and views on teacher leadership. Inherited biases are not something that one can easily be rid of – instead, traditions are something that shape "who we are and how we understand the world … and attempts to step outside that would be nigh on impossible" (Gallagher, cited in Schwandt, 2000, p. 194). In fact, while "self-understanding is believed to bias or distort successful interpretation" (Kerdeman, 1998, cited in Schwandt, 2000, p. 194), Garrison (1996) explained that these very prejudices and biases are the prejudgements:

> necessary to make our way … in everyday thought, conversation, and action. … The point is not to free ourselves of all prejudice, but to examine our historically inherited and unreflectively held prejudices, and alter those that disable our efforts to understand others, and ourselves. (p. 434)

Thus, due to my prior experiences and views on teacher leadership, I had to be cognisant throughout the interpretation, analysis and writing up of results that I was interpreting results that emerged from the co-construction with the interviewee. I had to ensure that I was not making personal judgements or interpreting results that were viewed through my particular experiences and views on teacher leadership only, but instead to use my experiences as a strength and a lens to understand and interpret the experiences of others.

The trust relationship was further enhanced due to the fact that participants for this study had worked as teacher leaders with me as a member of the Leadership Research International (LRI) research and development group. My credibility by association with this group had been already established through my participation in various large scale interstate team research projects as well as at the biennial IDEAS National Learning Forums, so participants felt more at ease with their knowledge of the work of the LRI. There was a reciprocity and mutualism established in the relationship between schools and the LRI, as both parties benefited – schools engaged with the whole school improvement project (IDEAS), with support from the LRI at various junctures of the two year journey, while the LRI (as a Research and Development group) benefited by having access to a wealth of school improvement data that could be used for research. Due to the LRI's reputation of over 16 years of research and working with schools, I found that participants were only too willing to share their innermost feelings and thoughts on the topic of my research.

One of the main objectives of the study was to understand the participants' perceptions of their organisational reality. To do this, I would need to interpret participants' actions and experiences and how their consciousness constitutes or constructs things (Trujillo,

1983). Building and maintaining trust with participants provided the environment for this to occur.

### 3.2.3  Biographical research.

The contribution of biographical research in the social sciences can be traced back to its heyday in early Chicago Sociology in the 1920s and 1930s when autobiographies, letters, diaries and various personal documents "created an awareness of the complexities of modern life histories, milieus and social worlds" (Riemann, 2003, p. 2). While this thinking fell out of favour and was regarded as unscientific for a number of decades, in recent times there has been increasing fascination with biographical methods. Yet, there is still a great deal of insecurity around how researchers using this methodology proceed when analysing data (Riemann, 2003).

Biography as a qualitative method is a story of a person's past that is subject to contemplation for a particular reason and "assembled for the purposes of the moment" (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997, p. 157) and they claim that the selection of relevant details is determined by the context in which the events occurred. Gubrium and Holstein (1997) cited one such example where a school's staff considered a child's biography or their past when assembling class lists for the following year – particulars that are not relevant are set aside, however these particulars may be incorporated and hence reinterpreted, for a different purpose on another occasion. Despite being "tied to concrete events, biography is continually subject to reinterpretation" (p. 157).

The biographical interpretive approach to research involves the separating out of the chronological story from the experiences and meaning provided in the interview, that is, separating the lived life from the told story (Wengraf, 2001). The perceptions of those being studied are important (Wiersma, 2000) to glean an individual's perspective within a particular historical and structural context (Bornat, 2008). Biographical research is influenced by hermeneutic phenomenology, through the investigation of the lived experience from the participant's perspective (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000).

### 3.2.4  The hermeneutic lens for biographical interpretive research.

Hermeneutics was chosen as a lens for this study from several major schools of interpretive sociology, including ethnomethodology, action theorists, symbolic interactionism, hermeneutics, and phenomenology. Hermeneutics is the art of interpretation in context, especially social and linguistic context. For this study, I investigated the participants' lived experiences, drawing on their recollections and perspectives of those experiences. Reliving the lived experiences "functions as the equivalent to observation" (Bleicher, 1980, p. 23). This informed the creation of personal narratives or biographies as developed through co-construction with the researcher, for interpretation by the researcher.

The term *hermeneutic* is derived from the Greek god, Hermes, who acted as an interpreter with messages from the gods to the mortals. In this role, he not only announced their words verbatim, but provided additional commentary and points of clarification, thus interpreting their messages (Bleicher, 1980). While not a Greek god or goddess, the researcher's role appeals, not unlike that of Hermes, as an interpreter of my participants' messages for the reader.

Historically, hermeneutics has emerged as a theory of interpretation whenever it was necessary to "translate authoritative literature under conditions that did not allow direct access to it, owing either to distance in space and time or to differences in language" (Bleicher, 1980, p. 11).  Hermeneutics has been used in a number of ways, including in literary interpretation to interpret the language of the text. This can be traced back to its origins in the Greek educational system, with the interpretation of literary texts by poets such as Homer (Bleicher, 1980).

The study of Hermeneutics is characterised by several lines of thought, including hermeneutical theory, hermeneutical philosophy and critical hermeneutics, ranging from Dilthey's *historical consciousness*, through to Gardamer's *fusion of horizons* or language agreement about our shared world, Ricouer's phenomenological hermeneutics, and Habermas' critical hermeneutics, which challenges the idealist assumptions underlying hermeneutical theory and philosophy. The latter has an affinity with the Frankfurt School and Marx's work and is revolutionary in the sense that it promoted changing reality rather than merely interpreting it (Bleicher, 1980).

Of these approaches, Dilthey's historical consciousness appealed as the lens for this study. "The first condition for the possibility of a science of history consists in the fact that I myself am an historical being, that he who researches into history is the same as he who make it" (Dilthey, 1958, VII, p. 278, cited in Bleicher, 1980, p. 23). The interpreter, or researcher and the object or participant are linked by a context of traditions. This implies that the researcher "already has a pre-understanding of the object as he approached it, thereby unable to start with a neutral mind" (Bleicher, 1980, p. 2). As a former teacher leader, my pre-understanding of the common IDEAS experience meant that I was linked with my participants through our common experiences and needed to be cognisant of this in my mindset and interpretation of the evidence.

Dilthey's concept of *verstehen,* or meaning-contexts, centres on the premise that we operate in social systems and structures which also contain meaning. It is crucial therefore to consider the lived experience of a participant, or the part, within the whole experience of the organisational context within which they worked:

> Historical objectivations are interpreted by reference to that which objectifies itself in them. This understanding cannot take the form of a search for causes and effects, but can succeed only through the consideration of contexts and through forming a relationship between inner and outer, part and whole. (Bleicher, 1980, p. 26)

Therefore, the interpretive analysis drew on the participants' recollections of their lived experiences and the interpretation of the context within which they worked. This involved the interpretation of the social and linguistic context – the social, in terms of participants' recollections of their experiences as teacher leaders within their schools, and an analysis of the organisational context; and the linguistic, in terms of their conversations about their experiences, requiring an interpretive analysis of their told story of their teacher leader experiences.

## 3.3   The Research Strategy

The qualitative researcher is usually concerned with the *what* and the *how* questions (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000) and uses inductive analysis, in that the researcher

commences analysis "without any preconceived theories or hypotheses" (Wiersma, 2000, p. 201) to define "categories, themes and patterns" (Janesick, 2000, p. 389) from the data. The categories that emerge from the data are not imposed prior to data collection, but the researcher must decide on the most effective way to tell the story and to "convince the audience of the meaning of the study" (p. 389).

In biographical research, data collection methods such as interviews are used to unearth a life history, or part of it, and reconstruct a participant's experience (Riemann, 2003). For this study, the interviews were framed so that the researcher could illuminate the participant's story and interpret the meaning from the lived experience. The research questions were generative (Riemann, 2003) and formulated to elicit a narrative of the participant's journey as a teacher leader. In separating the lived life from the experiences and meanings of the interview, coding of data was necessary to identify themes and pinpoint an individual's perspective within the given context (Bornat, 2008).

Additionally, it was necessary to develop a "*sufficient trust relationship …* between the researcher (s) and [the participant] before and during the interview" (Riemann, 2003, p. 12, original emphasis). In the case of this study, I have my own personal experience of the topic under study. As highlighted previously, development of a trusting relationship (Riemann, 2003) through my personal work with the IDEAS project enabled me to establish connections with teacher leaders from all over Australia through IDEAS workshops, conferences and former team research projects.

### 3.3.1 Purposive sampling.

Participants for this study were selected using purposive or purposeful sampling, based on previously identified criteria for inclusion to suit the purpose of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Wiersma, 2000). Other methods of comprehensive sampling to include the full range of eligible participants would have been outside the scope of this study.

Purposive sampling (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) is the method favoured by the Naturalist tradition because it "increases the scope or range of data exposed … as well as the likelihood that the full array of multiple realities will be uncovered" (p. 40). This also increases the opportunity for the researcher to consider the context – local conditions and local values "for possible transferability" (p. 40).

In Phase One, 25 participants for the initial questionnaire survey (Phase One data collection) were selected from a database of IDEAS teacher leaders from across Australia. The criteria for selection included that they must have been teacher leaders in a whole school improvement process and be from a range of education systems across Australia (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3

*Purposive Sampling Criteria for Phase One Data Collection*

| ***Purposive sampling criteria for Phase One data collection*** |
| --- |
| 1. Participants must have been a teacher leader that had been through the whole school improvement process. |
| 2. Participants were from a cross-section of Education systems across Australia. |

From the survey, I developed a secondary set of criteria to select 10 participants for in-depth semi-structured interviews (Table 3.4) to suit the purpose of the research.

Table 3.4

*Purposive Sampling Criteria for Phase Two Data Collection*

| | ***Purposive sampling criteria for Phase Two data collection*** |
|---|---|
| *1.* | Participants selected from those with a diverse range of experiences since involvement with the process of whole school improvement (as evidenced from Phase One data collection). |
| *2.* | Participants were of varying ages, gender and teaching experience. |

These criteria further refined the selection of participants by focusing on diversity of participants' age, gender and teaching experience. Additionally, and most importantly, I was keen to select teacher leaders from a diverse range of experiences following the whole school improvement project.

Figure 3.2 provides an overview of the data collection process, using the Funnel Approach (adapted from Wiersma, 2000) and mapped to the research questions.

**Research problem:** What understandings emerge from the lived experiences of IDEAS teacher leaders who have been through a process of whole school improvement?

**Question 1: The images**

1 (a) What have been the experiences of IDEAS teacher leaders in schools and education systems?

1 (b) What is the impact of these experiences on their concept of leadership in schools?

**Question 2: The Context**

What emerge as supportive contexts for teacher leaders?

**Question 3: The implications**

What are the implications for schools and education systems?

General questions which initiate the study

Possible sites; possible subjects

Initial data collection

Revisions - moving towards specific groups/sites/conditions

Increased focus on the phenomenon and subjects

Interpret emerging specific biographical phenomena

Focusing and refining

Detailed analysis and representation of phenomena

Implications and recommendations

Formulation of research problem and questions

Teacher leaders who have been through a process of whole school improvement

**Phase 1 data collection:** Select 25 IDEAS teacher leaders from different states and systems for written response to survey questions.

Interpretation of phase 1 data; refining.

**Phase 2 data collection:** Decide on 10 teacher leaders to interview; formulation of interview schedule

Semi-structured interviews with participants

Interpretation of phase 2 data: refining, generalisability and conclusions

Implications and recommendations for schools and education systems

**Education systems' approval to conduct research**

*March-April 2012*

**Surveys**

*May-June 2012*

**Interviews**

*October-November 2012*

*Figure 3.2.* Data Collection, Using the Funnel Approach

Adapted from *Research methods in education: An introduction*, 7th ed. by W. Wiersma, 2000, Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

### 3.3.2 Biographical methods for data collection.

Two methods of data collection were used for this research – questionnaire surveys and semi-structured interviews. Each of these will be explained and justified in the following section.

#### 3.3.2.1 *Questionnaire surveys.*

Survey research can be used to "measure attitudes, opinions, or achievements – any number of variables in natural settings" (Wiersma, 2000, p. 157), with the design ranging from longitudinal studies through to cross-sectional designs where data collection involves random samples from all populations at one point in time (Wiersma, 2000). As this study was looking at participants' recall of their experiences of teacher leadership in a natural setting, thus drawing on opinions, attitudes and achievements during that time, a questionnaire survey of teacher leaders with these particular experiences was considered to be a suitable instrument to collect data for this purpose.

The purpose of the survey as Phase One data collection was to source possible participants for in-depth interviews in Phase Two data collection. The survey was constructed as a written questionnaire. Wiersma (2000) highlighted the challenges of constructing a questionnaire with *good items* and then getting the participants to respond. Careful attention to detail ensured that the items provided the necessary data for the study in a format that was clear and using terminology that would be understood and also provided the impetus for participants to respond (Wiersma, 2000).

An effective questionnaire should be accompanied by a covering letter explaining the process for responding to the survey. The survey layout should not appear overcrowded, with items and pages clearly numbered. It may contain a mix of several concepts in a logical sequence, including open-ended items that require some writing (Wiersma, 2000). Follow-up procedures should also be planned for when administering surveys. This may take the form of a follow-up mailing, or a postcard that is a pleasant, but firm reminder (Wiersma, 2000) close to the due date of the survey. In this study, I sent all participants reminder emails one week before the due date, then followed up with phone calls if I had not heard from them by the due date.

As this was a qualitative survey, the intent was to capture as many responses as possible within the nominated field of study of teacher leadership. The focus was on the richness of the response in each case rather than the number of responses received. There were no items of a particularly sensitive nature and all participants were assured of privacy and ethical boundaries of the study (Appendices A and C). They were also assured they could withdraw from the study at any time. Due to the already established relationships with myself, it appeared that the participants felt comfortable and at ease in answering any questions and sharing their innermost thoughts and feelings on the topic of this study.

#### 3.3.2.2 *Semi-structured interviews.*

The biographical interview method, developed by Schütze in the 1980s, requires the "separating out of the chronological story from the experiences and meanings which interviewees provide … the interviewee may not be fully aware of contexts and influences in their life" (Bornat, 2008, p. 347). This approach was further developed by

Rosenthal and Fischer and is known as *biographical interpretive analysis* or *biographical narrative interpretive analysis* (Bornat, 2008). In separating the lived life from the told story, it required an elaborate codification of the interview to identify themes (Bornat, 2008), which will be discussed later in the analysis of data section of this chapter.

The interview, whether structured, semi-structured or unstructured, can provide opportunities for participants to "articulate their own experiences in their own voices … relatively empower those being researched … listen to the plurality of voices that occupy different spaces … [and note] how actors become included or excluded from particular networks of power" (Gardner, 2001, p. 190). Interviewing is appropriate for drawing out more complex situations where in-depth information can be collected and questions explained. Being too formal and structured limits the emergence of new data, while being too flexible means that the research question focus is lost, hence the semi-structured approach was chosen. The researcher also requires some interviewing skills and flexibility to respond to any opportunity that will produce useful information (Wiersma, 2000), so that opportunities for further questioning are not lost (Kumar, 2011). Semi-structured interviews were chosen for the purpose of this research where key questions were used to guide the discussion and retain the research focus, but also allowing some flexibility for emerging questions or themes and new meaning to come to the fore.

The limitations are that it is time consuming and may be expensive – depending on the delivery method chosen – and the quality of data depends on the quality of interaction and the interviewer skills. A researcher may also introduce his/her bias (Kumar, 2011), so while being a good listener, also needs to respond with genuine interest, but without being evaluative of participant responses (Wiersma, 2000). Gardner (2001) argued that in an interview, the researcher only sees what the respondent presents and other contributing factors, such as certain activities, events and people that might be critical may not be seen and the "interpretation will be based on highly partial data" (p. 191). In Gardner's view, the most reliable method to ensure the match between what is constructed in the interview and what actually took place was triangulation – multiple accounts, multiple types of data and methods of data collection – to corroborate or refute particular findings. It is also possible that the participant may have forgotten particular events or episodes that took place.

For this study, the interview is a biographical interpretive account of a participant's story, as they recall it, assembled for the purpose of the interview (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997). In this study, credibility is ensured by use of comprehensive description in firstly, extensive data collection in two phases, and secondly, in the biographical interpretation and analysis of the data to demonstrate that the multiple constructions have been represented adequately (Denzin, 1989; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The purpose is to capture each participant's lived experiences as a teacher leader, his or her current views on leadership, the contexts that have enabled them to flourish as teacher leaders, and some possible recommendations for schools and education systems. Hence the semi-structured interview, viewed and interpreted through the biographical lens, suited this purpose.

## 3.4　Data Collection

Data collection used purposive sampling techniques in both phases (Figure 3.2):

1. Phase One: a written questionnaire survey emailed to 25 participants
2. Phase Two: semi-structured interviews with 10 participants, either face-to-face, via telephone or using Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) technology with webcam, dependent on the participant's location and technology preferences.

### 3.4.1　Phases of data collection.

#### 3.4.1.1　*Phase One – Written questionnaire surveys.*

Phase One of the data collection involved selecting 25 participants to suit the purpose of the research and inviting them to respond to a written questionnaire survey (Appendices B and C). Of the 20 respondents who returned the survey, all had significant involvement in their school's IDEAS School Management Team and had varied experiences since IDEAS (Table 3.5). These findings will be discussed in Chapter Four.

The participants were selected from the IDEAS database of teacher leaders held by the Leadership International Research (LRI) group at the University of Southern Queensland. The LRI engages with research and consultancy with IDEAS schools all over Australia, and internationally in Singapore and Sicily, so has established a close relationship with teachers in more than 400 schools. The database includes schools and systems that had chosen to use IDEAS as their school renewal process and therefore the participants selected for this study are only representative of this sample of schools and education systems throughout Australia. At the time of this study, a selection of South Australian schools had just joined IDEAS and so did not have any participants to suit the criteria of the research, while the Northern Territory and Tasmanian schools had not been involved.

Ten participants were selected for in-depth semi-structured interviews. The chosen sample from the database (Table 3.5) included participants who: (1) have had a variety of experiences following their engagement with IDEAS and would make interesting biographical narratives for further in-depth study; (2) have had experience in leading the school improvement process at their school, as part of the IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT); and (3) are from a range of education systems throughout Australia.

Table 3.5

*Written Questionnaire Survey Respondents*

| *State or Territory* | Survey Participants | Age bracket | School sector | IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT) involvement |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Victoria* | 1.  Male | 36-40 | Primary (State Education) | ISMT 2006-2009 |
| | 2.  Female | 46-50 | Secondary (State Education) | ISMT 2004-2009 |
| | 3.  Female | 51-55 | Primary (State Education) | ISMT 2009-2012 |
| | 4.  Female | >60 | Primary (State Education) | ISMT 2009-2012 |
| | 5.  Female | 56-60 | Primary (State Education) | ISMT 2005-2008 |
| *Western Australia* | 6.  Male | 56-60 | Secondary (State Education) | ISMT 2006-2012 |
| | 7.  Female | 41-45 | Secondary/Professional Learning (State Education) | ISMT 2007-2009<br>IDEAS Facilitation 2009 |
| *New South Wales* | 8.  Female | 41-45 | Primary (Catholic Education) | ISMT 2006-2012 |
| | 9.  Female | 41-45 | Secondary (Catholic Education) | ISMT 2007-2010 |
| | 10. Female | 25-30 | Primary (Catholic Education) | ISMT 2007-2010 |
| *Australian Capital Territory* | 11. Female | 51-55 | Primary (Catholic Education) | ISMT 2004-2008<br>IDEAS Facilitation 2009-2012 |
| *Queensland* | 12. Male | 56-60 | Secondary (State Education) | ISMT 2001-2010 |
| | 13. Male | 51-55 | Secondary (State Education) | ISMT 2004-2007 |
| | 14. Female | 56-60 | Secondary (State Education) | ISMT 2003-2011 |
| | 15. Female | 56-60 | Primary (State Education) | ISMT 2001-2006 |
| | 16. Female | 51-55 | Primary (State Education) | ISMT 2001-2006 |
| | 17. Female | 51-55 | Primary (State Education) | ISMT 2003-2010 |
| | 18. Female | 41-45 | Primary (State Education) | ISMT 2003-2005<br>IDEAS Facilitation 2005-2008 |
| | 19. Female | 56-60 | Primary (Catholic Education) | ISMT 2008-2009 |
| | 20. Female | 56-60 | Primary (Catholic Education) | ISMT 2006-2012 |

Once Education system and individual school principal approval had been obtained, participants were contacted by me via email in the first instance with an expression of interest in participating in the research (Appendix C) and sent a survey (Appendix B), a consent form and a participant information sheet (Appendix D). Many of them I had met before at various IDEAS forums and workshops run by the LRI, so I was able to renew those contacts. Those that I had not met were very open to working with me due to the already established trust relationship built with the LRI.

Once participants had agreed to take part in the research, they completed the survey and signed consent form and returned both to me via email. Where I had not received a response from a participant within one week, I followed up with a second email and subsequently a phone call if no response. One participant asked if she could complete her survey orally by telephone, as she was travelling frequently with her work. Additionally, due to her communication style, she found it more convenient to discuss her responses over the phone.

Of the 25 teacher leaders contacted to participate in the survey, 20 responded positively and sent their surveys via return email along with the consent forms. One teacher leader declined to participate because of the demands of her current role at a National level.

Four teacher leaders who were originally emailed did not participate for various reasons – two had informally said they were willing to participate, however the busyness of school life intervened and despite follow up phone calls and emails, they did not return the survey. Three of the four participants were also difficult to contact due to the education system change in emails during this time. Despite phone calls and messages, I did not manage to make contact with these participants and my emails were not returned. These participants were from the same education system, which is useful demographic information in identifying possible bias due to non-response (Wiersma, 2000). Due to the time constraints around my study, I opted to leave these four participants as I had sufficient data to progress my research to the next stage to select participants for interview for Phase Two.

### 3.4.1.1.1 Education system contextual information.

Before unpacking Phase Two data collection, an insight into each of the education systems will be useful in understanding the contexts within which the teacher leader participants worked. Participants were selected from a range of Education Systems throughout Australia including: Queensland State Education (Primary and Secondary sectors); Toowoomba Catholic Education, Queensland (Primary sector); Sydney Catholic Education, New South Wales (Secondary and Primary sectors); Australian Capital Territory (Primary sector); Victorian State Education (Secondary sector); Western Australia State Education (Secondary sector/Professional Learning). While all systems are under the Australian Government Federal funding umbrella and share the Australian Curriculum in common, each system is governed independently. The extent of each system's engagement with the IDEAS project warrants some explanation to provide a context for each of the teacher leader biographies to follow.

Queensland State Education

The Queensland Department of Education and Training (DET) is a government funded state education system. IDEAS originated as a partnership between the University of Southern Queensland's Leadership Research Institute (LRI) and Education Queensland's school reform proposals of the mid-1990s.

> At that time, research into successful school reform undertaken through the University of Wisconsin-Madison was used by the University of Southern Queensland's Leadership Research Institute to create the Research-based Framework for Enhancing School Outcomes. During trialling of the framework in 1997, and exploration in nationwide school contexts, the *ideas* process and the concept of parallel leadership were developed. Thus, **IDEAS** is a unique Queensland creation and stems from a fruitful university-schools partnership.

From 1998 to 2000, **IDEAS** was employed in forty-nine state schools ... Their experiences were used to refine the core *ideas* processes and concepts. (IDEAS website) (http://ideas.usq.edu.au/Home/IDEASbackground/tabid/138/Default.aspx, original emphasis)

After an initial trial in four schools in 1997, 49 schools implemented IDEAS in 1999. From 2001-2006, IDEAS was implemented in clusters of Queensland State schools from the Murrumba District, with 22 schools involved, to a North Queensland cluster of five schools, a Laidley cluster of nine schools and a greater Brisbane cluster of nine schools. During the time, continual refinements to the IDEAS model of improvement continued alongside implementation in other Australian states. After this time, the partnership with Education Queensland dissolved.

Toowoomba Catholic Education

The Catholic Education Office, Diocese of Toowoomba, is responsible for the operation of 31 Catholic Diocesan schools across south-western Queensland. In alignment with the requirements of the Accreditation of Non-State Schools 2001 Regulation for Improvement Processes, and the Queensland Catholic Education Commission policy of 2003 for Catholic School Renewal, the Diocese developed a School Renewal policy in 2005: "Each primary and secondary school will engage in self-renewing processes which align to activity with gospel values and build communities in which God's spirit is nurtured" (CEO, November, 2005). In this document, it states that "all schools will undertake formal renewal processes every five (5) years, to meet the Improvement Processes requirement of the legislation for the Accreditation of Non-State Schools in Queensland" (CEO, November, 2005).

During 2003, a significant number of Queensland State schools were involved in the IDEAS project. Nine of these State schools that joined at this time were located in the Toowoomba region, along with three CEO schools in a cluster arrangement. In 2006, a further 10 CEO schools began the IDEAS project to full implementation, followed by a further four in 2008. Beyond this time, the CEO had no further involvement with the IDEAS project.

Sydney Catholic Education

The Catholic Education Office (CEO) Sydney is responsible for the leadership, efficient operation and management of the Catholic systemic schools which educate over 70,000 students in 150 parish primary and regional secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney using funds provided by government and private sources. The Sydney systemic focus on continuous improvement (CEO, 2016) supports principals to lead their school in creating the culture and practice to "improve learning outcomes and life opportunities for students" (para. 1) through a system-wide framework, the *School Review and Improvement (SRI) Framework.* Each school implements the framework through a process of their choosing with the support of localised Regional Consultants, while also addressing "processes for compliance with State and Federal Government accountability requirements" (para. 2).

In 2006, a number of schools in the Sydney CEO chose to begin their whole school improvement journey using the IDEAS project. It was observed that there was a distinct relationship and complementarity between School Review and Improvement (SRI)

processes from the Sydney CEO and the IDEAS project, including: *teachers are the key; professional learning by teachers is the key to improvement in student outcomes; success breeds success; collective responsibility for alignment of school processes*; and *a culture of no blame.* Also important was a shared view that *the locus of responsibility for school decision-making is the school itself.* Additionally, the perspective that Regional Consultants should be provided "to support leadership development and leadership transition, especially in relation to the principalship" (Andrews et al., 2012, p. 24).

> The Sydney Catholic Education uses its School Review and Improvement (SRI) processes to build a culture of continuous improvement in its 147 schools. The SRI framework comprises a number of linked processes that are underpinned by the key processes of 'one size does not fit all', 'no blame', 'evidenced-based self reflection' and 'improved outcomes for students'. The IDEAS processes for school revitalisation complement the SRI whole school improvement processes (Report on IDEAS in Inner West Region 2006-2010 – Mrs Elizabeth O'Carrigan). (Andrews et al., 2012, p. 24)

The IDEAS project of whole school improvement continues to thrive in 2016 in the Sydney CEO with 30 teacher leaders involved in an Aspiring Leaders program and 15 schools directly involved at various stages of IDEAS implementation.

Victorian State Education

The Victorian State Education Department implements Victorian Government policy on early childhood services, school education and training and higher education services. The Department manages Victorian government schools and drives improvement in primary and secondary government education. IDEAS had been identified in 2003 by Victorian education officials as suitable for implementation in Victorian schools because of its explicit focus on continuous school improvement, which was central to the Victorian *Blueprint for Government Schools.*

> The Targeted School Improvement Initiative was a component of *Blueprint for Government Schools*, *Flagship Strategy 6: School Improvement*. The purpose of the initiative was to implement systemic intervention strategies in schools that were identified as performing below expectations. Over the three year life of the initiative the Department identified 92 schools as performing at levels sufficiently below expectations and as requiring intervention. (Andrews et al., 2009, p. 13)

Twenty-two schools undertook the project in 2004, with 17 of these identified as targeted or underperforming. These schools received funding through the *Targeted School Improvement Initiative*, three schools were funded by an *Innovation and Excellence* cluster initiative, while "two schools sourced funds from within their own budgets" (Andrews et al., 2009, p. 13).

This was followed by a further 11 schools adopting IDEAS in two clusters which tested IDEAS in a range of settings including merging and complex schools. Continued refinement of the RBF occurred during this period, and a large scale research project resulted in the development of the Capacity Building Framework (Crowther & Associates, 2011). No further schools have taken up the IDEAS project. The system continues to support current and future leaders with a new School Leadership Initiative that increases the "professional development opportunities available to teachers and principals" (DET, 2016, para. 1).

Western Australia State Education

The Western Australian Department of Education is a state government education system. Out of more than 800 public schools across the state, 441 of these were classified as Independent Public schools in 2015, with an opportunity for up to 50 more schools to become independent schools in 2017. The Independent Public School initiative (DET, 2015a) was launched in 2009, allowing schools to shape their "ethos, priorities and directions [to] meet the distinctive needs of their students and school communities" (para. 1) through a combination of local autonomy and central support. Principals can make decisions about student support, staff recruitment, financial management, governance and accountability. Schools make the decision to apply as a community and are selected based on a set of selection criteria.

The Institute for Professional Learning (DET, 2015b), an initiative with the Department, was formed to coordinate the professional learning needs of the Department. It customises professional learning to meet the needs of a school, network or region and focuses on "the promotion of excellence in leadership, teaching and support within and for schools" (para. 1), including the support for new and graduate teachers, and aspiring leaders.

Western Australia's involvement with IDEAS began with four schools in the National trial in 2003 (Chesterton & Duignan, 2004). In between 2006 and 2009, a total of 31 schools made up of 29 secondary schools and two primary schools joined in three stages following the National trial. Each of the schools had self-nominated and were supported by the Institute for Professional Learning alongside the LRI. In 2009, Edith Cowan University's School of Education in Western Australia undertook a review of the schools involved in the first stage of IDEAS. Three key themes emerged: (1) staff, referring to the communication of the desire or need for renewal; (2) leadership, which involved principal support, commitment and encouragement for the establishment of the ISMT group; and (3) external support, referring to USQ's availability to provide guidance (Pilkington & Lock, 2013).

Now that the Education System contexts have been highlighted, Phase Two of the Data Collection process is explained.

### 3.4.1.2   Phase Two – Semi-structured interviews.

Due to the geographical distribution of the participants across Australia, the long distance voice-recorded interviews were conducted using one of two methods: (1) a high quality digital voice recorder to capture a telephone interview on loud speaker, or (2) the voice recording feature to capture an interview using Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) technology, with webcam so that participant and researcher could share a face-to-face experience where possible. Interviews were conducted face-to-face with participants that lived within the same vicinity as the researcher in a mutually agreed location and recorded with a high quality digital voice recorder (see Table 3.6). Where possible, the interviews were conducted within the space of one week to ensure consistency of approach and to maintain the focus and momentum of the data collection process. Only one interview had to be conducted several days after the rest due to the availability of the participant.

Table 3.6

*Interview Communication Procedures*

| Participant No. (as per table 3.5) | When | Participant Location and Education Sector | Interview communication and recording devices |
|---|---|---|---|
| Participant 19 | 25 October 2012 | Queensland, Primary Catholic Education | Face-to-face interview – digital voice recording |
| Participant 2 | 26 October 2012 | Victoria, Secondary State Education | VoIP interview with webcam – VoIP MP3 audio recording |
| Participant 13 | 26 October 2012 | Queensland, Secondary State Education | Face-to-face interview – digital voice recording |
| Participant 18 | 30 October 2012 | Queensland, Primary State Education | Phone interview – digital voice recording |
| Participant 12 | 1 November 2012 | Queensland, Secondary State Education | VoIP interview with webcam – VoIP MP3 audio recording |
| Participant 9 | 1 November 2012 | New South Wales, Secondary Catholic Education | Phone interview – digital voice recording |
| Participant 15 | 1 November 2012 | Queensland, Primary State Education | VoIP interview with webcam – VoIP MP3 audio recording |
| Participant 16 | 1 November 2012 | Queensland, Primary State Education | VoIP interview with webcam – VoIP MP3 audio recording |
| Participant 7 | 2 November 2012 | Western Australia, Secondary/Professional Learning, State Education | Phone interview – digital voice recording |
| Participant 10 | 8 November 2012 | New South Wales, Primary, Catholic Education | Phone interview – digital voice recording |

The interview questions (Table 3.7) for this phase were generative (Riemann, 2003) in that the final questions emerged from the themes and concepts identified in the Phase One data collection from the written questionnaire survey. The interview questions were framed in terms of the three key teacher leadership questions for this research – the images, the context, the implications. Using a semi-structured framework provided scope for drawing out more complex situations during the interview, thus allowing for the emergence of new meaning, yet still ensuring that the research focus was maintained. The researcher required skills and flexibility (Kumar, 2011; Wiersma, 2000) in responding to these opportunities to produce further information. In my role as researcher, I was fortunate to be able to draw on skills learned during prior experiences with the LRI, being part of large scale team research projects and mentored by more senior researchers on those projects. These skills came to the fore during my research interviews where I was able to use the previously learned questioning skills to advantage.

Table 3.7

*Semi-Structured Interview Questions*

| Research Question (RQ) focus | Interview Questions |
| --- | --- |
| RQ1: Concept of leadership | How do you see yourself now? What has enabled/inhibited this perception?<br>How do you see your future?<br>What is your current understanding of leadership? |
| RQ2: Context | Talk about your current workplace and how you operate in that context.<br>○   Who is involved?<br>○   What keeps you coming to work every day? |
| RQ1: Explanation | How would you synthesise or capture your experience, for example, in a metaphor, image or explanation? |
| RQ3: Implications | From your experience, what insights can you offer that might be useful for schools and education systems to consider? |

*Audio-recording of interviews*

All interviews were audio-recorded to enable me to listen to them again following the interview for transcribing and analysis. Each interview was approximately one hour in duration. The recording also takes the pressure off the researcher to take field notes during the interview (Wiersma, 2000) thus enabling the focus on the interview process and line of questioning. Due to the interpretive biographical orientation of this study, it was important that my focus remained solely on the interviewee, looking for the underlying meanings and visual, auditory or linguistic cues throughout the interview process. Any attempts to take field notes and divert my attention to other tasks may have resulted in missed cues and thus a missed opportunity to interpret some significant new meaning. All 10 interviews were transcribed and field notes were taken from the transcribed interviews as I listened to the interviews in conjunction with the transcriptions at a later date.

*Additional artefacts (unsolicited)*

Two participants elected to contribute further data at either the survey or interview stage. One participant sent through further data outlining her views on her teacher leadership role within the current context along with her survey data in the Phase One stage of the data collection. She had used these data as part of her application for promotion and submitted her written views as a valuable contribution to the study.

Another participant sent through an image and metaphorical explanation as a follow-up to the interview. These artefacts were part of the co-construction of their biographical narratives and were used in the analysis of the data.

## 3.5   Working with the Data

Phase One written questionnaire survey responses from the 20 teacher leaders were scrutinised for emerging themes (explained in more detail in Analysis of data – coding section). These formed the basis of the semi-structured interview questions for the 10 interview participants. Interviews from Phase Two were transcribed and studied to

identify emerging themes to develop a thematic framework, which formed the basis of the data analysis for write-up of the study.

### 3.5.1 Transcription.

The transcribed interview has a key role in the biographical interpretive method, which involves "elaborate codification of the interview in such a way as to identify themes, having separated out the 'lived life' from the 'told story' in the transcribed interview" (Wengraf, 2001, cited in Bornat, 2008, p. 347). For this research, colour coding was used initially to identify themes that aligned with the research questions. From there, I also began to build mind maps of some of the general themes and trends that were emerging from the data in the transcribed data evidence.

As well as looking at segments of text to identify themes, the researcher needs to look at how the participant delivers their story – whether they are "descriptive, argumentative, reporting, narrative or evaluative … the analysis expects a deep level of explanation and interpretation, one which looks for hidden and explicit meanings in the transcript" (Wengraf, 2001, cited in Bornat, 2008, p. 347). In this study, researcher annotations on the transcripts and summary mindmaps were useful in noting particular behaviours, inflections and any other nuances that went beyond what the linguistic evidence in the transcribed text might present.

### 3.5.2 Analysis of the data – Coding.

In qualitative research design, the organisation of the information and data reduction, or coding, is an important part of the process to see what emerges from the data (Wiersma, 2000). Coding of data may use a number of categories and the researcher uses inductive analysis to define the categories, patterns and themes from the data (Janesick, 2000). Deciding on the most effective way to "tell the story [and] convince the audience of the meaning of the study" (Janesick, 2000, p. 389) was the most challenging part of this study.

At this point, I understood Riemann's (2003) comment regarding the belief that there is still a great deal of insecurity around knowing how to proceed with analysis of biographical data. It does present some challenges in knowing the best way to interpret and capture the lived experience of the subject of inquiry and then present that evidence in such a manner that tells a story (Janesick, 2000), that is (a) a true representation of that lived experience, and (b) answers the research question. In the following section, I explain the coding process I undertook to begin my data analysis and thus begin the unpacking of the stories.

#### 3.5.2.1 *Phase One data analysis coding.*

In Phase One, I transferred all of the survey data (responses from 20 participants in the questionnaire survey) to a large wall chart, large enough to almost cover one wall several metres long (large sheets of butcher's paper is useful for this task). Being a person with visual, kinaesthetic and spatial design preferences, I was keen to have the data before me on a wall, rather than on a computer screen, so that I could use colour and annotations to look for patterns in the data. Columns were drawn up with each participant's name and details, followed by columns for each question from the survey. The data were summarised into each column, including key quotes from each person's

data. In the summarising exercise, I was already coding, interpreting and making decisions about which data were useful and narrowing the field of data to suit the purpose of the research. I was then able to use a colour coding system of highlighters to view the chart through different lenses – one colour for each of my research questions. *What were the participants telling me about their experiences of teacher leadership? What impact did their experiences have on their view of leadership in schools?* (Question 1 - pink lens) *What messages were there about the context that enabled teacher leadership to flourish?* (Question 2 - orange lens) *Were there any messages for schools or education systems?* (Question 3 - green lens). Sections of text were highlighted on the chart accordingly.

Once the colour coding exercise was complete, I was able to see which participants would be the best source of data in answering the research questions. All 20 respondents could have been used for interview in a comprehensive sampling method (Wiersma, 2000) for Phase Two, however for the scope of this study, it was felt that a sample of 10 participants for in-depth interview was ample to gather sufficient data to answer the research questions. Therefore, it was necessary to narrow the field further. The patterns that emerged from the data highlighted some key themes. An examination of these themes enabled me to select a smaller sample using the developed set of criteria to narrow the field to 10 participants for interview. The criteria ensured that I secured a selection of participants from a broad range of teacher leader experiences and from a range of education systems across Australia. These criteria have already been discussed in the purposive sampling section of this chapter (see again 3.3.1).

### 3.5.2.2    *Phase Two data analysis coding.*

For this phase of the analysis, there were several layers involved (Table 3.8) to interpret the fullest possible meaning from the interviews through comprehensive description, and thus enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The layers will be unpacked in the following section.

Table 3.8

*Phase Two Data Analysis Coding – Layers of Analysis*

| **Phase Two Data Analysis Coding – Layers of Analysis** | |
|---|---|
| 1) **Read through the interview transcripts and listen to the audio-recordings** | a. Colour coding, highlighting key quotes and comments and mapping to the research questions (one colour each to highlight data presenting images of teacher leadership; data about the context; data alluding to implications) |
| | b. Annotate transcripts – comments related to the questions (as above) and any emerging themes |
| 2) **Visual mapping of data – Conceptual diagrams and Mind Mapping** | a. Develop a conceptual diagram for each participant interview – data reduction and key concepts |
| | b. Develop mind maps to compare conceptual diagrams, generalise, and observe overall trends in the data |
| 3) **Metaphorical devices to represent data** | a. Use the metaphors provided by participants to interpret their experiences of teacher leadership beyond improvement. |
| | b. Develop new metaphors for teacher leadership beyond whole school improvement – once the sleeping giant (of teacher leadership) awakes. |

With the interviews with 10 participants completed and transcribed, the coding process for Phase Two began. I used the hard copies of the transcriptions initially to read along with as I listened to the audio recordings. During this process, I could annotate anything of significance in the margins at the side of the hard copies. These annotations generally related to the research questions, and offered any comments pertaining to insights, reflections or questions that emerged as I listened to the recordings. Following this process, I then re-read the interviews and used the same colour coding process from Phase One to identify key quotes as evidence of each of the research questions. Further annotations and reflections or insights were included on the transcripts, as they emerged from the data.

I then began to build a conceptual diagram (Eppler, 2006) for each of the interview participants, identifying the key themes that were emerging from each interview, resulting in a set of 10 diagrams – one for each participant. A conceptual diagram allows for the "systematic depiction of an abstract concept in pre-defined category boxes with specified relationships" (Eppler, 2006, p. 203). While in this definition Eppler argued that the boxes are pre-defined, in this study I have included a type of conceptual diagram that emerges from the data due to the qualitative nature of the study. This means the boxes or categories are not pre-defined, but the principle of the layout is similar. While visualisation methods for knowledge construction and sharing (Eppler, 2006) have been around for some time, only recently have we seen the evidence of their emergence as tools in qualitative research (Crowe & Sheppard, 2011; Daley, 2004).

Concept maps, another type of visual representation, have been identified as a useful strategy in qualitative research (Daley, 2004) to ensure credibility and trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) in the analysis process. A concept map has been defined as a "top-down diagram showing the relationship between concepts, including cross connections among concepts, and their manifestations" (Eppler, 2006, p. 203). They can be used to help the researcher focus on meaning from the interviews, as well as being a useful tool for reducing qualitative data and analysing themes (Daley, 2004). "Concept maps created from interview transcripts allows the researcher to probe the human cognitive structures and then to represent these structures by linking concepts with a framework of propositions" (Daley, 2004, p. 6).

If concept maps have been identified as useful for reducing qualitative data and analysing themes (Daley, 2004), then it would seem that other similar visualisation methods would also be valuable – conceptual diagrams, mind maps and the use of metaphor. For this research, I chose to incorporate all three – conceptual diagrams, mind maps and metaphor – for coding and biographical interpretive analysis of the data as they appeared to be tools well-matched to explore the emerging thematic structure of a biographical interpretive inquiry.

Conceptual diagrams (Eppler, 2006) were used in the first instance (see Table 3.8) to reduce the interview data from each participant to the key concepts emerging from each of the research question areas. Secondly, I was able to identify any patterns or themes emerging from the data for each interview. Mind maps (Buzan & Buzan, 1995; Rustler & Buzan, 2012) were created for each participant as a biographical interpretive lens to explore the interview data and themes that were emerging from the data. A mind map is "a multi-coloured and image-centred, radial diagram that represents semantic or other connections between portions of learned material hierarchically" (Eppler, 2006, p. 203). While conceptual diagrams (Daley, 2004; Davies, 2011) focused on specific evidence from each interview, a mind map could be used to generalise and compare conceptual diagrams, thus observing general trends in the data (Buzan & Buzan, 1995; Davies, 2011; Eppler, 2006; Rustler & Buzan, 2012).

The next layer of coding and analysis involved the use of metaphor (also see Table 3.8). During the interview process, I had also asked each participant to think about a metaphor for their experience of teacher leadership. These metaphors enabled participants and me, as the researcher, to further unpack and interpret their experiences beyond what may have been possible with the standard interview question. A *metaphor*, as defined by the Macquarie Dictionary (Butler, 2014) is "a figure of speech in which a term or phrase is applied to something to which it is not literally applicable, in order to suggest a resemblance, as *A mighty fortress is our God*". A *visual metaphor* is:

> … a graphic structure that uses the shape and elements of a familiar natural or man-made artefact or of an easily recognizable activity or story to organize content meaningfully and use the associations with the metaphor to convey additional meaning about the content. (Eppler, 2006, p. 203)

With either explanation, both metaphorical devices, visual or linguistic, could be successfully implemented as tools to organise and explain content (in this case, the data) and to convey additional meaning about the content (the participant's told stories).

Similarly, Morgan (2006), an organisational theorist, used metaphorical perspectives to explain the complex nature of organisations: "Metaphor stretches imagination in a way

that can create powerful insights … to find fresh ways of seeing, understanding, and shaping the situations that we want to organize and manage" (p. 5). I have also had experience in using metaphor to work with the visioning process in schools and have found it a useful device to explain phenomena. I was able to draw on my expertise in the work I have done with visioning and use of metaphor with schools through the Leadership Research International group.

For this reason, and in light of the evidence regarding suitability in the literature, it appeared that metaphor was an appropriate device to unpack and interpret the biographical accounts in this study. Hence, I chose to use it in my interview questions to assist teacher leaders reflect on and articulate their leadership journey. Subsequently, drawing on G. Morgan's (2006) work, I used metaphor to reflect on and interpret the data from the lived experiences of the 10 teacher leaders in this study.

## 3.6   Validity

Validity is concerned with feeling "sufficiently secure [about the findings] to construct social policy or legislation based on them [and that] action that can be taken on the part of research participants to benefit themselves or their particular social contexts" (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2013, pp. 246-247). The qualitative researcher must therefore ensure that the process and the outcome is "well-documented, communicated clearly with persuasive and comprehensive description of results that addresses the research problem and ensures a valid and reliable research outcome" (Wiersma, 2000, pp. 211-212).

Lincoln et al. (2013, pp. 249-250) identified authenticity criteria for validity – fairness, and ontological, educative, catalytic and tactical authenticity. Each of these has been given due consideration in judging the validity of the processes and outcomes of this study as presented in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9

*Validity Authenticity Criteria*

| Validity Authenticity Criteria | Considerations in this Study |
| --- | --- |
| *Fairness*, that is, a quality of balance, with stakeholder or participant views, perspectives, claims, concerns and voices apparent in the text. Omission of these would reflect a form of bias. | Participant views, perspectives, claims, concerns and voices apparent in the text evidenced through: <br> **Process:** survey and in-depth semi-structured interview; interpretative analysis of interviews through conceptual diagrams, mindmaps and metaphor for leadership. <br> **Outcomes evidence:** Mindmaps and biographies (teacher leader voices represented throughout both of these devices); Teacher leader capacity building model (voices represented in the themes as an outcome of the study). |
| *Ontological authenticity*, determining a raised level of awareness by individual research participants | Raised level of awareness by individual research participants evidenced through: <br> **Process:** Teacher leader interviews and analysis - the capacity to engage in moral critique (Lincoln et al., 2013, p. 250), and having a raised level of self-reflection and meta-awareness of who they are as leaders evident in the interview process. They were passionate about their roles as teacher leaders and strong advocates for this role to continue in an organisational context. <br> **Outcomes evidence:** Meta-awareness evidenced in the mapping of teacher leader participants on the *Teachers as Leaders Framework* and in the mind-mapping of each teacher leader; Research Question 1; *The Teacher Leader Capacity Building Model,* as a product of this study. |
| *Educative authenticity*, determining a raised level of awareness by research participants about those who surround them or with whom they come into contact for some social or organisational purpose. | Raised level of awareness by research participants about those who surround them within their organisational contexts evidenced through: <br> **Process:** Teacher leader interviews and analysis – the capacity to understand the organisational context within which they operate was evident within the interview process. They understood the context of leadership, the characteristics for effective leaders and could define a model for effective organisational practice for whole-school improvement. They could also identify when the people around them were not aligned with the model. <br> **Outcomes evidence:** Meta-awareness of the organisational context in which they work evidenced in biographies and mindmaps; Research Questions 2 and 3; *The Teacher Leader Capacity Building Model,* as a product of this study. |
| *Catalytic authenticity*, the ability of a given inquiry to prompt action on the part of the research participants | This inquiry has the potential to prompt action on the part of the participants through: <br> • *The Teacher Leader Capacity Building Model* produced as an outcome of the research. It is a model that has the potential to be implemented in schools and education systems to ensure the sustainability of teacher leadership. <br> • A list of four recommendations for schools and education systems to consider to complement the implementation of the model. <br> • A list of five recommendations for further research to strengthen the future for teacher leadership in education settings. |

| *Tactical authenticity*, the involvement of the researcher/evaluator in training participants in specific forms of social and political action if participants desire such training. | As the researcher, I have the potential and experience to train interested parties in specific forms of action for school improvement through my work with the LRI, including: |
|---|---|

As the researcher, I have the potential and experience to train interested parties in specific forms of action for school improvement through my work with the LRI, including:

- *The Teacher Leader Capacity Building Model*, and the development of teacher leaders, which I have already implemented as a workshop in an International setting raising awareness of this model.
- Whole-school improvement processes
- Visioning processes
- Schoolwide Pedagogy
- Professional Conversations processes

Given the nature of the biographical methodology, which relies on the interpretation of multiple realities and the depth of understanding of people's experiences, I needed to ensure that credibility is preserved through extensive data collection, or saturation, rather than triangulation to identify emerging themes. This was achieved through the collection of extensive survey and interview data for each of the final 10 participants. I used comprehensive description in the analysis of the data and communication of results. This was achieved through examining the data using three layers of analysis (Table 3.8) and communication of the data through the use of conceptual diagrams, mind maps, metaphor and written biographies.

During the first layer of analysis, a colour coding system used for both the interviews and the surveys, as described earlier, was used to identify mapping to the research questions, then transcriptions were annotated with reflections and insights to identify emerging themes. This was followed by a second layer of biographical interpretive analysis through the use of conceptual diagrams and mind mapping for each participant's data to uncover further insights and themes from the data. The third layer of analysis involved the use of metaphor to analyse the teacher leader journeys and images of leadership, thus providing further insights into current understandings of teacher leadership for these awakened sleeping giants. Each layer of analysis and each conceptual diagram, mind map or metaphorical device used for analysis provided another lens for looking at the data, and thus painted a comprehensive picture for each participant's teacher leader experience. To demonstrate truth value or trustworthiness, and hence credibility, "the naturalist must show that he or she has represented those multiple constructions adequately" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 296).

This study employs comprehensive description (Denzin, 1989; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) enabling the final report to be transferable for other readers to compare the context for the research with other similar settings. Extensive data collection ensures that the voices and realities of the teacher leaders are represented adequately in order to understand the depth of their lived experiences. The findings are such that some action can be taken to benefit the participants by the implementation of a model at a school or education system level. As the researcher, I have the potential and experience to train interested parties in processes for school improvement and the Teacher Leader Capacity Building Model as an outcome of this research.

## 3.7  The Place of the Researcher in the Study

Throughout this chapter, I have highlighted my place in this study – first, by the use of the pronoun *I* in the write-up. The use of first person is necessary to describe what was done in the field and "to reflect an awareness that the researcher cannot be independent of the field data" (Perry, 1998, p. 78).

Second, and arguably, most importantly, I came to this research idea with two sources of inspiration:

1. My experience as an IDEAS teacher leader (2001-2003) in my (former) school. The skills and capacities developed throughout those three years awakened my sleeping giant of teacher leadership. I was ready to face new educational challenges.
2. A workshop I co-presented that inspired possibilities for research into this area. Following my transition to the University sector and work with the LRI, I co-presented at a workshop to teacher leaders at an IDEAS National Learning Forum back in 2008. Teachers at that forum were inspired by my journey as a teacher leader following a process of whole school improvement.  I began to wonder about other teacher leaders and what their experiences were like. My sleeping giant had been awakened – what was the experience of others?

Third, I came to this research with particular experiences and views on teacher leadership – based on a model of leadership called *parallel leadership* (see Figure 1.6), where teacher leaders and administrator leaders are engaged in collaborative action to strengthen the alignment between the school's vision and teaching and learning practices to enhance organisational capacity. Parallel leadership is based on three values: mutual trust and mutual respect; shared sense of purpose; and allowance for individual expression (Crowther, 2010; Crowther et al., 2010; Crowther & Associates, 2011; Crowther et al., 2009).

Last, while it has been said that "self-understanding is believed to bias or distort successful interpretation" (Kerdeman, 1998, cited in Schwandt, 2000, p. 194), it is my belief that understanding my own experience of teacher leadership in a school reform process has enabled me to interpret my participants' experiences through deep knowledge of the process and the experience. While their experiences differed, through the co-construction process during the interview, my experience assisted them unpack their experiences by asking the right questions throughout the meaning making process so that new meaning could be made. As mentioned previously, I knew that I had to be cognisant throughout the interpretation, analysis and writing up of results that the lens I was using for viewing the results was the participant's lens as well as my lens in the co-construction of meaning.

## 3.8  Ethical Considerations

Ethics clearance for the proposed study was obtained from the Office of Research and Higher Degrees at the University of Southern Queensland. The participants were informed about the features of the interview format and the written response survey in letters of consent – if they were involved in both phases – with an assurance that the information will be treated in a strictly confidential manner. Data will be stored in a

locked filing cabinet or on a password protected computer for a minimum of five years. Pseudonyms have been used for any names to preserve anonymity.

Participants were interviewed, where possible, in a natural setting so they felt at ease. Due to the geographical location of participants across Australia, many were interviewed in the comfort of their own space at a time to suit them. Where local participants came to my office, this was by their own choosing, as I also offered to come to their location. Refreshments were provided. As already highlighted, knowing the work of the LRI, and given that I had already worked with many of the participants so that a trust relationship had been established, they felt at ease to share their experiences and insights on this topic. Participants were also notified in the formal letter of consent (see Appendix D) that they may withdraw from the research at any time.

## 3.9    Limitations

A possible limitation to the study was that specific participants were selected from teacher leaders who have been through a process of whole school improvement and only 10 participants were selected for interview. This is, however, also a strength of this research, in that the participants were selected to suit the purpose and scope of the research using purposive sampling techniques, thus enabling extensive data collection from the 10 participants to identify emerging themes and comprehensive description (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) in the analysis of the data. By choosing only 10 participants for interview, I was able to capture a richness and depth of experience within each narrative that would not have been possible with more participants and in the timeframe available for this study.

## 3.10    Conclusion and Final Reflection

In this chapter, I have highlighted the importance of my place as the researcher given my experience as a teacher leader. From the framing of the research questions, through the interviews with participants, to the decisions about the coding of the data, it has been a personal journey. I have *lived* the experiences with the participants and been part of their journey.

The methodology was designed to take account of the individual teacher voices as biographical interpretive accounts of their lived experiences as teacher leaders. My challenge as the biographical interpretive researcher was to separate the lived life from the told story (Wengraf, cited in Bornat, 2008; Gubrium & Holstein, 2000; Wiersma, 2000) and then find a way to communicate the interpretation in a narrative that tells a story (Janesick, 2000) that was a textual expression of its essence (van Manen, 2001). This was done through the use of visual representation via the use of conceptual diagrams, mind maps and metaphorical devices (Buzan & Buzan, 1995; Daley, 2004; Davies, 2011; Eppler, 2006; Rustler & Buzan, 2012) in the coding and analysis of the data.

In Chapter Four, the data from Phase One questionnaire survey will be presented, followed by the Phase Two interview data in Chapter Five, at which point the narratives of the *awakened* sleeping giants will be revealed through a biographical interpretive analysis of their experiences through mind mapping.

# 4. CHAPTER FOUR: The Search for the Awakened Sleeping Giants: Who Are They and What Capacities Have They Developed as Teacher Leaders?

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Teacher leaders "perform highly complex formal educational functions in conjunction with, and on behalf of, their colleagues and their principals. They are also individually characterised by marked dispositions, styles and ideals". (Crowther, Ferguson, & Hann, 2009, p. 4)

## 2.6 Who Are the Awakened Sleeping Giants? An Introduction

In this chapter, the process for the search for the teacher leaders, or awakened sleeping giants, is revealed. To do this, the data from Phase One of the research, the Questionnaire Survey, are presented and analysed. This will be followed later in this chapter by an explanation of the coding process, analysis and presentation of related data for selection of participants for Phase Two, the in-depth semi-structured interviews. The biographical interpretive interview data from Phase Two will be presented in Chapter Five.

When Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) heralded the awakening of the sleeping giant of teacher leadership with their six *Dimensions of Teacher Leadership*, the way was paved for further research into this area. This was closely followed by Lambert's (2003, 2007) *Leadership Capacity Matrix* and *District Leadership Capacity Matrix*, which provided ways of enhancing a leadership culture in schools and districts. It is evident from this and other research that leadership development, and teacher leaders in particular, is integral to sustainable whole school improvement and thus the improvement in student learning outcomes. Yet, it is emerging from this study that in some Australian schools and systems, the development of teachers as leaders is not apparent.

An Australian research team developed *The Teachers as Leaders Framework* (Crowther et al., 2009; Crowther et al., 2002) – see Chapter Two (Table 2.4). This framework acknowledges the capacity of teachers as leaders in their schools and communities and their potential as leaders in the school reform process. *The Teachers as Leaders Framework* was also used for this study as a lens in the preparation of the Questionnaire Survey for Phase One data collection, in the selection of participants for the survey, and in the initial analysis of survey results for selection of interview participants for Phase Two data collection.

*The Teachers as Leaders Framework* (Crowther et al., 2009; Crowther et al., 2002) is an authoritative, research-based representation of the teacher leader activity evidenced in IDEAS schools. The framework is a result of the Leadership Research International's research and developmental work, which spans more than 16 years. Teacher leaders in these schools "perform highly complex formal educational functions in conjunction with, and on behalf of, their colleagues and their principals. They are also individually characterised by marked dispositions, styles and ideals" (Crowther et al., 2009, p. 4). They are involved in advocating for the needs of

students within and beyond the school; developing professional external networks; designing complex professional learning and workshops; and working with administrators on developing alignment between the vision, values and shared pedagogical practices. These are very complex tasks that, in IDEAS schools, are enacted through a distributed form of leadership called parallel leadership (see Figure 1.6), where teachers as the pedagogical leaders, and administrative leaders as the strategic leaders, work together in alignment to share understandings and develop new meaning in an environment of mutual trust and respect. With this framework in mind, the search for the sleeping giants began.

## 4.1    Looking for the Awakened Sleeping Giants: Presenting the Questionnaire Survey Data

In the following section, the Questionnaire Survey data are presented and analysed in the search for the sleeping giants for Phase Two interviews. Participants for the Questionnaire Survey task were selected from the IDEAS database of teacher leaders. These were teacher leaders who had experience on the IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT) and thus the probability of participants meeting the criteria in the *Teachers as Leaders Framework* was very high. An initial analysis and mapping of participants to the framework would reveal the extent of these teacher leader functions. Following this, an analysis of the contexts that enabled the teacher leaders to enact these very complex functions once they had been through the IDEAS project, and once their sleeping giant had been awakened, would be revealed by the design of the survey questions.

The survey questions were designed using higher-order reflective thinking strategies, specifically a Y-chart and SWOT analysis (Frangenheim, 2006), to draw out (1) the participants' understandings of their developed teacher leader capacities during the two-year commitment to the IDEAS project and since engaging with the process, and (2) the encouragers and inhibitors to enacting those capacities within the contexts they now find themselves. To preserve anonymity and due to the larger number of participants in Phase One of the research, the participants have been identified numerically, for example, Participant One, along with relevant geographic and contextual information.

A sample from the Questionnaire Survey data, specifically the data for Participant Two, has been presented as a table (Table 4.1). The data in this format was used in finalising participants for interview and demonstrates two key aspects of each participant's teacher leader journey:

1. The participant's engagement as a teacher leader during the IDEAS project using descriptors from the Y-chart format – looks like, sounds like, feels like– while also describing the enablers and inhibiters for their teacher leader capacity development; and
2. The participant's engagement as a teacher leader following the IDEAS project using a SWOT analysis, thus identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to their teacher leader capacities within their current context.

The data from the Phase One Questionnaire Surveys, as per the sample provided in Table 4.1, revealed a wide range of teacher leader experiences. It was clear that each of the participants had demonstrated teacher leader criteria from the *Teachers as Leaders Framework* throughout their IDEAS experience. This is evidenced in the sample excerpts of participant quotes from the survey data mapped to the framework (Table 4.2).

Table 4.1

*Sample of the Questionnaire Survey Data (Phase One) – Participant Two*

| Participant | Geographic information; IDEAS involvement | Participant's teacher leader engagement during IDEAS | Participant's teacher leader engagement post-IDEAS (SWOT Analysis) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Participant 2 Female 46-50 | Victoria Secondary sector State Education<br><br>ISMT member and co-facilitator 2004-2009 | **Y-chart**<br>*Looks like*<br>• Presenting<br>• Teamwork<br>• Meetings<br>• Visiting other IDEAS schools<br>• Establishing networks with other schools<br>• Thoughts on paper; synthesis of thoughts<br>• Contributions of staff, parents and students<br>• Student forums<br>• Hubs – splinter groups.<br><br>*Sounds like*<br>ACTIVE:<br>• Voicing thoughts, values and beliefs within small teams at school level<br>• Voicing thoughts, values and beliefs at staff meetings with staff<br>• Contributing to discussions with other schools at IDEAS meetings<br>• Presentations at IDEAS conferences<br>• Presentations at other conferences and meetings – principals' conferences<br>• International Arts and Society conference | **Current context: Participant Two** has remained in the same school as a teacher leader, but in a new leadership role as a coach and mentor, with the same principal leading the school. In her new role, she continues to advocate for the Schoolwide Pedagogy, which was created and visioned by the teachers at the school in her days as an ISMT member. Participant Two has continued her professional learning, and to advocate for her school's work by presenting at an International Arts conference, worked with the local council and continues her well-established external networks as an expert within the local Arts community. With her principal's encouragement, she hopes to advance this work in the near future.<br><br>**Strengths**<br>• Knowledge and experience in community building<br>• Strong leadership voice in leadership team<br>• Work more closely with teachers in different subject areas<br>• Work with teachers on improving instructional practice at different levels – classroom, faculty and whole school level.<br><br>**Weaknesses**<br>• Balancing the coaching and mentoring role with the leadership role.<br><br>**Opportunities**<br>• Is it time to relook at the school's purpose statement and values?<br>• Is it time to relook at the (school's) principles of teaching and learning? |

- Visiting Victorian schools, visiting interstate schools, visiting international schools

PASSIVE:
- Listening to thoughts, values, beliefs of others
- Processing and sifting information relevant to my school's context.

*Feels like*
- Feels like the *Aurora Australis* ice breaker – there was a sense of a very slow moving force that forged its way through a solid mass. The ice was rigid and inflexible as were many staff's habits and practices. I also felt the need to respect the nature and positives of the solid mass – staff at this school held strong to many of the traditions that had come through the years. In particular the re-emergence of the school motto, which had been sitting silently in the background. The IDEAS process brought this to the forefront where it still sits strongly
- Feel pride for all the positive aspects.

**Encouragers:**
- IDEAS support team
- (University) support team
- Teachers embracing change

**Inhibitors:**
- Most teachers – concerned about change

Tall poppy syndrome

**Threats**
- Teacher acceptance of changing roles
- The introduction of teaching and learning coaches has not been well or widely received, although there has been a gradual acceptance.

**Participant 2 further comments and reflections**: When we engaged with the IDEAS process in 2004, one of the reasons was to capture the culture of the school in readiness for a time of a substantial change in the staffing. Many expert teachers were due to retire and have consequently done so. The current staff profile looks very different to the way that it looked eight years ago. The school has a much larger number of graduate teachers who have brought their own understandings of the culture of the school. Many have chosen (this school) because of the reputation it holds. They are young and enthusiastic and are taking the values and philosophies that resonate with them. The (school's) purpose statement still holds strong – stickers espousing these are stuck onto all student electronic notebooks. The (school's) principles of teaching and learning are still humming in the background and are used for unit planning.

Table 4.2

Survey Data Evidence Mapped to The Teachers as Leaders Framework

| *The Teachers as Leaders Framework* | **Teacher leader excerpts from the survey data** |
|---|---|
| Convey convictions about a better world by<br>• articulating a positive future for all students<br>• contributing to an image of teaching as a profession that makes a difference | • "[We had] energy driven and empowered staff who communicated with each other and involved parents and other volunteers in the process … children expressing how they can own parts of the school and take responsibility for their ideas to initiate community involvement in the school … directed towards the purpose of helping children towards their goal of doing and being the best they can be". (Participant 19)<br>• "[I have this] self-belief [and] ability to lead teams … and ability to look at both the bigger picture [the vision] and work with others to plan how we will achieve it … my new role within a new school has provided opportunities to work to create a new school culture where students and their wellbeing and learning opportunities are always at the centre". (Participant 5)<br>• "[Our] meetings [were] held regularly by an enthusiastic diverse team [with] lively talk, vigorous debates [and] discussions over small nuances of meaning [using] descriptive and aspirational language … with creative workshops for whole of staff to generate school distinctiveness [using] artefacts, documents, photos, symbols". (Participant 14) |
| Facilitate communities of learning by<br>• encouraging a shared, schoolwide approach to core pedagogical processes<br>• approaching professional learning as consciousness-raising about complex issues<br>• synthesising new ideas out of colleagues' professional discourse and reflective activities | • "[IDEAS] builds teacher capacity to facilitate change [and] resources teachers facilitating professional dialogue … [it's about] leading change and actioning school-wide change and engaging with staff and other stakeholders; working with other schools and networking with other teacher leaders [and] the professional development opportunities … [it's] empowering, busy, exhausting at times … invigorating …". (Participant 8)<br>• "[It's about] processing and sifting information relevant to my school's context". (Participant 2)<br>• "Having everyone on the same page was important … [It's about] working together – staff, parents and students … Professional conversations and 'no-blame' [are important, and the] synthesising, feeding back and refining from (in-house) workshops and in-service". (Participant 10)<br>• "[It was] an opportunity to run/manage continuous improvement endeavours …". (Participant 21) |
| Strive for pedagogical excellence by<br>• showing genuine interest in students' needs and well-being<br>• continuously developing and refining personal teaching gifts and talents<br>• seeking deep understanding of significant pedagogical practices | • "I became far more reflective about how I might improve". (Participant 7)<br>• "We were talking in a different way and we ended up having a strong sense of who we were". (Participant 7)<br>• "My development as an educational leader has been deeply influenced by my involvement in IDEAS and its notion of parallel leadership. In many ways, it is my ingrained way of 'being a leader'. This has not always accorded with the expectations of the system or of others in my workplaces". (Participant 14)<br>• "[My] work with student voice [and the Student IDEAS Team] led to a Premier's scholarship in 2006 to undertake a study tour of the United Kingdom visiting 25 schools that were doing innovative work with student voice and to work with a researcher at [a University in the UK] … [I've also] completed a Masters of Education focusing on school leadership and student voice and written a chapter for a book and journal articles [on this topic]". (Participant 12)<br>• "Encouragers [for me] … authentic engagement with authoritative pedagogy … [the ISMT has led] deep engagement with authoritative pedagogy and models of quality teaching". (Participant 9) |

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| Confront barriers in the school's culture and structures by<br>• standing up for children, especially disadvantaged and marginalised individuals and groups<br>• working with administrators to find solutions to issues of equity, fairness and justice<br>• encouraging student "voice" in ways that are sensitive to students' developmental stages and circumstances | • "[I am] a positive advocate despite the many challenges we faced [and have developed] more effective strategies to communicate with staff at whole school and individual level … and strategies to deal with staff inertia and have developed whole school action plans to facilitate change". (Participant 9)<br>• "[I have] sheer and utter determination to achieve anything that I am passionate about to help children … if the team dynamics are positive, then no matter how hard a task seems, it can be achieved on step at a time …". (Participant 16)<br>• "[I have] absolute knowledge that the right team can achieve extraordinary things together no matter what the odds". (Participant 15)<br>• "[It was] involvement from different voices – parent, student and staff … and engagement in conversation (which was) balanced … loud voices quiet and quiet voices heard …". (Participant 1)<br>• "What can we do to make the school better? Can we develop a dialogue between students and teachers about teaching and learning? [I] enjoyed student enthusiasm and their desire to change things [the Student IDEAS Team]… [I used] knowledge and experience gained through IDEAS, especially the SWP workshop to develop student voice initiatives [in] negotiated pedagogy and curriculum …". (Participant 12) |
| Translate ideas into sustainable systems of action by<br>• working with the principal, administrators and other teachers to manage projects that heighten alignment between the school's vision, values, pedagogical practices and professional learning activities<br>• building alliances and nurturing external networks of support | • "My principal trusts my professionalism and seeks advice on issues. I believe this trust has been gained through my work with IDEAS [as a teacher leader on the ISMT]". (Participant 9)<br>• "There was a sense that the process [IDEAS] and the product [the vision and SWP] was positive, real, useful". (Participant 13)<br>• "[It was] an authentic opportunity to improve things". (Participant 4)<br>• "Strengths of the process [for me, are] teacher ownership and teacher engagement; developing new relationships with staff; cohesion of purpose; support of successive principals; unity of purpose; opportunity for further teacher leadership; owned direction of school improvement; opportunity to expand thinking; Limitations [include] Systemic eg Department of Education demands, and entrenched attitudes". (Participant 6)<br>• "We have used the framework [IDEAS] to [assist with our school merger, and to] develop our new vision/values, Schoolwide Pedagogy, personal pedagogy [we've] worked on deepening pedagogy in 2011". (Participant 3)<br>• "[My principal] showed complete faith in my decision making ability and also supported my growth as an IDEAS facilitator in wider [systemic and inter-state] contexts …". (Participant 17)<br>• "[It provided] a real opportunity to work with other schools and network with other teacher leaders". (Participant 8)<br>• "Groups of schools at similar stages [of the process] can get together to discuss together … [to] enable [schoolwide] pedagogical change". (Participant 11) |
| Nurture a culture of success by<br>• acting on opportunities to emphasise accomplishments and high expectations<br>• encouraging collective responsibility in addressing schoolwide challenges<br>• encouraging self-respect and confidence in students' communities | • "Constantly being required to shape strategic thinking, achieve results, cultivate productive working relationships and communicate with influence provides a challenging environment in which to work, but also offers great opportunity for continued learning and growth. These capabilities [are] critical in any workplace, particularly the school context". (Participant 18)<br>• "I felt that as a member of the leadership team [ISMT] I had an added responsibility to keep some direction and to provide some professional development for staff and parents … I felt that being part of the IDEAS program encouraged me to reclaim my profession. I felt invigorated and full of energy for positive change in our school. [It felt like] re-enchantment". (Participant 20) |

Adapted from *Developing teacher leaders*, 2nd ed. (p. 3) by F. Crowther, M. Ferguson, and L. Hann, 2009, Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

The survey data revealed that each teacher leader survey participant had been a member of their school's IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT) as part of the IDEAS school renewal process. As teacher leaders in an IDEAS school, they had also demonstrated the criteria in *The Teachers as Leaders Framework* (Crowther et al., 2009). The synthesised evidence has been mapped to the criteria of the Framework (Table 4.3).

They were all sleeping giants or teacher leaders who had been awakened throughout the IDEAS project. It was now time to question whether that teacher leader capacity had been enabled since engaging with IDEAS by examining their current contexts. Whether they had been enabled or otherwise would assist my selection in providing a diversity of participant experiences for interview selection for the next phase of data collection and analysis.

Table 4.3

*Evidence of Teachers as Leaders Mapped to the Criteria of the Framework*

| The Teachers as Leaders Framework | Evidence |
|---|---|
| **Convey convictions about a better world** | These teacher leaders engaged staff, parents and students in the visioning process for the school. Engagement of key stakeholders ensured ownership of the process and the product and generated a vision for the school using 'descriptive and aspirational language' that was distinctive and unique and articulated 'their future'. |
| **Facilitate communities of learning** | These teacher leaders encouraged others to participate in the development of a schoolwide approach to teaching and learning. They did this through the facilitation of professional conversations in a 'no-blame' environment to engage staff in the 'processing and sifting through information' and 'synthesising, feeding back and refining' of new ideas from their professional learning. For them, it was about building teacher capacity to 'facilitate change' and networking with other teacher leaders in professional learning communities, internal and external to the school environment. |
| **Strive for pedagogical excellence** | These teacher leaders continually seek to deepen their understanding of pedagogical practice as they strive to improve the collective understanding of quality learning and teaching in their schools. They did this by reflecting on their personal pedagogical practice and leadership style and by engaging with authoritative and personal pedagogies to refine their approach to a schoolwide pedagogy. Some teacher leaders have engaged with further study and scholarly work to refine their talents and skills. At the core of this work is their 'genuine interest in students' needs and well-being' reflected in their schoolwide approach to pedagogy. |
| **Confront barriers in the school's culture** | These teacher leaders advocated for the needs of their students and ensured that all voices were heard – staff, parents and students. They understand their challenges and resolve to work together in a shared schoolwide approach to confront any barriers and stay true to their vision and values to make their schools a better place for all. They believe that with the 'right people' working together towards a shared vision, they can 'achieve extraordinary things'. |
| **Translate ideas into sustainable systems of action** | These teacher leaders worked with their principals, administrators and other teacher leaders in the creation of a shared school vision and a schoolwide approach to pedagogical practice. They realised this was an authentic opportunity to improve things as there was cohesion of purpose, their professionalism was valued, their opinions were valued and they owned the direction of the whole school improvement. With the support of the principal and administrators, they had the opportunity to overcome the limitations of systemic demands and entrenched attitudes and build and nurture their external networks of support through working with other schools and networking with other teacher leaders. Opportunities to extend their personal professional learning networks also abound in these contexts. |
| **Nurture cultures of success** | These teacher leaders felt successful in their work and thus were able to collectively act to address schoolwide challenges, through respectful and productive working relationships where all voices were heard. They also celebrated their successes to emphasise their accomplishments with external networks, parents and school communities. |

Adapted from *Developing teacher leaders*, 2nd ed. (p. 3) by F. Crowther, M. Ferguson, and L. Hann, 2009, Thousand Oaks: CA, Corwin Press.

## 4.2 Locating the Awakened Sleeping Giants: Selecting Survey Participants for Interview

The process of coding and analysing the data in locating the sleeping giants is explained in the following section. This has resulted in the final selection of participants for interview.

In the initial coding and reduction of the data, I used the colour coding exercise outlined in Chapter Three and three coloured highlighters to highlight and map the participants' responses transcribed on the large wall chart to my three Research Questions (Figure 4.1). Research Question One was the pink lens, Research Question Two was the orange lens and Research Question Three was the green lens. In the cross section of responses from each participant, I found that any one of the survey respondents could have been selected to answer each of the research questions, however selecting this many for interview would have been outside the scope of this study.
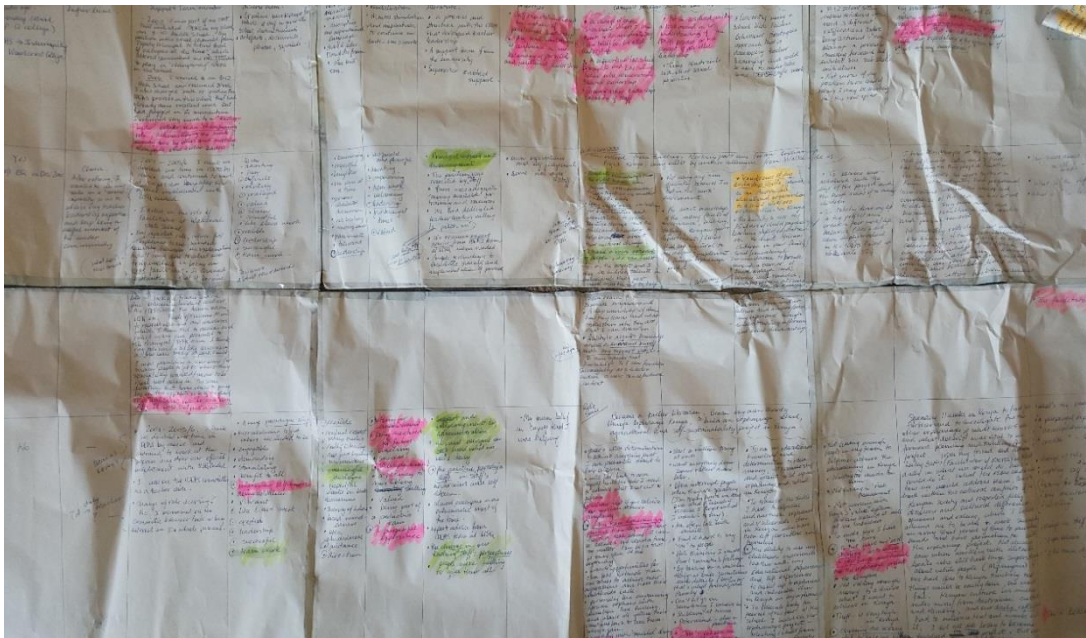


*Figure 4.1.* Survey Data Collection Colour Coding (Small Sample of Larger Chart)

As identified in Chapter Three, the patterns that emerged from the data highlighted some key themes (Table 4.4). An examination of these themes enabled me to select a smaller sample using the developed set of criteria to locate participants with interesting, diverse experiences and from a range of education systems across Australia, to narrow the field to 10 participants for interview.

Table 4.4

*Key Themes Emerging from the Colour Coding*

| RQ1: Pink lens Lived experiences | RQ2: Orange lens Supportive contexts | RQ3: Green lens Implications |
|---|---|---|
| • Confidence; belief in self as a leader<br>• Autonomy – to take initiative – *I can fly*<br>• Seeing a place for self<br>• Professional learning opportunities – conference attendance and presentation<br>• Sharing practice<br>• Coaching/mentoring of others<br>• Feeling valued<br>• Inclusiveness – shared understanding<br>• Professional dialogue – all voices heard<br>• Working with the *right team*. | • Relational leadership<br>• Top-down leadership – having to *get back in my box*<br>• The *right team*<br>• The *right* principal<br>• Advocacy within the school<br>• Resourcing – rewarding teachers; time allocation for leadership roles<br>• Positive working environment<br>• Role of the principal in managing change and as an advocate for teacher leadership<br>• Clear vision and transparency. | • Professional learning opportunities – contextual<br>• Autonomy<br>• Advocacy beyond the school<br>• Networks beyond the school |

As identified in Chapter Three, I needed only 10 participants to provide sufficient data to answer the Research Questions and in the time available for this study. I then turned to the criteria I had adopted for selection of participants for the semi-structured in-depth interview (Table 4.5) – see Chapter Three for explanation of the criteria.

Table 4.5

*Criteria for Selection of Participants for Semi-Structured Interview*

Participants selected would:

(1) have had a variety of interesting experiences following their engagement with IDEAS where they may or may not have had the opportunity to utilise their teacher leader capacities in other ways;

(2) have had experience in leading the whole school improvement process at their school, as part of the ISMT;

(3) be from a range of education systems throughout Australia.

This set of criteria was used to examine each of the survey respondents to find the participants for interview. The last criterion was achievable from the survey participants, as I had a cross-section of participants from a range of education systems that had engaged with IDEAS throughout Australia. The second criterion of having ISMT experience had already been fulfilled by each participant in the survey. It was the first criterion that was the deciding factor in enabling me to select participants for interview. I would select participants that had a diverse range of experiences that would provide interesting subjects for interpretive biographical accounts.

I chose participants for interview from a range of situations – some participants that had been provided with conditions that encouraged their teacher leader capacity, some that had created their own conditions to flourish, while others that had been trapped or restricted and found themselves in a professionally unrewarding environment. This was the diversity of teacher leader experience that would provide some interesting data for my study.

### 4.2.1  Teacher leader current contexts and experiences.

To assist in selecting interview participants to meet the first criterion, the current and relevant contextual and narrative information for each survey participant has been summarised in Table 4.6. Collating the information into a table enabled me to sort through the survey participant experiences and narrow the field to select the diversity of participant experience required for interview for this study.  The relevant information that aided my selection of the final 10 participants highlighting their diverse experiences has been colour coded accordingly.

Colour coding for Table 4.6.

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| --- | --- |
|  | Transformed self in same context |
|  | Transformed self in new context |
|  | Spread their own wings |
|  | Trapped or restricted |

Table 4.6

*Teacher Leader Current Contexts and Experiences*

| *Participant *selected for interview* | Education sector and ISMT experience | Located in original (IDEAS) school | Located in new context | Contextual information/narrative |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *1 – Male 36-40* | Victoria, State Education – Primary<br><br>ISMT facilitator 2006-2009 | | Principal in a new school | **Participant 1** relocated for promotion as principal at a new school, following his teacher leader experience at previous school. As a teacher leader in his previous school, he felt "empowered and energised" by the process. Professional conversations ensured that there was "involvement from different voices – parent/student/staff, and it was balanced – the loud voices quiet and quiet voice heard". He has been able to transfer his teacher leader skills and knowledge and understandings of the process to this new context, a non-IDEAS school. He has completed a Master of Education using IDEAS theory base and says he has a "strong theoretical understanding of the concepts". |
| *2 – Female\* 46-50* | Victoria, State Education – Secondary<br><br>ISMT member and co-facilitator 2004-2009 | Remains in same school, with same principal | | **Participant 2** has remained in the same school as a teacher leader, but in a new leadership role as a coach and mentor, with the same principal leading the school. In her new role, she continues to advocate for the Schoolwide Pedagogy, which was created and visioned by the teachers at the school in her days as an ISMT member. Participant Two has continued her professional learning, and to advocate for her school's work by presenting at an International Arts conference, worked with the local council and continues her well-established external networks as an expert within the local Arts community. With her principal's encouragement, she hopes to advance this work in the near future. |
| *3 – Female 51-55* | Victoria, State Education – Primary<br><br>ISMT member and co-facilitator 2009-2012 | | Has remained in the school that has now merged with another school. | **Participant 3** has used her teacher leader skills in taking on new leadership responsibilities, and has been promoted to Learning Unit Coordinator of the Year 3-4 Learning Unit in the school; she is a music specialist; and is the coordinator of a pilot music (strings) program in the Arts with (a city) Symphony Orchestra, thus fostering external networks. As a teacher leader and facilitator of the IDEAS project, her confidence has increased and "it has been a huge task at a volatile time in our 'merging' history". She acknowledged the (system) role and support in pointing them in this direction: "Our Regional Director suggested we attend the IDEAS (National) conference in 2008 to assist with our (school) merger. We have used the framework to develop our new school vision/values, SWP, personal pedagogy". |

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| **4 – Female >60** | Victoria, State Education – Primary<br><br>ISMT member and co-facilitator 2009-2012 | | Same school, but merged with another school | **Participant 4** remains with the same school that merged with another school. Further information about her current role was not supplied. She did see IDEAS as "an authentic opportunity to improve things", but would like to see more "opportunities for explicit discussion by whole staff". She felt there was an "over-emphasis on numeracy and literacy (NAPLAN) to the detriment of IDEAS". |
| **5 – Female 56-60** | Victoria, State Education – Primary<br><br>ISMT member and facilitator 2005-2008 at the school level;<br>IDEAS Support team (IST) member offering support to other IDEAS schools | | Moved with her school, as part of a four school merger in a school regeneration project | **Participant 5** moved in 2009 as part of the four school merger. She claimed that "the merger was not by choice, however it was my choice to move with the school into the new entity". She was invited to be part of the leadership team in the new school and was promoted to assistant principal, following her teacher leader experience in the IDEAS school renewal process. "I was keen to be involved in the establishment of the new school and excited by the prospect of having a role to play in its leadership team." |
| **6 – Male 56-60** | Western Australia, State Education – Secondary ISMT facilitator 2006-2011; ISMT member 2012; IDEAS Support Team (IST) member, offering support to other IDEAS schools 2009-2010 | Remains in same school, with same principal | | **Participant 6** is in the same school, but in a different role. He was promoted to Head of a Learning Area and says that the ISMT presence is still strong in the school. "I began as the school based facilitator of IDEAS until 2012 when due to a different role in the school, I handed that role over to a new facilitator and continued to work in the ISMT." He noted that IDEAS has been accepted as an ongoing process in their school and after attending Andy Hargreaves' presentation on succession planning, he was keen to ensure that the process: (1) had a continuing impact on the school, and (2) ensure that a succession process was in place. |
| **7 – Female* 41-45** | Western Australia, State Education – Secondary ISMT school facilitator 2007-2009; IDEAS state coordination role; IDEAS Support Team (IST), offering support to other IDEAS schools | | Professional Learning area (systemic role) working with graduate teachers | **Participant 7** has used her teacher leader skills in a variety of context at the school and system level since her role as a teacher leader in the IDEAS project within the school. She began as an IDEAS facilitator in a school before moving into a system role where she led the IDEAS support team/facilitation and worked in the professional learning area working with graduate teachers. Her IDEAS state coordination role involved forum coordination and workshop planning and delivery. At the time of this survey, she had not moved workplace recently but her role had changed, partly due to the lack of systemic support for IDEAS and she was reassessing her situation. |

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| 8 – Female 41-45 | New South Wales, Catholic Education – Primary ISMT member 2006-2009 (former school); Training IDEAS facilitator 2010-2012; ISMT member 2010-2012 (current school) | | Relocated to a new school context for promotion | **Participant 8** was approached to take on a leadership role in a new school, as assistant principal, following her experience as a teacher leader and coordinator in her previous school. She saw opportunities to use her skills to build teacher capacity to facilitate change through staff meetings and workshops. Knowing the encouragers and inhibitors (including financial constraints) for colleagues and capacity for change from her last context, in her new role, she could resource teachers to facilitate professional dialogue. |
| 9 – Female* 41-45 | New South Wales, Catholic Education – Secondary ISMT member 2007-2010; 2009-2010 (system) leadership training program (IST) | Remains in same school, with same principal | | **Participant 9** was looking for leadership positions in other schools to utilise her teacher leadership expertise further, however her principal did not want to lose her expertise. She was encouraged to stay in her current context when a new leadership position became available and she was promoted to Coordinator, Teaching and Learning. "(I) believe participation in IDEAS was a contributing factor to promotion". Participant nine was also involved in a system leadership training program that was directly linked to the IDEAS work to build system capacity for leaders to work in this area. "I was invited to join (the system) IDEAS leadership training program to provide assistance to other IDEAS school (in our system) … I became the 'expert' (from our school) in the process." |
| 10 – Female* 25-30 | New South Wales, Catholic Education – Primary ISMT member 2007-2008; ISMT facilitator 2009-2011; IDEAS Support Team (IST) member 2010-2011, offering support to other IDEAS schools | | New school | **Participant 10** joined the ISMT on her school as a beginning teacher and was asked to take on the facilitator role as a third year teacher when the original facilitator left the school. She applied for promotion to the new school context and now has a leadership position on the executive – she was encouraged to apply for this role. This was her career goal, which she has reached before turning 30. "This is my ultimate career goal, so it's like I got there earlier than I thought … originally I didn't think I would try and apply … till later in my career, but then because other people said to me, 'I think you could do that really well', it got me thinking a bit more." Participant Ten also participated in (the system) IDEAS leadership training program. |
| 11 – Female 51-55 | Australian Capital Territory, Catholic Education – Primary<br><br>ISMT member, 2004-2008; (System) IDEAS facilitator, 2009-2012 | | IDEAS facilitator at (System) District Education Office | **Participant 11** began her involvement as an ISMT member at her school. Following this, she became the facilitator of IDEAS with the system, leading the process for her district, which involved forum coordination and workshop planning and delivery. From a system perspective, she saw the benefits of networking and professional learning: "Groups of schools at similar stages can get together to discuss together" and found that school were interested in using the IDEAS process to "enable pedagogical change". There was much room for improvement, however, in the building capacity of teachers as leaders in this process: "Staff (were) not able to see IDEAS as a process to be taken over a number of years … (and) ISMT teams are not big enough to capture interested people … when these people leave, there is no longevity". |

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| **12 – Male\* 56-60** | Queensland, State Education – Secondary<br><br>ISMT member, then co-facilitator, 2011-2010; worked with the Student IDEAS Team (SIT) 2001-2007 | Remains in same school context, with two principal changes since IDEAS | | <mark>Participant 12 is on extended leave and is feeling quite disillusioned and frustrated over the events of recent years since IDEAS and the resultant lack of professional capacity, particularly teacher leader capacity.</mark> He was engaged in work on student leadership, student voice and negotiated pedagogy throughout IDEAS that resulted in a Premier's scholarship to the United Kingdom to visit schools and researchers in the student voice field. His scholarly work with other researchers and a Masters of Education in the area of student voice resulted in several publications in this area. When IDEAS was disbanded under the new principal, a top-down approach to leadership predominated, teacher leaders were silenced and his work on student voice was marginalised as well. "My role is essentially the same, but things have changed." The second new principal, formerly part of the original IDEAS team, has returned to the school as a principal and is turning this around, prioritising teacher leadership development in his school planning. |
| **13 – Male \* 51-55** | Queensland, State Education – Secondary<br>ISMT member 2004-2009; chaired various actioning committees. | Remains in the same school context, with a change in principal | | Participant 13 remains as a Head of Department in his school, and has chaired various actioning committees throughout the IDEAS project - Building Positive Relations, Values Education, Schoolwide pedagogy, which has been his most significant role change. From the Values Education actioning committee, "I organised a cluster of local IDEAS schools to join a project …" Throughout IDEAS, there was "a sense that the process and the product was positive, real and useful". <mark>Since IDEAS, he has experienced a change in leadership in the school – an administration with a different set of beliefs and practices and thus he finds himself operating in a very different context: "It is very difficult to take action within school when Admin is the block".</mark> |
| **14 – Female 56-60** | Queensland, State Education – Secondary<br><br>ISMT facilitator and member 2003-2011; IDEAS Support Team (IST) member, offering support to other IDEAS schools. | | Two new school contexts – former IDEAS school; Acting role in a non-IDEAS school. | Participant 14 has relocated from her IDEAS context and deputy principal role to another city. Her first role as a deputy principal was to reinvigorate the IDEAS work in the new school context – "I was charged with re-igniting the IDEAS process in this school that had already done excellent work but had flagged in its momentum." Her second role since then is an Acting Head of Campus in another school context, a non-IDEAS school. She has a supportive executive team who demonstrate shared leadership, along with strong teacher leadership capacity of staff and relishes the opportunity of being in charge of her own sub-school where she can "work to demonstrate my own belief in parallel leadership. My development as an educational leader has been deeply influenced by my involvement in IDEAS and its notion of parallel leadership. In many ways, it is my ingrained way of 'being a leader'. This has not always accorded with the expectations of the system or of others in my workplace." |

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| **15 – Female*** <br> **56-60** | Queensland, State Education – Primary <br><br> ISMT facilitator 2001-2006; IDEAS Support Team (IST) member, offering support to other IDEAS schools | Remained in same school context post-IDEAS, initially with the same principal, but then with a new principal when their former principal was promoted. | Now retired and working as Deputy Director of (an) Orphanage Project, Africa, 2011-current | **Participant 15**, a former teacher librarian, has now retired from teaching and is using her teacher leader and facilitation expertise to join Participant 16 from her former IDEAS school in building a sustainable Orphanage and school for orphans and vulnerable children in Africa. She sees this is an opportunity for "transference of my leadership skills gained in an Australian educational organisation to a social welfare organisation in (Africa)". Her IDEAS experience has highlighted for her the power of working together to achieve a vision: "(I have) absolute knowledge that the right team can achieve extraordinary things together no matter what the odds. (My) long experience in looking for opportunities to create positive change and the skills and knowledge to help bring about that cultural change" will be a strength in her current role. |
| **16 – Female*** <br> **51-55** | Queensland, State Education – Primary <br><br> ISMT member 2001-2006 (joined initially as a teacher aide) | Remains in same school; uses the school holidays and long-service leave for regular visits to Africa to oversee the Orphanage project. | Founder and Director, (an) Orphanage Project, Africa, 2010-current | **Participant 16** began her career as a teacher aide in the library, studied to become a teacher while on the ISMT, then became a teacher librarian when the teacher librarian retired from their school. When IDEAS was disbanded at her school and a top-down leadership style predominated with the arrival of a new principal, she became despondent that she could no longer enact her teacher leader capacity within this context. Instead, she utilised her teacher leader skills in another context and followed a dream: "I began my own charity in (Africa), to build an orphanage, school, agricultural and self-sustainability project. (My strength is my) sheer and utter determination to achieve anything that I am passionate about to help children". |
| **17 – Female** <br> **51-55** | Queensland, State Education – Primary <br><br> ISMT member, co-facilitator, then facilitator, 2003-2010; IDEAS Support Team (IST) member, providing support to other IDEAS schools; IDEAS systemic support at the local district level | | Tertiary sector – Academic in the Curriculum and Pedagogy area | **Participant 17** began as a music teacher in her school, then joined the ISMT as a member, eventually taking on the Facilitation role. With her principal's support and encouragement, she was involved in IDEAS support and facilitation at the district level and interstate, until systemic support for IDEAS was withdrawn. This prompted her new direction to utilise her teacher leader skills in a new context. She enrolled in further study – a Master of Education, followed by a PhD and is now working as a lecturer at the University. Her teacher leader skills are utilised to advantage by being in charge of a large course team: "as a Course Examiner, (I) have the major role in developing the course and building the team". She enjoys being able to "contribute to research and the creation of new knowledge" in her current role, but acknowledges that the politics, the lack of shared leadership, the limited collegial sharing and the "lack of time due to excessive workloads" are all challenges within the University context. |
| **18 – Female*** <br> **41-45** | Queensland, State Education – Primary <br> ISMT member and co-facilitator, 2002-2005; systemic roles, IDEAS implementation, District Office, 2005-2008 | | Systemic role in Leadership and Performance area, 2008-2012 | **Participant 18** began as a principal in a small school before moving to the deputy principal role in a school which subsequently implemented the IDEAS project. Following her teacher leader role in the IDEAS project, she worked within the system on the implementation of IDEAS, based in a District Office. This role involved forum coordination and workshop planning and delivery for IDEAS schools, as well as working closely with the University. When IDEAS was no longer supported at the system level, she was transferred to another systemic role in leadership and performance in another city. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **19 – Female**\* **56-60** | Queensland, Catholic Education – Primary ISMT member and co-facilitator, 2008-2009 | Remains in same school context with same principal | **Participant 19** is an assistant principal and Year 5 teacher in a small country school. Throughout 2008 she was acting principal, and with their seconded principal's approval, introduced the IDEAS project to the school. She worked with their facilitator to drive IDEAS throughout 2008. In 2009, when the principal returned, Participant 19 returned to her usual roles in the school and also continued as the sole facilitator of the IDEAS project while the 2008 facilitator went on Maternity leave. Participant 19 found there was dwindling support for the process from 2009 onwards, thus contributing to her feelings of disempowerment as a teacher leader. "I found the principal who returned to the school in 2009 really did not know how to lead us in the process and did not allow either of us to do it." |
| **20 – Female 56-60** | Queensland, Catholic Education – Primary ISMT member and facilitator, 2006-2012 | Remains in same school, with same principal | **Participant 20** was in the same school with the same principal, although an acting principal was in the role at the time of this study. There was no mention of role change within the school for Participant 20 in her survey data. She mentioned the powerful effect that the IDEAS project had on her as a teacher leader: "(it) encouraged me to reclaim my profession. I felt invigorated and full of energy for positive change in our school". |
| **21 – Female 56-60** | Queensland, Catholic Independent School - Secondary ISMT member and Facilitator, 2004-2008 | Remains in the same school context, with a change in principal | **Participant 21** was an assistant principal and ISMT facilitator at her school and she remained in the same role at the time of this study. While their journey began slowly, the ISMT grew in strength to lead the process for at least three years. A downside for them was having one of the ISMT members using the school's experience as part of her Education Doctorate: "It changed the dynamic and pressured the school for results – this was premature and became a divisive factor. ISMT spirits flagged due to this". The years 2004-2007 were energising and affirming, while 2008 became frustrating for her as a teacher leader as IDEAS flagged in momentum. Apart from the impact of the doctoral research of one of the ISMT members, there was a "culture of compartmentalisation as opposed to whole-school initiatives; the 'isolation' of not being part of a systemic endeavour; and the hangover from a leadership team restructure that led to low morale and anger". |

**KEY\*:**

| | |
|---|---|
| | Transformed self in same context |
| | Transformed self in new context |
| | Spread their own wings |
| | Trapped or restricted |

\*See Figure 4.2 for explanation of categories

### 4.2.2 Analysis: Emerging categories of teacher leader participants.

The data presented in the previous table (Table 4.6) revealed that there were emerging groupings or categories of teacher leader participants. While they had all *self-actualised* (see Maslow, 1971 as teacher leaders in their IDEAS school contexts, since IDEAS, there are those that had sustained their image of themselves as teacher leaders and been able to grow their capacity as teacher leaders further, and those that had not (Figure 4.2).
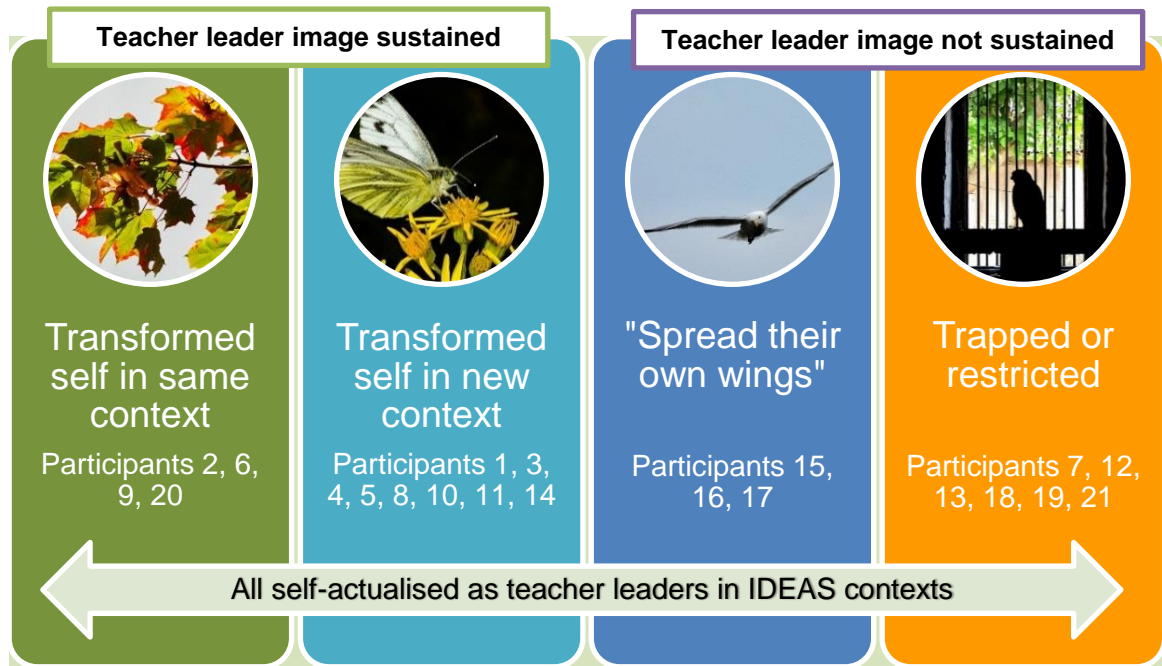


*Figure 4.2.* Categories of Teacher Leader Participants in Post-IDEAS Contexts

Digital photograph Creative Commons licensing attributions: *Autumn: Maple leaves* [CC, BY, NC, ND, 2.0] (wolf4max, 2014); *Green veined butterfly* [CC, BY, 2.0] (Ruston, 2013); *Spread your wings and soar into the sky* [CC, BY, NC, ND 2.0] (Ednie, 2010); *Trapped: A view from the "other" side* [BY, NC, ND 2.0] (Maniar, 2010).

Those that had sustained their images of themselves as teacher leaders may be viewed in two distinct groups – the *transformed in same context* and *transformed in new context* groups. Members of the first group have remained in the same context and have either been promoted or been able to utilise their teacher leader capacities within that context. Participants two, six, nine and twenty are examples (Figure 4.2). Members of the second group have been promoted to a leadership position in another context and been able to transfer their teacher leader capacities to that context. Participants one, three, four, five, eight, ten, eleven and fourteen are example of teachers fulfilling their potential in a new context.

The teacher leader participants that had not been able to sustain their images of themselves as teacher leaders and grow their potential further in their post-IDEAS context have remained unfulfilled for various reasons. There were those that felt trapped by circumstances outside their control, for example, systemic changes that resulted in job or role changes. Participants seven and eighteen were re-considering their options for the future as a result of these changes – they both felt they had a lot

more to offer in terms of their teacher leader capacity and that it was not being utilised in their current contexts. Participants twelve, thirteen, nineteen and twenty-one remained in the same school context, with different principals and were disillusioned with the loss of capacity that had been built throughout the IDEAS project and the top-down approach to leadership that prevailed in three out of the four cases. Participant twelve's disillusionment was such that he was on extended leave and considering his options for the future. In cases such as these, the workplace is not meaningful to the teacher leader, as there is a misalignment of vision, values and beliefs, meaning the context in which one works has had a significant impact on the individual's capacity to sustain their image of themselves as a teacher leader.

Participants fifteen, sixteen and seventeen have all spread their wings and sought their own opportunities for leadership elsewhere when either their workplace became less meaningful or restrictive or the opportunities were not available anymore. The first two participants felt trapped by the top-down approach to leadership that prevailed within their post-IDEAS school context and looked for a new opportunity to enact their leadership capabilities and find meaning in their work through advocating for children in need. In this instance, these two participants have moved beyond self-actualisation and become involved in a cause outside of their skin or outside of themselves – in something that Maslow would term as a "calling or vocation (Maslow, 1971, p. 42)" (Chalofsky, 2010, p. 31). Participant seventeen found herself at a crossroad when systemic changes resulted in her path changing direction. While she could have happily returned to a supportive principal in her school, she was looking for a new opportunity to grow her teacher leader capacity and spread the ripples further. She opted to do some further study, then moved into the tertiary sector where she is now able to enact her leadership and facilitation expertise in a different context.

Now that clearly defined categories of teacher leader participants had emerged from the survey data, the process of final selection of participants for interview could begin. To ensure diversity and interest in the narrative accounts, as well as a cross-section of participants, selection occurred from each of the four categories (Figure 4.2) – transformed in same context; transformed in new context; spread their own wings; trapped or restricted.

### 4.2.3 The final selection of participants for interview.

For the final selection process for interview, participants were selected from each education system where possible to ensure a representation from different systems. All participants had ISMT experience. Consequently, criteria two and three for selection of participants were achievable. The major influencing factor in choosing participants was the teacher leader narrative that emerged throughout the survey data (Table 4.5). The narrative must provide some clue to the mystery of the awakened sleeping giants and thus assist in answering the research questions – firstly, it should make an intriguing and inspiring teacher leader narrative; and secondly, it should contribute to the diversity of narratives by providing a spread of participants from each of the categories defined in Figure 4.2 – those that had transformed themselves as teacher leaders in the same (IDEAS) context; those that had transformed in a new context; those that had spread their wings and created their own opportunities; and finally those that felt trapped or restricted.

The colour coding to define the categories from Figure 4.2 has been utilised in Table 4.6 to represent the diversity of participants by selecting at least one sample narrative from each category. Participants selected have also been highlighted with an asterisk in Table 4.7. Now that the selection process was complete, each participant was allocated a pseudonym to ensure privacy of the individual in the presentation of the data (Table 4.7).

Table 4.7

*Survey Participants Selected for Interview and Allocated Pseudonym*

| Survey Participant | Education sector | Interview Pseudonym |
|---|---|---|
| **Participant 2 – female, 46-50** | Victoria, State Education – Primary | **Laura** |
| **Participant 7 – female, 41-45** | Western Australia, State Education – Secondary | **Eva** |
| **Participant 9 – female, 41-45** | New South Wales, Catholic Education – Secondary | **Jenny** |
| **Participant 10 – female, 25-30** | New South Wales, Catholic Education – Primary | **Lucy** |
| **Participant 12 – male, 56-60** | Queensland, State Education – Secondary | **Fred** |
| **Participant 13 – male, 51-55** | Queensland, State Education – Secondary | **Karl** |
| **Participant 15 – female, 56-60** | Queensland, State Education – Primary | **Liza** |
| **Participant 16 – female, 51-55** | Queensland, State Education – Primary | **Claire** |
| **Participant 18 – female, 41-45** | Queensland, State Education – Primary | **Shelley** |
| **Participant 19 – female, 56-60** | Queensland, Catholic Education – Primary | **Angela** |

## 4.3  Introducing the Sleeping Giants: Presenting the Interview Data

The participants were interviewed using the interview communication procedures as outlined in Chapter Three (Table 3.6) following the guideline for the semi-structured interview questions (Table 3.7). Additional unsolicited artefacts were provided by two participants – Fred provided a visual metaphor in the form of an image, while Jenny provided some further data outlining views on teacher leadership completed following leadership workshops and submitted for an interview for another job.

Coding of the Phase Two interview data involved the use of inductive analysis to define the categories, patterns and themes emerging from the data (Janesick, 2000). In the first instance, this involved colour coding of the interview transcripts, mapped to the research questions and relevant annotations to identify emerging themes. Secondly, some visual mapping of the data occurred through conceptual diagrams for each participant to identify the key concepts emerging. Thirdly, this was followed by detailed mind maps as a biographical interpretive analysis of each participant's narrative, followed by a presentation of each participant's metaphor for themselves as a teacher leader (also see Table 3.8, Chapter Three). The mind maps and metaphorical devices will be explored in detail in Chapter Five. The conceptual diagrams to begin the initial visual mapping process exploring the categories, ideas

or themes emerging from the data for each participant have been presented in the following section.

### 4.3.1  Visual mapping of interview data: Conceptual diagrams.

Visual mapping was used for data reduction for each participant's interview. In the first instance, conceptual diagrams (Eppler, 2006) were used for each participant interview to determine the key themes emerging from each interview. As each participant related his or her narrative, I used biographical interpretive analysis to understand and identify what the participant was really saying: "What messages am I hearing in this biographical account? What are the underlying themes?"

The visual mapping in the following conceptual diagrams captures the key messages that emerged from each participant's interview. This in turn provided a framework for the second stage of the visual mapping process – the key themes to be used for the main branches of the mind maps which explore the detail of each participant's narrative in Chapter Five.

**Conceptual diagrams key:**

| | |
|---|---|
| | Teacher leader image sustained and transformed in same context |
| | Teacher leader image sustained and transformed in new context |
| | Trapped or restricted – teacher leader image not sustained |
| | Spread their own wings – creation of own context for sustaining teacher leader image |

## 1   Laura

**Key messages:**

- o **Leadership** - personal professional growth in current context; team approach to leadership; role of principal in developing teacher leader capacity; sees self as a leader; overcoming the *tall poppy* syndrome.
- o **Professional learning** – at the forefront
- o **Coaching and mentoring** – capacity building
- o **Networking** – external – an expert in a community context

**Metaphor:**

A sunflower, turning face to the sun of *professional growth* and *opportunity*, shying away from storm clouds.

▫ Teacher leader image sustained and transformed in same context

*Figure 4.3.* Conceptualising Laura's Awakened Sleeping Giant as a Teacher Leader

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## 2    Eva

**Key messages:**

- **Professional engagement** – collaboration; mentoring; PLCs
- **Professional learning communities** (PLCs) – contextual professional learning; teachers as designers of professional learning; clusters; system support
- **Meta-view of self as a leader** – networking; own growth; aspirations; self-determination
- **Leadership** – people and processes; dynamic and enabling

**Metaphor:** A relational metaphor with a shared vision – a person standing on a hill, with others beside them working together, with high aspirations for the future.

☐  Trapped or restricted – teacher leader image not sustained
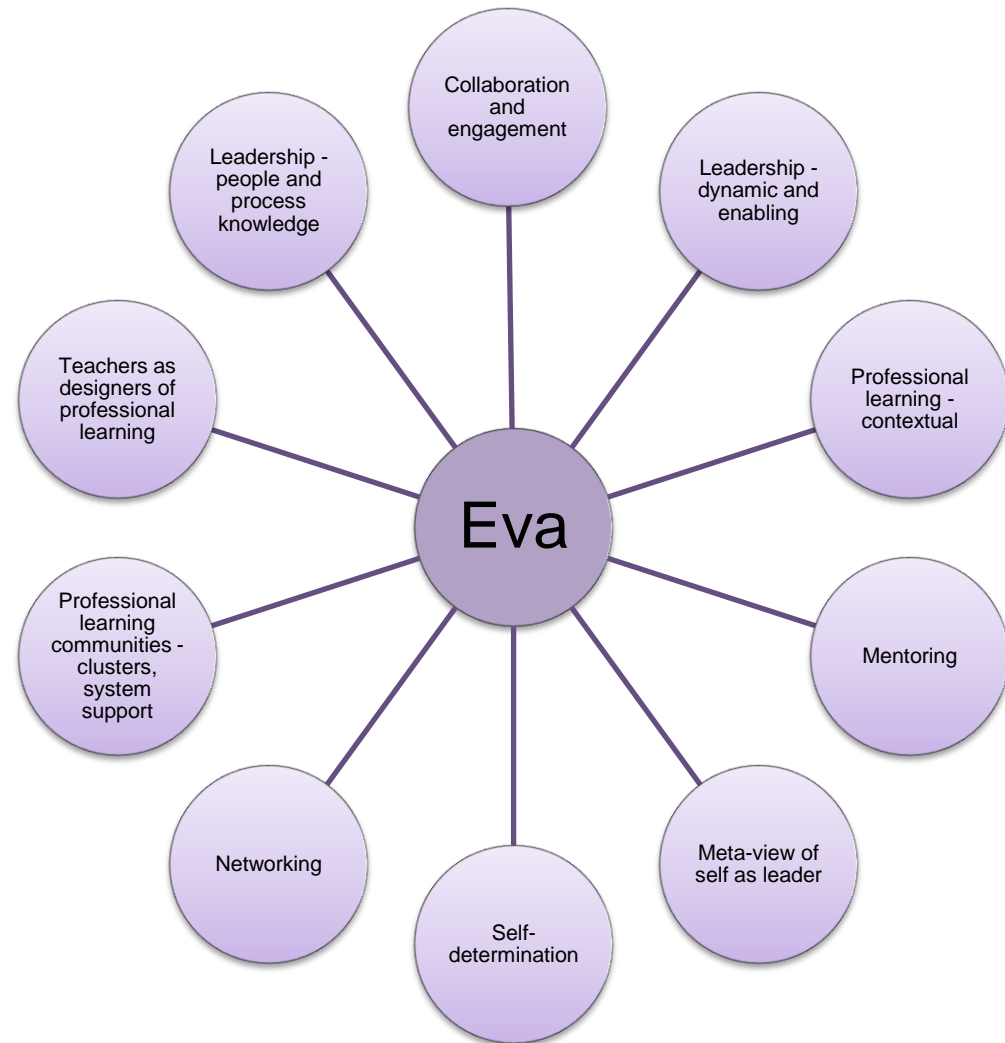


*Figure 4.4.* Conceptualising Eva's Awakened Sleeping Giant as a Teacher Leader

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# 3   Jenny

**Key messages:**

- **Professional learning** – school-based contextual; personal further study
- **Capacity building** – personal through reflective practice and feedback; in others through action research
- **Self-actualisation** – self-efficacy; autonomy in enacting own leadership role; increased confidence - sees self as a leader; feels safe to take risks
- **Leadership**
  - Parallel leadership
  - Role of principal – trust relationships; developing teacher leader capacity
  - Networks – to lead learning

**Metaphor:**

Flat, collaborative model for leadership – people working together beside each other in a trusting cooperative relationship

☐   Teacher leader image sustained or transformed in same context
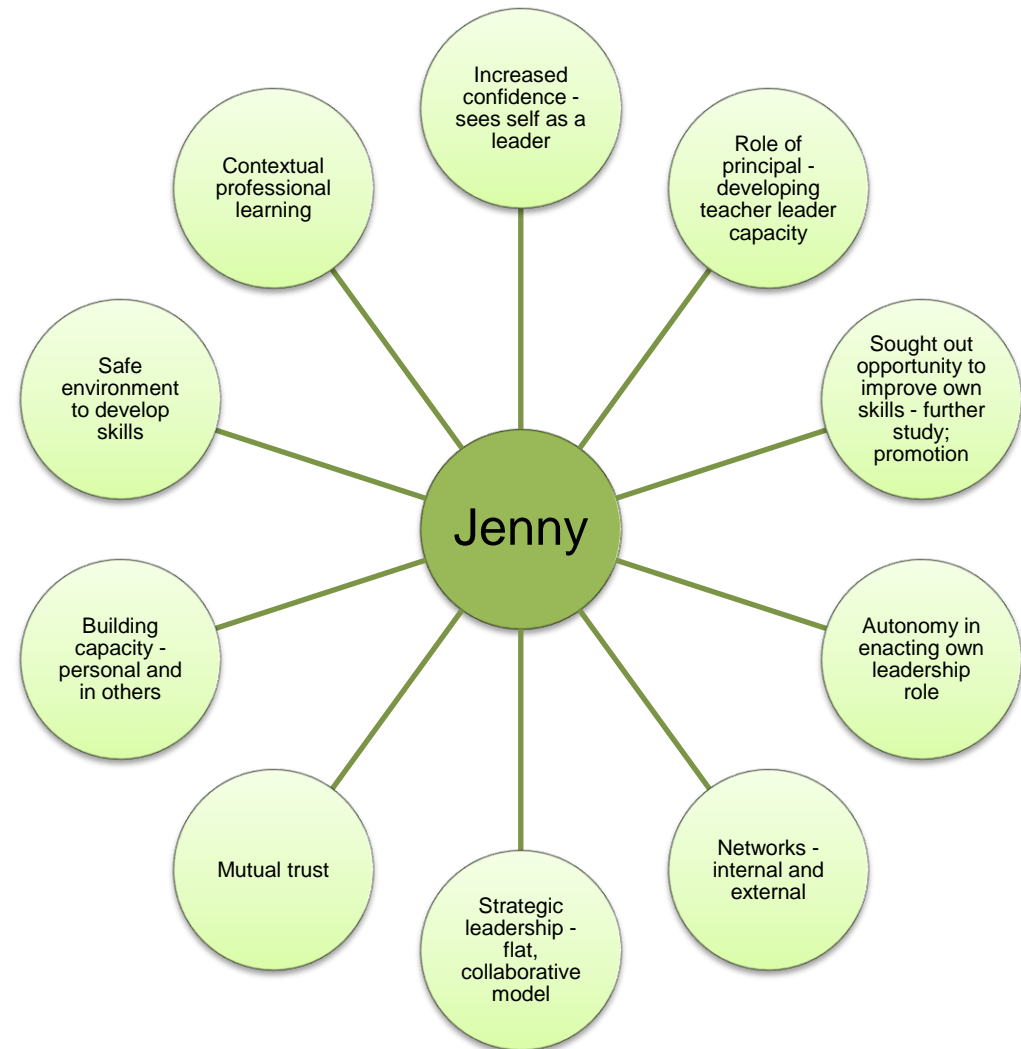


*Figure 4.5.* Conceptualising Jenny's Awakened Sleeping Giant as a Teacher Leader

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## 4   Lucy

**Key messages:**

- ○ **Growth as a teacher leader** – increased confidence; reached career goal; big picture thinker
- ○ **Advocacy** – for own ideas; belief in self
- ○ **Mentoring** – leadership development opportunities; role of principal in developing teacher leader capacity
- ○ **Relationships** – transparency and communication; managing conversations; establishing credibility
- ○ **Professional learning** – ongoing; further study; leadership courses

**Metaphor:**

A flower – growing, opening up, symbolising maturing and confidence in self as a leader.

▢  Teacher leader image sustained or transformed in new context
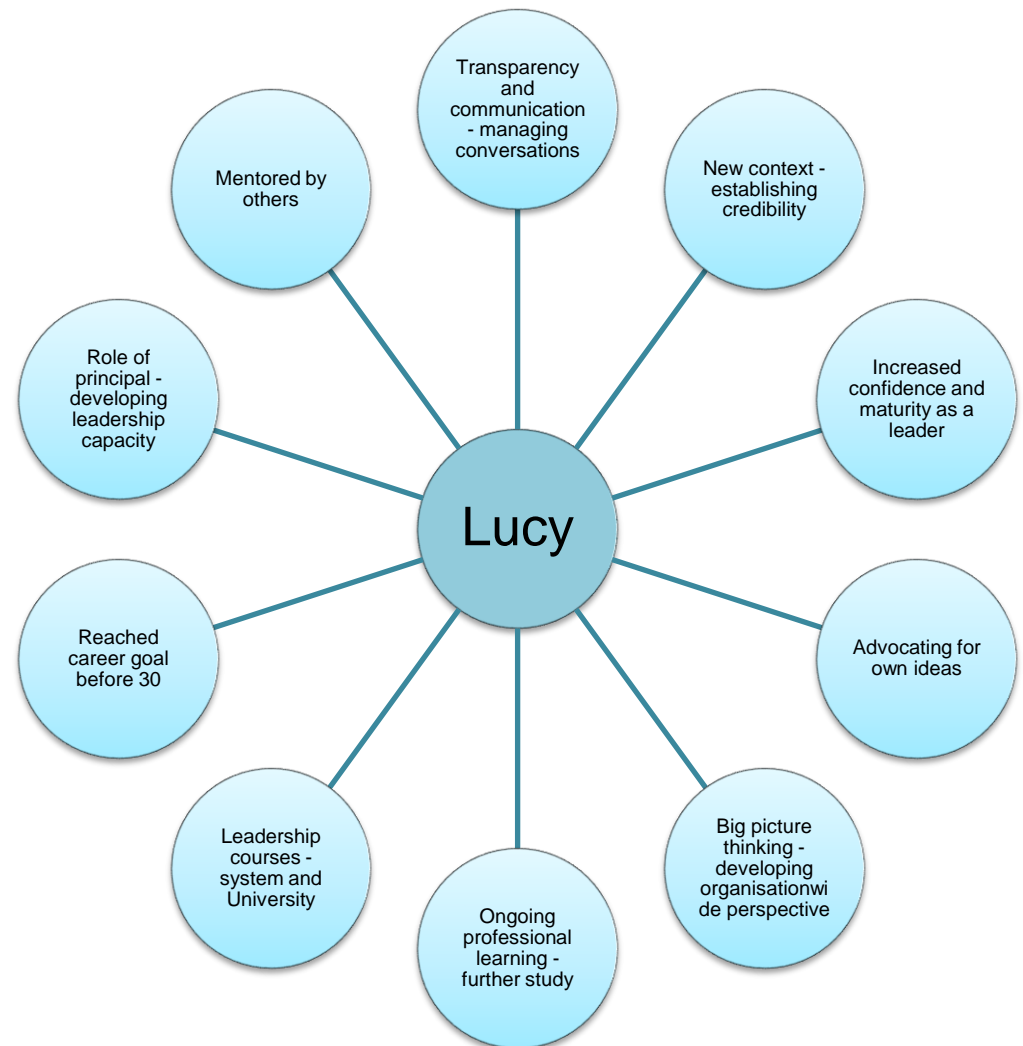
Figure 4.6. Conceptualising Lucy's Awakened Sleeping Giant as a Teacher Leader

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## 5    Fred

**Key messages:**

- **Networking** – advocacy for students; opportunities for professional networking
- **Leadership** – misalignment system/school/research views on leadership; principal role in growing teacher leader capacity; support for schoolwide approach
- **Self-efficacy**, or lack of, in two diverse contexts; valuing teacher professionalism
- **Professional capacity** – conference presentations; scholarly work - research and writing; further study

**Metaphor:**  Withered tree stump in a stagnant billabong, signifying his current battle-scarred soldier status.

☐    Trapped or restricted – teacher leader image not sustained
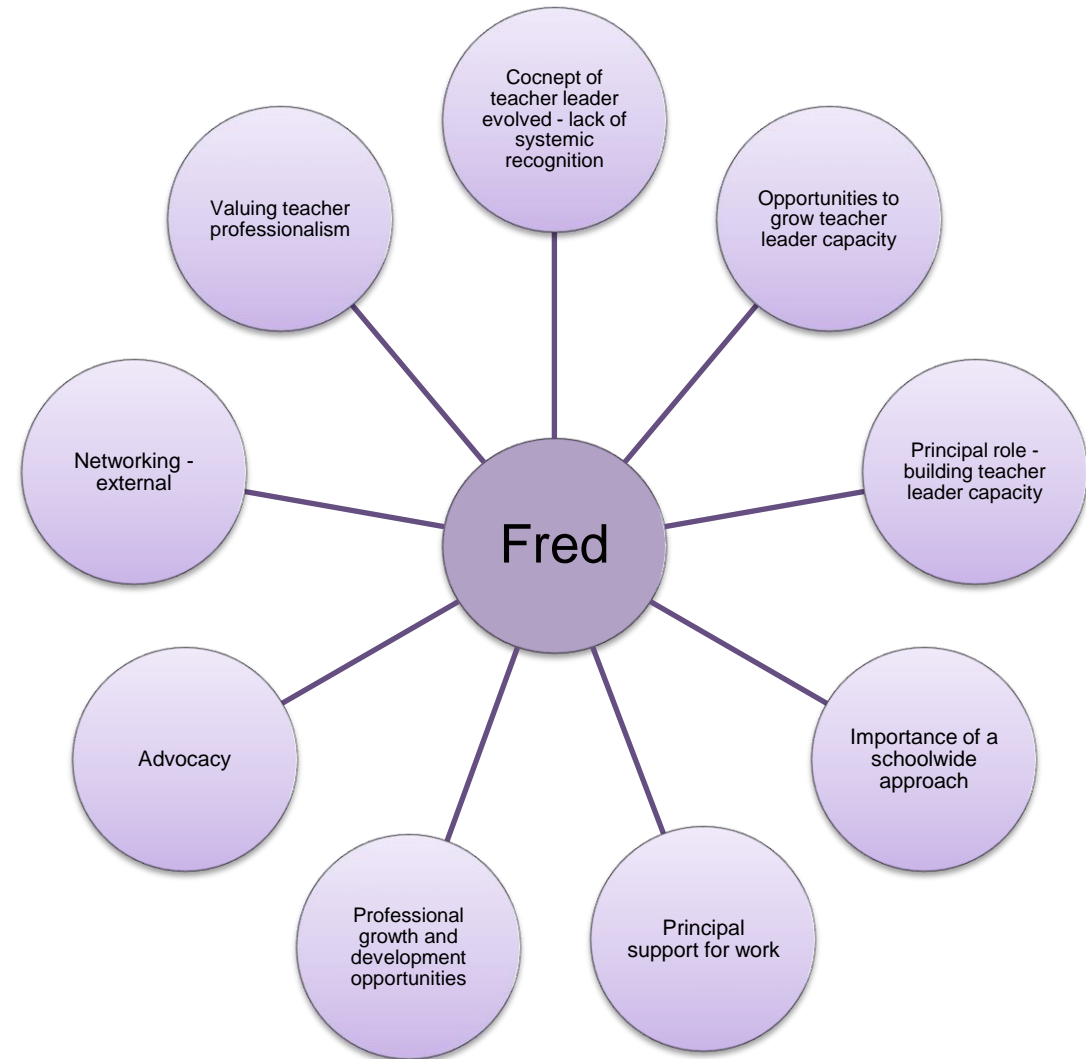


*Figure 4.7.* Conceptualising Fred's Awakened Sleeping Giant as a Teacher Leader

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## 6   Karl

**Key messages:**

- **Being true to self** – own values, beliefs; lack of alignment in systems/schools
- **Organisational processes of engagement** – shared vision and values; transparency; relationships
- **Professional community** – professional conversations; valuing teacher professionalism; reflective practice

**Metaphor:** Karl Marx – the notion of being revolutionary and standing up for what you believe in, but in an intellectual way, through demonstration in own sphere of influence.

☐   Trapped or restricted – teacher leader image not sustained
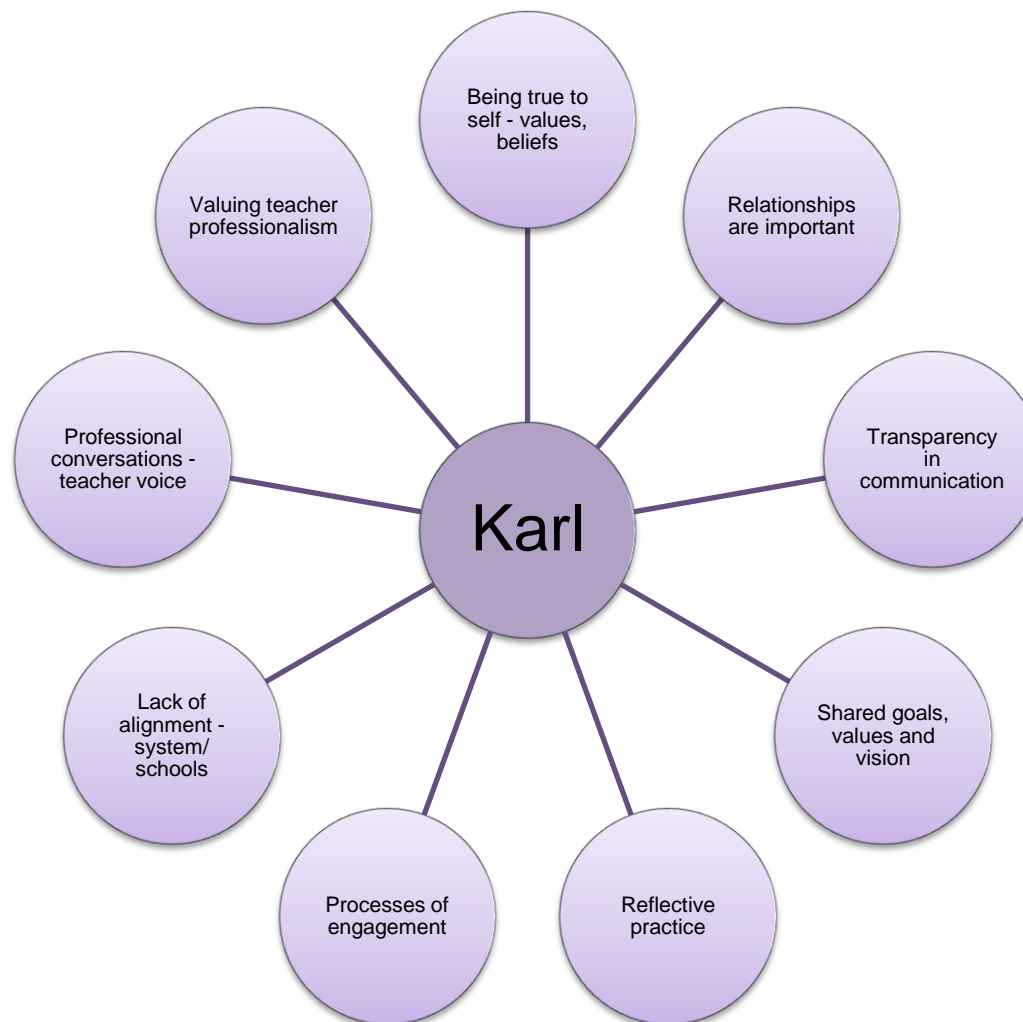


*Figure 4.8.* Conceptualising Karl's Awakened Sleeping Giant as a Teacher Leader

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## 7   Liza

**Key messages:**

- **Meaningful work** – aligned values; seeing place for self; the *right* team
- **Transference of skills** – IDEAS context to new context
- **Leadership** – mentoring aspiring leaders; networks; advocacy; professional conversations – teacher voice; supported to take risks
- **Knowing yourself** – teacher leader confidence and empowerment

**Metaphor:** A tornado or snowball – as it grows, it gains momentum and builds capacity - an expanding sphere of influence.

☐ *Spread their own wings* – creation of own context for sustaining teacher leader image
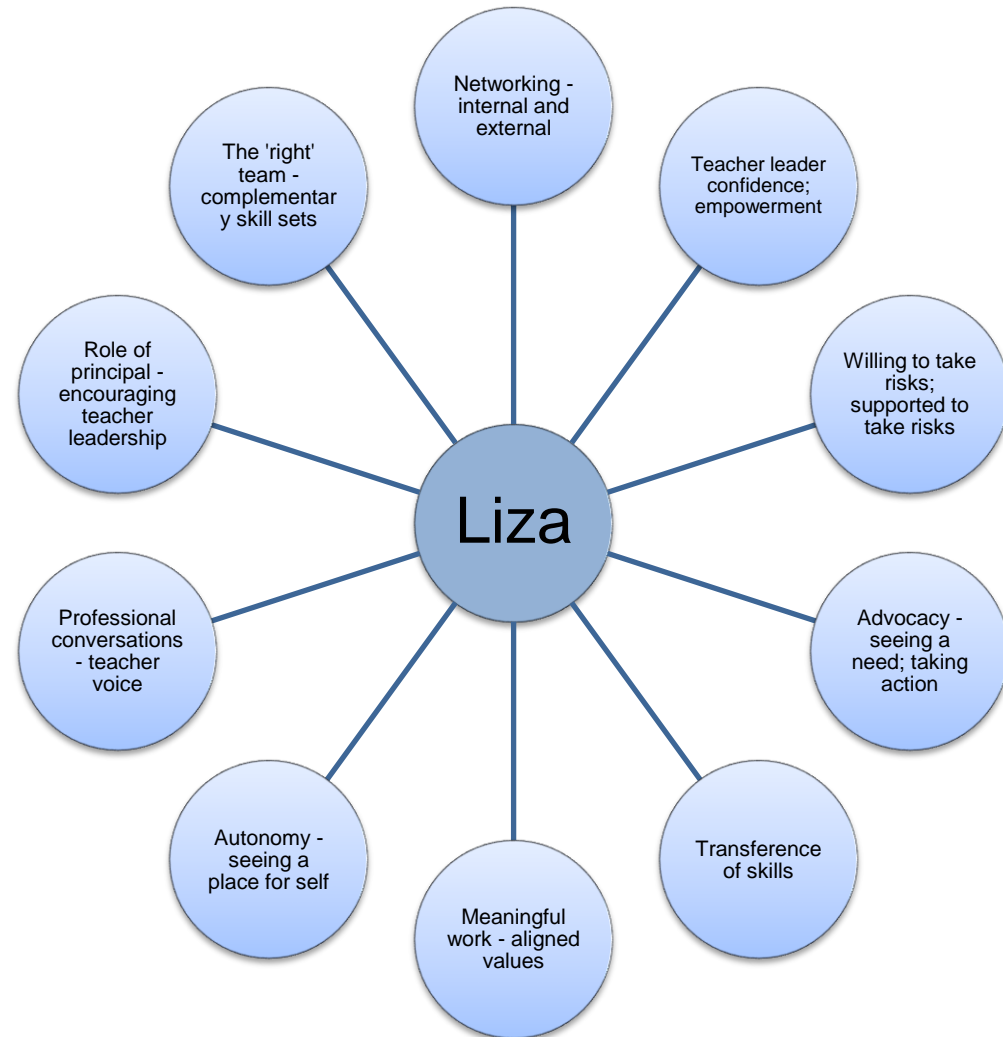


*Figure 4.9.* Conceptualising Liza's Awakened Sleeping Giant as a Teacher Leader

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# 8    Claire

**Key messages:**

- **Professional personal growth** – meaningful work; confidence; belief in self; empowerment; advocacy; creation of own opportunities
- **Context is important** – meaningful workplace; professional conversations – teacher voice; opportunities for growth as a teacher leader, or lack of opportunity, in two diverse contexts

**Metaphor:**

A concept web – a web or network of people and connections working together to achieve a vision

☐   *Spread their own wings* – creation of own context for sustaining teacher leader image
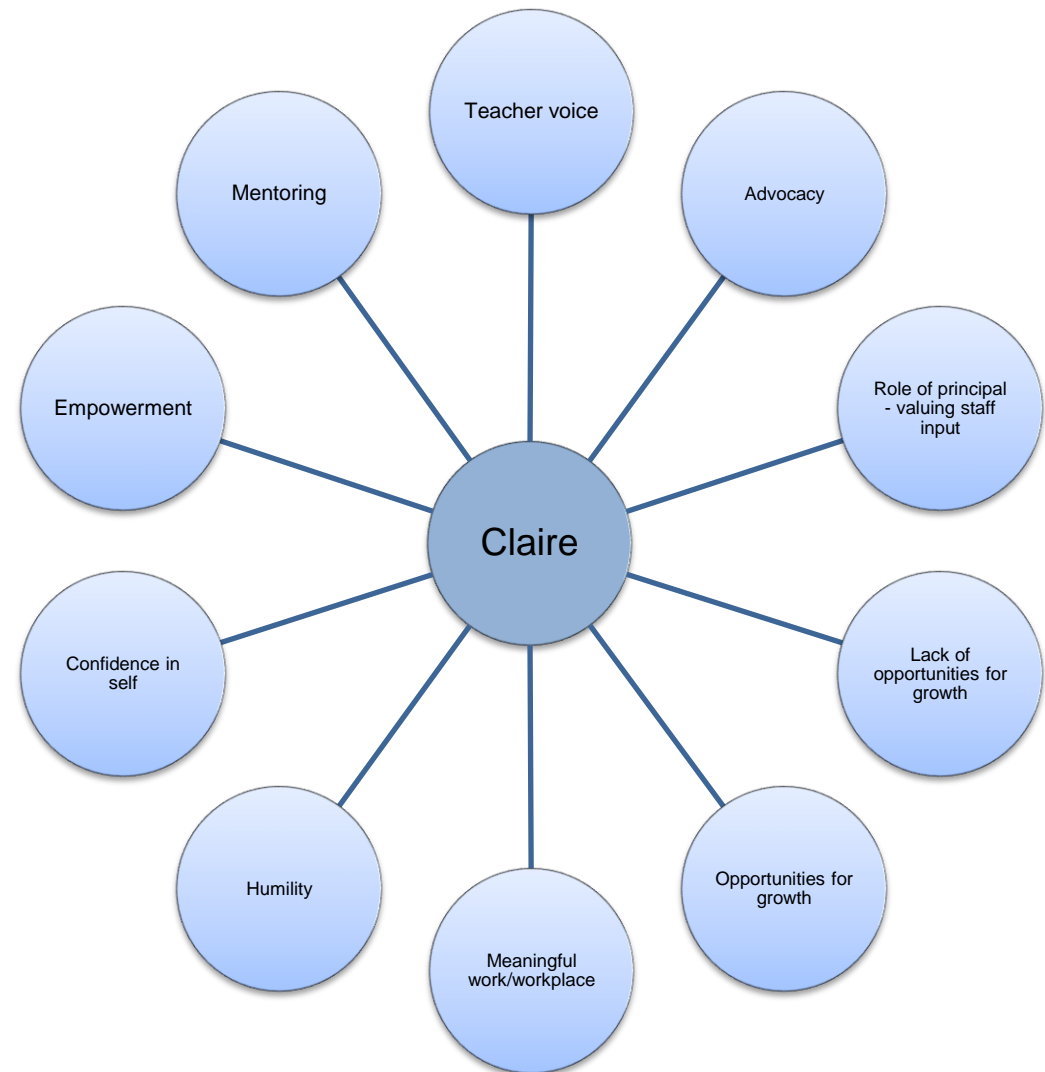
*Figure 4.10*: Conceptualising Claire's Awakened Sleeping Giant as a Teacher Leader

## 9   Shelley

**Key messages:**

- **Meaningful work** – reaching own potential; organisational alignment (schools/systems); being valued by the organisation
- **Building capacity** – team, leadership capabilities; career pathways; alignment
- **Leadership** – knowledge of self as leader; empowerment; belief in self
- **Transference** – skill transferability across contexts; recognition of prior learning (RPL)

**Metaphor:**

Like the wind – sometimes flat out and sometimes slow and steady, reflecting changing leadership styles for different situations.

☐   Trapped or restricted – teacher leader image not sustained
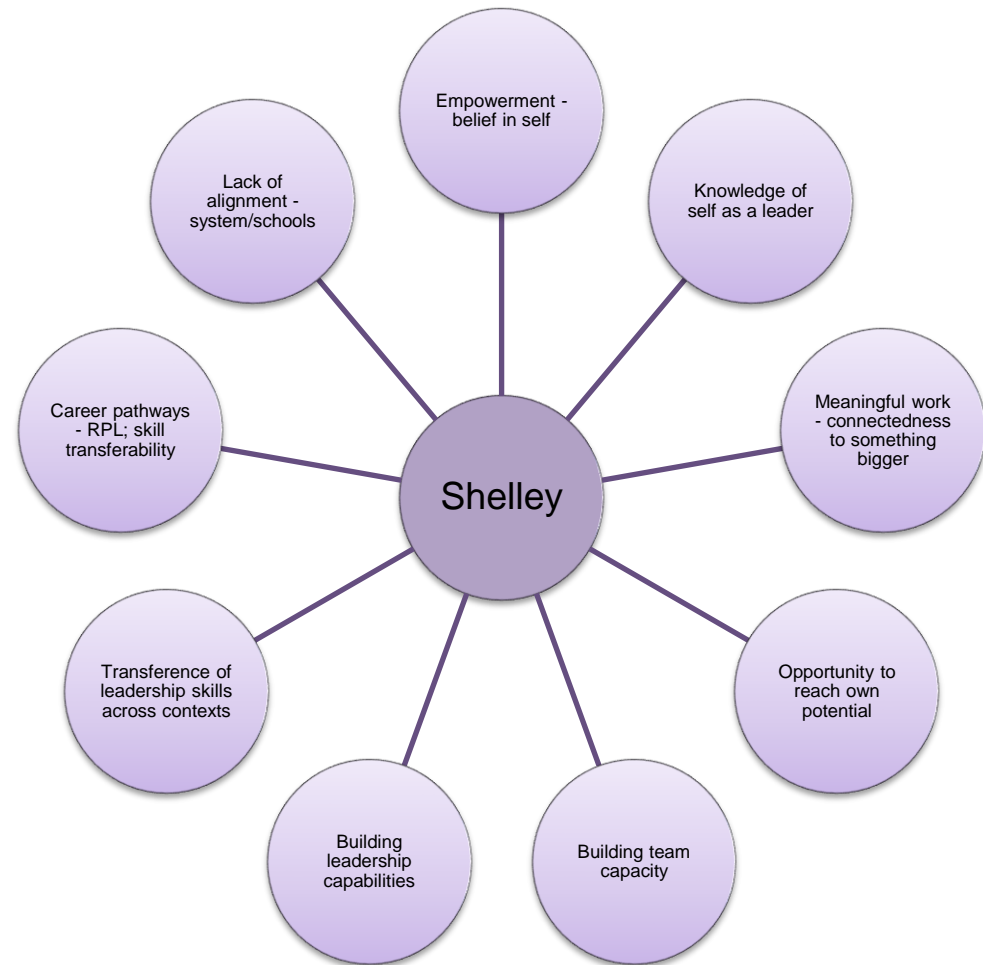


*Figure 4.11.* Conceptualising Shelley's Awakened Sleeping Giant as a Teacher Leader

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## 10  Angela

**Key messages:**

- **Leadership** – networking; mentoring and succession planning; the 'engaged' principal; honesty and transparency; further study
- **Professional learning** – ongoing; capacity building – school/system; leadership studies
- **Education system role** – trust teacher professionalism; focus on aspiring leaders

**Metaphor:**

A solar system journey that spirals off and is open ended; is constantly changing and adjusting, with bumps along the way.

☐ Trapped or restricted – teacher leader image not sustained



*Figure 4.12.* Conceptualising Angela's Awakened Sleeping Giant as a Teacher Leader.

## 4.5 Summary

A number of key themes emerged from the conceptual diagrams representing the 10 teacher leaders in this study:

- *Leadership* – the importance of a shared view of leadership, and the significant role of the principal in that process; the relational aspect and that leadership is about people and processes; the importance of prioritising teacher leadership; leadership is about establishing credibility, transparency and communication and managing conversations; mentoring is important.
- *Professional learning* – teachers are designers of professional learning, it is contextual, that is, designed specifically to suit the needs of the school and designed by the people in the school; systemic support for contextual professional learning is crucial; teacher leaders personal professional growth through professional learning, both at the school level and privately – this involved scholarly work, research and writing; professional conversations were instrumental in developing shared understandings in professional learning.
- *Meaningful work* – teacher leaders wanted to be part of the big picture; shared vision and values within a school created meaningful contexts for work; relationships of trust and mutual respect were important; opportunities to realise one's potential meant work was meaningful; organisational alignment and feeling valued by the organisation in that what they were doing was worthwhile was important.
- *Networking* – internal and external networks for sharing ideas; advocacy for their ideas and for students; reflective practice occurred within networks and feedback mechanisms used to critique their work; teacher leaders engaged in professional networks to lead learning; conference presentations that led to scholarly work with other networks, and resulted in opportunities for research and writing were important to personal professional growth.
- *Role of education system* – organisational alignment, including shared vision and values was important; the need to prioritise teacher leadership to build capacity within the organisation was flagged.

The search for the awakened sleeping giants was now complete and a clear picture of the capacities they had developed as teacher leaders was emerging through the presentation of the conceptual diagrams and tables in this chapter. The teacher leaders were identified and surveyed, with the data from the Phase One Questionnaire Surveys mapped to *The Teachers as Leaders Framework*. A further refining process was necessary to select participants for Phase Two Interview, also explained within this chapter. This was achieved through the lens of the criteria for interview selection along with the identification of four distinct categories of teacher leaders that emerged from Phase One, which highlighted the degree to which teacher leaders had developed beyond self-actualisation within their individual contexts since engaging with the IDEAS project. Participants were selected across all four categories for diversity and interest, as well as a cross-section of narrative accounts.

With the final selection of participants identified and interviewed, the coding process to reduce the data further has also been presented in this chapter. Conceptual diagrams were used to identify the key messages emerging from each participant's narrative. These will form the key themes and main branches of the mind maps as a biographical interpretive view of each participant's narrative in Chapter Five.

# 5. CHAPTER FIVE: Teacher Leader Biographies: Interpreting the Voices of the Awakened Sleeping Giants

"Teacher leadership – its time has come" (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 2), or has it? That is the question.

Katzenmeyer and Moller's book, *Awakening the Sleeping Giant: Helping Teachers Develop as Leaders* (2001, 2009) was one of several written highlighting the leadership void in school reform evidenced in the 1990s, and was also the inspiration for the title of this thesis. Others have written about successful case studies involving teachers as leaders (Durrant, 2004; Lambert, 2003; Lieberman & Miller, 2004), including those involving the Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievements in Schools (IDEAS) project, the context for this study – Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson and Hann's book, *Developing Teacher Leaders: How Teacher Leadership Enhances School Success* (2002), with a second edition by Crowther, Ferguson and Hann (2009), and Crowther and Associate's book *From School Improvement to Sustained Capacity: The Parallel Leadership Pathway* (2011).

These publications highlight the characteristics of outstanding teacher leaders, capacity building for teachers as leaders and models of distributed forms of leadership, including parallel leadership. There is no literature that tracks how teacher leaders have emerged from the reform process and what they have been able to do since. The purpose of this study is to highlight the lived experiences of selected teacher leaders who have already been through a reform process and recount their individual journeys since that process. What have they been able to do with their new-found capacities since their teacher leader awakening? What impact have these experiences had on their concept of leadership now? What conditions or contexts have enabled them to flourish? What are the implications of these findings for schools and education systems?

As outlined in Chapter Three, a biographical interpretive approach was utilised to analyse the data in two phases – Phase One and Phase Two. Phase One data collection was a written Questionnaire Survey, where 25 participants were selected from the IDEAS database of teacher leaders using purposive sampling. In Chapter Four, the data from the Questionnaire Survey of 25 participants were presented. From the survey respondents, 10 participants were selected for semi-structured in-depth interviews for Phase Two data collection, again using purposive sampling, using the criteria as outlined in Chapter Four. These 10 participants were interviewed, the recordings transcribed and analysed, providing the focus for this chapter, Chapter Five – Teacher Leader Biographies: Interpreting the voices of the awakened sleeping giants.

Throughout this chapter, each of the 10 interview participants is given a voice. Their individual biographies have been analysed and interpreted through the use of a visual method of data reduction and analysis called mind mapping (Buzan & Buzan, 1995). As identified in Chapter Three, mind maps were used as biographical interpretive lenses to explore the themes emerging from the interview data. Each mind map

allowed for each teacher leader voice to be explored through their lived experience descriptions, and reconstructed through the researcher's interpretation of that lived experience through the branches, sub-branches and inter-connections that make up the mind map.

A mind map is a visual or graphic technique that enables the gathering and holding of large amounts of data, encourages problem solving by discovering new and creative pathways (Buzan & Buzan, 1995) and is used to represent semantic or other connections in the data (Eppler, 2006). A mind map identifies information around a central concept, from which major themes or ideas radiate or branch outwards as the major branches on the map. Each theme or idea may be broken down into sub-branches. Traditionally, mind maps work to a set of laws or principles for the layout, including: clarity, as starting at the centre, there is a hierarchy to the ordering of the branches and sub-branches, with each layer of branches becoming thinner as they radiate out from the centre; the use of at least three colours, one for each category of branches and sub-branches; keywords in printed capital and lower case letters used to label the branches; words centred on the branch and extended along the full length of the branch; images used where possible to support the linguistic design; emphasis used as appropriate and also associations shown on the map (Buzan & Buzan, 1995).

For this study I have developed my own style of mind mapping and extended and adapted the principles of mind mapping to include the following aspects to suit the purpose of this research: (1) key phrases, as well as keywords to capture the full meaning, as attempting to simplify to one keyword often diminished the richness of the teacher leader lived experience; (2) quotes or snapshots of teacher voice as the images, to demonstrate the evidence of their lived experiences rather than using visual images attached to keywords and key phrase interpretations; and (3) my interpretive biographical analysis of the lived experiences alongside the teacher voice in both the representations of the branches and associations on the map. As already outlined in Chapter Four, the coding process for the mind maps occurred as follows: the central concepts for the main branches in each participant's mind map were determined by the conceptual diagrams; with the main branches established on each map, the sub-branches were identified from a further coding process from the tables of interview data and emerging themes, as mapped to the research questions.

To capture the richness of each description and to ensure each teacher leader voice is represented, the focus remains on presenting the data as individual teacher leader biographies, or lived experiences. Pseudonyms have been used for all names to preserve anonymity. For the remainder of this chapter, a biographical interpretative representation of the lived experiences of the following 10 IDEAS teacher leaders has been explored through a mind map and written narrative of each teacher leader's voice: Claire, Liza, Fred, Eva, Lucy, Karl, Shelley, Jenny, Angela and Laura.

The context for meaningful work

Observing others
Mentored by others
Shared vision
Open communication — Trust / Mutual respect
Encouraged by others
Transparency

"(Our IDEAS facilitator) encouraged me (saying) that I could be a very good educator - she inspired me, mentored me and said that I could do it ... through her support and the principal's support and the teaching staff, I was able to get my (education) degree while still working ..."

Autonomy to explore personal potential
Forum for genuine professional dialogue
Innovation valued
Having a voice
Sharing ideas
Purposeful experiences — Provided / Sought
Shared leadership structures
Opportunity for growth
Work is meaningful — Empowerment
Teacher leader — Confidence / Humility

Opportunities for growth - Context 1

**Meaningful work**

Top down leadership
Innovative ideas rejected or ignored
Maintenance of status quo
Not valued
'Boys club' mentality
Ideas not heard
No forums for genuine dialogue
Lack of voice
Lack of trust
Lack of mutual respect
Lack of transparency
Communication minimal
Lack of opportunity to explore personal potential
Looked for opportunities elsewhere
Feelings of angst
Teachers feeling devalued
Feeling disengaged
Work not meaningful

Lack of opportunity for growth - Context 2

"Decisions are made within the school that are not discussed with any of the staff. Teachers are devalued ... we're not trusted ... the weekly newsletter for teachers was stopped ..."

Creation of own opportunities for meaningful work

**Meaningful work**

Personal professional growth

Claire

Context is important

Context 1 experience

**A meaningful workplace**

"My thoughts mattered. My thoughts counted. My suggestions counted. That hadn't been the case before ... my confidence grew immensely. I became a lot more able to share my point of view (through) open discussions and ... professional dialogue."

Professional conversations
Relationships maintained
Rules for communicating
Problems solved
Creating a space for teacher voice
Transparency
Views are shared
Views respected
Increased confidence

Positive working environment
Sense of accomplishment
Purposeful experience
Connectedness

A powerful shared vision
"We felt it ... we believed it ..."
People working together
Shared decision making

People are valued
Valueing staff input
Respect
Mutual trust

"... a really good working environment where everybody is exceptionally happy to go to work every day ... and you are valued ... you would give way over and beyond what was expected of you ... because it is such a positive working environment."

Shared leadership
Engagement of all
A team
People working together
Shared decision making
Shared responsibility
Individual voice is heard

Problem solving
Mastery of new skills
Exploring own potential
Ongoing learning

Resilience
Self confidence
Willpower
Belief in self and values
Humility (as a leader)
Strong sense of social justice

Seeing a need
Networking
Advocacy
Getting people on board
Creating a vision
Actioning a project

Clearly defined roles
Individual strength areas utilized
Shared leadership
Individuals see a place for self
All have a voice

Self-critique
Team professional conversations
Feedback from others

Transference of skills to new context

"... confidence, belief in myself ... all of these skills that I've got over the years ... the sort of skills I'd need (to follow my dream) ... if I hadn't gone through the IDEAS process and gained the skills and confidence and belief in myself, then I certainly wouldn't be doing what I'm doing now ..."

*Figure 5.1.* An Interpretive Biographical View of Claire's Account of Her Teacher Leader Journey

## 5.1   Claire's Teacher Leader Biography

Claire has a passion for wanting to make a difference in the lives of her students – she began her career as a teacher aide, then studied for her education degree while raising a young family and working full-time. Claire's humility as a leader is evidenced in that she continually credits having wonderful mentors and support people as being instrumental to her success. One of her key mentors was Liza, the IDEAS facilitator and a teacher leader at her school. Liza realised Claire's potential while she was a teacher aide and encouraged her to study to become a teacher. IDEAS encouraged a distributed form of leadership with teacher leaders as parallel (pedagogical) leaders. Claire flourished in this environment as she felt valued as a contributing member of the school community – even while still a teacher aide, she emerged as a leader within the school, becoming a part of the school's IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT) on the whole school improvement journey. She qualified as a teacher and, as a teacher leader in the school improvement process, continued on her quest to advocate for students.

However, after an involvement of approximately eight years with the school improvement journey under the same principal, Claire's work context changed. Their principal was promoted and a new principal with different ideas and with a different way of working came to the school. The work they had engaged with as parallel leaders in the IDEAS project was no longer valued and a top-down approach to leadership now predominated. A *boys club* began to emerge within the staff context and communication began to break down. Claire felt disempowered and frustrated at what she saw occurring. While she could still experience the joy of working with students, the ability to advocate for students as a teacher leader within a process of whole school improvement was no longer an option in this context.

It was on an overseas holiday the following year in 2010, that Claire's advocacy for children and education was realised in another context – in an impoverished country in Africa. Claire was distressed by the plight of orphans in this country and vowed to do something to make a difference. On her return to Australia, she realised this was an opportunity to use her leadership skills to build a better future and education for the orphaned children and so began her campaign to build a sustainable orphanage and school in that country. At the time of writing, she had gained the support of Rotary International, built a team of people to help establish the project, purchased land, drawn up plans and they were completing the building of their first children's home to open the doors to a small group of orphans the following year. While Claire still teaches in Australia, she no longer experiences fulfilment from her current context and plans to reduce her commitment to teaching here and focus her future on the Orphanage project.

Claire's teacher leader journey highlighted the importance of two key areas – firstly, her empowerment through *personal professional growth* to create her own opportunities for fulfilment and secondly, the *importance of the context* in which one works in enabling growth and fulfilment. Each of these will be unpacked in the following section:

### 5.1.1  Personal professional growth.

Claire's strong moral purpose is her driving force in her work as a teacher and in her life in general. This purpose also underpins and drives her professional learning and growth as a teacher leader. She has operated in two very diverse school contexts in recent years – one that has provided opportunities for significant personal professional growth (Context One) and one that has not provided opportunities for her growth and, in fact, appears to have repressed any opportunity for growth (Context Two). This has been a source of frustration for someone like Claire who has been empowered by a context led by a principal that provided a distributed leadership structure and valued ongoing professional learning.

#### *5.1.1.1  Opportunities for professional growth.*

Opportunities for professional growth, as provided by Context One, were the key to Claire's growth and development as a teacher leader. She found the encouragement and mentoring of others from her early days as a teacher aide on the IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT) were instrumental in providing her with the courage and belief in herself:

> Liza encouraged me [saying] I could be a very good educator – she inspired me, mentored me and said that I could do it … through her support and the teaching staff, I was able to get my [education] degree while still working.

Claire highlighted the importance of communication and transparency within this context and that everyone had a voice: "My thoughts mattered. My thoughts counted. My suggestions counted. That hadn't been the case before … my confidence grew immensely. I became a lot more able to share my point of view [through] open discussion and … professional dialogue". Professional conversations were significant in creating the space for shared meaning making and individual voices to be heard. Teacher confidence increased with the realisation that the experiences were purposeful and that their input was valued, as Claire reflected: "… [there was] a positiveness and enthusiasm to work together … and being able to talk about anything that we may not even agree on but come to a positive outcome, because of our professional dialogue".

Additionally, Claire highlighted the importance of autonomy to explore her own personal potential within that context: "I was given a lot more opportunities … to improve my skills … allowing me to explore my potential". Opportunity for growth was provided through the utilisation of shared leadership structures, where parallel leadership predominated, with teachers as the pedagogical leaders in the school. Teacher leaders were empowered as their contribution was valued and because they felt safe in this environment, they had the confidence to try out new ideas and offer suggestions. Work was meaningful as it was framed by a powerful vision statement that everyone believed in – a living, breathing vision that had pedagogical meaning and reflected the shared values and beliefs of the school community. Everyone owned it:

> … with our vision statement that we could achieve the extraordinary, we felt it. We felt like we were, every day. It allowed me personally to know if you believed in something strongly and you worked towards it and you worked hard, that it could be achieved.

Lack of opportunity for professional growth was apparent in Context Two and was a source of frustration for Claire after the empowering teacher leader experience provided within her first context. In contrast, top down leadership prevailed in Context Two. Innovative ideas were rejected or ignored and there was maintenance of the status quo. Many felt there was a boys club mentality, and there were no forums for genuine dialogue, which meant that a lack of teacher voice prevailed in much of the school. Claire maintains that teachers felt they were not valued, as their ideas were not heard, resulting in feelings of angst and disengagement. Lack of transparency was apparent and communication was minimal, with teachers feeling there was a lack of trust and mutual respect.

> We have a whole new leadership team … decisions are made within the school that are not discussed with any of the staff. Teachers are devalued … we're not trusted … the weekly newsletter for teachers was stopped … there is work going on in the school grounds that we know nothing about. We never know when somebody's away … we cannot openly discuss anything … because we are not valued. We were so used to all having a part in the decision making as joint leaders and now, it's like going back 20 years to the dark ages!

For Claire, work in this context was no longer meaningful and although she remained working in this context, she found an opportunity to extend her professional self in another context – the Orphanage project.

## 5.1.2 Creation of own opportunities for professional growth and meaningful work.

Claire's strong moral purpose and wanting to help children in need was her main driver for beginning the Orphanage project:

> [It was] the desperate need that I saw. I have donated to other orphanages, but other orphanages are full, so it just was the desperate need and by volunteering at other orphanages and seeing what a difference they made to children's lives, I didn't even question myself twice. I just knew I had to do it.

Claire now had an opportunity to apply the skills she had learnt as part of the IDEAS project and provide fulfilment to her professional working life. She had *permission* to explore her own potential without the constraints of top-down leadership. She was her own *boss*. Claire attributes her IDEAS experience as the key to her success and had attained considerable process knowledge that she is now applying to the Orphanage project: knowledge of processes including the creation of a powerful vision; getting people on board, with individuals seeing a place for self in the organisation; networking and advocating for the cause; shared leadership with clearly defined roles so that individual strengths are utilised; actioning a project; problem solving; mastery of new skills, such as project management, and ongoing professional learning; team professional conversations so that all have a voice; feedback from others and organisational self-critique to reflect and determine future direction for the project.

While process knowledge is crucial, there are particular teacher leader attributes that appear to underpin Claire's success: a strong belief in self and having a set of team shared values; having resilience and willpower to keep going in the face of adversity; self-confidence; humility as a leader; and particularly in this case, a strong sense of social justice and moral purpose to advocate for the needs of children:

> … [I have] confidence, belief in myself … all of these skills that I've got over the years … the sort of skills I'd need … if I hadn't gone through the IDEAS process and gained the skills and confidence and belief in myself, then I certainly wouldn't be doing what I'm doing now … I may have had the same opportunity in going to the same place [to volunteer at an orphanage], which brought this about, but I would not have been able to do what I'm doing now, at all!

### 5.1.3  Claire's metaphor.

Claire uses the metaphor of a concept web to describe her experience of building the orphanage – a web or network of people and connections that are working together to make it a reality – and throughout the experience, her professional capacity is increasing. She recalls with anticipation when she first began to speak publicly to garner support for the cause and the project management skills she is learning along the way:

> I'm dealing with a lot of professional people … a lot of business people … I was very self-conscious, but now, it doesn't bother me at all … my confidence is building. I just think I've got this skill mastered, [when] another one presents itself … [I'm] constantly learning … at no point do I think this is just too much. I just think 'I've got something else to learn now … how am I going to do this?'

### 5.1.4  Building team capacity.

In this new context, Claire has utilised skills learnt in the IDEAS project to build team capacity for the Orphanage project. While she is the driving force behind the project, Claire has developed a distributed or parallel leadership structure for the management team, while utilising team strengths. She has not necessarily allocated pre-determined roles – rather, team members have been inspired by her vision and offered their services based on their individual strengths and the place they can see for themselves within the project, or organisational structure. Professional conversations are used to develop shared understandings and reflect on and review progress on a regular basis. Of particular interest is the power of a shared vision for the orphanage – a vision that the team lives, breathes and believes in their daily work. Claire has used the same vision for the orphanage that inspired her previously at her school. This vision appears to be having the same impact in this new context. Despite all of this, Claire's humility prevails: "I don't see myself as a leader … I've still got a long way to go".

### 5.1.5  Context is important.

Based on Claire's experience, there appear to be particular contextual conditions that are favourable for teacher leader satisfaction, personal professional growth, teacher leader capacity development and a sense of connectedness to their workplace. In the

first instance in Context One, teacher leader capacity was built within the school context and opportunities provided for personal professional growth. In Claire's case, it has already been established that this provided a satisfying and empowering context for work – the work was meaningful, people were valued and relationships were important. Conversely, in Context Two, opportunities for teacher personal professional growth and teacher leader capacity development were not forthcoming and a high degree of teacher dissatisfaction and anxiety existed, because as Claire highlighted, they had previously experienced something which they knew worked better.

### 5.1.6  Researcher's final comments.

Through Claire's narrative, it is clear that to enable the growth and empowerment of teacher leaders within the work context, and to build teacher capacity and satisfaction within that context, there are a number of significant factors that need to be present:

- The use of professional conversations is an important process tool for engaging everyone. These conversations provide a set of rules for communication, create a space for teacher voice and ensure that all views are shared and respected through a transparent process. This in turn increases confidence of all as they feel safe to contribute. It ensures that relationships are maintained and problems are solved.
- A powerful shared vision permeates the culture of the school or organisation. The vision is a living, breathing statement with people involved in working together, thinking together and involved in shared decision making for the direction of the school. This is evident in Claire's former school context (Context One) and her Orphanage project, where she has used the same powerful vision to generate enthusiasm: "We felt it … we believed it".
- Shared relational forms of leadership in a distributed or parallel form is a key element in ensuring engagement of all. Teacher leaders become a key part of the team that drives the pedagogical direction of the school and are involved in shared decision making and shared responsibility. Most significantly and empowering for teachers, through the use of professional conversations and a shared leadership structure, individual teacher voices are heard as part of the process, making them feel valued, respected and trusted.
- Finally, the valuing of people contributes to creating the conditions for a positive working environment. Where people are valued, their contributions are valued, teacher voice is heard, and mutual respect and trust prevails. This all contributes to a positive working environment where there is a sense of accomplishment and connectedness of the people and the experience is purposeful. As Claire highlighted:

    … [it was] a really good working environment where everybody is exceptionally happy to go to work every day … and you are valued … you would give way over and beyond what was expected of you … because it is such a positive working environment.

Individual strengths

Teams of people

Working together

Establishing networks

Professional Conversations

Confidence

Empowerment

Teacher voice

Shared decision making

Seeing potential in others

Mentoring others

Provide opportunities for growth

Leadership

Leader's role in providing a context for meaningful work

Meaningful work

The 'right' team

Working together

Complementary skill sets

Seeing a place for self and skill set

Professional Conversations

Trust

Respect

Advocacy

Transparency

"It became my life"

Overcoming barriers and challenges

Clear vision for future

Seeing a need; taking action

Wanting to make a difference

Aligned values

Autonomy - sense of self

Organisational vision

"Not trying to change people, but help them see that change is possible …"

"You have a responsibility as a leader to … (help them) realise their potential."

A context that provides a space for trust and respect.

Liza

Knowing yourself

Transference of skills

Teacher leader capacity in IDEAS context

Shared decision making

Visioning

Professional dialogue

Facilitation

Advocacy

Networking

New context

Confidence; empowerment

Transference of skills to everyday life

Seeing a place for self

Being supported to take risks

Autonomy

Confidence

Willing to take risks

Being reflective of self

Empowerment

"I think that by going through a leadership experience really helps you to know yourself as an individual …having the skills and experience… transfers to a lot of your life."

Skills transferrable to work and life contexts

Figure 5.2. An Interpretive Biographical Account of Liza's View of Her Teacher Leader Journey

## 5.2   Liza's Teacher Leader Biography

Liza, now retired, was a teacher librarian and facilitator and teacher leader in the IDEAS whole school improvement process. While Liza has a passion for advocating for children and education, she also has a particular strength in mentoring others in realising their capabilities and talents. In the IDEAS whole school improvement journey, Liza was asked by her principal to take on the facilitator's role, which was a key role in leading the IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT). In this role, Liza facilitated team members to work with their strength areas and workshopped with staff members in areas of need throughout the school improvement journey. An example of Liza's ability to recognise potential in others stems from my own personal experience. I was a part of that school's ISMT at the time, and Liza noted my potential as the scribe for the journey to keep a journal of reflections and meeting notes. I was also asked to attend a workshop on Professional Conversations in our state's capital with our deputy principal, and then to in-service our staff on the process of Professional Conversations, a key component of the whole school improvement process. Liza also mentored Claire, another participant in this study, in her journey as a teacher leader. Three years into the school reform journey, I left the school to relocate to another city for family reasons, while Liza and Claire continued, with the rest of the school staff and principal at the time, to sustain what they had created.

Like Claire, Liza flourished in the environment where teachers were parallel leaders and worked alongside the principal to effect whole school improvement. Liza retired just following the time that a new principal came to the school, some four years later, mainly due to personal circumstances. However, like Claire, she too was frustrated by the disempowerment that pervaded with the new culture that was emerging. For a while, Liza spent time with family in her early retirement, but soon realised that she needed something further.

Liza accompanied Claire on one of her expeditions to Africa when she was in the throes of the early phases of establishing the orphanage (see Claire's narrative for further details). They volunteered at another orphanage to gain experience. Liza was hooked. She realised that this was her path to fulfil her need as an educator and she became part of Claire's team. For a while, Liza was a little unsure of her role and how she could add value to the project, but as she returned a number of times to Africa with Claire, she realised that she could work much the same way as she had in her facilitation role within the IDEAS project and be somebody that assists in bringing everything together. Claire is now the Founder and Director of the Orphanage project and Liza is the Deputy Director and Volunteer Coordinator for the project. They realised they were using the same skills, professional conversations and a form of parallel leadership that they had adopted in the IDEAS project. With their mentorship and guidance, they built capacity by encouraging people in the team to find their areas of strength and skill to contribute to the project.

Liza's teacher leader journey has highlighted a distinct focus on four key areas: the focus on the importance of *leadership* and the leader's role in the mentoring of others to become teacher leaders; the context that provides the conditions for *meaningful work*; the importance of *knowing yourself* as a leader; and the recognition of own skill set and *transference of skills* to other contexts.

### 5.2.1  Leadership.

Through her former teacher-librarian role and also her work with IDEAS, Liza realised the importance of networking and saw the leader's role as crucial in establishing networks. The leader had a key role in bringing teams of people together to work towards a shared vision, yet also in identifying individual strengths to work harmoniously as part of a team: "You're really drawing on strengths of other people and tapping into them … people are happy to play their part within the organisation and respect the part that other people play". Additionally, Liza cited an example of using local expertise as part of the team effort for the Orphanage project vision:

> We've got a couple of people on the team … at the orphanage who we're working hard with now – they are local people with their own set of skills … they would never have had the opportunities if we hadn't recognised something within them and thought "yes, we could work with this person to get them to achieve something good … for the orphanage".

Good leadership for Liza is about shared decision making. This can only be enacted through processes of professional conversations and shared leadership structures, which Liza utilises from her IDEAS experience. These processes are crucial in providing a space for teacher voice and thus instilling a level of confidence and empowerment in teachers that have been a part of these processes:

> I've grown to be a really good leader as far as having the confidence in myself – I'm not afraid to tackle things – I'm a lot more empowered … because every time you do something and you're supported with it … you usually have a win, but sometimes I've definitely failed at things. But, you learn from that and then you're taking another step up, so that all the while you're climbing a ladder.  I'm saying [I'm climbing] the ladder, but I don't see myself as being at the top … or the leader being at the top, because I do believe that it's a shared role. You feel supported [to take risks] … there are things that a leader does to facilitate other people all the way to help them to come up as well.

#### 5.2.1.1  Mentoring.

Liza highlighted that one of the key roles of a good leader is that of mentoring others. In her experience, a leader should be able to see potential in others and additionally provide opportunities for growth of that potential. While she has experienced this herself in her teacher leader journey, she has also acted as a mentor to others in the same capacity, including Claire and myself, as mentioned earlier:

> You have a responsibility as a leader to look out for signs ... in other people, opportunities that you know that if you gave them a bit of support here or a bit of encouragement or gave them an opportunity to do something, then they would grow in their potential … and step up to the plate. I think that's one of the most important things that good leaders do – [help people] realise their potential.

### 5.2.2  Meaningful work.

*Meaningful* for Liza means a number of things: it is when something is so important to you that it becomes not just part of your life, but *becomes your life*; it is about

seeing a need, wanting to make a difference and taking action; it is about working together with the *right* people, like-minded people, to get the job done through a shared vision and values and way of working, where mutual respect and trust are products of a transparent and dynamic environment, where individual voices are heard. Reflecting on her more recent top-down experience of school leadership before retiring, Liza highlights the critical importance of the leader's role in establishing the context for meaningful work:

> [Principals] can make or break [a school]. The teachers … were there still supporting each other, but they don't have any voice. Teacher leaders that have been heavily involved with IDEAS [and decision making in the past] have been shut down and [been told] "no, sorry, this is the way we're going to do it". Really, there shouldn't be any place for that in the education system.

### 5.2.3  Organisational alignment.

As an IDEAS teacher leader, Liza has experienced the need for leaders to facilitate a clear, shared vision for the future and she has used these skills to effect with the Orphanage project. Along with Claire, they saw a need for more accommodation for orphaned children in Africa and took action. They are continual advocates for the cause through networking and travelling far and wide as guest speakers at various events to promote their work. For them, the message is simple – it is about wanting to make a difference in the lives of vulnerable orphans in Africa. They are achieving this through a powerful organisational vision with aligned values and beliefs, yet still providing for autonomy and a sense of self within that organisation – each individual's contribution is tangible and valued.

As Liza reflected on her IDEAS facilitator role, it equally parallels her current facilitation role with the Orphanage project:

> … [the facilitator role] became my life – you have to live it and breathe it to make it happen. It's always in your mind. It's not like a 9-3 thing at all. I think that I really believed that it [the IDEAS process and the work we were doing] could make the difference to the children that we were teaching and to education in general. As a passionate teacher … it really fired me up to get a glimpse of how things could be so much better and everyone could be more empowered.

Both the IDEAS project and the Orphanage project were about overcoming barriers and challenges, as Liza reflects: " … not trying to change people, but help them see that change is possible and you're working on the positive things, then often the negative things fall by the wayside – you start to see 'oh yeah, that could happen'".

#### 5.2.3.1    *Networking.*

In Liza's work in the school context for IDEAS, she networked and searched for the right people to deliver workshops and fulfil particular roles to achieve the school's shared vision as part of the IDEAS whole school improvement journey. In her work with the Orphanage project, she is involved in networking and searching for the right people to complement their team skill set to achieve the vision for the orphanage. Having the right people in the team is important in achieving the shared goals and vision of the school, the project, or the organisation. They needed to be a group of people that could work together towards the agreed vision, yet have complementary

skill sets. In the Orphanage project, it was important that each person could also see a place for self and their skill set within that project or organisation, so that they could add value to the project and their contribution would be meaningful.

### 5.2.3.2 *Professional Conversations.*

The Professional Conversations process was identified as crucial in providing the space for transparency of processes and open communication. It engendered mutual trust and respect as participants felt safe to share their point of view and ensured consistency of processes and maintenance of the school's or organisation's shared vision. As was prevalent in both Claire's and Liza's case, where the school staff was not able to, or not permitted to maintain this as a process, communication and transparency was impaired and there was a loss of connectedness across the school – people felt disengaged and there was a loss of meaningfulness in their work:

> If you don't have that communication and that trust and respect that builds through those conversations … I think that is one of the most powerful tools that you could ever have in a school system … and really, if that is part of the system, that would survive [change] … the changing principal, the changing deputy … because of the fact that this is how schools operate.

## 5.2.4 Knowing yourself.

Knowing yourself as a leader was important to Liza. Being part of a process of whole school improvement and being a teacher leader in that process, there are two forms of reflection that are encouraged along the way – reflection of the school's journey and progress at various junctures using data evidence, and also self-reflection as a teacher leader in the process. Professional self-reflection was encouraged by the ISMT members each year to reflect on their journey as individuals:

> I think that by going through a leadership experience really helps you to know yourself as an individual. Then, that obviously transfers to a lot of your life or all your life – I think that having the skills and the experiences that I have in working in that [IDEAS] team, I think that's really helped me to be reflective of myself, of my thought patterns and practices – it's made a great difference to me as an individual.

The reflective practice and knowledge of self transpires to other parts of life and work and Liza began to use it in her work for the Orphanage project. Initially, she was unsure of her role in the project, but began to see the parallels between this project and her work with IDEAS, and thus began to see a place for self as part of the Orphanage project:

> [Initially] I didn't really see a very clear role for myself [in the Orphanage project], so while I was supportive, I wasn't involved. For some reason or other, I said I'd go to Africa and once I went to the orphanages and volunteered, I could just see then that "yes, this was possible and we could do this and nothing would stand in our way". It's a really long commitment. It's a bit like school renewal and the IDEAS process. It doesn't finish off after 18 months – I knew it was worthwhile. Because I wasn't teaching anymore, it really still fed for me the need to assist children and educate children and break them out of poverty cycles – to empower them really – I think it had all the right ingredients to attract me to it.

With both Claire and Liza forming a united team with a clear, shared vision, it was not long before others became part of the team inspired by their vision. Liza was empowered by her work with IDEAS and had the confidence and willingness to take the risk to set out on this project with Claire, with both transferring their IDEAS skills into a new work context.

### 5.2.5  Transference of skills.

Throughout the IDEAS project, Liza developed capacity as a teacher leader and mentored others in developing their teacher leader capacity. She learnt skills in shared decision making, how to develop a shared vision, and how to develop a process for professional dialogue. Additionally, she learnt skills in facilitation – as the ISMT facilitator, she was responsible for advocacy of the project and networking to get people on board. She led the team of teacher leaders in the IDEAS School Management Team who were responsible for the overall facilitation of IDEAS within the school. These were valuable skills in providing confidence and empowerment for Liza that were transferable to life and other work contexts: "I can see a lot of things that I used to do in IDEAS as a facilitator within the school that I can do with others on our team [in the Orphanage project] – for example, the professional dialogue skills".

### 5.2.6  Liza's metaphor.

As Liza reflected on her teacher leader journey, she likened it to an expanding sphere of influence. Her metaphor for her teacher leader growth was like a tornado or a snowball – she could not decide which – but knew that as it grows, it gains momentum and builds capacity.

### 5.2.7  Researcher's final comments.

Claire and Liza experienced similar conditions in their IDEAS school contexts. When they found themselves in a disempowering context, they made a conscious decision to step out and build their own dream. They built on their previously empowering experiences to develop their capacities further in fulfilling a dream in a new context.

Liza was driven by a strong moral purpose. Her overarching need as an educator to help children overcome barriers and challenges to their education, and mentor others in their capacity for professional learning was evident at the school in which she worked and additionally in her current context in the Orphanage project. In both cases, Liza has been able to effectively implement the skills and teacher leader capacity built within her former context to great effect – they are achieving the extraordinary. The key features of Liza's own journey were:

- reflection on self and knowing self as a teacher leader;
- her capacity to mentor and grow others' capacity; and
- the transference of skills to new contexts in her quest for meaningful work.

**Professional growth and development**

- Conference presentations
  - Students presenting our work
  - Teachers presenting our work
- Visiting other schools
- Sharing our work with others
- Writing for journals and books
- International Scholarship opportunities
- Working with other researchers
- Visiting international universities
- Ongoing professional learning
- Further study
  - Master of Education
  - Other - PhD?

**Networking**

Professional Conversations
- Internal
  - Principal support
  - Other teachers in the school
  - Support for projects
- External
  - University
    - Local
    - International
  - Other schools
    - Local clusters
    - Interstate
    - International
  - Other researchers
    - Local
    - International
- Advocacy
  - For students
    - Student voice
    - Negotiated pedagogy
  - Sharing my ideas and work
  - Sharing our school's work
  - Presenting at forums and conferences
- Feedback
  - Reflection
  - Clarifying ideas

*"There are many models of leadership ... but from my perspective, the most effective school leadership model is that of distributed or parallel leadership ... (it) enables greater diversity of opinion ... better decision making ... as well as greater teacher engagement with the school, its culture and values."*

**Leadership**

- Concept has evolved (through research)
  - Broader view of leadership
  - Students as leaders
  - Teacher as leaders
- System has not changed
  - Narrow focus
  - Principals feel powerless
  - Teacher leaders feel powerless
  - Accountability demands
  - System pressures
  - Government pressures
  - Teachers as pedagogical decision makers
- Distributed or parallel leadership
- Growing teacher leader capacity
  - Principal knowledge of teacher leadership
  - 'Real' schoolwide approaches
  - Principal support for initiatives
  - Engagement in schoolwide initiatives
  - Teacher voice
    - In the school's vision
    - Pedagogical decision making

The role of the principal in valuing teacher professionalism in growing teacher leader capacity

Principal understanding and valuing teacher leader development - include teacher leader capacity development as part of school development plans.

**Fred**

**Teacher self-efficacy**

*"(my current disillusionment) ... the failure to support my work with student voice in any real form and a feeling of being professionally and personally isolated ..."*

Not feeling valued
- Professionalism devalued
  - Stagnating, slowly withering
  - Feeling disillusioned
  - Feeling of apathy
  - Lack of confidence
  - Feeling trapped
- Top-down approach to leadership
  - Lack of flexibility
  - Individuals cannot create change
  - Loss of autonomy
  - Loss of creativity
- Lack of Principal support
  - Feeling isolated
  - Networks dissipated
  - Lack of enthusiasm by others for ideas

*I know there's a better way, but I feel powerless to do anything about it.*

Feeling valued
- Support of Principal
  - Feeling safe
  - Working with others
  - Others on side
  - Presenting at forums and conferences
  - Networking with others
  - Making connections
- Shared leadership - distributed/parallel
  - Team of people working together
  - Shared understandings
  - Alignment of goals
  - Teacher voice
  - Teacher autonomy
  - Pedagogical decision making
- Treated as a professional
  - Confident
  - Proud
  - Inspired
  - Engaged
  - Great enthusiasm
  - Energised
  - Empowered

*"I found the whole IDEAS process quite inspiring and was greatly energised by the possibilities it had for school renewal and transformation as well as the development of teacher leadership."*

Figure 5.3. An Interpretive Biographical View of Fred's Account of His Teacher Leader Journey

## 5.3 Fred's Teacher Leader Biography

Fred is a strong advocate for students and student voice. He began his IDEAS teacher leader journey as the IDEAS facilitator at his school. Fred was like a fearless soldier with a passion and strength of commitment that was fuelled by a principal that believed in teachers as parallel leaders and valued their contribution to whole school improvement. This principal supported Fred's advocacy for students and their contribution to the learning journey, as did a small team of people and their work played a key role in the development of the Schoolwide Pedagogy and the formation of a Students IDEAS Team (SIT). Fred's advocacy for student voice and negotiated pedagogy became the core strength of this work, but it was not supported by all teachers. When the principal left to go to another school, Fred found that the knockers grew in power under the leadership of a new principal who had different views on leadership and pedagogy.

Fred's work on student leadership had earned him a scholarship for several months to work with experts and academics in the field of student voice in the United Kingdom, and to visit schools working with student voice while there. He has since published papers in journals and books on the topic of student leadership and student voice. Fred was in his element with like-minded people and felt empowered by this experience. Unfortunately, Fred's joy was shattered on his return when he found that the projects he had been working on in his school had been disbanded and his work was now officially not recognised within this new context under the new leadership. He continued to work there, but day by day felt more and more disengaged and disempowered as a teacher leader, until eventually he fell ill and took leave.

Fred was so passionate in his quest for advocacy for student voice and negotiated pedagogy, but without the support of his colleagues and the new principal, it became a burden and he was fighting an uphill battle. Eventually he found that he felt like a lone soldier fighting his own battle and is now a weary, scarred and battle-worn soldier that, if he can manage in time to re-energise, is looking for new avenues to pursue his quest to advocate for student voice and negotiated pedagogy.

Fred's teacher leader journey has been an inspiring, yet tough journey and has highlighted four key areas – the place of *professional growth and development* and its impact on teacher  leader capacity development; the importance of *networking* in building professional learning and teacher leader capacity, particularly internal networking; the meaning of *leadership*, the tension between Fred's beliefs about leadership, the nexus between theory and practice, and how a principal can learn to recognise and draw on the talents and expertise of individual teachers to build capacity; and the impact of two very different contexts on a *teacher's self-efficacy* and professionalism. Due to the image Fred has of how an organisation should be, there appears to be a direct impact on his ability to sustain his image of himself as a teacher leader – Fred felt valued in one context and not valued in another. Each of these four areas will be unpacked in the following section.

### 5.3.1  Professional growth and development.

A key component of the IDEAS whole school improvement journey was the opportunity to share the school's journey with others at regular IDEAS forums,

including cluster meetings, local forums, school visits, National Learning Forums and conferences. As the IDEAS facilitator and a teacher leader at his school, Fred was a regular at these gatherings, which provided the opportunity for both professional learning and networking. His school made regular presentations about their vision and Schoolwide Pedagogy work, including their work on student voice and negotiated pedagogy. Fred also involved the students in these presentations talking about the pedagogy for their school, and found that sharing their work with others had significant benefits for the development of teacher leadership:

> I found the whole IDEAS process quite inspiring and was greatly energised by the possibilities it had for school renewal and transformation as well as the development of teacher leadership. I enjoyed my leadership role as facilitator [of the IDEAS project] especially in the development of the vision and the SWP as well as the opportunity to work closely with people from [the University] in a number of roles, including making presentations about IDEAS to other schools. I loved the early enthusiasm that IDEAS engendered in the school, particularly among some staff, the presentations we made at various IDEAS conferences and gatherings.

Fred's professional growth as a teacher leader is evidenced in the empowerment he felt by being involved in these networks. This involvement also led to many exciting new opportunities for him, including the offer to write a chapter in an edited book and several articles on the work on student voice and negotiated pedagogy. He also received an International Scholarship opportunity to pursue this work in the United Kingdom, working with other researchers and visiting international universities. Fred was inspired to pursue ongoing professional learning through further study and completed a Master of Education in the area of Leadership.

> The connections I made with people at [the University] led on to my completing a Master of Education degree, something I had never contemplated during all my earlier years of teaching and which I thoroughly enjoyed. They also led to my working with a number of PhD students from [the University] in recent years which I have also enjoyed as well as sharing my ideas with a number of student teachers who were quite excited by the possibilities.

### 5.3.2  Networking.

Networking opportunities were a key feature of Fred's teacher leader capacity development. Opportunities for both internal and external networking predominated, with professional conversations and advocacy for their work as the focus for these networks. Internal networking was crucial in the first instance, where principal support for Fred's ideas for negotiated pedagogy to be adopted were instrumental to its success. While Fred may have had the support of a few like-minded people, principal support paved the way for Fred to garner support from other teachers in the school so that his ideas were adopted as part of a school-wide approach to pedagogy.

In the second context, it was the withdrawal of the internal networking opportunities within the school that caused the dissipation of Fred's work. Where the ideas were not supported by the principal, Fred's work dissolved fairly rapidly leading to his disillusionment:

If a single teacher is developing a different way of doing things and then the kids go back into a traditional classroom in another class, that can lead to problems … it can lead to resentment … Fullan writes about how it's very difficult for a teacher and for kids … and he talks about the need for a school-wide approach to things … key lessons from my experience over the last decade or so, has been the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of an individual teacher to change things within a school. No matter how good the ideas may be, no matter how exciting what they come up with might be, it's very difficult to get other teachers and admin to buy into that without the support of the principal. SO [original emphasis], there is still that element of top-down leadership there. Unless you get people on-side, you're not going to make a difference.

The external networks in the early days for Fred were professionally very rewarding and inspiring. He established links with University partners, both local and international, as well as other schools, local clusters of schools, and schools interstate and internationally. Through his writing, he also established contacts and credibility with other researchers, both locally and internationally.

The opportunity for professional conversations with others to advocate for his ideas and work as well as sharing his school's work was important. Fred was always an advocate for students, student voice and negotiated pedagogy when presenting at forums and conferences. While enjoying the professional conversations as an opportunity for sharing, they had an additional benefit in that the feedback received through these conversations allowed them to clarify their ideas and confirm their thinking.

Fred's advocacy for students and student voice was evident in his drive to establish a Student IDEAS Team (SIT) as part of the IDEAS project. Initially, Year 11 students were involved and then, as Fred reflected: "the SIT grew and evolved over the next five years [until] it incorporated interested students from all year levels". This work with students was extended to involve them in discussions on pedagogy once the school's draft Schoolwide Pedagogy had been established, which provided some surprising insights and an exciting new direction for Fred and his close colleagues – negotiating pedagogy with students:

When we got a draft of [our] Schoolwide Pedagogy (SWP), we got a small group of kids to go over it, to look at the language it was written in, to make sure that the kids could understand it. They designed a mural to describe the IDEAS experience and describe the SWP … there's a whole IDEAS workshop [there], just looking at the mural and talking about what's in it and what it means. I found that those kids had incredible ideas and incredible insights into teaching and learning … [they] came up with the idea of where we'd negotiated not just a curriculum but also the pedagogy. We sat down and talked about, "Okay, what do we want to learn? Okay, how do we want to learn it? How are you guys going to learn it best?" They came up with incredible ideas, which I've written about [in articles and a book chapter]. That just showed me how much kids know and what insights they have and what imagination they have about how to make teaching more fun and exciting and engaging. I can honestly say that our process of negotiating the pedagogy turned one [year nine] class around and engendered a real love of learning among many of them. Tangentially, this work … also led to my

being awarded a [State] scholarship in 2006 to travel to England [in 2007] and visit about twenty-five different schools across the country and work with [an academic] who [has worked with others in] some ground-breaking work on student voice.

### 5.3.3 Leadership.

Throughout his teacher leader journey, Fred was particularly interested in the meaning of *leadership* in the current context and the nexus between theory and practice and has pursued further study on this topic. His IDEAS experience has exposed him to a particular type of distributed leadership called parallel leadership, where teachers were the pedagogical decision makers in the school. This is the model that empowered him as a teacher leader and thus developed teacher leader capacity in the first context. When he was exposed to a top-down model of leadership in the second context, his teacher leader capacity and concept of professional self was affected significantly.

Fred articulated that the concept of leadership has evolved through research and felt that there was a broader view of leadership, with students as leaders and teachers as leaders, yet apart from his experience of parallel leadership, there was a significant lapse in between the research literature and the reality of the system:

> The most effective school leadership model is that of distributed or parallel leadership in the form of diverse teacher leaders throughout the school … this enables greater diversity of opinion and probably better decision-making within the school, as well as greater teacher engagement with the school, its culture and values. While this model continues to be an effective model within the school … it seems at odds with the direction being taken by [the system and governments] which favour centralised, top-down decision-making with some veneer of consultation … Interestingly, when [our principal] had to present his goals for the school to one of the [system] managers, he included the development of teacher leaders and was surprised to be told that he was the only principal this manager worked with who had done so. A sign of the times?

Within the system, a top-down approach still predominates and there is a narrowed focus on accountability demands such as literacy and numeracy. Fred highlighted that due to system and government pressures, principals and teacher leaders felt powerless. He realised that growing teacher leader capacity is important to teacher professional learning and development, yet there is little room or evidence of this within the current environment. Principal knowledge of teacher leadership and how to develop teachers as pedagogical leaders is essential for this to occur. In addition to student voice, Fred knew the importance of teachers having a voice in the school's vision and in pedagogical decision making. Engagement in school-wide initiatives is crucial for pedagogical alignment with an authentic vision, and of course, principal support for any initiatives.

The principal's understanding and valuing of teacher leader development is important to develop teacher leader capacity as part of their school development plans. It is crucial that a principal can recognise, resource and develop individual teacher leader talents and expertise to contribute to the professional capacity of the school, as was evident with Fred's first principal. This provides the space for a

teacher leader to act with passion, commitment, moral purpose and drive towards something they truly believe in, in a journey with others. As Fred reflected:

> Current directions [in the system] are leading to a diminishment of teacher autonomy and professionalism, a narrowing of the curriculum and a single-minded focus on literacy and numeracy as measured by NAPLAN, an increasing disengagement of more students from school and learning and a lessening of creativity in the classroom – it's taken a lot of the joy out of teaching … if the standard of teaching is to improve, there has to be time and space for teacher teams to work together, in a collaborative environment, to support each other, to develop resources, to mentor each other, to visit each other's classrooms and to include students in these discussions.

### 5.3.4  Teacher self-efficacy.

Fred has worked in two very different contexts – one where he felt valued and one where he didn't feel valued. Each of these has a significant impact on his teacher leader capacity and his self-efficacy as a teacher.

#### 5.3.4.1  *Feeling valued.*

In the context where Fred felt valued, teacher leadership was valued and he felt he was treated as a professional. He felt confident, proud, inspired, engaged in what was going on because his ideas counted, he had great enthusiasm, was energised and empowered. In this context, a distributed model of leadership called parallel leadership was implemented by the principal as part of the IDEAS project, a process for school renewal. This model provided a context for teams of people working together to develop shared understandings and alignment of goals under a shared vision for teaching and learning for the school. It allowed for a degree of teacher autonomy as they had input into the shared pedagogical decision making in the school.

In this environment, teachers had the support of the principal, and enjoyed working with others. Fred felt safe as his ideas were supported, his voice counted and he knew he had others on side. He enjoyed presenting at forums and conferences, networking with others and making connections.

> I loved getting up and talking to groups of teachers about [our work with IDEAS]. I remember [one teacher] after one presentation we did – he just said, "I love listening to you talking about this stuff, because you're so passionate about it" … then also the IDEAS conferences and workshops and things, where we met with and talked with teachers from other schools [and] people from the University … having those professional conversations with them.

#### 5.3.4.2  *Not feeling valued.*

In the second context, Fred did not feel valued as a professional and used the metaphor of a dead tree trunk in a stagnant billabong to describe how he felt as a teacher leader in this context – stagnating, slowly withering; standing alone; feeling disillusioned; feeling of apathy; lack of confidence; feeling trapped:

I could see myself as a plant or tree that bloomed through IDEAS and [the] student voice project – these really inspired and changed me – but which has been slowly withering since. All those things were just so exciting and empowering and the potential was there to go anywhere. Then, through various things, it died and withered away and thus the rather stark image [of a dead tree in a stagnant billabong] …

In this context, a top-down approach to leadership prevailed. In Fred's view, the loss of autonomy and creativity, resulting from the lack of principal support for flexibility to pursue new ideas left him feeling isolated as his networks dissipated. The lack of enthusiasm by a number of others for his ideas left Fred with the realisation that individuals cannot create change, as the ideas were not valued or supported by the principal. Fred reflects on the new principal's response at the time and the impact it had on what they had created as a school during the IDEAS project:

IDEAS 'was done' at the school and the ISMT was to be disbanded as 'it was no longer necessary' … from there … IDEAS began to wither in the school, though the SWP [Schoolwide Pedagogy] was still the basis of teaching and learning for a couple of years before being forgotten … we had developed an ambitious project [from the SWP] to develop true partnerships in learning between teachers and students based around work on negotiated pedagogy and curriculum … I have written a number of articles about [it] as well as a chapter in [a book] … students and I made presentations to teachers' conferences which were well received … there was no support from [the new] admin for it, however.

Additionally, the lack of support for his work and ideas on return from his international scholarship opportunity, in addition to the changing nature of education in the face of system and government accountability measures at the expense of real conversation about authentic school-wide approaches to pedagogy and teacher and student voice have had a significant impact on his self-efficacy:

The lack of interest in these ideas when I returned, the disbanding of the Student IDEAS Team while I was away … all led to fairly rapid disillusionment … At the moment, I am looking for another career or direction in my life as I am … disillusioned with … the failure to support my work with student voice in any real form – a feeling of being professionally and personally isolated … I am disillusioned with many elements of current trends in education in Australia … [our IDEAS work] was not sustained [at our school] … the emphasis of the system on making what is measurable the most important way of judging a school's or a teacher's success … accompanying this, the obsession with measurable data which is increasingly being used by the system and the media to denigrate schools and teachers … issues such as teacher evaluations and merit pay [which] militate against the collaborative nature of successful teaching. I have some sympathy with the idea of paying good teachers more, but no-one has come up with a system that is fair and which works. Most proposals involve ideas such as value-added measurement based on student test scores which the US experience has shown to be gloriously unreliable and unfair … [curriculum] which reduce teacher autonomy and creativity and is contemptuous of teacher professionalism – it turns us into technicians following a script in many cases

… and the contradiction in a system which extolls the importance of teacher team-work, but provides little time for such team-work to occur.

### 5.3.5  Researcher's final comments.

These two very different contexts experienced by Fred highlight the significant role the principal has in the whole school improvement context. The principal is vital in:

- establishing a shared vision for the school;
- building relationships of mutual trust and respect;
- valuing the role of teacher leaders and prioritising teacher leadership in planning to grow teacher leader capacity for whole school improvement;
- valuing teacher leader voice, and the consideration of the impact on teacher self-efficacy;
- recognising individual teacher leader talents and abilities; and
- finding a place for the development and fulfilment of individual teacher leader potential.

Schools

Clusters

Systems

Role of the system support for capacity building

Teachers working with other teachers

Contextual professional learning

Teachers as designers of professional learning

Support in networks and clusters

*"I think it's very encouraging when the experts (external University mentors) have come to a school and then sit down with a group of teachers and say 'You can do this. You are intelligent human beings who are able to solve your own problems and work through this process (IDEAS)."*

Culture of collaboration

Mentoring

Inspiring others

Collegial

Supportive

Professional Conversations

**Professional engagement**

**Professional learning communities**

**Leadership**

Shared or distributed

Processes

For working together

For capacity building

System support

Intellectual capital

Social capital

People

Relationships

Dynamic

Motivating

Inspiring

Enabling

Feeling supported

Feeling safe

Intellectual and social capital built through shared conversations

Eva

*"It's not about selling (something) ... It's about developing (and) motivating people (and) building people and capacity ... (it's about) processes and people. To be a good leader, you have to have good process knowledge and you have to have a sense of how you're going to contain or manage a process."*

**Meta-view of self as a leader**

Self-determination

Perceived by others as a leader

Networking

External

Internal

Growing realisation of self as leader

Process knowledge

Having aspirations

Confidence

Having a voice

Feeling safe

Feeling enabled

Internal and external networks – across schools and systems

*"I see myself as a leader ... I've become far more reflective about how I might improve ... you have a sense of how much you've grown with this ... it's fundamentally reconceptualising what's my role as an educator ..."*

Role of the principal as an enabler

*Figure 5.4.* An Interpretive Biographical View of Eva's Account of Her Teacher Leader Journey

## 5.4 Eva's Teacher Leader Biography

Eva is a young, dynamic teacher leader and through her IDEAS experience had a dual role as a teacher leader in a secondary school context and also working at the system level as a facilitator of whole school improvement processes. She is a strong advocate for teacher professional learning communities and professional engagement and both roles provided the scope for her to develop her particular interest in these areas through the facilitation of workshops and teacher professional conversations. Eva loves working with people and thrives in an environment where teams of people work together and she can assist in bringing teams of people together. While Eva's teacher leader experience was an empowering and rewarding one of working across two contexts quite successfully, she experienced some disillusionment when the systemic context support for IDEAS was reduced and she had to rethink her role and future as a teacher leader. Her narrative highlights her insights from working across both contexts – within schools and within the system.

There are four areas that clearly emerged from Eva's narrative: the first was the clarity with which she viewed her growth as a leader and what she was able to do with her new skills, her *meta-view of self as a leader*; secondly was her advocacy for *professional learning communities*; thirdly, her beliefs about *leadership*, and teacher leadership in particular; and last, but not least, the value placed on *professional engagement* and the role of mentoring and professional conversations. Each of these will be unpacked in the following section.

### 5.4.1 Meta-view of self as a leader.

Eva has developed a particular awareness of her own growth as a leader and continually reflects on this growth to improve. Eva appears outwardly confident and admits she only began to really see herself as a leader through the whole school improvement process and her work in a coordination role at the system level in working with other schools in the process. She also cited how others within the same context viewed and responded to her and perceived her as a leader, contributing to the view of oneself as a leader:

> I see myself as a leader – it is a bit of a plague of self-doubt, I have to say – it's one of those things – I actually found my school experience [as an ISMT member] helped. I did have a sense that I was leading this process and that I was a leader in that respect – when I left, a few people sort of made comments to that effect. It was only then that I realised that I do, actually – you still have to own your own leadership.

Eva admitted that she has become far more reflective about how she might improve her own skills as a teacher leader and has a self-determination and commitment to her responsibility to continue to be reflective in that role in her quest for growth in her own professional learning: "It's fundamentally reconceptualising what's my role as an educator". She vividly remembered becoming aware of herself as a leader and her growth as a leader in 2009 while leading a meeting on school visits:

> You have a sense of how much you've grown with this [process] … I thought "Oh my God, I'm actually a leader" … it was an empowering moment. Most people go through schooling – as a teacher in a school – they don't see

themselves owning any leadership capacity even though they are seen by others as leaders in the school … you won't hear it unless you own it.

There also comes a time with growth and change that a context may change and the person may need to reconsider how their skills may be used to best effect within that context or possibly consider moving to another context. Eva's work situation at the time of this study was changing at the system level, so due consideration would need to be given to her future. Eva has aspirations to work with her newfound leadership skills in another context, but is unsure of what that would be:

> I've learnt so much over the last few years in my current role and I'm itching to put it into practice … it's kind of the sleeping giant I think … I enjoy my work … [but what] I'm doing at the moment … it's not really exciting … it's not dynamic. I'd like see myself in a school using a different skill set to actually lead a school in some ways … to be part of a leadership team that was making a real difference … exposing them to really good professional learning.

Eva has established good networks in recent years with both external and internal networks and mentors, and has a good knowledge of processes to engage people, so is very keen to use these skills to lead people in developing professional learning that is contextual and to give teachers a voice in their professional growth and learning. Within these networks, she knows that the role of the principal is critical in enabling the development of people and processes – the intellectual and social capital – for the establishment of professional learning communities at the school level.

### 5.4.2  Professional learning communities.

Eva's advocacy for professional learning, and the establishment of professional learning communities, is evident in her plans for the future and has been influenced by her past experiences, with the coordination of workshops and forums at school, district and state level. She values external networks such as University partners in the mentoring and modelling process for the establishment of professional learning communities:

> I think it's very encouraging when the experts [external university mentors] … have come to a school and then sit down with a group of teachers and say "You can do this. You are intelligent human beings who are able to solve your own problems and work through this process [IDEAS]".

Instrumental in the development of teacher leader capacity in Eva's school was the concept of teachers as designers of professional learning within the context of their unique professional learning community. Teachers who are working together and thinking together to design professional learning, and thus create new meaning for their context, is a powerful way of developing teacher leader capacity:

> As a leadership team [a teacher leader on the ISMT], you are designing professional learning that engages your staff in professional, collaborative intelligent problem solving about your school. There's no one better to design professional learning than teachers. You've got all the resources at your fingertips. You know how to do it; you do it every day in the classroom … you know the needs of your group and context … [it's] hard stuff and challenging and we're actually going to have to think. So [it's] really activating people's thinking … to build capacity. I see the whole professional

learning community model is really important because I think most valuable professional learning and teacher leadership … comes from teachers working with other teachers.

Extending the concept of professional learning communities from internal within the school context to external networks for cluster sharing was a concept that Eva promoted within her area. Professional learning networks highlighted a dual benefit in developing teacher leader capacity and improving teaching and learning outcomes. Teacher leaders opened up their classrooms for anyone who wanted to come and view their work on a particular focus or view a particular resource.

I think over time, people get a lot out of that process … across the network, or cluster of schools, by them actually raising the profile of their work and actually having to articulate to the others what they're doing, what they're trying to achieve, why they've done certain things. I think systems could do more to actually encourage teachers to apply and go through [a leader teacher certification] process. It's a win-win to me, there's a lot of covert and overt capacity building that goes on in a teacher for that year or two when they're so focussed – they're reflective about their teaching, they build their own teaching and they also build their leadership role with in the school. It's a win-win for everybody in the end. I think as a system we could actually probably do more to support that – the power of a really good, job embedded action – reflective professional learning over time – how powerful that can be … professional learning processes [are] so important to enhance leadership, to build leadership capacity, in any position people are in. Not positional leadership, but to be able to do that – school by school and therefore in the system – people talk about coaching, [but] they miss really what's behind that.

### 5.4.3  Leadership.

Eva's experiences of working as a teacher leader have left her with two firmly held beliefs about teacher leadership, and leadership in schools more broadly. Being a leader is about processes and people – processes for working together and the relationships built with people, resulting in capacity building within the organisation. She described her experiences as a teacher leader as feeling very safe and supported, with teachers engaged and talking, and having a very strong sense of who they were.

Leaders have a key role in inspiring and motivating people towards a vision and enabling people to work together in processes that build individual teacher capacity and hence build the overall capacity of the organisation or school. They need to be dynamic enablers and motivators to develop people and understand process:

I used to do conferences …, but the links between training and professional learning … it's not about selling [something] … It's about developing, motivating people … it's about building people and building capacity for change … and how can we all work better together … it's about processes and people … to be a good leader, you have to have good process knowledge and you have to have a sense of how you're going to contain or manage a process. You certainly have a sense of people and be able to enlist support and get them on board and help them to feel excited about their work …

Having worked in a culture of collaboration as a parallel leader in a school exposed Eva to a level of teacher professionalism that she had not experienced before. Teachers working together, solving problems and having a voice in the pedagogical decision making and designers of their own professional learning for the school appealed to her self-confessed positive, optimistic and somewhat idealistic view of the world. She enjoyed the challenge of thinking outside the box and being able to communicate on an equal playing field, so can feel somewhat restricted by having to operate in a top-down systemic context that values positional leadership and in her view, places limitations on her professional creativity and communication with people at different levels of the organisation:

> I don't get the positional thing as easily … sometimes that actually is a bit weird for me … I have to stop myself. Because I will just ask – I mean I've just sent an email to the Director General [of Education] … I have to think 'line managers, process, systems' … I have to stop myself and follow the correct process, because I don't see that certain people should be speaking to certain people. I know the process exists for reasons …

Eva's beliefs about leadership are confirmed by her metaphor for herself as leader – people working together with high aspirations and the importance of relationships are evident in an image of herself amongst a group of people standing together on a hill:

> It would never be a person standing on a hill with people lined up behind them. It would probably be a person standing on a hill with people alongside, next to them, but they were in the middle … it wouldn't be linear, it would be a bit more lateral.

### 5.4.4 Professional engagement.

Professional engagement is important to Eva and she considers it part of her professional responsibility to engage and inspire others in a culture of collaboration where professional conversations prevail – a culture that is collegial, where mutual trust and respect is paramount. She has worked in a system where system support to build the capacity for school and cluster networks and have certified facilitators working at the system level to support the clusters was crucial. When that system support for facilitation was withdrawn, or particular difficulties were encountered in building a culture of engagement, feelings of frustration began to emerge. In one such case in Eva's narrative, the difficulties of releasing people for professional learning to build the capacity for the system facilitation support team became problematic:

> Our plan was to wean off [the university] and obviously build a capacity here to work with the process a bit more [in the system] ... as it happened, it didn't actually happen that way … and at the end of the day, the system doesn't really support as much as we'd like …we've lost capacity in that group.

The mentoring, collegiality and the professional conversations that were a key component of the IDEAS facilitation group have dissipated and that is a source of frustration for Eva. She lost her network as it existed and would need to find new ways of utilising her teacher leader skills in a new context.

Eva has worked at both the system and school level. Her teacher leader capacity was developed initially as part of the IDEAS project at the school level. For a while, she was able to work with these new capacities at the system level in facilitating and

growing others' capacity. Given that she had seen *both sides of the coin*, she was able to reflect on how systems and schools might work together better to achieve the desired outcomes for students. While Eva acknowledged that there has to be some accountability and benchmarks in place, "there's a great competition or demand on the time [available] … you've got so many staff meetings, PD days and you're trying to fit it in. Some of those things are legislated or systemic".

### 5.4.5  Researcher's final comments.

Eva's experience with professional learning communities and school-wide approaches to pedagogy and her work at the system level has highlighted:

- the need for system support and resourcing in allowing schools more flexibility in the way they respond to initiatives and to embrace any initiatives in a holistic way;
- cultures of collaboration should be built to share practice through professional learning communities; and
- networks or cluster sharing, whether internal or external to the organisation, have significant benefits for building teacher leader capacity.

Central node: **Lucy**

**Relationships** (branch)

Working together to a common goal
- Sense of purpose
- Sense of achievement
- Motivating
- Empowerment
- Feeling valued
- Ownership
- Commitment
- Sense of responsibility

*"...it's that feeling of community ... people here are hard workers ... they have a passion for teaching ... so that's been very motivating ... (it) inspires me as well ... I know that they value when you do put the time in ... when you do put hard work in, people do appreciate it ..."*

Establishing credibility (new context)
- Clear communication
- Transparency
- Approachability
- Being well organised

*"Letting people in on the big secret"*

- Valuing input and ideas of others
- Trust

Managing conversations
- Sometimes difficult
- Shared

**Professional learning** (branch)

Courses on leadership
- School system
- University — Credit towards Master's program.
- Other?

Master of Education study

*" ... having opportunities where they talk about ... your leadership style ... just to get a better understanding of leadership ... for teachers, even if you're not in a leadership position. The system does provide opportunities once you're in a leadership position, but there's not much beforehand ..."*

**Growth as a teacher leader** (branch)
- Young, shy teacher
- Maturing capabilities
- Being well organised
- Growth in self-confidence
- Big picture thinker
- Developing organisation-wide perspective
- Reached career goal before 30
- Reassessing the future - what now?

**Mentoring** (branch)

Leadership development opportunities
- within school
- within system

*"The whole IDEAS process and having worked with that really set me up really well for future leadership."*

External partnerships
- School system
- Other schools
- University

Internal (within school)
- Other teachers
- Supervisors
- Principal

Strong principal leadership
- Belief in staff
- Mentor young and beginning teachers
- Recognise skills in mentee
- Motivate and inspire confidence in staff
- Encourage others to take on leadership roles
- Encourage others to develop capabilities
- Develop and retain the right people

*"My boss was a big encourager because she believed in me and said 'I think you could take this (facilitation role) on and you can lead this ... having that belief behind me I think really helped me a lot."*

*"Without her vision for the school, it wouldn't have taken off as much as it did ... she would say, 'If you don't like this, there are other places you can go' ... because the whole direction of the school was changing, people that were (blockers) moved on ..."*

**Advocacy** (branch)
- Confidence to advocate
- Being proactive
- For own ideas
- Transparency
- Consistency
- Shared vision
- For Schoolwide Pedagogy
- Balancing system and school priorities
- Establishing purpose

Belief
- In self
  - Capabilities (leadership)
  - Credibility
  - Confidence
- In what they've created (as a school)
  - Shared vision
  - Schoolwide Pedagogy

*"... one of the big, important things is letting people know the purpose (of what they're doing) ...If you're going to lead something, people have to value it."*

*Figure 5.5.* An Interpretive Biographical View of Lucy's Account of Her Teacher Leader Journey.

## 5.5   Lucy's Teacher Leader Biography

Lucy's narrative takes us on a journey in her role as a teacher leader in two contexts: one as a teacher leader in an IDEAS school and the second context in a non-IDEAS school, both in the same education system. In both of these contexts, Lucy felt supported as a teacher leader.

Lucy was shy and unassuming when I first met her – a young teacher that was quietly passionate about the vision and direction the school was taking with their whole school improvement process, and one that appeared to only share her views when asked. On my second visit with a colleague, some two years later, I was astounded at the transformation in Lucy's demeanour. We were greeted by a confident young woman who shook our hands and showed us around the school and, although the principal was in attendance, she facilitated the meeting sharing the school's direction and journey thus far with their school improvement process. What caused this transformation in Lucy over the two-year period and what was she doing now?

Lucy adopted a leadership role in the whole school improvement process as a young beginning teacher, only third year out of University. She had been a part of the IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT) in her first two years at the school, but when the IDEAS facilitator relocated to another school for a promotion opportunity, Lucy was approached to take on the facilitation role. Due to her ISMT experience, Lucy quickly realised the importance of engaging the key stakeholders so that they had ownership of the creative process – they needed to believe and be a part of the school's vision for the future. Having a shared vision involved transparency and consistency across the school by ensuring that everyone was on the same page:

> I was responsible for leading the ISMT and also furthering where we were up to in the process. My main role was with the Schoolwide Pedagogy and developing that – I worked with new teachers when they came to the school [and] in-serviced them on the process … I also worked with students … and the parents. I think [what] enabled me was my passion for [the process] and my belief in it. I really believed in what we were doing. Having everyone on the same page was important.

For the following interpretation, Lucy's teacher leader biographical account is organised into five key areas: firstly, her *growth as a teacher leader*, which she likens to a flower blossoming; secondly, the importance of *relationships* and working together to achieve success; thirdly, the importance of *mentoring* young and beginning teachers and helping them achieve belief in themselves; fourthly, *advocacy* for own ideas and the school's shared vision and pedagogy;  and lastly the importance of *professional learning*, whether offered as part of a system or private further study.

### 5.5.1   Growth as a teacher leader.

Lucy's growth as a teacher leader was evident from the moment I saw her on my second visit to the school, in the confidence with which she presented herself and her school's work. She was still unassuming, still proud of what they had achieved and

still humble about her achievements, but there was something almost intangible that was new:

> I think I've come a long way. I'm a lot more confident than I used to be … I think I'm credible … I think I have a lot to offer other people … in the role I'm in at the moment, because it's a passion of mine.

Lucy had developed from a shy, young teacher to a confident young teacher leader with maturing capabilities in the leadership area. She had become more of a big picture thinker and was developing an organisation-wide perspective. Lucy, as she had described, had blossomed like a flower, and has since moved to a new context for a promotion opportunity. For Lucy, this move is significant as she has reached her long-term career goal, all before turning 30, and is now reassessing her future. What now for this teacher leader?

When I asked her if she could think of a metaphor that best describes her teacher leader journey, she described the concept of growth and a flower blossoming because:

> I think I've really grown and matured in it. I think I still am …I was thinking of flowers, opening up … because naturally, I'm quite a quiet person. I think I still am in situations … I think it's helped me to realise that I have a lot to offer … but I think it really started with being given the experience and being believed in. It's helped me to believe in myself. I feel like it's just grown.

Lucy highlighted the key role her school principal played in recognising potential in staff and encouraging them to reach their full potential. She saw the notion of mentoring young and beginning teachers as crucial to her success. There were two factors that contributed to this – firstly, where the principal recognised potential leadership capabilities in a teacher, and secondly, assisting the teacher to recognise and achieve belief in themselves, and recognise and achieve their full potential. The first of these two factors is crucial, as in Lucy's case, she may not have put herself forward for the facilitator role if the principal had not recognised her potential and encouraged her to do so.

> My boss was a big [encourager] because she believed in me and said 'I think you could take this [facilitation role] on and you can lead this. So having that belief behind me I think really helped me a lot. She's provided so many opportunities for leadership. I don't think I would be here in this position today [in her promotion role in a new context] if it wasn't for her and her belief in me … I think she saw I was organised and that I could organise events [with the] launch of the vision and the Schoolwide Pedagogy; working with people; but also delegating tasks to people and working with a team. I think also presenting to big audiences … principals, to parents, to staff … mentoring as well … working with teachers in the classroom.

Additionally, while encouraging teacher leadership, Lucy noted the key role the principal had in taking a firm stance on their preferred future and ensuring that the right people were going to be on board. In this regard, there was support for staff who were willing and able, to achieve the shared vision for the school.

> … without [the principal's support] and vision for the school, it wouldn't have taken off as much as it did … she would say, "if you don't like this,

there are other places you can go" … because the whole direction of the school was changing – people that were blockers … moved on.

### 5.5.2 Relationships.

Lucy had already experienced the value of establishing good working relationships in working together towards common goals in her first context, as part of the IDEAS whole school improvement experience. She already knew about the importance of valuing the input and ideas of others, establishing trust and using a process of professional conversations to manage this. Being a new staff member in her current leadership role in a new context was not without its challenges – she values the relationships she needs to build with people, yet in the new context, credibility needed to be established, and she still finds the difficult conversations challenging:

> One of the things that I still find hard is having those sort of conversations with people when you have to say, "look, okay, I get that you feel this way, but this is what we're doing" … I find that tricky, because I wanted people to like me. I know in leadership you can't be like that … you need to know that people aren't always going to like you … I really have to pep myself up before I [say something] … [and remember] it's not personal, it's professional.

Additionally, as a newcomer in a new context, credibility needs to be established.

> I've realised I really had to build that up. When I was at [my last school], I'd been there and I'd worked my way up into the leadership, so people had either seen me over the [three] years rise to that, or they started and I was already there … whereas when you go somewhere new, no one knows what you've done before.

Lucy's focus on relationships and connecting with people ensures that she makes an effort to be in the staffroom as much as possible at recess and lunch breaks. She realised from her own experience in her former school, that when people feel valued and you want to know about them and connect with them, they are more likely to want to connect with you and come on board. Demonstrating that one is approachable and well organised are high priorities for Lucy, as are clear communication, working together towards a common goal and transparency:

> One of the big, important things [I've learnt about leadership] is letting people know the purpose of what you're doing. If you're going to lead something, people have to value it … to see the point of it and their role in it … and what they can bring to it. It's not just – "okay, this is the way it's going to be", it's about people having ideas as well, and valuing that, and working together. You also have to be a good communicator [because] when it's very foggy and [they're] not sure what's happening, people are less excited or enthusiastic.

Working together and getting people on board is a high priority for Lucy, but she has realised this also needs to be tempered with the need to balance system and school priorities. While the school may have a clear vision and strategies, sometimes "there are some things obviously that need to be 'okay, this is the way it is because that's an expectation from higher up that it has to happen like that'". Lucy's experiences highlighted that these expectations can be managed when there is transparency, trust, a shared vision and people and their contributions are valued, that is, a shared way of

working. She highlighted that there is a real sense of community within this school context, where people worked together and valued each other's contributions.

> … It's that feeling of community … people here are hard workers … they have a passion for teaching … so that's been very motivating … [it] inspires me as well … I know that they value when you do put the time in … when you do put hard work in, people do appreciate it.

Lucy's focus on relationships, working together and getting people on board highlighted her particular view about a distributed form of leadership learned as part of her IDEAS journey and one that is she attempting to work with in her new context.

### 5.5.3 Mentoring.

Lucy has already identified the key role her principal had in mentoring her as a teacher leader through the whole school improvement process, demonstrated by the faith and belief in her capabilities to take on the facilitation role in the process in her third year of teaching. She identified the importance of mentoring younger or beginning teachers in recognising their leadership capabilities and instilling belief in their capabilities.

> I think sometimes when you first start out, you think that you're still learning and that what you think isn't as important as someone who's been teaching for a long time. IDEAS gave me the chance to … take on a little bit of leadership. When I was first approached [to be part of the ISMT], I was in my second year of teaching … I didn't think that I should. I didn't think to put myself forward. So when I knew that they thought "you've got something to offer", then I thought, "okay, yeah, I do". I don't think I'd be where I was today if I wasn't approached like that. So I think that belief … to let teachers know that their opinions are valued [is important] … even if you haven't been teaching for a long time or haven't been in leadership before.

This experience has had a significant impact on Lucy's belief in herself and ensuing confidence as a teacher leader in the years that followed. Most significant is that Lucy has achieved her long-term career goal before the age of 30 and is now having to reassess her future goals as a teacher leader.

Additionally, Lucy's experience as a mentee has had a positive impact on her role as mentor of others in her new context. She assists others to identify their strength areas and weaknesses and to build teacher capacity in working with these areas:

> The mentoring side of it [is] really important [in my role] … it's about going into classrooms and seeing what's happening … and offering any help, or even modelling lessons … as well as discussion … It's meant to be a non-judgemental sort of thing … it's not just leaving people to sort it out for themselves … but working together to reach a solution.

### 5.5.4 Advocacy.

In her first context, Lucy first advocated for the school's journey in the IDEAS whole school improvement process in her early days as a member of the ISMT, as a young second year teacher and before she became the ISMT facilitator. The ISMT facilitator at the time was due to present the school's journey to a room full of

principals when she became ill the day before, and Lucy was asked to present instead.

> I was like "whoa" [when asked]. It was so intimidating. But I think being given the opportunity to actually do something and talk about [our school improvement process] to a whole room of principals was pretty intimidating … but I think being given the opportunity and the belief that they think I can do it … definitely helped. It makes you think in that direction.

Lucy's advocacy for the school had a dual benefit in that it cemented her belief in what they had created as a school and additionally fuelled her own confidence and leadership capabilities, knowing that her principal and mentors had confidence in her to present to a room full of principals.

On moving to her new school for promotion to a middle management position, Lucy found that advocating for one's ideas and for the need for change can be a challenge in a new context. Lucy became a newcomer in a new context. She found that transferring her teacher leader skills and advocating for her ideas can be managed over time, and balanced with what already exists within the current context. She found that sometimes her ideas were met with resistance initially, but realised the need to temper the advocacy for new ideas with the establishment of relationships to gain trust and respect. Some staff at the school had been there for a number of years, so she was met with "this is the way it's always done".

> So coming in new, I've seen things done differently that I think "that's really good, so I'd like to try that again, because I know how well it works". Sometimes there is resistance … but then at the same time, I think coming in to a fresh place [and] having lots of different ideas and seeing how they do things here as well … that's helped me to have new ideas about things and how I can do things. Because I'm new, I can push a little bit more … at the same time trying not to do too much, because if you try and change too much, people [resist].

Lucy advocated for the school's sense of community and its effect on leadership. There appears to be a sense that the school community is working together to achieve something that goes beyond the school gates. They have a shared sense of responsibility and purpose that is both motivating and rewarding. Lucy discussed the hard-working, appreciative staff: "They don't take [your hard work] for granted … it's that feeling of community … and because you're part of it, the leadership side is a bit easier as well".

### 5.5.5 Professional learning.

Ongoing professional learning is important to Lucy and her teacher leader journey. In addition to Master's study in her area of work, she would like to further understand the area of leadership by undertaking some core units in leadership study in getting to know her leadership style. She highlighted the role that the education system could play in this area by making leadership courses available to teachers in addition to principals, or those in a formal leadership position: "… to get a better understanding of leadership and what would be expected … for teachers, even if you're not in a leadership position … the system does provide opportunities once you're in a leadership position, but there's not much beforehand". In one example Lucy cited

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where a unit of work or a course could account for one credit towards a Master of Education.

Lucy highlighted that the IDEAS whole school improvement process was instrumental to her professional learning – it provided a leadership model to promote future leaders and mentoring and modelling of processes such as professional conversations through workshops and partnerships with the University over a two year period.

> The whole IDEAS process and having worked with that really set me up well for future leadership. I really believe if I hadn't been part of that – even if I'd had leadership in other areas, it wouldn't be quite the same – just because we had the extra support as well through the workshops and through talking to people like yourself about things, and accompanying you on visits, and being able to see how you work as well. I think all of those things helped me.

Lucy feels supported in her new context by both the principal and the staff and has been able to transfer some of the skills learned as part of the IDEAS whole school improvement process into this context. She is keen to introduce the shared way of working using professional conversations to build teacher capacity within that context. In addition to her current Master's study and transference of her ongoing professional learning skills, Lucy is currently reassessing her professional learning needs for the future, now that she has achieved her career goal at such a young age.

### 5.5.6  Researcher's final comments.

Of particular interest in this narrative, is that Lucy had worked in two quite different contexts – one, a school that had been through school reform using the IDEAS project, and another school that had not used IDEAS. In the first context, Lucy had the support of the principal to develop her teacher leader capacity through a model of parallel leadership. In the second context, Lucy has the support of the principal to share her ideas and advocate for improvement, hence enabling her to further grow her teacher leader capacity development. While Lucy had learnt valuable skills throughout the IDEAS project in her first context that enabled her to secure promotion in her second context, it was the principal in both cases that recognised Lucy's potential and made the difference in Lucy feeling that her work was a valued contribution to the community context.

Top down authoritarian

Frameworks system imposed

Teachers have no input

No shared understanding

No alignment

Teachers don't engage

*"We need to actually have this shared understanding of what we're doing. If we're not, we can't be going in the same direction ...(this) has come the wrong way (top down)! You sit there thinking, this is not working."*

Organisational processes

In current context

Professional conversations

Trusting people

Social capital

Valuing teacher professionalism

Professional community

Listening to teacher voice

Engaging people

Reflective practice

System

School

Own beliefs/values

Lack of alignment

Prior teacher leader experiences

Karl

Being true to self

In the face of adversity

Processes of engagement

*"It's that idea of envisioning ... what's different about this place (our school)? That's gone from schooling now, there's a one size fits all. What do our kids need? .. then we look at this framework of how a school is put together and what we do with that ... what can we do is the crucial thing."*

Shared understandings

Relationships are important

Shared vision

Shared values

Shared goals

Reflective practice

Open and honest communication

Providing space for conversations

Participation by all

Intellectual capital

How does this work in Our school?

Frustrated

Working subversively

Feel revolutionary

Imposed frameworks

Some at school level

Professional agency

Restricted by system demands

Other opportunities

Teach overseas

Another school

Further study - Masters' thesis

Figure 5.6. An Interpretive Biographical View of Karl's Account of His Teacher Leader Journey

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## 5.6   Karl's Teacher Leader Biography

Karl is a secondary teacher and head of department and over the years, has seen his share of education trends come and go. He was inspired however, by his school's engagement with the IDEAS project for school renewal, during which he was a teacher leader and facilitator of the process. For Karl, this was more than a mere passing trend or a product, but an energising process that brought about a change in culture that was empowering for himself and other teacher leaders at his school.

After approximately three years of engagement with IDEAS, the school was well on its way to developing a shared way of working, with teachers challenging and working with their values and engaging in professional conversations. A change in culture was emerging. It was around this time that a new principal was appointed and things began to change. The new administration was not interested in engaging with what was already in place and much to Karl's disappointment, their three years of work in culture building and professional community was disbanded. "The new boss … would never take two years to run through a process … a process that isn't over within three months is just not worth running". While Karl was unable to continue their work as a school-wide approach, he has continued to work with some of the IDEAS processes in his area of influence. Within his department, he has built a professional learning community and used organisational processes to engage in reflective practice with his team.

For the following interpretation, Karl's teacher leader experience is organised into four key areas: *Organisational processes* in his current school-wide work context, the importance of *professional community* and *processes of engagement* in pursuit of whole school improvement, and lastly, *being true to self* in the face of conflicting values and beliefs.

### 5.6.1  Organisational processes.

Karl has experienced two different contexts as a teacher leader, one that valued school-wide organisational processes and the contribution of teacher leaders to that process, the other that was a results-driven approach with little time for genuine engagement and less time for conversations and implementation of a process that may change the culture. In his current context, his source of frustration stems from the apparent lack of established organisation-wide consultative processes and the top down authoritarian approach to implementation of change. In this context, system imposed frameworks, such as the schoolwide pedagogical framework, offer no consultation and input from teachers into the construction of such frameworks. In Karl's experience, one of the disadvantages of this approach is that they have no shared understanding and therefore they begin to disengage from the process or any attempts at implementation. At best, people engage for a while as it becomes just another job to be done and then the framework becomes another dust collector on a shelf. Additionally, there is no alignment with the school's values and beliefs about learning and teaching:

> Schools [in our district] have to develop a pedagogical framework … they have the pedagogical framework descriptions and we've basically got to go "How does this work in our school?" So it doesn't! It comes the wrong way! You sit there thinking, "This is not working". You know, teachers don't even

know – we've been doing this for six months and teachers can't even tell you the first thing on the list, you know, they just haven't engaged with it first … so those processes [organisational processes from IDEAS] are still really important to me.

In Karl's experience, organisational processes are important and influenced by three key factors: firstly, having a process ensures engagement of key stakeholders to develop a shared understanding, which is crucial for ownership of the process and the product; secondly for sustainability of the implementation, as it is evident that if people own it and value it, they will want to ensure it is sustained; thirdly, the principal leadership factor is crucial in providing the environment for the first two factors to occur.

### 5.6.2 Professional community.

Establishment of a sense of professional community is central to the organisational processes for whole school improvement. The starting point is provision of a space for professional learning communities to emerge – a space that allows for professional conversations and values the professionalism of teachers, a space that gives teachers a voice and allows teacher leaders to emerge. Karl identified the value of the professional conversations in their school improvement journey as a key to building trust and engaging people in reflective practice. While the sense of professional community is not school-wide now, Karl uses the concept in his department. He reflects on the experience of an enlightening reflective practice session with his department, where teachers were asked to use reflection on their teaching and report back by sharing with colleagues.

> They struck gold in various places, and other people who heard them talking saw the gold and actually recognised things that the speaker didn't recognise … it's just this wonderful thing, the idea of reflective practice … I would love to build reflective practices into the school's program [rather than just in my area] but it really does need time.

### 5.6.3 Processes of engagement.

Karl highlighted a number of processes that were key to the engagement of key stakeholders. These included establishing relationships that engender open and honest communication; reflective practice; and providing a space for conversations to occur in a respectful and safe environment. While he is restricted by systemic imperatives, his previous experience and engagement in developing a shared vision for the school impacts his thinking about what he can do as a teacher leader to make a difference:

> It's that idea of envisioning ... what's different about this place [our school]? That's gone from schooling now, there's a one size fits all. What do our kids need? … Then we look at this framework of how a school is put together and what we do with that … what can *we* do is the crucial thing.

Despite his influence in his area of the school and his efforts to instil processes of reflective practice, he still experiences frustration at the school-wide and system-wide top-down imperatives that he and other teacher leaders know will not be sustainable:

[My concept of leadership] has been very much shaped by IDEAS, and despite the way things are going, I only continue to see evidence of it working. So this is the thing that frustrates me most about the current [way of] things. I can see that not working, and yet we can see how other things work, yet the choice is for the not working version. [The] Research-Based Framework [from IDEAS] I think has described schools really, really well. There's four different dimensions to the school and the questions it's raised about them … the background … the notion of engaging people … that notion of the shared understanding – we need to actually have this shared understanding of what we're doing. If we're not, we can't be going in the same direction. Then the effect that has [and] will have on … the values … the effect that will have on our pedagogy and the effect that'll have on the way we behave … so that general thread of the IDEAS process I think is still an immensely valuable process.

### 5.6.4  Being true to self.

Karl has strongly held beliefs on teachers as leaders and school improvement processes that are grounded in his IDEAS experience and he does not wish to compromise those beliefs. He looks for ways of still being true to self while operating in a climate that often contradicts his values and views.

#### 5.6.4.1    Lack of alignment.

One source of frustration for Karl currently is the lack of alignment between system, school and his own beliefs and values about how schools should operate and about learning and teaching. This source of frustration stems from his prior teacher leader experiences as an IDEAS teacher leader where he was engaged in a process of whole school improvement that he felt and knew worked:

Those processes of engagement [from IDEAS] are still really important to me. I'm just not in alignment with the processes that are going on [currently], and I don't regret that. You know, I could change to be like that, but I choose not to.

#### 5.6.4.2    Imposed frameworks.

Karl noted that while he had some professional agency at the school level to work within his department on processes of engagement and reflective practice, he felt somewhat restricted by system demands, which are in contradiction with the values and shared experiences they had worked with during IDEAS. Because of this, he feels he is working somewhat subversively within his context. He would urge school leaders to feel more revolutionary and to have a voice within the systemic context.

I don't think I'm a great deal different, but the system has changed around me anyway, so I do feel sort of sidelined, a bit subversive, a bit in the trenches. I haven't changed the way I think about things [since IDEAS]. You don't necessarily change the way you do things because there are very sort of authoritarian top-down … business models meaning that you've got to do things differently … and sometimes you do things that aren't aligned to the school and are a little subversive … there is professional agency within the school which allows me to [raise ideas] … I'm not oppressed … I just don't

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like the business model of administration that is imposed on schools and taken up by schools … [no-one] is fighting it. I wish they would.

### 5.6.4.3 *Other opportunities.*

Currently, Karl continues to work in this context, but he is considering other opportunities to diversify his teacher leader experience, including further study such as a Master's research thesis, teaching in another school or teaching overseas. He has taught overseas before and is entertaining this opportunity again, however this time, considering it more as a professional learning opportunity than he had in the past when younger.

> I've been overseas [before] … I do what I'm supposed to do with the school and I go away weekends. You're really a tourist who happens to get paid for Monday to Friday work. I do have the sense that next time … I do want to be more engaged in what I'm teaching rather than simply living in the country … I do see that as a bit of a leadership role … I really would sort of make the effort to make sure it was a professional experience rather than just a personal one.

## 5.6.5 Concept of leadership.

Karl's concept of leadership has been shaped by his IDEAS experience of parallel leadership. As a middle level manager at his school, he trusts and values the professionalism of others. Relationships are important to him and he values open and honest communication as he engages his team as a team leader in reflective practice and in conversations to achieve shared goals:

> I do believe leadership is about support … when people say, "I need you to do this", you don't say, "Sorry, I haven't got the time". You actually make an effort to do that … I believe that my role is to support people, not to somehow dictate what they should do, but to trust their professionalism, to keep having all of the conversations, to be reflective, to get people to be reflective.

## 5.6.6 Karl's metaphor.

When I asked him to think of a metaphor for himself as a leader, he considered the metaphor of Karl Marx, the German philosopher, economist, sociologist, historian, journalist, and revolutionary socialist:

> I'm not a Marxist, but that notion of being revolutionary but actually not being involved in a revolution, which of course is what Marx did. He wrote stuff but he didn't stand on any barricades. He was too old a man by the time he got to that point for a start … I actually do believe in revolutions, I do believe in change, I do believe that if things aren't right, you don't make them work, you get in and jiggle like buggery until the system works. So as a sort of a general metaphor for revolution, I think he actually stands pretty well … it's that sense of sort of wanting that change but not really being prepared to load a gun to achieve it, but working subversively continuously in an intellectual way rather than necessarily in an activist way.

### 5.6.7 Researcher's final comments.

Karl's narrative highlights two significant issues:

- First, the importance of process and the need to make space for people to engage in process was significant. The authoritative systemic pressure to deliver results in short often unachievable timeframes is in conflict with the need to implement process to achieve sustainable results and engage people in the process. The benefits of a process approach are that it builds capacity for teacher leadership, places value on teacher professionalism and builds social and intellectual capital within an organisation. Much of this is missing in the one size fits all, results driven and top-down authoritative approach predominant in Karl's more recent experience.

- Second, the issue of sustaining a culture with staff turnover, in particular with principal leadership turnover, was significant. The school had demonstrated some significant growth in development as a professional learning community, including development of teacher leader capacity, however, this culture did not survive the induction of a new principal. This highlights the crucial role of the principal in the capacity building process. As Karl reflected:

> Time is a very effective thing. The longer you have a group [staff], the more history builds up relationships and there can be clashes and losses in that time, but basically surviving bad times is actually really good. … you have people come and go … and an assortment of ideas [on] how to induct people into a process which they actually weren't a part of … what needs to change with people coming in and what can be preserved … including in our case the boss, [but] how do we induct the boss into a community process? We never got the solution.

**Transference**
- Own business
- New opportunities?
- School to system
- System to school
- Skill transferability
- Career pathways
- Recognition of prior learning
- Building leadership capabilities
- Empowerment

*When personal professional needs are not met or potential is not realised, the desire to search for new opportunities arises.*

*Transference of leadership skills across contexts*

**Meaningful work**
- Organisational alignment
  - Clear vision
  - Clear strategy
  - Connectedness with all levels
  - Principles of practice
- Being valued by the organisation
  - Empowerment
  - Belief in what is possible for self
  - Leadership capability development
  - Understanding self
  - Building relationships
- Reaching own potential
- Helping others achieve goals
  - Building individual capabilities
  - Building team capacity
  - Having a shared team vision
- Connectedness
  - Connecting people
  - Connecting with people
  - Connecting to something bigger

*Need for alignment between system and school needs - bottom up approach.*

*The system must connect with the real needs of teachers.*

"I like to work with people who inspire me ... I'm looking for a bit more ... I'd quite like to have my own business (using skills developed ... I often think I put all this energy and effort into a role ... where I don't really feel like I can reach my potential. What could I do that would enable me to do that for myself and build people around me ... ?"

**Leadership**
- Knowledge of self as a leader
- Reflective processes
- Prior experience - IDEAS
- Empowerment
- Clear shared vision
- Clarity of purpose
- Shared understanding
- Building leadership capabilities
- Belief
- Trust

*A belief in what is possible for self*

"Leadership ... is as much about self-leadership as it is about leading others. It's about knowing and understanding yourself and being a leader in your own life that enables you to lead others ..."

**Building capacity**
- Building team capacity
- Recognising capabilities
- Developing capabilities
- Teacher voice
- Organisational alignment
- Career pathways

*Building system capacity*

"Meaningful work is ... important work, that it's connected to something bigger, that it's valued by the people that we might be working with and influencing, by the organisation ... that it's making a difference ... it's about respect, relationships, listening ... "

"How do we actually work together to get the best outcomes for kids? We're not building, connecting and understanding. We're not all on the same page. (The system) would say 'well, here's the page, you need to get on it' ... It doesn't work like that ... they would say 'yes, our work contributes to outcomes for kids', but a lot of them forget that if (they) were engaging with teachers regularly, it's a whole different conversation."

**Shelley**

*Figure 5.7.* An Interpretive Biographical View of Shelley's Account of Her Teacher Leader Journey

## 5.7   Shelley's Teacher Leader Biography

When I first met Shelley, she was an aspiring teacher leader and facilitator in her
IDEAS school. She had a passion for the process, as it involved teams of people
working together and she could facilitate that process. While Shelley was the deputy
principal at the school at the time, this was not her first formal leadership position, as
she had earlier formal leadership experiences as a principal of a small school. What
appeared to inspire Shelley ultimately, was the informal facilitative teacher leader
role that she adopted during the IDEAS project.

After approximately three years of engagement with the IDEAS project at her school,
Shelley became involved in assisting other schools with their IDEAS journey as a
facilitator within the system. This role involved travelling and working with schools
all over the state, one which she relished. Eventually she moved into a role still
within the system, but based in the capital city, where she could engage with teams
of people designing programs around leadership. Shelley has reached a point in her
career where she is not quite mid-career, but has reached a peak with her skills and
capabilities and needs to find a new outlet for these. She is finding that while she still
likes her work and the people with whom she works, it is no longer stimulating for
her. She is looking for something more meaningful to assist her in reaching her
potential as a teacher leader.

Throughout Shelley's narrative, there were four key areas that were significant: the
concept of *meaningful work* and feeling connected to something bigger; *building
capacity*, within the school and the system; *leadership*, and knowledge of self as a
leader; and *transference* of skills, and knowing what is possible for self. Each of
these will be unpacked in the following section.

### 5.7.1   Meaningful work.

For Shelley, meaningful work is the joy experienced in helping others or
empowering others to achieve success in the workplace. There is also a mutualism in
the pervading sense of respect and having a voice within the workplace.

> Meaningful work is … important work, that it's connected to something
> bigger, that it's valued by the people that we might be working with and
> influencing, by the organisation … that it's making a difference … it's about
> respect, relationships, listening …

Meaningful work though, is evidently also about having a sense of fulfilment and
having personal work ambitions met, along with a sense of alignment with personal
values and beliefs and the values of the workplace. Shelley found that her work is
currently not providing her with the same level of meaningfulness that it had
previously. She is not feeling the same level of connectedness. This could be due to
the changing nature of the current workplace with restructure looming and
additionally that she feels she has fulfilled her potential there and is looking for a
position that could challenge her skill set beyond the current position:

> I feel like I need to be able to spread my wings a bit more. I feel like I've had
> this broad range of experiences in little schools, bigger schools, IDEAS, the
> leadership, school leadership development, writing programs … I almost feel
> like it's time for a new challenge … whilst I like the people I work with, I

don't go to work and go, "Wow, that was a really exciting meeting!" Even with [my] own [team] when things get really on a roll and everyone says "That was a great meeting", I'm finding myself going, "Yeah" [half-heartedly] … I'm looking for a bit more.

There are a number of factors that are evident in Shelley's narrative that contribute to the level of meaningfulness one experiences in the workplace, including: organisational alignment for all levels of the organisation; being valued by the organisation; having the space to reach personal potential; a sense of fulfilment gained by helping others achieve their goals; and a sense of connectedness through networks to people, with people, and to something bigger.

#### 5.7.1.1    *Organisational alignment.*

The first of the factors contributing to a sense of meaningful work is *organisational alignment.* Work in Shelley's experience through IDEAS is meaningful when there is a clear vision, clear strategy and there is a connectedness with all levels of the organisation. There need to be clear principles of practice that define what an organisation does and how an organisation works. Having worked in both schools and the system, one of Shelley's major concerns was the need for stronger alignment between the system and the real needs of schools, which would clearly benefit from a more bottom-up approach, rather than the existing top-down approach to management. She cited the need for stronger connections between the system and the schools and for systems to listen to the voices of teachers in a mutual arrangement:

> How do we actually work together to get the best outcomes for kids? We're not building, connecting and understanding. We're not all on the same page. [The system] would say "well, here's the page, you need to get on it" … it doesn't work like that … they would say "yes, our work contributes to outcomes for kids", but a lot of them forget that if [they] were engaging with teachers regularly, it's a whole different conversation.

#### 5.7.1.2    *Being valued by the organisation.*

Second, *being valued by the organisation* was important to Shelley in experiencing meaningfulness in the workplace. Teacher leaders experienced empowerment and a belief in what is possible for self when they felt valued by their school or their workplace. Being valued meant that they had a voice in the school's direction and were able to contribute to a shared understanding of pedagogy, framed by a shared vision and values. They developed a strong sense of self and understanding self, as in Shelley's case, a strong understanding of her leadership capability development. Additionally, there is a strong focus on building relationships through professional conversations and providing the space for these to occur.

#### 5.7.1.3    *Support to reach own potential.*

Third, the space, mentoring and *support for teacher leaders to reach own their own potential* was important in establishing a context for meaningful work. Where teacher leaders were supported to achieve their personal learning goals, they also experienced fulfilment in assisting others to achieve their goals. In Shelley's narrative in the school context, she was responsible for assisting her students achieve their learning goals; in the IDEAS context, she was responsible for assisting staff to

work towards a shared vision and pedagogy; while in her current context, she was responsible for assisting colleagues to achieve their individual capabilities which contributed overall to the building of team capacity. In each of these scenarios she experienced fulfilment as a teacher leader.

### 5.7.1.4    *Connectedness through networks.*

Last, meaningfulness is derived from *connectedness* – the opportunity to connect with people through networks and through professional conversations; the opportunity to connect people as a facilitator, whether through workshops or networking; and the sense of connecting to something bigger. In Shelley's school context, having a shared school vision and principles of practice was important in the establishment of connectedness across the school – people felt like they were connected to something bigger. In her current context, she established some principles of practice for her team to establish a sense of connectedness for the team. However the sense of connectedness to something bigger appears to be lacking within the system, with a lack of opportunity to develop external networks and feel like one is connected to something bigger. This provides a possible reason for Shelley's readiness to spread her wings.

## 5.7.2  Building capacity.

*Building capacity* has been important for Shelley in two different contexts: at the school level in terms of the presence of teacher voice in the school's direction thus ensuring organisational alignment at the school level; and at the system level in her current context in building team capacity, recognising capabilities, developing capabilities and career pathways. She identified the need for the system to connect with the real needs of teachers. Listening to teacher voice and focusing on teacher leader development would ultimately contribute to building system capacity, an area which is seemingly lacking.

Through her experience with IDEAS and now with her leadership role in her current context, Shelley has learned much about building capacity in other people to work with a more distributed form of leadership. As an IDEAS teacher leader, she was a team member and facilitator of the process. In her current role, she is responsible for developing the capabilities of others and has realised what it means to be a good leader. She has developed an understanding of how all the pieces fit together in the broader view of leadership:

> I think I understand all the pieces of the puzzle now …When I was in a school, I had this thing about if it's going to be done properly or well, I have to do it myself. That's a perfectionistic trait. I still have that, but I've done a lot of work and learned a lot about that in me and what I need to do to actually build on the diversity of the people and the skill and talents of the people around me, to get the job done. That's also been about balance, and for me, not being stressed out of my brain, because I'm trying to do everything – it's not good for others, it's not good for the context and it's certainly not good for yourself – it's been really powerful for me in terms of the way I go about my work … It is when you've got high expectations of yourself … that translates to the work and the people around you. Sometimes you have to be a little bit more realistic and if I want to develop the people around me, sometimes I've got to just let it happen, let it be done, not in a

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different way to perhaps how I would do it and maybe not to the same level that I would do it, but it's okay. That's about their learning and growth too … there has been a really strong focus on performance and performance development across the system – within that has been the leadership and capability development. That's been the context and the focus – if I'm going to be good at what I'm doing, then I need to model that for others and so does my team.

### 5.7.3 Leadership.

*Leadership*, and the experience Shelley now has in this area, has contributed to her knowledge of self as a leader. Much of her thinking is informed by her prior experience of leadership gained through the IDEAS project, where a form of distributed leadership called parallel leadership prevailed. Shelley found this an empowering experience and she knows the importance of an organisation engaging in a shared understanding of how they work, framed by a clear shared vision led with a leader who has clarity of purpose. She engages regularly in reflective processes on her own growth as a leader and enjoys building leadership capabilities of others:

> I guess this is related to the particular role I'm in … more of a strategic leadership role around system priorities and people – managing and leading the work … strategic leadership of specific priorities connect to strategic direction of the organisation …When I reflected on that and all the experiences, different learnings that I've had around leadership and as a leader since IDEAS and certainly through IDEAS have deepened my understanding of what leadership needs to do and be … I feel a lot more confident now as a leader … I definitely feel … a greater level of confidence around my own ability to lead and influence … Leadership  ... is as much about self-leadership as it is about leading others. It's about knowing and understanding yourself and being a leader in your own life that enables you to lead others. It's about knowing and understanding yourself and being really a leader in your own life that enables you to lead others and be aware of all the things you need to do.

### 5.7.4 Shelley's metaphor.

When I asked Shelley to think of a metaphor for herself as a teacher leader, she did have difficulty articulating this at first. She did think it was sometimes like the wind, which could reflect changing leadership styles for different situations:

> It's constantly changing, it's about different paces. Sometimes it's flat out, sometimes it's slow and steady and considered and thoughtful. Other times it's just like bang, bang, go go! You've got to just jump in and do this. It's influenced by a whole lot of factors. It impacts in many, many different ways – strong, soft, hard …

### 5.7.5 Transference.

A feature of Shelley's narrative was her self-recognition of transference of skills, and leadership skills in particular, across contexts. With that came a great sense of empowerment and a belief in what is possible for self. Shelley's focus on building leadership capabilities and career pathways was strong. She was keen to see more

recognition of skill transferability and recognition of prior learning from the school sector to the system and from system to the school sector. There was little support, with even some resistance that she should go back into a school after working for several years in the system, given that she did not have recent school experience and current curriculum knowledge. Shelley did not see that as a deterrent, as her IDEAS experience left her with the knowledge that teachers are the pedagogical leaders working in parallel with the principal as the strategic leader towards a shared vision for the school. Therefore her knowledge of capacity building and leadership would have been advantageous in a school context. She felt that anything else she needed to know about, for example the new curriculum, she could draw on her team of teachers and their strengths in this area. She is still considering other options, as she reflects on what she has been able to do in her current context and the skill set she has accumulated:

> The IDEAS work, the working in a school and then with a whole range of contexts was incredible for me … the work that I do is always underpinned by a lot of that thinking and the conceptual work …[about] everyone on the same page, about building relationships, about developing a culture … all that sort of thing. We went through a process [recently] where we developed principles of practice for our [work group]. We were having a few issues [with particular people and bad behaviour]. I led [the development of the principles of practice] because I realised we've got nothing in concrete that actually connects us around the work we do and the way we actually do it.

### 5.7.6  Researcher's final comments.

One of the overriding messages from Shelley's narrative is about alignment of schools and systems. When personal professional needs are not met, when one is feeling unfulfilled, or potential is not realised, the desire to search for new opportunities arises, yet grasping that new opportunity requires a certain level of risk. Shelley has accumulated a wealth of skills as a teacher leader in a school and since, in her systemic work context. There are conversations that need to occur across education settings – schools and systems – to ensure alignment and best use of professional expertise. Currently, Shelley is an example of expertise that is not being utilised to effect across contexts and is therefore a valuable organisational resource that will be a loss to the organisation if she chooses to go elsewhere. In the short term and long term, the misuse and/or loss of Shelley's expertise will come at a cost to the organisation. How will her skills and capabilities be recognised and will she prefer to stay safe in her current context or go out on a limb for a new challenge? What new opportunity awaits this awakened sleeping giant?

> I like to work with people who inspire me … I'm looking for a bit more … I'd quite like to have my own business [using skills developed during IDEAS] … I often think I put all this energy and effort into a role … where I don't really feel like I can reach my potential. What could I do that would enable me to do that for myself and build people around me?

Jenny

**Professional learning**

Contextual - school-based
- Diagnosing needs
- Mapped to Schoolwide Pedagogy
- Planning and implementing
- Action learning projects
- System support to achieve goals

Commitment to building personal professional capacity through ongoing professional learning

Personal
- Ongoing
- Capacity building goals - 10 year plan
- Further study
- Increased professional capacity

"IDEAS has been really significant for my professional development - without it, I wouldn't have been in this position quite as quickly I don't think ..."

**Capacity building**

Personal
- IDEAS and other presentations
- Synthesising learning
- Reflective practice
- Generate new understandings
- Further study
- Challenge of difficult conversations

In others
- Empowering others
- Contextual professional learning
- Teacher inquiries
- Action research projects
- Acknowledging teachers' aspirations
- System support to achieve goals

"One thing I'm really proud of (is) the skills that I'm developing around teacher inquiries - it's in action research and the way to progress their own capacity, to build (school) capacity."

"(Acknowledging teachers' aspirations) ... Let's have a cup of tea together and tell me where you want to be. Let's think about what you need to do next."

**Self-actualisation**

Further study - Master of Education
Opportunity
- To develop skills in context
- Sought own opportunities
  - Further study
  - Leading IDEAS process
  - Promotion application in other contexts

- Increased confidence
- Sees self as a leader
  - Humility
  - Bring people along with you
  - Viewed by others as a leader
- Autonomy within leadership role
- Safe environment to develop skills

"I knew I had the capacity ... I think there's a bit of self-actualisation and I was like, okay, the time is right now, I know I can do this."

Self-efficacy
- Belief in self
  - Confidence
  - Capacity to study
  - Action research projects
  - Leadership capabilities
- Belief that goals are achievable
- 10 year career plan
- Building capacity in self

Reflective practice and contribution to new knowledge

"I've had lots of opportunities and I've made a lot of my own opportunities as well."

"I'm not a naturally very confident person and I guess just having those successes (has) been really affirming."

**Leadership**

- Mutual trust
- Flat, collaborative model
- Parallel leadership is key
- Building capacity in others
  - Mentoring
  - Action research projects
  - Diagnosing professional learning needs
  - Planning and implementing contextual professional learning
  - Coffee conversations about their 'dreams'
  - Planning career paths
  - Developing teacher leaders
    - Seeing potential - aspiring leaders
    - Mentoring aspiring leaders

Role of principal
- Safe environment
- Providing space for conversations
- Trusting staff
- Keeping the right people on the team

Developing networks to lead learning
- Internal
- External

"The establishment of networks within my school and externally to 'talk teaching' ... my participation in professional discourse across a range of venues has enhanced my understanding of effective practice."
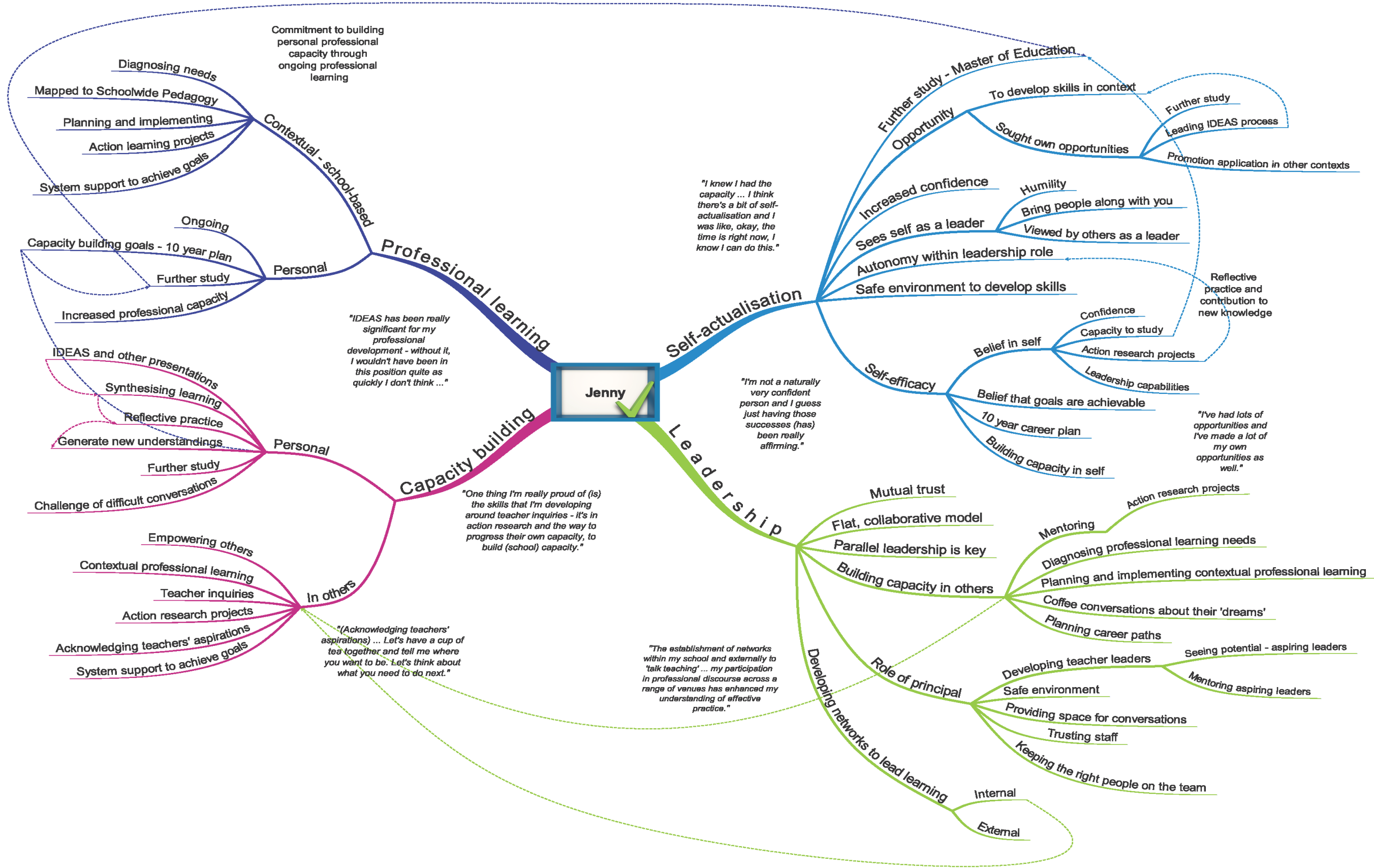
Figure 5.8. An Interpretive Biographical View of Jenny's Account of Her Teacher Leader Journey

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## 5.8  Jenny's Teacher Leader Biography

Jenny is the Teaching and Learning Coordinator in her secondary school context. She has been a strong advocate of the IDEAS project at her school, becoming the go to expert after her involvement with external networks and the system-supported leadership program for school improvement. "My involvement with the IDEAS process, both as a facilitator at my school and in the [system] leadership program has provided many opportunities for me to develop as a leader".

There are four areas that clearly emerged from Jenny's narrative: the first was her realisation that she had *self-actualised* as a teacher leader; second was the focus on *professional learning* within the school context and her own professional learning; third was the focus on *capacity building* and that professional learning was targeted to build personal professional capacity with the view to building school-wide capacity; finally, the focus on *leadership* and the relationships established to build capacity in others and develop networks to lead learning. Each of these four areas is unpacked in the following section.

### 5.8.1  Meta-awareness of self-actualisation as a teacher leader.

Jenny's meta-awareness that she had self-actualised as a teacher leader emerged very strongly in her narrative. She had a number of opportunities to develop her skills within her school context by leading the IDEAS project, yet she actively sought out many of these opportunities as she began to realise the potentially empowering process that IDEAS offered their school: "I've had lots of opportunities and I've made a lot of my own opportunities as well". She sought opportunities to improve her own skills through three avenues: leading the IDEAS project; through further study in completing a Master of Education; and through applying for promotion to other contexts. "I knew I had the capacity … I think there's a bit of self-actualisation and I was like, okay, the time is right now, I know I can do this".

The time felt right for her due to her increased confidence in her ability to step forward as a teacher leader:

> I'm not a naturally very confident person and I guess just having those successes [has] been really affirming … I'm really strategic and more innovative than I have given myself credit for. I'm really proud of the fact that I've been able to give some good solid advice to the executive about ways to progress the school forward … also the fact that I've been able to manage those changes.

Jenny has a high degree of self-efficacy and now views herself as a leader, however this belief is tempered with a humility, growing confidence and confirmation about her capabilities as new opportunities present themselves: "I think I've got the confidence now to apply to be a principal". The degree of autonomy provided within her current leadership role has afforded her a safe environment to develop her skills under the mentorship of her principal. In turn, she has been able to effectively mentor others within the school in their action research projects in her role as Teaching and Learning Coordinator. Jenny realises the importance of bringing people along with you. She is viewed by others as a leader, which has contributed to her view of self:

"staff see as my greatest strength … my interpersonal relationships and good communication … I was really, really humbled by that".

### 5.8.2 Professional learning.

Professional learning at Jenny's school is contextual and school-based. Professional learning needs are diagnosed and mapped to the Schoolwide Pedagogy. As the Teaching and Learning Coordinator, Jenny has a key role in mentoring others in the facilitation, planning and implementation of action learning projects that meet their unique needs. She has also developed networks of support at the system level to assist them in achieving their goals. "I used [our school's] learning principles to identify the professional learning needs of staff in my faculty". Professional learning at this school is inextricably linked to building the professional capacity of the school, which will be expanded upon in the following section.

Jenny's personal professional learning is ongoing. She values capacity building as a school priority and personal priority and thus has a 10 year plan for her future to increase her professional capacity, including further study.

### 5.8.3 Capacity building.

Jenny recognised that her teacher leader experience has been valuable in building her professional capacity to date. Throughout her experience, she has developed IDEAS and other presentations and presented to a variety of audiences, including her own school, National Learning Forums, groups of principals and education systems' associates. She has engaged in reflective practice, facilitated workshops, synthesised learning to generate new knowledge, facilitated challenging conversations and engaged in further study:

> Through the development of various presentations I have been required to synthesise experience to generate new understandings … IDEAS has been really significant for my professional development – without it, I wouldn't have been in this position quite as quickly I don't think.

Jenny also sees her role now to pay it forward and engage in building the capacity of others. She empowers others through contextual professional learning opportunities which involve teacher inquiries and action research projects. She acknowledges teachers' aspirations by developing relationships with them, through informal meetings and conversations over a coffee, thus providing a safe and trusting environment for planning and skill development. She develops relationships with system networks to leverage support to enable them to reach their goals:

> I … see my role as working really extensively with staff to build their capacity ... One thing I'm really proud of [is] the skills that I'm developing around teacher inquiries – it's action research and the way to progress their own capacity, to build [school] capacity ... it's a safe environment for people to develop their skills, and as they become more confident and more skilled themselves you can take away the support of mentorship.

### 5.8.4 Leadership.

Jenny recognised the importance of prioritising the development of teacher leader capacity and the significance of parallel leadership as a vehicle for her own work with other teachers. Building relationships of trust and mutual respect with staff enabled her to get to know staff and their aspirations and dreams and identify potential teacher leaders to foster and develop within the school:

> Let's have a cup of tea together and tell me where you want to be. Let's think about what you need to do next … so let's have those sorts of conversations, to acknowledge their own aspirations, and that to have aspirations is a good thing. But then you need to find opportunity for them to develop those skills and that whole notion of parallel leadership is essential for that to happen … it's highly collaborative.

Jenny also acknowledges that real change takes time and there is a need to work with willing staff and advocate for change. Bringing people along with you to effect real, sustainable change and knowing when to step back remains an ongoing challenge – and there is the challenge of having those difficult conversations.

> I do find it really difficult to challenge stuff. I tend to avoid those sort of conflicts. I … worked with those aspirational staff members, trying to get those on board, so that I can … get a ground flood of support, then I have that credibility with others before I tackle the real hard members of staff. It's hard to challenge them to think of things differently. I strongly advocate parallel leadership as I have seen first-hand across a range of schools its importance to improved school outcomes … you need to be aware of the problems, you need to be cognisant of what might happen in the future, and to be able to plan for that, and to bring people along with you. I don't think you can do that in that … top-down model. You need to have people on side with you and wanting to work with you in making those changes together … to effect good change.

The principal played a key role in developing teacher leaders and noting potential aspiring leaders initially, as in Jenny's case. He provided a safe environment for mentoring and development of potential and space for conversations. He trusted staff and made concerted efforts to keep the right people on the team. When Jenny was looking at promotion opportunities, she opted to stay in the school: "I went, you know what? I can do more here. I want to take on the challenge of happier and to progress it further, because I love this school".

As a teacher leader at her school, Jenny was also involved in networks, both internal and external to the school. Involvement in these networks served to develop her own personal professional capacity, and that of the school, as she became a leader of learning:

> The establishment of networks within my school and externally to 'talk teaching' … my participation in professional discourse across a range of venues has enhanced my understanding of effective practice. I am constantly impressed by how passionate our profession is about the art of teaching and the desire to do the best to serve students within our communities.

### 5.8.5 Researcher's final comments.

Jenny's narrative has revealed the following:

- There is a strong commitment to building personal professional capacity and the professional capacity of the school through ongoing professional learning.
- Parallel leadership is a powerful enabler for building personal teacher leader capacity and school capacity. Feeling safe to step out of one's comfort zone and take risks, along with establishing relationships of mutual trust and respect is key to this arrangement.
- Empowering teacher leaders enabled the establishment of internal and external networks to lead learning and thus build professional capacity in the school – internal networks involved mentoring and action research projects, with a focus on reflective practice and contribution to new knowledge; and external networks involved school improvement facilitation and systemic leadership networks.
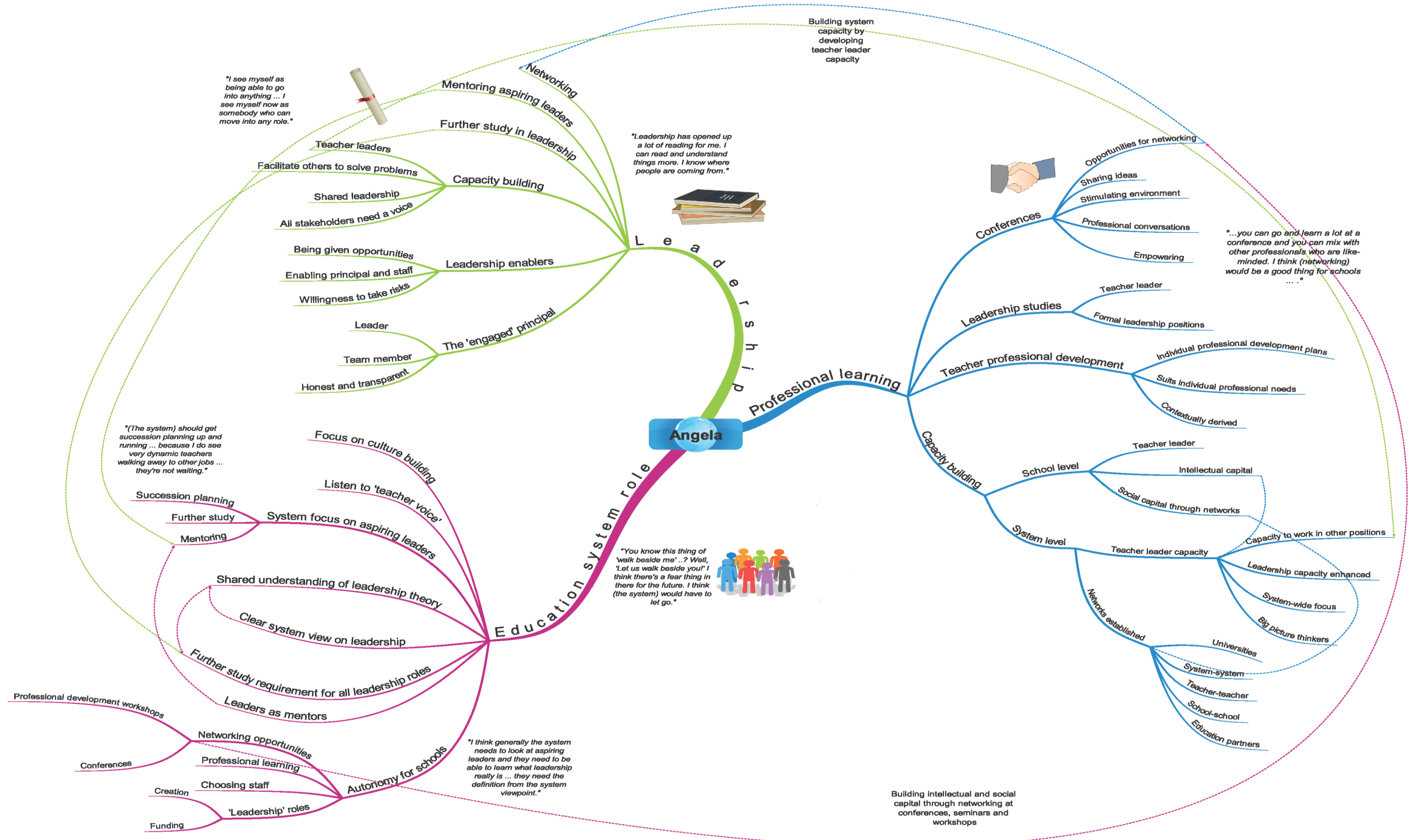
**Angela**

**Leadership**

Networking

Mentoring aspiring leaders

Further study in leadership

*"I see myself as being able to go into anything ... I see myself now as somebody who can move into any role."*

Teacher leaders

Facilitate others to solve problems

Shared leadership

All stakeholders need a voice

Capacity building

*"Leadership has opened up a lot of reading for me. I can read and understand things more. I know where people are coming from."*

Building system capacity by developing teacher leader capacity

Being given opportunities

Enabling principal and staff

Willingness to take risks

Leadership enablers

Leader

Team member

Honest and transparent

The 'engaged' principal

**Professional learning**

Conferences

Opportunities for networking

Sharing ideas

Stimulating environment

Professional conversations

Empowering

*"...you can go and learn a lot at a conference and you can mix with other professionals who are like-minded. I think (networking) would be a good thing for schools ... ."*

Leadership studies

Teacher leader

Formal leadership positions

Teacher professional development

Individual professional development plans

Suits individual professional needs

Contextually derived

Capacity building

School level

Teacher leader

Intellectual capital

Social capital through networks

System level

Capacity to work in other positions

Teacher leader capacity

Leadership capacity enhanced

System-wide focus

Big picture thinkers

Networks established

Universities

System-system

Teacher-teacher

School-school

Education partners

Building intellectual and social capital through networking at conferences, seminars and workshops

**Education system role**

*"(The system) should get succession planning up and running ... because I do see very dynamic teachers walking away to other jobs ... they're not waiting."*

Focus on culture building

Listen to 'teacher voice'

Succession planning

Further study

Mentoring

System focus on aspiring leaders

Shared understanding of leadership theory

Clear system view on leadership

Further study requirement for all leadership roles

Leaders as mentors

*"You know this thing of 'walk beside me' .. ? Well, 'Let us walk beside you!' I think there's a fear thing in there for the future. I think (the system) would have to let go."*

Professional development workshops

Networking opportunities

Conferences

Professional learning

Creation

Choosing staff

Funding

'Leadership' roles

Autonomy for schools

*"I think generally the system needs to look at aspiring leaders and they need to be able to learn what leadership really is ... they need the definition from the system viewpoint."*

*Figure 5.9.* An Interpretive Biographical View of Angela's Account of Her Teacher Leader Journey

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## 5.9 Angela's Teacher Leader Biography

Angela is a teacher leader in a small country primary school context. She has been a passionate advocate for engaging all in a community change process, both as a teacher leader and in her role as acting principal on numerous occasions. In the period when I first met her, she had been acting in this role for approximately 12 months and was inspired by the work they were able to do at the school with the IDEAS project.

> I was itching to do IDEAS because I'd heard about it through [a teacher at another school]. It was something that I was really passionate about. The other thing that I feel I developed a lot of confidence with – because I did the study [Masters in leadership] first – and I was able to say, I think our school needs to go in this direction. When the principal left for that year [on secondment] she was quite happy to let me take the reins and do this or lead this …

Angela worked hard for 12 months engaging school staff, parents and students in a community process that involved the forming of a vision and values. She was beginning the important work on personal philosophy and pedagogical discussions to frame a school-wide approach to pedagogy, when the principal returned to the school from secondment in another setting. To Angela's disappointment, the capacity building work they had begun was not valued by the returning principal and was not continued.

> I was really disappointed that we got to the stage with our IDEAS [work] where we were and it was disallowed. I was going ahead with it and I know that the energy was there and I could have picked it up with other people but it wasn't allowed. It was a real block … so we've gone through an amazing process which has no ending … all that lovely hard work which was so good for the staff. They would have continued working because the parents were really excited by it too. The kids loved it because we put it in through the classes too. We used to get them to do things and displays. So we don't have that anymore … I think there was a little bit of competition [when the principal came back] and there shouldn't have been because I stepped back. I think if you're a linear thinker and you see something as having to start at the beginning, it wouldn't work. IDEAS isn't meant to do that. See, the principal hasn't been there at the start for us. It's hard work. It still has an effect on our culture, our school culture. Everyone has a voice at our school and people who come, the new staff who come, love it … the new supply teachers, they're there for a day … they can see it and feel it.

Angela has experienced the empowerment from a process that gives teacher leaders a voice, and there is a sense that the culture is still embedded within the school. Yet, she feels professionally disempowered that the work the principal supported initially has now been discontinued. This has raised some serious questions for Angela as she is now not able to fulfil the image of herself as a teacher leader at this school. She had been happy there, but is now considering other options. Angela's narrative highlighted three key areas that were given due consideration when discussing her professional goals and learning for the future: first, her current views on *leadership*; second, the importance of *professional learning* for teacher leader growth, which has flow on benefits for self and the school; third, her views on the *role of the education*

*system* and how they might work together with schools in mutually beneficial ways. Each of these areas will be unpacked in the following section.

### 5.9.1 Leadership.

Angela has had the opportunity to work as a teacher leader throughout the IDEAS project, but also in formal leadership positions in a middle management role and as acting principal of the school. Application for the middle management role required her to engage in further study, which is one of the reasons she enrolled in the Master of Education. Her teacher leader experience of capacity building processes and further study in leadership have provided her with a broader view on education and encouraged deep reflection on the real meaning of leadership. She has also developed a confidence in her capacity as a teacher leader and is able to see that these skills are transferable to a range of contexts, thus enhancing system capacity through her versatility and knowledge of such processes:

> Leadership has opened up a lot of reading for me. I can read and understand things more. I know where people are coming from. I look forward to conferences. I've become very picky with who I go and see these days and listen to … I see myself as being able to go into anything and that's what I mean … I see myself now as somebody who can move into any role.

In her role as an acting principal during the IDEAS project, Angela worked closely with the IDEAS facilitator and was a keen participant in the process. She identified the importance of the principal knowing when to step back and let others lead, but also when to be involved, while still remaining engaged in the process. For her, it was essential that the principal be a leader, but also to be seen as a member of the team leading the process, while ensuring that others had the opportunity to step up and lead at various junctures:

> If you don't participate, if you just give or hand down something and you're not on task with what the meaning of different aspects is and how much work goes into it, and where you can source things, you can't just dump something on people … you have to actually be part of it and know what's happening and be able to talk with them about it.

Commenting on what she has learnt about leadership, Angela understands leadership to be a capacity building process, including facilitating others to solve their own problems and realises the value of shared leadership where people are working to their strengths:

> I actually have benefitted from being very fortunate to have lots of stints in the principal's chair. I would like to see myself as somebody who works hard but when people come to me I don't actually give them the answer. I used to solve all problems by suggestion because I can't see any problem. I'm terrible like that … if someone comes to me with a problem I'm thinking "Oh there's an easy way around that" … so I used to suggest, but now I just say "What would you like to do about it?" So I've learned to not solve everybody's problems because they don't really want you to. They just want you to listen to them … I've learnt that you don't have to stand there and tell people what to do. You don't have to be the knower of everything. You don't have to be first. You don't even have to be first at school. I mean you can't anyway because you've got meetings in the mornings sometimes … I've just learned

that you don't have to fit into the expectations of the old lineal way of, "this is what we do".

As part of the capacity building process, she has noted the significance of the community stakeholder voice in that process. The leader has a significant role in networking and building the community links so that a shared understanding is built around the vision and values for the school:

> Context is really important … and I think you need to know everybody … all your stakeholders. You need to be able to look at them and let them tell you what is important to them. They need a voice … you must be out there and around, and approachable.

Honesty and transparency were qualities valued by Angela as a teacher leader and in her formal leadership roles: "You need to be honest, and you don't beat around the bush and pretend. You need to be honest and you need to tell people what they want to hear but tell the truth about it too". Treating the staff and each other as valued and trusted professionals and letting them in on the big picture was important in creating a transparent environment:

> There [are] even some things that I don't know and I've been working there for 17 years. Some things are hidden … when I started putting out the director's newsletter in the staffroom, they said, "Oh, that's the first time we've ever seen a director's newsletter because it only comes to the principal". See, I don't think [principals] should hold everything.

Angela cited a combination of factors that contributed to her capacity to develop as a teacher leader and her current leadership role, including the support of her principal and other staff: "… [being given] opportunities … and how willing you are to take the risks and how enabling your principal can be. How enabling your staff is".

### 5.9.2  Professional learning.

Angela completed a Master of Education in Leadership several years ago, as part of a systemic requirement to go into a middle management role in the school in which she is currently working. Her further study in the area of leadership has influenced her thinking and broadened her views on leadership and education more generally. Thinking and talking about beliefs and values is particularly pertinent when schools are required to articulate their purpose and values as part of the school renewal process, but generally speaking, Angela noted that schools are not engaging in these conversations. She highlighted the benefits of engaging in further study to encourage deep thinking about these aspects:

> We still aren't really articulating our purposes and really depthing what we're on about for kids. We're not confident when any conflict arises … I think the study allows us to be able to communicate with people and stand up and say this is what we do in our school, and this is what we are in our community. You get a certificate and you go to a graduation and you can say this is part of my story. I think too many people don't bother with [further study] and get stuck with the 'doing' in a school. They don't actually look at what you are and what you represent and the thinking that goes [with that] … or your philosophy, or even your passion.

### 5.9.2.1  Networking.

Opportunities for networking are limited for the average teacher leader in the classroom and school. While internal networking may occur within the school, Angela cited the benefits of external networking for ongoing professional learning and building professional capacity. Conferences are one source of external networking where the opportunity for sharing ideas in a stimulating environment occurs. Angela in her role as acting principal has had the opportunity to attend conferences, but as a teacher leader she has not. She found the professional conversations and environment of these events both stimulating and empowering, as well as providing a good avenue for teachers to network with others:

> I think because we're so busy we get bogged down in the teaching role and at school that we haven't got time to look at those things unless we're really passionate about doing that …You can go and learn a lot at a conference and you can mix with other professionals who are like-minded. I think [networking] would be a good thing for schools.

### 5.9.2.2  Individualised professional learning.

Angela's comment highlighted the importance of prioritising ongoing professional learning and teacher professional development activity within the school context. Individual professional development plans value the individual professional learning needs of each teacher, rather than a blanket approach to professional development. She cited that quite often, professional development was determined using a top-down approach to planning, rather than contextually derived based on particular needs of groups, or the school: "'Okay, we're doing this PD' because they have to put money into everybody, so 'we're going to do this and that's going to cover yours'. Whereas if they put their goals down and talked with the principal …". This blanket approach clearly neglects the professional learning needs of the individual teacher and the professional capacity building that could occur from drawing on the individual strengths and expertise of each teacher.

### 5.9.2.3  Contribution to professional capacity of the school.

Angela's experience highlighted the importance of ongoing professional learning through conference, seminar and workshop attendance to provide the opportunity to build capacity at the school level, as intellectual capital is heightened through shared knowledge. She articulated clear ideas on how teacher leaders should share their knowledge of professional development activity through workshops with other staff. Teacher leader capacity is also enhanced as they lead various workshops in their field of expertise. System level capacity is thus enhanced as teacher leaders develop the capacity to work in other positions, and teachers become big picture thinkers developing a system-wide focus. Networks are established with various partners, including universities, system-system, teacher-teacher, school-school, and other education partners.

Professional learning would be a priority and contextualised, with support for networking opportunities through professional development workshops and conferences. The education system has a key role in supporting these aspects.

### 5.9.3  The role of the education system.

Angela's narrative highlights a number of considerations for the role of the education system in building system capacity by retaining great teacher leaders within the system.

#### 5.9.3.1  *"Let us walk beside you".*

First, having tasted parallel leadership, Angela was keen for systems to consider a mutually beneficial arrangement that provided schools with more autonomy. Developing a shared understanding of ways of working across the system, rather than the current top-down approach to systemic leadership would require a high level of systemic trust of its principal leaders: "You know this thing of 'walk beside me' …? Well, 'Let us walk beside you!' I think there's fear thing in there for the future. I think [the system] would have to let go".

#### 5.9.3.2  *System-wide view on leadership.*

Second, Angela expressed that a clear system view on leadership was needed. Systems and schools would develop a shared understanding of leadership theory, with a focus on culture building to sustain and improve pedagogy and thus improve student learning. An important part of culture building is providing the space for listening to teacher voice to empower teacher leaders through professional conversations: "I think generally the system needs to look at aspiring leaders and they need to be able to learn what leadership really is … they need the definition from the system viewpoint".

#### 5.9.3.3  *Further study requirement for all leadership roles.*

Third, further study would be a requirement for all leadership roles, along with some degree of flexibility in choosing staff and support for the creation of and funding for the development of leadership roles to suit the school context: "… some kind of overall movement towards more roles for people who want to be leaders. We've got people – we've got the learning support teachers. They are like leaders. They are amazing. Why isn't there suitable funding for their role?"

#### 5.9.3.4  *System-wide focus on aspiring teacher leaders.*

Finally, Angela expressed a desire for a whole of system focus on aspiring teacher leaders, with succession planning as a priority, further study a requirement and a plan for mentoring aspiring leaders. Teacher leaders with capacities such as Angela's will be looking for that something extra. For systems to retain their great teacher leaders, succession planning would need to be addressed with some urgency: "[The system] should get succession planning up and running … because I do see very dynamic teachers walking away to other jobs … they're not waiting".

### 5.9.4  Angela's metaphor.

When I asked Angela for a metaphor to describe what leadership means to her, she likened it to a spiral, like a solar system, but it also appears to be a mixed metaphor with the addition of a journey that has bumps along the way:

… because I think it doesn't actually have to be closed. It should be a constant movement that's picking up and letting go and building on. There's no circle or oval in the centre. I think it just starts with a dot … I think there's a lot of movement and it doesn't necessarily grow bigger. It just keeps going around but it does trail off at the end so I don't know where that goes to … I just wonder if it's because of all the changes that happen in school. I wonder if it's an open-ended thing that we don't know what the end is. There is never any ending anyway because things are constantly changing and adjusting. I think that spiralling action too would be because there are bumps, but this looks smooth. After the bump and hiccup you actually get over it and keep going so I think there's a direction in that image … I wouldn't say that underneath that you wouldn't find bumps and that … probably if you delved into that spiral image you would see a lot of bumps and a lot of heartbreak. There would be other images … that image wouldn't be finished … not just the spiral at the end, the actual detail within that would have lots of things in it once you looked into maybe the three dimensional part of it.

### 5.9.5  Researcher's final comments.

Angela's narrative revealed several very clear, powerful and insightful messages for system leaders that informed Research Question Three for this study:

- "Let us walk beside you", requiring systems to let go and develop mutually beneficial trusting relationships with schools, to replace top-down authoritative, bureaucratic relationships;
- system-wide view on leadership, developing a shared understanding of successful leadership – engage aspiring leaders, understand leadership theory to develop a vision for what really works in improving schools;
- further study requirement for all leadership roles to provide some scholarly activity and thinking within these roles; and
- system-wide focus on aspiring teacher leaders, which has implications for succession planning within systems.
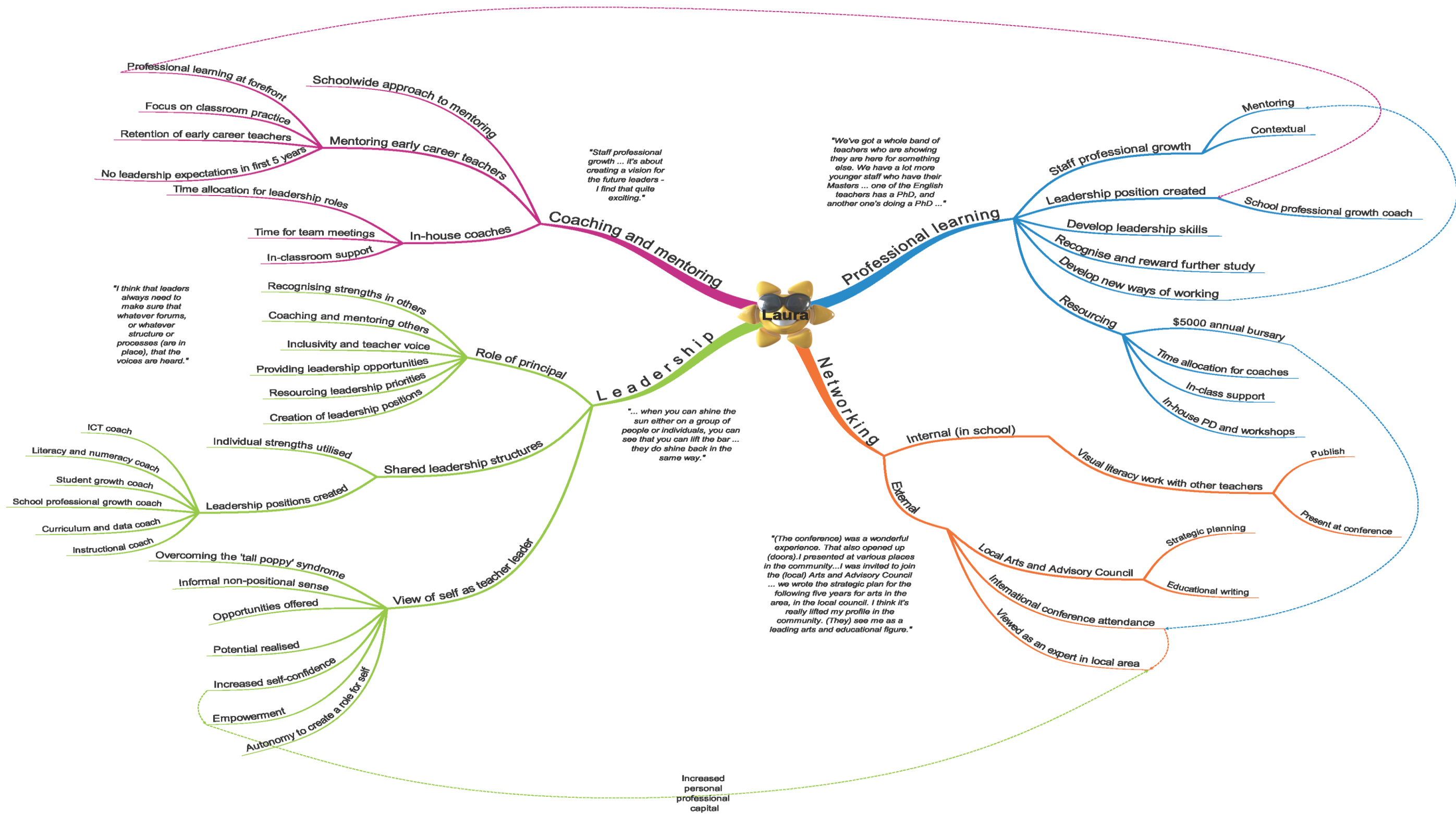
Central node: **Laura**

Main branches:

**Coaching and mentoring**
- In-house coaches
  - In-classroom support
  - Time for team meetings
- Mentoring early career teachers
  - Time allocation for leadership roles
  - No leadership expectations in first 5 years
  - Retention of early career teachers
  - Focus on classroom practice
  - Professional learning at forefront
  - Schoolwide approach to mentoring

"Staff professional growth ... it's about creating a vision for the future leaders - I find that quite exciting."

**Professional learning**
- Staff professional growth
  - Mentoring
  - Contextual
  - School professional growth coach
- Leadership position created
- Develop leadership skills
- Recognise and reward further study
- Develop new ways of working
- Resourcing
  - $5000 annual bursary
  - Time allocation for coaches
  - In-class support
  - In-house PD and workshops

"We've got a whole band of teachers who are showing they are here for something else. We have a lot more younger staff who have their Masters ... one of the English teachers has a PhD, and another one's doing a PhD ..."

**Leadership**
- Role of principal
  - Recognising strengths in others
  - Coaching and mentoring others
  - Inclusivity and teacher voice
  - Providing leadership opportunities
  - Resourcing leadership priorities
  - Creation of leadership positions
- Shared leadership structures
  - Individual strengths utilised
- Leadership positions created
  - ICT coach
  - Literacy and numeracy coach
  - Student growth coach
  - School professional growth coach
  - Curriculum and data coach
  - Instructional coach
- View of self as teacher leader
  - Overcoming the 'tall poppy' syndrome
  - Informal non-positional sense
  - Opportunities offered
  - Potential realised
  - Increased self-confidence
  - Empowerment
  - Autonomy to create a role for self
  - Increased personal professional capital

"I think that leaders always need to make sure that whatever forums, or whatever structure or processes (are in place), that the voices are heard."

"... when you can shine the sun either on a group of people or individuals, you can see that you can lift the bar ... they do shine back in the same way."

**Networking**
- Internal (in school)
  - Visual literacy work with other teachers
    - Publish
    - Present at conference
- External
  - Local Arts and Advisory Council
    - Strategic planning
    - Educational writing
  - International conference attendance
  - Viewed as an expert in local area

"(The conference) was a wonderful experience. That also opened up (doors).I presented at various places in the community...I was invited to join the (local) Arts and Advisory Council ... we wrote the strategic plan for the following five years for arts in the area, in the local council. I think it's really lifted my profile in the community. (They) see me as a leading arts and educational figure."

*Figure 5.10*. An Interpretive Biographical View of Laura's Account of Her Teacher Leader Journey

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## 5.10  Laura's Teacher Leader Biography

Laura has been a teacher in the one secondary school context for 28 years. It is a vibrant, creative school and teachers are attracted to working there. However, with a number of the teachers at the school approaching retirement in the next five to ten years, the school's unique culture was in danger of being lost. While the culture was unique, no one could really articulate what it was and how it was reflected in their learning and teaching. The new principal was keen to capture and sustain the culture and this was one of the school's main drivers for adopting the IDEAS project.

During the school's engagement with the IDEAS project, Laura had a leadership role in the school as Head of Arts, but also as a member of the IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT). When the assistant principal and IDEAS facilitator retired, Laura adopted more of a leadership role within the ISMT during the sustaining phase. When I first met Laura some six years ago, she was emerging as a leader of the school renewal process. The new principal was a keen supporter of professional learning and a distributed form of leadership, called parallel leadership that was a key to the success of working with IDEAS. He valued teacher professionalism and at the time of our first meeting, Laura appeared somewhat humbled by the principal's trust and belief in her capabilities.

Laura has been happy and experienced professional fulfilment at this school. She is still working with the same principal that was there when they began their renewal process. Her narrative captures what she has been able to achieve since engaging with the IDEAS project, as the school sustained their school-wide approach to pedagogy and the professional learning culture was revitalised. Developing *leadership* capacity and *professional learning* is the focus of the school-wide approach to *coaching and mentoring*. In addition to this, the focus on internal and external *networking* to build personal professional capacity as well as the school professional capacity has featured throughout Laura's narrative. Each of these aspects will be unpacked in the following section.

### 5.10.1  Leadership.

There were a number of influencing factors in the development of leadership in Laura's narrative – the role of the principal in developing teacher leader capacity, the shared leadership structures in place within the school and Laura having a view of self as a leader. First the role of principal in developing teacher leader capacity has been a key feature. This capacity was developed through both informal and formalised structures. Recognising strengths in others and providing leadership opportunities and support to develop leadership potential was evident in the principal's support of teacher leaders throughout the school. In Laura's case, one such example was where the principal encouraged her to submit an abstract to an International Arts and Society conference to profile the work she had been leading in the school. At the time, Laura was humbled by his confidence and belief that she could do it. While she appeared daunted at first, citing that her first reaction was "Really?", she agreed that it would be an exciting opportunity.

Second, shared or distributed leadership structures drew on individual strength areas, thus recognising individual professional and teacher leader capacity. Professional

conversations allowed for inclusivity and individual voices to be heard, thus empowering the usually quiet teachers to come to the fore. Laura reflected that perhaps some of the focus on professional conversations has been lost recently and should be rebuilt – the school's latest staff opinion survey reflected dissatisfaction in this area:

> I think the IDEAS process was wonderful for the school. People still talk about it fondly, but it did enormous things for the school, especially in listening to the quiet voices. I think that leaders always need to make sure that whatever forums, or whatever structures or processes [are in place], that the voices are heard. At the moment I think we have a climate where we have a few people who would be considered more … a bullying personality … it's the way that you can make sure that they don't take the only voice.

Coaching and mentoring others became a school-wide focus to build capacity for professional learning and leadership. Formalised leadership structures were incorporated to include leadership positions for six in-house coaches in priority areas – Information and Communication Technologies (ICT); literacy and numeracy; student growth; school professional growth; curriculum and data; instructional coach – to engage in coaching and mentoring in classrooms, as Laura explained:

> The positions are closely linked with an area of responsibility and we were able to apply for any number of them that we wanted to. I've applied for school professional growth, curriculum and data, there was instructional coaching. The three I didn't apply for were ICT, literacy and numeracy coach, and student growth.

Resourcing these initiatives became a priority – this involved a time allocation and funding for the six positions, with each coach given 10 periods, while other staff backfilled by increasing their teaching load. Initially this caused some resentment:

> The coaching program that we initiated three years ago came about with a lot of change for the school and there was a significant reaction from staff. A lot of blocking, and it's been a very difficult three years for us … working closely with teachers in classrooms. We were given a 10 period allowance each. So that was 60 periods. Staff reacted very badly to that. There was also a change where teachers had an increase in their face-to-face teaching time … so our time allowance was seen as a little bit indulgent … if you provide time and flexibility to be able to meet as a team, but also to be able to spend time with the teachers in classrooms – which has been very successful for some coaches and for some teachers.

Framed by the school's vision and school-wide approach to pedagogy, the coaches had some autonomy to vision these roles and were able to take initiative and have some creativity in working with their own ideas for the scope of the roles.

> [We] have been offered a lot of freedom … that we as a team are a very strong team, because we've had to come through it together and develop our own protocols, and ways of working together and working with others. I think having the freedom to be innovative, and hands off. To begin with, [our principal] was monitoring us fairly closely … I think that giving people really a chance to develop their own programs is great – or their own ideas, and their own way, their own initiatives.

As with any worthwhile change, it takes time to implement and the ongoing support of the principal to sustain. They are however, beginning to see the benefits of the coaching and mentoring program. Laura shares some of her successes later in this narrative. The key benefit is the contribution to the building of teacher leader capacity. It is clear from Laura's dialogue that they had the trust of the principal to create their roles within the shared view of the school-wide framework. This is a powerful incentive for an increased professional capacity as it places value on the professionalism of the teacher.

Finally, Laura is forming a confident view of herself as a teacher leader, as demonstrated in her increased confidence to accept opportunities when offered. While the principal monitors and provides guidance, she knows that her work will be valued and she knows that she will be trusted to do the job well. In accepting the offer to present at the Arts and Society conference in Europe, her potential had been realised and her self-confidence increased, resulting in a great sense of empowerment: "That was a huge, huge thing for me. I've never been a highly ambitious person, it's just that leadership's always been offered to me I guess because I showed that potential". In her coaching and mentoring role, she had some autonomy to create the role to suit the context for her work situation, thus providing professional fulfilment and enhancing her capacity as a teacher leader in her area of expertise.

One area that Laura did find difficult initially was the notion of overcoming the tall poppy syndrome:

> It's really hard being a 'tall poppy'. You have to be highly resilient. You have to develop a tough skin about what people are saying about you – the other thing I found really hard is the 'them and us'. So once you put your neck out, you become one of 'them', rather than the collective 'us'. I've always tried to effectively be that link … there's nobody that will have everything [in terms of leadership qualities].

In one sense, this has been overcome with a team or shared approach to leadership where successes and challenges were shared. Working with pockets of willing participants in the coaching and mentoring program and sharing the small successes along the way is achieving the desired effect, with more people coming on board. As a teacher leader in her school, Laura has grown significantly in that others are looking to her for leadership now:

> I see myself as a lot wiser, personally. I think what's happened is that the staffing profile at the school has changed significantly. So I'm actually one of the more experienced, wiser people, and I'm noticing that other people are regarding me in that way. So last year, we had two new assistant principals appointed to the school … I think because I've been here for such a long time, that they both do look to me for reassurance in some way, which is strange … so I still see myself as being someone who is filled with wisdom, I guess, and we have a lot more younger, inexperienced staff that have come to the school … [I've] had to step up into this position – the one that people come to for advice and guidance. It's interesting in terms of leadership how I haven't sought this, but it's become – it happened before me in a very natural way in some ways … always having looked for leadership opportunities for others, rather than myself.

### 5.10.2 Professional learning.

As evidenced in the leadership area, staff professional growth is a priority at this school. This school believes that teachers are the key to professional learning and this has been evidenced by their in-house approach to coaching and mentoring in a contextualised learning environment. Leadership positions were created to lead the coaching and mentoring program. The school professional growth coach was an area of particular interest for Laura: "Staff professional growth … it's about creating a vision for the future leaders – I find that quite exciting". Developing leadership skills is a priority at this school. In addition to this, Laura would like to see some recognition and reward for further study:

> We've got a whole band of teachers who are showing they are here for something else. We have a lot more younger staff who have their Masters … one of the English teachers has a PhD, and another one's doing a PhD … so it's about recognising that. I think there's more potential to recognise people who do those sorts of things outside school, and celebrating them. I don't know if we do that well enough.

As a school, they are developing new ways of working professionally through their coaching and mentoring program. The principal has also offered as part of the professional learning resourcing, a $5000 annual bursary to develop leadership potential and professional learning. When Laura was the recipient of this bursary, she used it to present at the conference in Europe:

> I wrote a paper for an Arts and Society conference [in Europe] and it was about how [our school] and particularly in the arts, reflected the community's values, but also in doing so was helping build the community. So it was about this symbiotic relationship between the local school, and the community in which it operates … how the shire – to how the council has helped to develop the culture of arts in the area, and how they have worked together over a long period of time. Very few people have picked [up] on that [offer of a bursary]. We do the same sort of thing. In fact for the year after, I don't think anybody applied to do it, which was really quite sad. I think the following year a girl did her Masters in a maths area and this year two people have gone off to different conferences. But there hasn't been another person who's come up with an initiative like the one that I undertook, which was, I suppose very ambitious.

Resourcing professional learning is crucial if it is a priority. This included time allocations for coaches, in-class support, in-house professional development sessions and workshops:

> If you provide time and flexibility to be able to meet as a team, but also to be able to spend time with the teachers in classrooms … which has been very successful for some coaches and for some teachers … in some ways it really did follow on from the IDEAS model of working with teachers, and particularly the 'no blame' and 'teachers are the key' and the 'professional learning'… the professional learning is always at the forefront. I think the new roles give people an area of accountability, so that they can keep themselves and others accountable a little bit more.

### 5.10.3 Coaching and mentoring.

Coaching and mentoring as a focus is achieved through a school-wide approach to mentoring, mentoring early career teachers and the provision of in-house coaches, developing capacity for professional learning and teacher leadership. First, their school-wide approach to coaching and mentoring others in their mentoring program is a vehicle for succession planning for leaders, in addition to professional learning. Laura stressed the importance of having some sort of training in place for the up and coming leaders or those taking on leadership positions. In her coaching role, she was fortunate to be given training along with principals and other leadership roles at the system level with a training program with an institute of educational leadership.

> It's a 15 day program. So there were 60 participants, there were two groups of 30 … principals, assistant principals, the heads of school and the coaches went through the training program, which was a wonderful training program … based on coaching … it's about self-discovery as an instructional coach, but also for teachers [in classrooms].

According to Laura, the untrained leaders in their school are the leaders that struggle: "Most of my work has been mentoring and coaching the next level of leadership in the school … working with them to develop their leadership skills". The new staff professional growth coach role that Laura has applied for will provide a focus on a vision for future leaders.

Second, mentoring early career teachers with a view to retention is a priority for the coaching and mentoring program. With professional learning at the forefront, and the focus on classroom practice, the aim is to support their early career teachers during their first five years. Laura confirms that to prevent teacher burnout, there is no expectation that these teachers engage in leadership roles during these five years:

> … they come in to schools very underprepared and then they're thrown in and that first year they have to do so much to meet the … standards. Their heads spin. I think that we're not looking after them. Not looking after teachers in their first five years. I think … any way leadership could help support those teachers through their first five years would be wonderful, because they are struggling … we're very careful because we have to encourage leadership amongst those, but got to be careful we don't burn them out. So we're trying to not give anybody who has less than the five years teaching. Doesn't really work anyway, because we've got quite a few people who are in as year level coordinators who have less than five years teaching … I think that that needs to be a school-wide discussion about how they're feeling … and prospects for them, as professionals too.

Third, in-house coaches were a feature of their success, providing on-going support and contextualised learning. Time allocation for leadership roles, team meetings and in-classroom support was essential for success. Part of this role was to encourage and mentor others to develop new ways of working that align with their Schoolwide Pedagogy. One such example was Laura's focus on visual literacy and art design, with teachers in the English area:

> This year I've been working with one of the English teachers on visual literacy and how we can develop some very specific curriculum. I suppose it will be pedagogy too. So it's about how we can develop some very specific

ways of assisting students to develop their literacy skills when analysing and evaluating art or design. So that's pretty exciting … [with] the English teachers I'm working with, we are hoping to take that further and into some sort of publication or presentation at conferences.

### 5.10.4 Networking.

Networking occurred both within the school and external to the school context for Laura. Internal networking involved in-school advocating for their vision and goals for the school and for new ways of working as a mentor and coach. The internal networking can sometimes result in external networking, such as Laura's anticipated work with the English teachers – to publish and present at conferences. Laura's external networking featured much work with the local Arts and Advisory Council involving strategic planning and planned educational writing following her success at the international conference attendance in Europe. In its wake, she was viewed as an expert in the local community:

> [The conference] was a wonderful experience. That also opened up [doors]. I presented at various places in the community. We have a monthly talk for the shire. I spoke at a number of other forums in the shire … I was invited to join the [local] Arts and Advisory Council … we wrote the strategic plan for the following five years for arts in the area, in the local council. I think it's really lifted my profile in the community. [They] see me as a leading arts and educational figure. Outside the school people will come and seek and speak to me about those areas. [Our principal] was hoping that I would probably take it further. I still have plans that I would like to work with the council … [they have] an amazing art collection which I would love to do some education writing around.

All of these initiatives and opportunities have contributed to Laura's sense of empowerment as a teacher leader, as well as her professional capital, which in turn contributes to building the school professional capital. It is clear that opportunities for professional learning, leadership and networking have all contributed significantly to building Laura's capacity as a teacher leader.

### 5.10.5 Laura's metaphor.

When I asked Laura about a metaphor for herself as a leader, she initially joked about being a lion tamer in her coaching role, given the changes and challenging circumstances they have faced in the last few years. She has, however, embraced an encouraging metaphor of a sunflower facing the sun, which promotes the idea of mentoring and opportunity, the very foundational aspects of her work:

> I wrote down some things like 'lion tamer being thrown to the lions'. Under a sheath of politeness and professionalism I moved away from that to 'a new crop of aspirant leaders' … but the last one I counted was about 'sunflowers', and how sunflowers turn their faces toward the sun. But then you have the storm clouds that brew, and how they shy away from the storm clouds. I don't know if it's about leadership, but it's about my role and what my role has been like over the past [few] years. So that when you can shine the sun either on a group of people, or individuals, you can see that you can … lift the bar and the way that they do shine back in some way.

### 5.10.6 Researcher's final comments.

Laura's narrative highlights the following key features:

- The notion of rewarding teachers and allocating time for leadership roles – in this notion, schools manage their own budgets with teachers in particular roles managing the budget for that area;
- The notion of in-house coaching and mentoring, thus acknowledging the professionalism of teachers – professional learning and succession planning for leadership to mentor the next level of leadership in the school can be the focus of this planning;
- Mentoring early career teachers to aid teacher retention and support early career teachers to achieve their professional learning and eventual leadership goals during their first five years;
- Professional learning is at the forefront to building whole school professional capacity; and
- The use of professional conversations as a protocol promotes inclusivity and individual voices can be heard, thus ensuring teacher engagement and the building of teacher leader capacity.

## 5.11  Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the data from the interviews of the lived experiences of 10 IDEAS teacher leaders have been shared, with the researcher presenting the narrative of each experience using mind mapping as a biographical interpretive analysis lens to view the interview data. Each teacher leader voice deserves to be heard independently of the other, while each contributes to the combined richness of the emerging themes of these empowered and awakened sleeping giants. Yet, the sleeping giant metaphor for each of these teacher leaders cannot be separated from the organisational contexts from which they have awakened and indeed, from which they now find themselves. As can be seen emerging from the teacher leader biographies, there are particular conditions that appear favourable for development of teacher leader capacity or awakening, and allow them to continue to grow their capacity once awakened, while others not so.

Further analysis of the lived experiences of the awakened sleeping giants and the contexts that are supportive following their awakening will occur in the next chapter. This understanding in turn will contribute to due consideration of implications for schools and education systems.

# 6. CHAPTER SIX: The Awakened Sleeping Giants: The Search for New Meaning – Research Question One

*You can't mandate what matters … Change is a journey not a blueprint.* (Fullan, 1993, p. 21)

## 6.1    Introduction

The participants in this study had all experienced a common process – the IDEAS process of school renewal. Throughout the process, they all experienced an enabling realisation of themselves as leaders – they had awakened (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, 2009) as teacher leaders within their IDEAS contexts. This was the key reason for participant selection for this study, and to thus establish what happened to them following their IDEAS experience beyond their awakening.

In the previous chapter, the biographical interpretive mind maps and narratives have demonstrated that the teacher leader experiences since IDEAS have been varied – some were empowering and included opportunities for developing teacher leader capacity, while others experienced such dissatisfaction and disempowerment, and either stayed on for various reasons or made a conscious decision to leave and pursue their own dreams. In this chapter, the research-based *Teachers as Leaders Framework* (Crowther et al., 2009) is used to map their experiences, thus contributing further insights into the images for each teacher leader category in response to Research Question One for this study.

The *Teachers as Leaders Framework* has been part of the whole school improvement experience for all IDEAS teacher leaders and thus informs their understanding of what a teacher leader is able to do to experience meaningful work (Chalofsky, 2003, 2010) – to feel successful and valued at work, to achieve their full potential, or to self-actualise (Maslow [1954, 1971], cited in Chalofsky, 2010, p. 32) within their workplace. As a familiar framework, it serves to illuminate the degree to which they have been able to enact their teacher leader capacities within the post-IDEAS contexts and is therefore justified as a useful mapping tool for this purpose.

## 6.2    The Images of Teacher Leaders Since IDEAS

In Chapter Four, distinct groupings of teacher leaders were emerging: those that transformed themselves in the same context, those that transformed themselves in a new context, those that spread their own wings and followed a dream and those that felt trapped or restricted within their current contexts. Following detailed analysis of the 10 teacher leader biographies from those emerging categories, it is clear that there are five categories, or images, of teacher leaders in this study, with commonalities of experience in each image: the *Culture Guardians*, the *Strategic Career Movers*, the *Dream Believers*, the *Battle-Scarred Warriors*, the *Realists*.

In the following section, the images of each of these categories of teacher leaders will be defined and explored by mapping each category to the six elements of *The Teachers as Leaders Framework* to establish a response to Research Question One:

| *Research Question 1* *THE IMAGES* | (a) What have been the lived experiences of teacher leaders that have emerged from a process of whole school improvement? |
| | (b) What is the impact of these experiences on their concept of leadership in schools? |

Throughout the mapping process, it became apparent that there are some elements on the Framework that are *aspirational* in nature and relate to what teacher leaders aspire to be or do, and have been labelled as such. Other elements of the Framework are more reliant on the context at hand for enactment – these have been labelled *situational*. In the situational components, it is evident that there are some contexts that are enabling, while others are restrictive, so these have been colour coded accordingly in each case (See, for example, Key – Table 6.1).

### 6.2.1  The Culture Guardians.

> *Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –*
> *I took the one less travelled by,*
> *And that has made all the difference.*
> – Robert Frost, American poet, *The Road Not Taken* (1916)

The *Culture Guardians* refers to a category of fulfilled teacher leaders who have made a conscious decision to remain in their respective schools and become the guardian angels of the culture. Despite opportunities to further their careers elsewhere, they opted to remain in a context that valued mutualistic relationships, the development of teacher leadership and authentic professional learning – a culture that provided the opportunity to grow their teacher leader capacity as the key to growing the school's professional capital.

With the support of their principals, the Culture Guardians advocate strongly in their respective schools for, and during the whole school improvement process – they became the culture breakers initially in getting people on board with the shared visioning process. Their journey was difficult initially, and involved breaking through the barriers of the former culture, building the new culture, while valuing what had gone before, and then sustaining the new culture. Being one of the first to stand up for what one believes is right for the school comes with a certain degree of risk, particularly in the early days of the process. As Laura recalled, it was difficult being a tall poppy and being viewed as one of the administration team could create a sense of professional isolation from teacher colleagues – the notion of *them* and *us* can become more obvious. One needed to develop resilience to deal with these situations.

The risk of professional isolation is minimal where the process is supported by administrative leaders, as was evident in the Culture Guardians group of teacher leaders. Each of these teacher leaders had developed mutualistic relationships with their respective principals. In each case, the principal had a key role in identifying teacher leadership potential and fostering that potential through provision of opportunities for leadership growth – opportunities that included leading professional

learning, networking internal and external to the school and involvement in the creation of a shared vision for the future.

In Laura's case, the principal gave her *authority* by opening doors to internal and external networking opportunities. Presenting at an international conference raised her professional profile for external networking in the local community. This in turn led to work with the local council in the Arts area. Internal networking opportunities enabled her to act as a mentor and work with other teachers on pedagogical work in the visual arts area at the school level. In Jenny's case, her principal realised that she was instrumental in helping him to build the culture and therefore the capacity of the school. He thus found an opportunity to encourage her to stay on, rather than move to another school for promotion.

Due to the mutualistic relationships developed with their principals over time, both Jenny and Laura felt safe and supported in their stance to break through the barriers of the existing culture within their schools. They began in small ways by working with other like-minded teachers to build capacity. Sharing and celebrating their successes along the way ensured that others came on board and gradually the capacity of the staff to support the process began to grow.

Both of these teacher leaders have chosen to remain in their schools beyond IDEAS, with the same principal that led the school through the process. While they may have had opportunities to go to other jobs for promotion, they made a conscious decision to remain as the guardians of the school culture. They have achieved a high level of personal fulfilment in their current contexts with opportunities to grow their own teacher leader capacity and have found their *happy place*. As Jenny recalled, when an opportunity for promotion became available at her current school: "I went, 'You know what? I can do more here'. I want to take on the challenge of happier and progress it further … I love this school".

Laura's and Jenny's teacher leader capacity in the post-IDEAS context is unpacked and mapped to *The Teachers as Leaders Framework* (Table 6.1), followed by an analysis of the teacher leader capacities and contexts that have enabled them to flourish in their current schools once their sleeping giant had been awakened.

**Key** (Table 6.1): **Aspirational and Situational Elements of the Framework**

**Aspirational:**

🔵 What teacher leaders aspire to be/do, despite the context – blue font

**Situational**:

🟢 Enabling teacher leader capacities in their current context – green font

🟠 Restrictions placed on teacher leader capacity in their current context – orange font

Table 6.1

*The 'Culture Guardian' Teacher Leaders Mapped to The Teachers as Leaders Framework*

| Teacher leaders… | The Culture Guardian teacher leaders |
| --- | --- |
| Element 1: Convey convictions about a better world by<br>• articulating a positive future for all students<br>• contributing to an image of teaching as a profession that makes a difference | Laura and Jenny have been identified as the Culture Guardian teacher leaders. They:<br>• stood as advocates for their profession and for students<br>• engaged in risk-taking – faced the tall poppy barrier. Jenny said it was hurtful being called the *no IDEAS* group in the early days of their whole school improvement journey, yet she continued to advocate for what she believed to be a better future for their school through her internal networking.<br>• worked in mutualistic relationships with the principals – were supported to take risks and felt safe in doing so |
| Element 2: Facilitate communities of learning by<br>• encouraging a shared, schoolwide approach to core pedagogical processes<br>• approaching professional learning as consciousness-raising about complex issues<br>• synthesising new ideas out of colleagues' professional discourse and reflective activities | Post-IDEAS context, they:<br>• facilitated communities of learning and advocated for their school's Schoolwide Pedagogy in a safe and supportive environment<br>• were supported by their principals – both Laura and Jenny still worked with the principals that had already been through the IDEAS whole school improvement journey with them and were keen to ensure the sustainability of what had already been created |
| Element 3: Strive for pedagogical excellence by<br>• showing genuine interest in students' needs and well-being<br>• continuously developing and refining personal teaching gifts and talents<br>• seeking deep understanding of significant pedagogical practices | Laura and Jenny are advocates for ongoing professional learning to develop one's personal practice:<br>• Laura through her research, coaching, mentoring and networking, both internal and external, in the Arts area<br>• Jenny through her deep knowledge of the IDEAS process – engagement with workshops and further leadership training. She was able to *manage* upwards with the executive and eventually became the *expert* in her school.<br>• The role of the principal – key to its success, with resourcing provided as appropriate e.g. bursary for professional development (Laura's school). They developed internal and external networks of learning that contributed to their professional discourse aiding the reflection and self-critique of their pedagogical approach. |
| Element 4: Confront barriers in the school's culture and structures by<br>• standing up for children, especially disadvantaged and marginalised individuals and groups | • Students encouraged to contribute in meaningful ways – their *voice* important in the creation of the Schoolwide Pedagogy. Laura considers that it is time to re-look at their vision and Schoolwide Pedagogy (principles of learning and teaching). These principles are ever-present on student notebooks and were even used as a framework when students were involved in interviewing the new deputy principals at the school. |

- working with administrators to find solutions to issues of equity, fairness and justice
- encouraging student "voice" in ways that are sensitive to students' developmental stages and circumstances

Element 5: Translate ideas into sustainable systems of action by

- working with the principal, administrators and other teachers to manage projects that heighten alignment between the school's vision, values, pedagogical practices and professional learning activities
- building alliances and nurturing external networks of support

As pedagogical leaders at their respective schools, Laura and Jenny are:
- engaged in reviewing the alignment of practice and the school's vision and values
- supported and trusted by their principals
- given *authority* to envision and enact their leadership roles to align with the school's vision and SWP
- able to link with external networks of support. Jenny has built networks with (the system) people assisting her to achieve the pedagogical goals for the school, while Laura has a number of community networks in the Arts area that provide a mutually beneficial school-community link to achieve their goals in the Arts area.

Element 6: Nurture a culture of success by
- acting on opportunities to emphasise accomplishments and high expectations
- encouraging collective responsibility in addressing schoolwide challenges
- encouraging self-respect and confidence in students' communities

Jenny and Laura are advocates for a collaborative way of working through shared distributed, or parallel, leadership structures. They:
- address challenges collectively in their respective schools
- celebrate their successes as a school community
- engage students in school-wide decision making and visioning processes

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### 6.2.1.1    The Culture Guardians: Final analysis.

Following their awakening as teacher leaders, the Culture Guardians have been enabled as teacher leaders in their current schools in all six elements of *The Teachers as Leaders Framework*. They have:

- broken down the barriers of an existing culture in their respective contexts;
- worked with administrators to envision the direction for the school, to find solutions for translating their ideas into action, and encouraged teacher and student voice;
- continued to work with and advocate for whole school improvement processes within their contexts, thus sustaining and becoming guardians of the school culture;
- facilitated communities of learning on an ongoing basis through coaching and mentoring and professional conversations;
- engaged in internal and external networks to contribute to an image of teaching as a profession that makes a difference, and through facilitation of communities of learning, used feedback from networks to engage in self-critique of their pedagogical work; and
- grown in confidence and have a strong sense of who they are as teacher leaders – they feel empowered and valued and are therefore able to contribute to and nurture cultures of success within their respective contexts.

The Culture Guardians' potential was realised and they were only able to enact these teacher leader capacities within a context that was supportive of their growth in the following areas:

- For each of the two teacher leaders in their respective contexts, the same principal was part of the IDEAS whole school improvement process, so they understood the history of the culture and were keen to sustain what had been created. The principals were also instrumental in keeping the *right* people on board to assist in sustaining the process.
- Organisational structures at the system and school level incorporated space for internal and external networking, contextual school-based professional learning and professional conversations to occur.
- A relational style of leadership prevailed, which featured mutualistic relationships between principal and teacher leaders – principals trusted teacher professionalism; provided the space for *teacher voice* and the building of relationships through professional conversations. Teacher leaders felt safe and supported to take risks and step outside their comfort zones.
- Targeted teacher leader capacity development occurred through parallel leadership structures – parallel leadership, a distributed form of leadership was prevalent in the visioning and pedagogical direction of the school. Principals as strategic leaders recognised teacher leader capabilities and provided opportunities for growing teacher leader capacity, and teachers as pedagogical leaders engaged in shared pedagogical decision making in their work.
- Resourcing teacher leadership and teacher professional learning was prioritised to build the school's capacity for knowledge generation, and thus improve the overall professional capital – the contribution of the individual to the whole school improvement effort to increase student learning outcomes. The principals in both cases provided support for ongoing professional

learning through targeted resourcing. One example was the principal's recognition of, and encouragement for Laura's ongoing participation in the community Arts work. With his support, she was becoming a leading Arts figure within the school and the local community.

Laura and Jenny have strong images and understandings of themselves as leaders and use this self-knowledge, confidence and empowerment to sustain the work they have created within their respective schools. They have continued working with parallel leadership structures to build capacity in their current contexts. This is also evidenced in their metaphors or descriptions for themselves as leaders, which highlights a belief in working together towards a common pedagogical vision and shining a light on others to help build their capacity.

Both feel safe and supported to take risks in an environment that encourages mutual respect. Their own personal professional learning is valued and planned for within their respective community contexts, internal and external to the school community. While there may have been other job opportunities outside of their school contexts, these Culture Guardians have been promoted and are valued within their current school contexts. They see ongoing potential to grow and sustain their own images of themselves as teacher leaders within their current contexts and have attained a new level of fulfilment in their work.

### 6.2.2  The Strategic Career Movers.

> *It is essential that in entering a new province you should have the good will of its inhabitants.*
> – Machiavelli, *The Prince,* c.1500 (2006)

The *Strategic Career Movers* is a category of teacher leaders who have strategically relocated to other schools or contexts to further their career and *grow* their teacher leader potential in the new contexts. They have emerged from their awakening with a growing realisation of themselves as leaders, and with a clear view of where they want to be within their careers. With a particular career plan in mind, they have used their developed teacher leader capacities in the promotion process, in some cases a lot earlier than anticipated, to further their careers and relocate to other contexts.

Lucy is one such example. While she had a career goal in mind, her IDEAS teacher leader experience enabled her to realise her leadership capabilities a lot earlier than anticipated. She had achieved her career ambition by 30 years of age. There are two key factors that appear to underpin Lucy's success – the mutualistic relationships with her two principals and the role of the education system.

First, the mutualistic relationship factor with her principals is a consideration. Lucy attributes her success to the encouragement and recognition of her potential by her former principal at her IDEAS school. Lucy explained that the principal believed she had the capacity for leadership and gave her a nudge in the right direction by prioritising and resourcing teacher leader capacity development. She provided opportunities to develop Lucy's teacher leader capacity through mentoring, enabling internal and external networks and targeted professional learning. Similarly, in her new context, Lucy is supported and mentored by her current principal and feels safe to take risks. Lucy knows the difficulties of beginning to work with people in a new context to become part of a new culture. Establishing relationships is the foundation

to her success in the new context. Just as Lucy was engaged in mutualistic relationships of trust with her principals in both school contexts, she is establishing similar mutualistic relationships with staff in her new context before attempting to introduce any changes or pedagogical innovations.

Second, the supportive mentoring and professional learning role of the education system must be considered. Lucy attended a system-supported contextual professional learning on leadership, related to their IDEAS whole school improvement journey. School improvement processes are valued by the system (Andrews et al., 2012) – they are school-based thus giving *authority* to the schools and are not system driven. The education system, along with the University, had a key role as external partners and mentors in their school improvement journey, providing contextual, needs-based, in-school support.

Of particular interest is the parallel, shared view on leadership between the system and the schools as a method of building system leadership capacity (Andrews et al., 2012). The system leadership framework provides a framework for shared values and views on leadership that all schools embrace – a key component of this framework is teacher leadership. As teacher leadership development is valued in each and every school system-wide, Lucy's experience as a teacher leader in both schools has been an empowering one.

Lucy's teacher leader capacity in the post-IDEAS context is unpacked and mapped to *The Teachers as Leaders Framework* (Table 6.2), followed by an analysis of the teacher leader capacities and the features of context that enabled her to flourish once her sleeping giant had been awakened.

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**Key** (Table 6.2): **Aspirational and Situational elements of the Framework**

**Aspirational:**

🔵 What teacher leaders aspire to be/do, despite the context – blue font

**Situational**:

🟢 Enabling teacher leader capacities in their current context – green font

🟠 Restrictions placed on teacher leader capacity in their current context – orange font

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Table 6.2

*The Strategic Career Mover Teacher Leaders Mapped to The Teachers as Leaders Framework*

| Teacher leaders … | The Strategic Career Mover teacher leaders … |
|---|---|
| Element 1: Convey convictions about a better world by<br>• articulating a positive future for all students<br>• contributing to an image of teaching as a profession that makes a difference | Lucy is a Strategic Career Mover teacher leader. She:<br>• had a clear view to her future career, as a beginning teacher<br>• articulates a positive future for students<br>• realised her potential as a teacher leader and the difference she could make to the profession<br>• is developing capabilities in mentoring and coaching to build professional capacity within herself and others in her new context, with the aim of articulating a positive future for their students |
| Element 2: Facilitate communities of learning by<br>• encouraging a shared, schoolwide approach to core pedagogical processes<br>• approaching professional learning as consciousness-raising about complex issues<br>• synthesising new ideas out of colleagues' professional discourse and reflective activities | As facilitator during IDEAS, Lucy:<br>• facilitated communities of learning to develop a Schoolwide Pedagogy at her school<br>Since IDEAS in her new school context, Lucy:<br>• established credibility as a teacher leader by building relationships<br>• facilitates communities of learning<br>• feels safe to take risks, as she is in a supportive environment<br>• is developing skills and strength to confront challenges<br>• is working to establish processes of professional conversations and reflective practice |
| Element 3: Strive for pedagogical excellence by<br>• showing genuine interest in students' needs and well-being<br>• continuously developing and refining personal teaching gifts and talents<br>• seeking deep understanding of significant pedagogical practices | Lucy's well-defined career goals were underpinned by:<br>• strong moral purpose<br>• genuine interest in students' well-being<br>• continued refinement of pedagogical practice<br>As a young teacher leader throughout the IDEAS project. Lucy believed that her:<br>• career goal was more accessible in a much shorter timeframe<br>• facilitation of the IDEAS project refined her leadership capacity and work with pedagogical deepening<br>• growth of own teacher leader capacity was overtly realised<br>• experience of mentoring by the principal helped her to reach her career goal before she turned 30, and she now has to re-define her goals for the future |

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Element 4: Confront barriers in the school's culture and structures by

- standing up for children, especially disadvantaged and marginalised individuals and groups
- working with administrators to find solutions to issues of equity, fairness and justice
- encouraging student "voice" in ways that are sensitive to students' developmental stages and circumstances

Element 5: Translate ideas into sustainable systems of action by

- working with the principal, administrators and other teachers to manage projects that heighten alignment between the school's vision, values, pedagogical practices and professional learning activities
- building alliances and nurturing external networks of support

Element 6: Nurture a culture of success by

- acting on opportunities to emphasise accomplishments and high expectations
- encouraging collective responsibility in addressing schoolwide challenges
- encouraging self-respect and confidence in students' communities

As an IDEAS facilitator, Lucy:

- worked with administrators and staff to develop school-wide solutions to meet the unique needs of their diverse school culture
- facilitated the development of their Schoolwide Pedagogy with a focus on improving literacy learning outcomes

In her new school context, Lucy:

- has transferred this knowledge and skill to her new school context
- with the support of, and in a close working relationship with her principal, is considering ways to develop unique school-wide solutions for her new context

Lucy has developed school-wide approaches to align the vision, values and pedagogical practices. She:

- is developing external networks of support
- is completing a Master of Education
- engaged in IDEAS Leadership training to build system capacity provided by (the system)
- is considering *what next?* – opportunity to extend external networks; re-vision her teacher leader future

Lucy has:

- a strong sense of self belief in her ability to lead, fostered by mentoring and recognition of her capability by key people at her school, in particular, her principal
- humility as a leader, the key to her success in her new context
- promoted a shared approach to leadership
- encouraged collective responsibility in addressing school-wide challenges

Lucy believed that a culture of success encouraged by acting on opportunities presented:

- supportive principals in both school contexts and has therefore been able to transfer her teacher leader skills across contexts
- her move as a career move. Lucy made a choice to move contexts based on a career decision.
- risk taking – while she was encouraged to apply for promotion, she also had the courage to take the risk and apply, thus attempting her career goal earlier than planned
- belief in self as a leader and the potential to grow her teacher leader capacity in another context

### 6.2.2.1     *Strategic Career Movers: Final analysis.*

Following her awakening as a teacher leader, Strategic Career Mover Lucy, has been enabled as a teacher leader in her current school in all six elements of *The Teachers as Leaders Framework*. She has:

- advocated for school-wide processes of improvement in both school contexts and worked with principals and administrators to confront barriers in the schools' culture
- realised the importance of establishing relationships with people to assist in culture building, through her experience of mutualistic relationships and professional conversations from her former school, and has used this knowledge to effect in her new school
- facilitated communities of learning through leading development of mentoring processes through her internal networks, informed by her own mentoring experience with her first principal; and instigated pedagogical change in her new role
- advocated for ongoing professional learning and is keen to establish more external partnerships between the education system and schools, particularly in the leadership area to further enhance the system-wide leadership framework
- grown in her own capabilities and confidence as a teacher leader and took risks to further her growth by relocating to a new context. She is constantly reviewing and reflecting on her own personal and professional growth, however can see potential for furthering her career and growing her teacher leader capacity in the new context.

The Strategic Career Mover's potential was realised and Lucy was able to enact these teacher leader capacities within a context that was supportive of her growth in the following areas:

- A relational style of leadership prevailed, which featured mutualistic relationships between principal and teacher leaders – principals trusted teacher professionalism; provided the space for teacher voice and the building of relationships through professional conversations. Teacher leaders felt safe and supported to take risks and step outside their comfort zones.
- Organisational structures at the system and school level incorporated space for internal and external networking, contextual school-based professional learning and professional conversations occur.
- External networks of support were in place – the education system was a supportive mechanism for the schools in Lucy's case. Contextual, school-based whole school improvement journeys were valued and prioritised through resourcing via external consultants. The consultants worked with the school's needs and assisted their journey.
- Teacher leadership was valued, evidenced firstly by a shared view on leadership through a system-wide leadership framework, and secondly by providing external leadership workshops to teacher leader school improvement facilitators to build system leadership capacity.
- Targeted teacher leader capacity development was evident in both schools through mentoring and support mechanisms – while parallel leadership was evident in Lucy's first school, an IDEAS school, a distributed form of leadership was evident in her second school due to the system focus on developing teacher leaders. Principals as strategic leaders recognised teacher

leader capabilities and provided opportunities for growing teacher leader capacity, and teachers as pedagogical leaders engaged in shared pedagogical decision making in their work.

- Resourcing teacher leadership and teacher professional learning was prioritised to build the school's professional capacity and ultimately, the system's professional and leadership capacity – the principals in both cases provided support for ongoing authentic professional learning through targeted resourcing.

Lucy has grown in self-confidence and strategically plans for growing her own teacher leader capacity to further her career. While initially she was tapped on the shoulder as a shy young teacher, her growing realisation has been accompanied by skilled principal mentoring when she was an early career teacher, and numerous opportunities to develop her leadership capacity in both schools in which she has worked. She uses the metaphor of *growth* to describe leadership, as a flower opening up, and through the mutualistic relationships and shared way of working with her principals, her views on leadership have been strongly influenced by her experiences as a parallel leader in her IDEAS school.

### 6.2.3 The Dream Believers.

*If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.*
– John Quincy Adams, 6th President of the United States of America, 1825-1829 (n.d.)

The *Dream Believers* is a group of teacher leaders who had a dream. When their school context changed and the opportunity to grow their teacher leader capacity ceased to exist, they made a conscious decision to leave and follow their dreams. This required a high degree of risk in stepping out of their comfort zone and into the unknown, while inspiring others to join them in a journey. It is a story about the strength of the human spirit to go beyond discouragement, disillusionment and adversity. The Dream Believers were both from the same school context and were not happy operating in an environment where top-down leadership prevailed. They realised they could not sustain an image of themselves as teacher leaders within that context. They dreamed of utilising their skills in new ways in the creation of an idealistic educational vision for the future in another setting. So, they have spread their wings and have created their own dreams.

Claire and Liza are the Dream Believer teacher leaders. They are fulfilling a dream of building a sustainable orphanage and school in Africa. For Claire, the decision to act and step out into the unknown was not a difficult one. While she had always wanted to work in an orphanage after volunteering in one, she now knew she had the leadership capacity, skills, confidence, belief in self and networks of support to begin her own. Liza was inspired and came on board as a true believer. They have now established broad networks of support through mutualistic relationships to assist them in their vision.

Central to Claire's and Liza's teacher leader capacity in the new context was that firstly, the work had to be meaningful for them given the risk they had taken in stepping out. Second, they realised the capacity for the transference of all the skills they had learned as part of their IDEAS experience. For the work to be meaningful, they needed a clear vision for the future and alignment of values, with everyone on the same page – not without its challenges in a cross-cultural context. Instrumental to this

was ensuring that they had the *right* team in place. To establish this team, mutualistic relationships were key to their success. Through their internal and external networks, they were able to draw on a number of school and community contacts to establish the foundational aspects of the project. The transference of skills learned in their IDEAS experience is evidenced in their use of distributed forms of leadership and ensuring that each person on the team has a *voice* through the use of professional conversations.

Further evidence of Claire's and Liza's teacher leader capacity in the post-IDEAS context is unpacked and mapped to *The Teachers as Leaders Framework* (Table 6.3), followed by an analysis of the teacher leader capacities and the features of context that have enabled them to flourish once their sleeping giant has been awakened. While Liza is retired and working solely on the Orphanage project, Claire still remains in her school context, and works on the project in her spare time and holidays – she has plans to scale back her commitment to the school in the future and follow her dream full-time. There is much that Claire is not able to do as a teacher leader in her current school context, however the representation on *The Teachers as Leaders Framework* demonstrates the duality of her two work contexts, with both aspirational and restrictive situational influences on teacher leader capacity development featured. Enabling situational elements represent the context they have created for themselves with the *dream* – the Orphanage project (See Key – Table 6.3).

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**Key** (Table 6.3): **Aspirational and Situational elements of the Framework**

**Aspirational:**

🔵 What teacher leaders aspire to be/do, despite the context – blue font

**Situational**:

🟢 Enabling teacher leader capacities in their current context – green font

🟠 Restrictions placed on teacher leader capacity in their current context – orange font

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Table 6.3

*The 'Dream Believer' Teacher Leaders Mapped to The Teachers as Leaders Framework*

| Teacher leaders … | The Dream Believer teacher leaders … |
|---|---|
| **Element 1: Convey convictions about a better world by** <br><br> • articulating a positive future for all students <br> • contributing to an image of teaching as a profession that makes a difference | Claire and Liza are Dream Believer teacher leaders. They: <br><br> • utilised their teacher leader capacity to imagine a positive future for vulnerable orphans in Africa by planning and starting the building of a sustainable orphanage <br> • are creating an image of teaching as a profession that can and is making a difference to the lives of children in another country |
| **Element 2: Facilitate communities of learning by** <br><br> • encouraging a shared, schoolwide approach to core pedagogical processes <br> • approaching professional learning as consciousness-raising about complex issues <br> • synthesising new ideas out of colleagues' professional discourse and reflective activities | In the school context, Claire and Liza: <br><br> • were not able to facilitate communities of learning in their post-IDEAS school context <br> • felt disempowered by the top-down approach to leadership under the new principal <br> • were not able to engage in a shared school-wide approach and felt disconnected from the school that they had so loved. Other teacher leaders at this school have either moved on to other schools or remain there, disempowered and disillusioned. <br><br> In the Orphanage context, Claire and Liza: <br><br> • encourage shared *organisation wide* processes in the shared vision and values for the Project <br> • continuously refine their pedagogical practice by thinking about the implications of adapting this practice to a different culture in another country <br> • develop *shared* understandings of the core pedagogical processes to be used in the Orphanage and school <br> • develop sustainable practices in establishing the Orphanage Project – development of an exit plan; getting the *right* people on board, employing leadership practices to mentor and train locals; knowing when to step back and hand over to the (Africans) |
| **Element 3: Strive for pedagogical excellence by** <br><br> • showing genuine interest in students' needs and well-being <br> • continuously developing and refining personal teaching gifts and talents <br> • seeking deep understanding of significant pedagogical practices | In the Orphanage context, Claire and Liza: <br><br> • place the orphaned children at the centre of their decision making about the project. Their needs and well-being are the drivers for the design of the project and require a deep understanding of cultural context. <br> • ensure a deep understanding of curriculum and pedagogical practices meets their unique cultural requirements <br> • continuously refine their personal talents through team professional reflection and professional conversations about the Project |

Element 4: Confront barriers in the school's culture and structures by

- standing up for children, especially disadvantaged and marginalised individuals and groups
- working with administrators to find solutions to issues of equity, fairness and justice
- encouraging student "voice" in ways that are sensitive to students' developmental stages and circumstances

In the school context, Claire and Liza:

- were not able to confront the barriers that existed in their school's culture
- were not able to work with administrators to find solutions to issues
- had no *voice*
- only worked within their sphere of influence

In the Orphanage context, Claire and Liza:

- find personal fulfilment and *grow* their own teacher leader capacities
- advocate for orphaned and vulnerable children
- create a vision and plan of action for a brighter future for these children

Element 5: Translate ideas into sustainable systems of action by

- working with the principal, administrators and other teachers to manage projects that heighten alignment between the school's vision, values, pedagogical practices and professional learning activities
- building alliances and nurturing external networks of support

In the school context, Claire and Liza:

- had no opportunity to work with the principal and administrators on any activity connected with their school's direction
- believed that transparency and communication were closed down under the new administration. Teachers did not know what was going on in the school.
- found that networking was not promoted

In the Orphanage context, Claire and Liza:

- have become their own administration team, with Claire as Director and Liza as Deputy Director of the Orphanage Project. They are empowered leaders of the project.
- ensure they draw on a vast range of external networks to bring the project to fruition
- embed clear lines of communication and transparency is ensured with regular updates of the project
- use professional conversations and reflection as a regular feature of their practice

Element 6: Nurture a culture of success by

- acting on opportunities to emphasise accomplishments and high expectations
- encouraging collective responsibility in addressing schoolwide challenges
- encouraging self-respect and confidence in students' communities

Claire and Liza:

- demonstrate a high level of self-efficacy
- believe in what they are setting out to achieve with the Orphanage project
- draw on the mutualistic relationships they have with each other and community members
- expect to achieve their vision and goals with the *right* team on board
- believe it is a collective responsibility to achieve the vision for the Orphanage

### 6.2.3.1    The Dream Believers: Final analysis.

Following their awakening as teacher leaders, Claire and Liza, the Dream Believers, have fled a disabling school context and been self-empowered due to their own strength of spirit, moral purpose and aspirations as teacher leaders in all six areas of *The Teachers as Leaders Framework*. They have:

- been aspirational in their dream for a better future for orphaned and vulnerable children in Africa and translated that dream into systems of action;
- advocated for the dream through their mutualistic relationships via internal and external networks to fundraise and garner support for volunteers to come on board;
- secured the *right* team to develop a shared way of working through organisation-wide processes to fulfil the vision for the project;
- used feedback mechanisms to reflect on and critique their work through professional conversations; and
- utilised their capacity building experience to employ local (African) villagers to work on the project, with the view to making the project a sustainable, community effort

While there was no opportunity to grow their teacher leader capacity, Claire and Liza made a conscious decision to not battle the bureaucracy that exists in their current school context. The Dream Believers followed their dreams, spread their own wings and moved on. They created their own context to fulfil their teacher leader potential and have grown the capacity of other like-minded individuals and the local community to sustain their dream project. Their concept of leadership is underpinned by the parallel capacity building model that is their IDEAS experience – the notion of concept webs, networks and connectedness were central to Claire's metaphor, while Liza's was a capacity building metaphor that was a growing sphere of influence, like a snowball that is growing in momentum. Together, these networking and capacity building metaphors are complementary for their shared approach to leadership of the Orphanage project.

## 6.2.4  The Battle-Scarred Warriors

> *These battle scars, don't look like they're fading*
> *Don't look like they're ever going away*
> *They ain't never gonna change.* (Guy Sebastian)
>
> *Never let a wound ruin me*
> *But I feel like ruin's wooing me.* (Verse 1, Lupe Fiasco)
>
> Song: *Battle Scars.* (Sebastian, Fiasco, & Harris, 2012)

The *Battle-Scarred Warriors* refers to a category of aspirational teacher leaders who have been fearless warriors advocating for a cause, but due to the lack of organisation-wide support, have been scarred by the effects of the *battle*. They have battled the top-down models of leadership and bureaucracy that infiltrated their post-IDEAS school contexts. They finally chose to retreat battle-scarred and weary, burned or burnt-out. The opportunity to grow their teacher leader capacity no longer existed and without organisational support, they had lost the battle trying to advocate for the cause.

Fred and Angela are the Battle-Scarred Warrior teacher leaders in this study. Fred's battle began when one of his biggest advocates, the Deputy, left the school. His networks of support soon waned with a principal who had little interest in sustaining their schoolwide pedagogical developmental work. A strong advocate for students, Fred was incensed by the lack of support for his work on student voice and negotiated pedagogy, an initiative that was putting students first and demonstrating improved outcomes. His scholarly work in this area also won recognition at a state and international level. Fred was fighting a losing battle. Frustrated, he eventually retreated and went on extended leave.

Angela's battle began when the principal returned to the school from secondment and showed little support for the whole school improvement initiatives created in her absence, despite her approval to proceed beforehand. Angela's scholarly work on leadership from her Master of Education was coming to fruition in her school context through the enactment of parallel leadership. Like Fred, Angela battled on for a while against the re-emergence of top-down leadership, but battle-weary, she eventually retreated to the classroom – the schoolwide pedagogical development work also died a natural death and Angela felt frustrated and defeated at the loss of capacity as a teacher leader in the school.

Fred's and Angela's teacher leader capacity in the post-IDEAS context is unpacked and mapped to *The Teachers as Leaders Framework* (Table 6.4), followed by an analysis of the teacher leader capacities and the features of context that have enabled them to flourish once their sleeping giant has been awakened. To represent the duality of Fred and Angela's current situation, demonstrating (a) what they would aspire to be as teacher leaders and (b) what they are actually able to demonstrate in their current contexts, their teacher leader experience is mapped on the *Framework* showing the commonalities in the aspirational and restrictive elements in their respective school contexts:

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**Key** (Table 6.4): **Aspirational and Situational elements of the Framework**

**Aspirational:**

🔵 What teacher leaders aspire to be/do, despite the context – blue font

**Situational**:

🟢 Enabling teacher leader capacities in their current context – green font

🟠 Restrictions placed on teacher leader capacity in their current context – orange font

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Table 6.4

*The 'Battle-Scarred Warrior' Teacher Leaders Mapped to The Teachers as Leaders Framework*

| Teacher leaders … | The Battle-Scarred Warrior teacher leaders … |
|---|---|
| **Element 1: Convey convictions about a better world by**<br><br>• **articulating a positive future for all students**<br>• **contributing to an image of teaching as a profession that makes a difference** | Fred and Angela are Battle-Scarred Warrior teacher leaders. Both were involved as facilitators of the IDEAS project in their respective schools and are passionate about:<br><br>• advocating for students and student voice through scholarly articles and further study<br>• a process that engages people and that was not just about improving student outcomes, but was an investment in a positive future for students and the community<br>• the empowerment of their profession<br><br>In their post-IDEAS school contexts they:<br><br>• felt disempowered to advocate beyond the confines of their respective classrooms<br>• lost the power to influence in the school and retreated to the classroom |
| **Element 2: Facilitate communities of learning by**<br><br>• **encouraging a shared, schoolwide approach to core pedagogical processes**<br>• **approaching professional learning as consciousness-raising about complex issues**<br>• **synthesising new ideas out of colleagues' professional discourse and reflective activities** | While facilitators of the process, both Fred and Angela:<br><br>• facilitated communities of learning through the development of a school-wide approach to pedagogy and aspire to continue doing this<br><br>In their post-IDEAS school contexts, their:<br><br>• schoolwide pedagogical development ceased as the principal did not support or resource it<br>• ability to facilitate communities of learning ceased as bureaucratic structures returned<br>• ability to influence as teacher leaders was replaced by top-down leadership structures<br>• professional learning processes were not sustained<br>• principals were not actively engaged or supportive of the processes that had been sustained<br>• principals not supportive of developing teacher leadership |

**Element 3: Strive for pedagogical excellence by**

- **showing genuine interest in students' needs and well-being**
- **continuously developing and refining personal teaching gifts and talents**
- **seeking deep understanding of significant pedagogical practices**

Both Fred and Angela aspire to refine their personal teaching gifts and talents through further study and scholarly work.

- Both completed a Master of Education in the area of leadership, so had a clear understanding and view of themselves as leaders.
- Fred's study also addressed the area of student leadership and student voice and he continued this work when he received a scholarship to the United Kingdom to visit schools and work with a University in this area of research.
- Fred has also written journal articles and book chapters on this topic. He uses this knowledge to inform his work in schools.

Since IDEAS, there has been little or no opportunity within their school contexts to continuously develop and refine their pedagogical work and personal teaching gifts.

**Element 4: Confront barriers in the school's culture and structures by**

- **standing up for children, especially disadvantaged and marginalised individuals and groups**
- **working with administrators to find solutions to issues of equity, fairness and justice**
- **encouraging student "voice" in ways that are sensitive to students' developmental stages and circumstances**

Fred and Angela are advocates for equity, fairness and justice in their respective schools and the communities in which they operate:

- Pedagogical decision making reflects the needs of the community.
- Fred in particular, is a strong advocate for students and student voice, as evidenced in his scholarly work in this area. His work in the school extended to negotiated pedagogy and curriculum with students and *students as researchers*. Anecdotally, he knows this has made a difference in the lives of his students.

In their post-IDEAS school contexts, they:

- were not able to influence as teacher leaders and work with administrators
- attempted to encourage student voice through a number of avenues, including negotiated pedagogy (Fred), however administrative support was not forthcoming
- became *battle weary* and retreated to their classrooms

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**Element 5: Translate ideas into sustainable systems of action by**

- **working with the principal, administrators and other teachers to manage projects that heighten alignment between the school's vision, values, pedagogical practices and professional learning activities**
- **building alliances and nurturing external networks of support**

In their post-IDEAS school contexts, Fred and Angela were:

- not able to work with the principal on alignment of vision and pedagogical practices, as the principal did not support the process and therefore it was not sustained
- not involved in alliances and external networks that had been built as they were not supported by their principals, for example, Fred's work with student voice and his networks with researchers and other schools in the United Kingdom. These had potential to become vital external networks and a capacity building resource for his school, but instead, this work was shut down by his principal while he was overseas on the scholarship.

**Element 6: Nurture a culture of success by**

- **acting on opportunities to emphasise accomplishments and high expectations**
- **encouraging collective responsibility in addressing schoolwide challenges**
- **encouraging self-respect and confidence in students' communities**

These two passionate teacher leaders have been warriors for their respective communities. They:

- were teacher leaders who saw value in what was created at their schools and did not want to see the loss of culture – they became champions for their cause
- confronted barriers in their school cultures, including the principal
- fought on for some time when their principals chose to close down the capacity building work that was achieved
- struggled and became *battle-scarred* and weary, as without the support of the principal, it became an impossible task. Angela *retreated* to the classroom and Fred took extended leave to recover from his battle scars.

### 6.2.4.1    The Battle-Scarred Warriors: Final Analysis

Throughout the IDEAS project, both Fred and Angela enacted all the elements on *The Teachers as Leaders Framework*. They felt empowered as teacher leaders through mutualistic relationships with others and worked to facilitate school-wide processes of improvement.

Conversely, their experience since IDEAS has left them feeling disempowered. Feeling professionally isolated, they retreated to their classrooms. Their level of frustration indicated that they still have a strong image of themselves as leaders, and as represented by their metaphors and beliefs about leadership – the belief in mutualistic relationships and parallel leadership, with the fostering of teacher leadership in particular. Angela's view of herself as a leader is a global, systemic view that spirals outwards, while Fred's currently represents his disillusionment as one of several dead trees in a stagnant billabong. Interestingly in the image he presented, he is not a solo tree. While he feels personally and professionally isolated, he is standing with other dead trees, perhaps highlighting that he is not alone in feeling this way.

Elements one, three and six of the framework relate to the *aspirational* functions of teachers as leaders. While restricted at the school-wide level, Fred and Angela were still able to enact each of these aspects within their own sphere of influence. They have been able to:

- convey convictions about a better world and advocate for students in their own classrooms (element one);
- strive for pedagogical excellence to refine their own gifts by engaging with further study (element three);
- nurture a culture of success by talking with passion about what they have achieved, yet still holding hope for their future aspirations, once they have recovered from their battle (element six).

Elements two, four and five relate to their capacity to perform as teacher leaders in the school-wide context – these situational, or contextual, elements impact on the functions of the teacher leader. Fred and Angela were generally not able to enact these teacher leader capacities in their schools:

- Facilitate communities of learning, for example, through a shared school-wide approach to pedagogical processes; contextual professional learning; synthesising new ideas out of colleagues' professional discourse – both Angela and Fred had begun these processes during IDEAS, but were not able to continue once their support mechanisms were lost (element two).
- Confront barriers in the school's culture to, for example, work with administrators to find solutions to issues of equity, fairness and justice; encouraging student *voice* – student voice was not encouraged, particularly in Fred's case where his project was closed down, while Angela was not able to work with the principal once the top-down approach to leadership returned to the school (element four).
- Translate ideas into sustainable systems of action by, for example, working with the principal, administrators and teachers to heighten alignment between the school's vision, values and pedagogical practices; building alliances and

external networks of support, which Fred had begun to do with his student voice scholarship, however this was discontinued (element five).

In both teacher leader scenarios, the context was dominated by a top-down bureaucratic model of leadership. Mutualistic teacher leader/principal relationships and support from principals was lacking. Teacher leadership was not valued and therefore not resourced. External networks were not encouraged. Fred's and Angela's capacity as teacher leaders was not utilised to effect in their school contexts, and there was no opportunity to *grow* their teacher leadership further. Therefore, they were an untapped potentially powerful human resource for their respective organisations.

The power of these Warrior teacher leaders is their high level of self-efficacy and aspirational nature, indicated by their individual fulfilment of the aspirational elements on the Framework. They have already experienced self-actualisation as teacher leaders in an IDEAS context. Like the Culture Guardians, they were keen to continue the work that they had been part of within their respective school contexts. The difference in this category was that the level of principal support was not effective in wanting to invest the time or resources in continuing with the culture building work, or in wanting to grow the capacity of teacher leaders within their schools. As cautioned by Gronn (2000), one should not interpret the "absence of immediate causal effects [as the] absence of influence or leadership" (p. 331). The Warriors experienced a level of disappointment at not seeing the long-term effects of their leadership actions when their work was discontinued by their principals.

If they can find their niche and strength of spirit, the Battle-Scarred Warriors will rise again from the battle field. In the face of adversity, they still have a strong sense of who they are as leaders and who they still want to be. They still advocate for element one on the Framework by *conveying convictions about a better world* and seek to further their own professional learning (element three). Fred in particular still has aspirations to fulfil his dream for beginning a Doctor of Philosophy researching the *student voice* field. Once their scars have healed, perhaps these teacher leaders could fulfil a dream and become Dream Believers, too.

### 6.2.5  The Realists

> *A good general not only sees the way to victory; he also knows when victory is impossible.*
> – Polybius, Greek Historian, c.200BC-c.118BC (2012)

The *Realists* are the disconnected teacher leaders who know they cannot influence organisation-wide processes as they used to, yet they have accepted this and made choices to work within those confines. They know they have particular capacities as teacher leaders that are not being utilised and therefore expressed a lack of fulfilment in their respective roles. Additionally, they are not aligned with top-down models of leadership prevalent in their current organisational contexts. The Realists are, however, working within their own sphere of influence in small ways in their respective departments.

Karl, Shelley and Eva are The Realist teacher leaders – there are several features common to each of their narratives. First, for various personal reasons and the fact that they have some teacher leader capacity in their current context, albeit limited, they have made a choice to stay. Second, they have accepted that in the context they

are working in and acknowledge they do not have the capacity to influence organisation-wide as they used to. While they have an ability to influence others, it can only occur in their sphere of influence within their individual departments or areas. Third, they value their self-efficacy, values and beliefs highly and are not willing to compromise these by becoming *aligned identities* (Sachs, 2003a, 2003b) – top-down systemic leadership is filtered as these teacher leaders work with collaborative processes for leadership and improvement within their respective departments.

They have been awakened as teacher leaders through the IDEAS project, as have the other teacher leaders in this study. Because of this awakening, they know there is a better way of doing things in their current context, yet the systemic restrictions are a source of frustration for these teacher leaders. They appear to be hunting for something better – they either do not have, or have not found, their own dream. While they are outward looking, they are trapped because they are reasonably comfortable. They may not agree with what is going on, but there is a level of risk in stepping out from the security of their current positions. By choice, whether through personal circumstances or other reasons, they have decided to stay. It appears that they have become *self-prisoners* of the system. They are talented teacher leaders, but are not being utilised to effect within their current systemic contexts.

The Realists and the Battle-Scarred Warriors have both chosen to remain in their current contexts and both groups share similar frustrations with the bureaucratic nature of their organisational contexts. Where they differ somewhat is that the Warriors were not accepting of the top-down bureaucratic structures and continued to battle these structures in an attempt to change things. One heroic soldier fighting a battle becomes a burnt out and battle weary soldier. The Realists however, have accepted that they could not influence within the whole organisation as they used to, particularly not as individuals, and have worked within their own sphere of influence to make a difference where possible.

Karl's, Shelley's and Eva's teacher leader capacity in the post-IDEAS context is unpacked and mapped to *The Teachers as Leaders Framework* (Table 6.5), followed by an analysis of the teacher leader capacities and the features of context that have enabled them to flourish once their sleeping giant has been awakened. As per the Warriors, the dual nature of their current situation is demonstrated by (a) what they would aspire to be as teacher leaders and (b) the situational elements, that is, what they were able to demonstrate in their current contexts, as mapped on *The Teachers as Leaders Framework.*

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**Key** (Table 6.5): **Aspirational and Situational elements of the Framework**

**Aspirational:**

🔵 What teacher leaders aspire to be/do, despite the context – blue font

**Situational**:

🟢 Enabling teacher leader capacities in their current context – green font

🟠 Restrictions placed on teacher leader capacity in their current context – orange font

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Table 6.5

*The 'Realist' Teacher Leaders Mapped to The Teachers as Leaders Framework*

| Teacher leaders … | The Realist teacher leaders … |
|---|---|
| Element 1: Convey convictions about a better world by<br><br>• articulating a positive future for all students<br>• contributing to an image of teaching as a profession that makes a difference | Eva, Shelley and Karl are the Realist or *disconnected* teacher leaders.<br><br>Eva and Shelley in their system roles and Karl in his Head of Department role aspire to make a positive difference to the profession. They:<br><br>• have realised their potential and know they have more to offer in terms of their teacher leader capacity and contribution to building the capacity of their profession<br>• are passionate and talented teachers who want to be able to connect with other schools and other teachers to network and share idea<br>• are not able to realise or further their individual potential and thus fulfil their teacher leader capacities in their current workplace<br>• feel trapped or imprisoned in their current roles because of the restrictions placed on them. Top-down approaches to leadership and no real voice in decision making and school-wide or system-wide processes is professionally unrewarding for a group of teachers that have been used to an inclusive, collaborative, shared approach to leadership. |
| Element 2: Facilitate communities of learning by<br><br>• encouraging a shared, schoolwide approach to core pedagogical processes<br>• approaching professional learning as consciousness-raising about complex issues<br>• synthesising new ideas out of colleagues' professional discourse and reflective activities | Eva, Shelley and Karl:<br><br>• facilitate communities of learning with their *sphere of influence* and within their respective roles in their departments<br>• ensure that professional learning is at the forefront of their agenda: Karl ensures that professional sharing and reflective practice is used within his department; Eva works with graduate teachers to influence their professional learning in positive ways; and Shelley ensures her team is engaged in principles of practice that reflect their shared way of working<br>• feel they have the capabilities to work with these processes more broadly, but are restricted to the facilitation and professional discourse of the small groups within their work areas, therefore limiting the capacity that can be built<br>• would like to promote this type of facilitation as a school-wide and system-wide shared approach to professional practice to build capacity on a larger scale |

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Element 3: Strive for pedagogical excellence by

- showing genuine interest in students' needs and well-being
- continuously developing and refining personal teaching gifts and talents
- seeking deep understanding of significant pedagogical practices

Shelley and Eva, in their systemic roles:

- observe a *disconnect* with the system and the real needs of teachers. It is a source of frustration for them that they would like to be *out and about* and working in schools, working with and connecting with teachers to develop deep shared understanding of pedagogical practices – professional learning that is contextualised
- have restrictions placed on their capabilities to build capacity for contextualised professional learning, due to their respective systemic agendas

Karl's experience is a source of frustration:

- The authentic school-wide approach is no longer the *way* within his school, or within the system – while his experience provided him with insights into a better way of doing things, organisational structures prevent him from having a voice.
- He still uses a professional learning community approach in his department to refine pedagogical practice, however this is not practised school-wide.

Element 4: Confront barriers in the school's culture and structures by

- standing up for children, especially disadvantaged and marginalised individuals and groups
- working with administrators to find solutions to issues of equity, fairness and justice
- encouraging student "voice" in ways that are sensitive to students' developmental stages and circumstances

Shelley, Eva and Karl:

- are all in *management* roles rather than leadership roles, having particular functions they need to fulfil and particular targets or capabilities that need to be met
- do not appear to have a role in leading or working with administrators to *vision* for the future
- have been restricted on this element of the Framework.

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Element 5: Translate ideas into sustainable systems of action by

- working with the principal, administrators and other teachers to manage projects that heighten alignment between the school's vision, values, pedagogical practices and professional learning activities
- building alliances and nurturing external networks of support

There is little or no opportunity for Karl, Eva or Shelley:

- to work with administrators on a vision for the future
- translate the vision into action
- build external networks
- work on alignment across the school as a parallel leader. Karl is frustrated by this, as a former facilitator of the IDEAS project at this school under a different administrative team, he now appears disconnected under the current team where a top-down approach to leadership prevails.

Shelley and Eva cited a lack of alignment between the vision of systems and schools and would like to see *teacher voice* given due consideration as part of a targeted capacity building agenda. Shelley in particular cited that systems need to have more conversations with teachers.

Element 6: Nurture a culture of success by

- acting on opportunities to emphasise accomplishments and high expectations
- encouraging collective responsibility in addressing schoolwide challenges
- encouraging self-respect and confidence in students' communities

While Shelley, Eva and Karl have some management responsibilities in their respective roles, there is very little opportunity to enact leadership. They:

- have no opportunity to address *school-wide* challenges
- feel trapped or imprisoned and are working within the restrictions of a system or a school where a top-down model of leadership prevails
- feel that while they working within their sphere of influence, they have lost the power to influence more broadly
- feel a sense of frustration at the level of bureaucracy either within the system or school within which they operate
- no longer feel challenged or inspired as teacher leaders within their contexts
- appear disconnected and would possibly look for other opportunities, however, there is a level of risk involved in looking at this as an option
- Can, however, encourage a culture of respect and confidence in their own small departments or teams within the professional learning community approach to sharing and celebrating success.

### 6.2.5.1    The Realists: Final analysis.

Despite being enabled as teacher leaders during the IDEAS project, Karl, Shelley and Eva are finding their post-IDEAS experience unrewarding. While they may have experienced a certain level of satisfaction in the jobs, this plateaued very quickly as their skill level and capacity outgrew the context. These teacher leaders were used to high level facilitation of learning communities and synthesising of complex ideas. They were used to working with administrators to find solutions to whole school improvement. They were also used to networking with other like-minded individuals, both internal and external to their school to share practice, critique their work and find solutions in a safe and supportive environment. They are now bored and feel trapped. If they step outside the known, it is uncertain what opportunities will be out there. So, they remain where they are, disconnected.

Their metaphors reflect their level of disconnect with Karl drawing on Marx's philosophy to reflect his intellectual *revolutionary* dilemma and Shelley feeling like she is in a whirlwind that is waxing and waning and taking her with it. Eva could see herself standing on a hill with others around her, reflective of her views on parallel leadership, but realising that this journey could not be achieved alone.

Like the Warrior teacher leaders, there are some elements of *The Teachers as Leaders Framework* that have been achievable in their current context, while others were not. Elements one, three and six of the Framework relate to the *aspirational* functions of teachers as leaders. While restricted at the school-wide level, like the Warriors, Karl, Shelley and Eva were still able to enact each of these aspects within their own sphere of influence. They have been:

- aspirational in their contribution to the profession in their own sphere of influence by working with their teams to advocate for the profession, but not in a broader sense, for example, school-wide or out into the system – Shelley highlighted in her system role the need to be able to network and connect with the real needs of teachers (element one);
- working with their teams to enhance pedagogical practice by sharing and refining their work through reflective practice – Karl's professional learning team, Shelley's principles of practice for her work group and Eva's focus on reflective professional learning for graduates are all examples of this (element three); and
- nurturing cultures of success by sharing and celebrating successes within their small teams, and encouraging collective responsibility to address their challenges, however not at a school-wide level – Karl, Shelley and Eva all encouraged ownership and voice in the collaborative approach used in their work groups (element six).

Elements two, four and five relate to their capacity to perform as teacher leaders in a school-wide context – the situational, or contextual, impacts. For Karl, Shelley and Eva, there were restrictions on their capacity to enact a number of these elements on the Framework. While they were in differing contexts, with Karl in a school and Shelley and Eva in systemic roles, there are particular elements that can be performed school-wide or organisation-wide, providing the organisational structure allows for that capacity building to occur. The following areas presented a challenge:

- Communities of learning only facilitated within their own sphere of influence, but not at the school-wide or system-wide level (element two).
- Lack of opportunity to work with administrators to effect solutions to confront barriers in the culture of the organisation (element four).
- Lack of alignment between schools/system with no opportunities to work on projects or to strengthen external networks to heighten alignment (element five).

As with the Warriors, top-down leadership structures limited opportunities for engagement in school-wide or system-wide processes for the Realist teacher leaders. There is potential in these three teacher leaders for a much greater contribution to building the capacity of the organisation – a potential that is currently underutilised.

## 6.3    Establishing the New Image of the Teacher Leader

The narratives of the *empowered* teacher leaders highlighted particular contextual factors that contribute to sustaining teacher leader capacity which will be unpacked in the next section. Yet, due to their engagement as teacher leaders in a whole school improvement experience, there are also features that all teacher leader participants have in common.

Regardless of their current contexts, they all had a high level of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986, 1997), a clear view of themselves as leaders (Dawson, 2010) and are all driven by an aspirational view to contribute to an image of their profession that will make a difference (Crowther et al., 2009). There are certain things they do that are aspirational as they go about their daily work, as identified in the mapping of each category on *The Teachers as Leaders Framework*. They are all advocates (Crowther et al., 2011) for the profession and driven by a strong moral purpose (Bandura, 2001) in wanting to do the best for students.

They believe that whole school improvement is a collective effort – one individual alone cannot make a difference, but collectively they can. When the context allows, they engage collectively in the creation of new meaning using collective intelligence processes (Conway, 2008, 2009), such as professional conversations. The collective effort is made up of particular skills, attributes and capabilities that they all bring – it is the unique blend of all of their talents that ensures the *right team* (Collins, 2001) is in place to implement change processes. They also believe that leadership is a role that is shared at all levels of the organisation through distributed or parallel models of leadership (Crowther, 2010; Crowther et al., 2009), and where teachers are valued as leaders. Mutualistic teacher leader/principal relationships are established with the right team on board, where mutual trust and respect are prevalent. Additionally, the collective effort does not reside within the four walls of the classroom, but extends to networks within and beyond the school. These teacher leaders were involved in networking (Crowther et al., 2011; Muijs et al., 2010), both internal and external to the school, to share and engage in organisational self-critique. This contributed to building the professional capacity of themselves and the school community as a whole to generate new pedagogical knowledge for improved student learning outcomes.

Having the particular skills and capabilities to act, does not guarantee they had the capacity to be enacted within a given context. While all teacher leaders in this study

had the capabilities to act, not all were in a context where they had the capacity or agency (D. Frost, 2000, 2006) to act. Some were in a school where their principal did not support them and thus the organisational structure was not supportive of teacher leadership – they had no teacher leader agency. This will be discussed later in looking at the importance of context. Additionally, for each teacher leader the work had to be meaningful (Chalofsky, 2003; Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009) to fulfil the particular images they had of themselves as leaders.

### 6.3.1 Mutualistic relationships.

Due to their experiences in the IDEAS project for whole school improvement, the teacher leaders have experienced the teacher/principal relational change (Dawson, 2010) that comes with the transition from teacher to teacher leader. Their IDEAS experiences have contributed and influenced strongly their views of leadership, where teacher leaders and principals engage in collective action involving mutual respect and allowance for individual expression (Andrews & Crowther, 2003).

Mutualistic teacher leader/principal relationships in this study are defined by mutual trust, respect and belief in each other as professionals. Teacher leaders and administrators worked together to develop shared understandings for an aligned future. Teacher leaders relied on their principals to create environments for the enactment of teacher leader agency and principals relied on teacher leaders as part of the collective effort in creating and sustaining change.

As they have experienced facilitating school-wide change workshops, these teacher leaders are expert designers and facilitators of professional learning, contextualising the learning to the needs of their school and their unique schoolwide pedagogical frameworks. Culture Guardians Laura and Jenny have principals that have created the conditions that make it attractive for them to remain at their respective schools and grow their teacher leader capacity. The principals not only value Laura's and Jenny's contributions to building and sustaining the capacity of the school, but realise these teacher leaders are mutually beneficial to the success of their journeys as principals.

### 6.3.2 Expert networkers.

Additionally, these teachers see the importance of reaching out beyond the borders of the classroom and the school to connect with others to share and refine their work in the creation of new knowledge – they realise the value and contribution of networking to professional capacity building. They are keen advocates for their profession, have developed skills as expert networkers and engage in organisational self-critique of their work (Crowther et al., 2011). They engage with each other at the school level to build a professional learning community and use these skills to network with others beyond the school. Culture Guardian, Laura, is one example of this. She utilises her external networks in the Arts area to build professional capacity external and internal to the school. Where the opportunities to network and utilise the new professional learning and knowledge are denied, professional capacity is lost to the individual, to the school, and to the wider organisation, as was the case for Battle-Scarred Warrior, Fred.

### 6.3.3 Teacher leader agency.

As part of their IDEAS experience, all teacher leaders in this study were teacher leader agents for whole school improvement throughout the IDEAS project and as such, had teacher leader agency (D. Frost, 2000, 2006) to fulfil their potential. They were engaged in a process that empowered them to act.

Through their agency, the teacher leaders in this study demonstrated a type of leadership where they had the power to influence others within and beyond their school via their internal and external networks, while simultaneously using the networks as an influential part of their organisational self-reflection and critique processes (Crowther et al., 2011). The Culture Guardians were still able to do this in their post-IDEAS contexts, so they felt successful and valued at work and supported to achieve their potential. They have been able to continue and sustain their work in their post-IDEAS contexts to experience work that is truly meaningful for them.

The Dream Believers, Culture Guardians and Strategic Career Movers are all examples of teacher leader groups where human agency was apparent in all three forms – *personal*, involving actions of self to produce the desired results, *proxy*, an agency involving trust of others to produce the desired outcomes and *collective*, a socially interdependent form of agency (Bandura, 2001). The Culture Guardians were agents within their current school contexts and have agency to be guardians of the culture. Strategic Career Mover, Lucy, is a teacher leader agent in her new context and has agency to make a difference in that context through opportunities to mentor and build the professional capacity of the school.

The Dream Believers' lack of agency in collective and proxy forms (Bandura, 2001) was disheartening for them in the school context. They pursued a dream that was driven by a higher moral purpose or calling and went beyond the self-actualisation (Maslow, 1971) they experienced in their former IDEAS school context. The Dream Believers are teacher leaders who have transcended self-actualisation to follow their own dream when agency was not achievable in the school context.

The Realists may have had some direct personal agency in their work in their sphere of influence, but collective agency at the organisational level was not apparent. This was a source of frustration for them, as they had been used to facilitating communities of learning at the organisational level. The Battle-Scarred Warriors appeared to have no personal, proxy or collective agency (Bandura, 2001), or an ability to make a difference (D. Frost, 2006) in a collective, collaborative manner in their school-wide contexts, which resulted in them retreating to the classroom or leaving.

When teacher leaders experienced collective agency (Bandura, 2001) within their respective schools, they experienced the power to use their teacher leader knowledge and skills to engage collectively and contribute to school-wide improvement initiatives. Where teacher leaders engaged as collective agents and engaged in collaborative relationships with administrative leaders to facilitate communities of learning; to develop a shared vision for learning; and used collective intelligence processes (Conway, 2008, 2009) in the creation of new knowledge in the form of their Schoolwide Pedagogy, they reported feeling motivated and valued as professionals within the school. Their work was meaningful for them and they could see its contribution to something bigger – the capacity building of the organisation.

In this context, this was the secret to sustaining teacher leader capacity. It seems crucial therefore, that potential individual teacher leaders within schools are empowered with the provision of a suitable context for enactment of teacher leader agency – a context that involved a shared purpose and leadership of a principal that enabled these conditions. This in turn raises their capabilities to engage in organisational renewal so that their contribution to the collective effort is more likely, as was the case with the Strategic Career Movers.

### 6.3.4   Strong moral purpose.

Teacher leaders in this study were also driven by a strong moral purpose, defined by a willingness and commitment to make a difference to the lives of their students (Andrews et al., 2012). This included advocacy for students and empowering them in their learning, collaboration in leadership, and mutual working relationships with others – it gave them a sense of community, providing they had authority or agency to engage collectively.

Their strong moral purpose manifested as moral agency (Bandura, 2001). Enabling teacher leaders through a collective form of *self-directedness* (Bandura, 2001) to participate in the formulation of the school's vision, driven by shared values, beliefs and moral purpose, provided the context for expression of moral agency.

When teacher leaders have experienced that empowerment, and when the broad organisation-wide enactment of moral agency through shared purpose and shared leadership is then removed from the equation, they felt disempowered and without purpose. The Battle-Scarred Warriors are examples of having their moral agency removed. In Fred's example, his deeply held convictions were about student voice and learning – he was a leader in this area within his school. With the discontinuation of this work while he was overseas on a scholarship, it was a clear message that his work in the school was no longer valued, thus impacting on his capacity to act in this area. The context for enactment of his moral agency in a collaborative environment had altered and he felt defeated.

### 6.3.5   High self-efficacy.

In this study, high self-efficacy (Bandura, 2001) was evidenced in each of the teacher leader narratives in terms of their view of themselves as leaders. Where teacher leaders felt their contribution was valued, they also had the capacity to be highly motivated in their individual workplaces. Within these supportive contexts, they had a voice and agency (D. Frost, 2006, 2008) to be engaged in the school's renewal process and felt they were engaged in meaningful work (Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009). Where they were not engaged in school-wide attempts for reform and did not have a voice, they did not feel valued. Their self-efficacy was still high as they believed they had capabilities and images of themselves as teacher leaders, but they could not enact their capabilities within their respective contexts – hence the source of frustration for the Warriors and to some extent, the Realists, when these expectations were not met in their workplaces.

### 6.3.6 The pursuit of meaningful work.

In developing as a teacher leader, the participants in this study had all experienced meaningful work, a sense of connectedness, the joy of doing something worthwhile, and the ability to have an impact on the organisation (Chalofsky, 2003, 2010; Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009) in their IDEAS contexts. Additionally, there was a level of anticipation in being able to continue their meaningful work with their newfound teacher leader capacities once their sleeping giant had been awakened; and to continue to grow their capacity as an empowered teacher leader professional. Each had a view about their competencies as leaders, however each teacher leader was not able to enact these competencies in their current contexts.

There are particular competencies and aspirational pursuits that require a raising of the standards as knowledges and competencies are expanded (Bandura, 2001). Each teacher leader in this study has acquired competencies in leading and facilitating communities of learning and in networking, internal and external to the school. This has led to a raising of the standards about how they view themselves as leaders and what they expect to be able to do in their workplace. They now have particular experiences, expectations and views about:

> (1) growing their own capacity as teacher leaders;
> (2) how they participate in the creation of, connect with, or are aligned with, the values of the workplace or organisation; and
> (3) knowledge of how to grow the capacity of the organisation.

This view of themselves can lead to disconnection from the workplace when the level of expectation and experience is not met and they are not professionally fulfilled as teacher leaders. The Realists, for example, quickly outgrew their contexts and became disenfranchised when they were not able to work to their full potential as leaders or sustain their image of themselves as teacher leaders. They felt disempowered when they were not able to experience meaningful work (Chalofsky, 2003, 2010; Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009) and grow their potential further. They were not able to grow the capacity of the organisation to the extent that they knew how and thus were limited in growing their own teacher leader capacity. They felt a loss of joy in contributing to something worthwhile (Chalofsky, 2010) and resultant lack of motivation to pursue anything new.

The Culture Guardians, Strategic Career Movers and Dream Believers are examples of teacher leaders who can express "meaning and purpose of their lives" (Chalofsky, 2010, p. 22) through their work in the ability to fulfil their capacity as teacher leaders, being able to connect with the values of the workplace and in their contribution to growing the capacity of the organisation in a "self-directed space [where they are] continuously challenged, creative and learning" (p. 22) – thus they were the empowered teacher leaders. They experienced meaningful work and felt the joy of contributing to something worthwhile (Chalofsky, 2010).

## 6.4 A New Image of the Teacher Leader

There is clear evidence that the key to sustainability of teacher leadership in school communities involves a number of key themes that have emerged throughout this chapter. These themes provide insight into a new image of the teacher leader

enabling enhancement of personal teacher leader capacity and thus, a valuable contribution to organisational capacity. The key themes:

1. The concept of personal teacher leader agency, where individual teacher leaders, schools and communities having the capacity to make choices, act on their decisions and thus have an influence on how they go about their work (D. Frost, 2006). Exploration of moral purpose and the capacity for moral agency (Bandura, 2001) is vital for teacher leaders to be empowered to pursue avenues of knowledge based on deeply held convictions about learners and learning, for example, student voice, thus providing a context for meaningful work. The role of the principal here is crucial as an enabler of leadership within any given context.

2. Collective agency (Bandura, 2001) and professional agency (Pyhältö et al., 2014) are collaborative and relational dynamics that involve the intentional management of new learning in professional learning communities. Again, the role of the principal is instrumental in prioritising and resourcing the space for collaborative work to occur.

3. Collective intelligence involves teacher leaders and administrative leaders discovering school-wide solutions through collective intelligence processes and the creation of new knowledge (Conway, 2008, 2009). The *3-dimensional pedagogy model* is one such example of a model for continuous knowledge creation for the 21st teaching professional (Andrews & Crowther, 2003, 2006).

### 6.4.1  Towards a model for teacher leader capacity building.

*Capacity building is the intentional process of mobilising a school's resources in order to enhance priority outcomes – and sustain those improvements.* (Andrews et al., 2009)

The teacher leaders in this study have facilitated the development of communities of learning. They have been involved in high level intellectual pursuits in the creation of new knowledge in the formation of the unique Schoolwide Pedagogy. IDEAS processes of collective intelligence were utilised, requiring skilful use of professional conversations. They have been driven by a moral purpose and obligation to advocate for students within and beyond the school. Their driving belief is that action is a collaborative effort.

Having experienced an empowering capacity building process, these teacher leaders "accept empowerment as their right" (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 30), which explains the frustrations experienced by The Battle-Scarred Warriors, The Dream Believers and to some extent, The Realists, when they no longer feel empowered to fulfil their potential. While they still had the capacity to act, they no longer had the power to act – they no longer had agency to act within their organisational contexts.

Clear messages about developing teacher leader capacity and sustaining that capacity in an organisational context have emerged from this research. Three dimensions have emerged: the *personal dimension*, which is grounded in one's talents and capabilities and what one thinks, believes and feels about oneself as a teacher leader; the *collaborative dimension*, which is grounded in a belief that capacity building is a socially interdependent and collaborative effort; and the *collective intelligence dimension*, which provides a focus on collective engagement in the pursuit of

organisation-wide solutions for the evolvement of new pedagogical knowledge. All three dimensions provide teachers with professional agency or the capacity or power to act, and all three dimensions are mutually beneficial and interdependent in the development of social and human capital. They are represented in the model that has emerged from this study for sustainability of teacher leadership in schools and education systems, *The Teacher Leader Capacity Building Model*, in the final chapter of this study, Chapter Eight.

The organisational context that enabled the empowerment of the teacher leaders was one that was focused on the skills and capabilities of its people to enable fulfilment of shared organisation goals. This must be given due consideration, in answer to Research Question Two in the next chapter, Chapter Seven, before final presentation of the capacity building model in Chapter Eight.

# 7. CHAPTER SEVEN: Situational or Aspirational: Why the Context is Important – Research Question Two

## 7.1　Introduction

In mapping each teacher leader category to *The Teachers as Leaders Framework* (Crowther et al., 2009) in Chapter Six, it is apparent that there are some elements of *The Framework* that teacher leaders in this study have been enabled to do and others they have not, dependent on the context. What has emerged therefore, is an understanding of *context*, which is the focus of this chapter, in response to Research Question Two:

*Research Question 2*　　　What emerge as supportive contexts for teacher leaders?

*THE CONTEXT*

Elements one, three and six of *The Framework* are relatively aspirational in nature and are predominantly the independently *enabling* elements of teacher leadership.

- Element one: Convey convictions about a better world …
- Element three: Strive for pedagogical excellence …
- Element six: Nurture a culture of success …

Many aspects of each of these three elements can be enacted independently or with some degree of teacher leader control or autonomy, regardless of the context within which the individual teacher leader operates.

The remaining three elements are predominantly *situational* elements and are highly reliant on the context – a context that provides the capacity for teachers as leaders to work collaboratively with administrators on school-wide alignment solutions:

- Element two: Facilitate communities of learning by (for example, encouraging a shared, schoolwide approach to core pedagogical processes);
- Element four: Confront barriers in the school's culture and structures by (for example, working with administrators to find solutions to issues of equity, fairness and justice …);
- Element five: Translate ideas into sustainable systems of action by (for example, working with the principal, administrators and other teachers to manage projects that heighten alignment between the school's vision, values, pedagogical practices and professional learning activities …).

All of these elements are dependent on the actions of the administration of the school or system:

1. Planning for the development of teacher leader capacity;
2. Having a process for establishing trusting relationships whereby participants feel safe and supported, for example, through professional conversations;
3. Promoting a schoolwide approach to shared professional learning; and
4. Providing opportunities for teacher leaders to work with administrators on solutions to heighten alignment of systems and processes within the school.

A human resource development view of the organisation appeared to predominate, enabling the individual to personally identify with the organisation's goals, values and purpose. In this light, the organisational culture, or the way things are done around here, acknowledges the aspirations of the individual participants as well as what the organisation stands for. Assumptions about people as self-directed, innovative and demonstrating initiative appeared to enable management systems to focus on cultivating leadership, in particular teacher leadership. This meant the contribution to overall organisational effectiveness was a shared effort. High levels of trust and risk presented a view of teaching as a mature profession, where members are enabled to self-manage change.

Where school-wide approaches to visioning and pedagogy were promoted and teacher leaders were engaged in problem solving with administrators, they had agency as teacher leaders and as such a voice within the school. They are the *empowered* teacher leaders – the Culture Guardians and the Strategic Career Movers are examples of this (Figure 7.1).

Where these systems were not in place, teacher leaders lost the capacity to influence the broader agenda as they had no agency to work with administrators on organisational alignment within the school or enhance their own professional learning. When administrator leadership behaviours assumed that people could not be trusted, required close supervision and formal direction, and increased accountability was enforced, the conditions for a more risk-averse profession emerged. Teacher leaders were not able to act, they lost confidence and trust was weakened, however their moral purpose appeared to be one of the main factors that sustained them. These *disempowered* teacher leaders are valuable untapped organisational resources that are currently being wasted. The Realists and the Battle-Scarred Warriors are examples (Figure 7.1).

There are also those who had a dream and when they could not fulfil their mission as teachers within their school contexts, they made a conscious decision that they were not going to let systemic roadblocks impede them from fulfilling their dream. They made a choice to leave and fulfil that dream – these are the Dream Believers (Figure 7.1). To do this, they moved outside the existing school context to empower themselves as teacher leaders – for them it was a case of self-empower or perish.
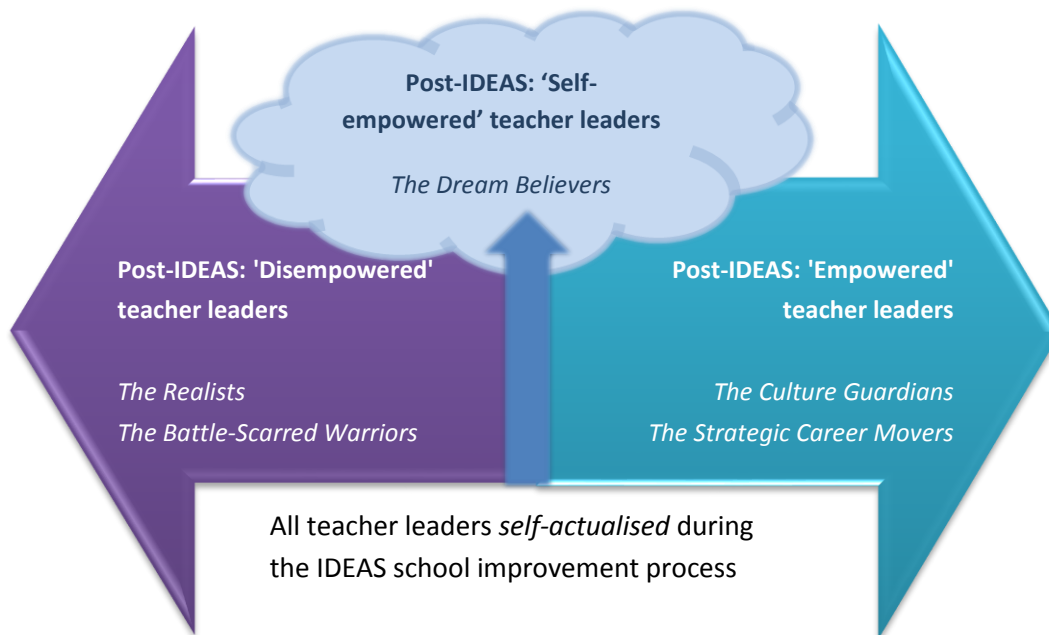
*Figure 7.1.* Establishing the Organisational Culture That Supports Sustainable Teacher Leader Capacity Development

The teacher leaders in this study all appear to have high levels of self-efficacy linked to their self-actualisation as teacher leaders in the IDEAS contexts. They had a strong belief in their capabilities as teacher leaders, despite the fact that enactment was sometimes impossible. In their current contexts, they managed to navigate through the roadblocks by employing one of three coping mechanisms:

1. Working within their sphere of influence;
2. Fighting the battle in pursuit of *the lost culture*; or
3. Creating their own conditions for enactment and fleeing the context in pursuit of their own dream.

These were the *disempowered* or the *self-empowered* teacher leaders. The *empowered* teacher leaders were enabled in mutually beneficial and trusting contexts, where they worked with administrators on solutions for school improvement and teacher professionalism was valued.

## 7.2 Establishing Supportive Organisational Contexts for Teacher Leadership

Each of the teacher leader categories in the *disempowered* and *empowered* groups had some common contextual features. Identifying the features of each context *type* will highlight some emerging contextual features that are supportive of sustainable teacher leader capacity development. These features have been summarised in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1

*Features of Contexts Towards Sustainable Teacher Leader Capacity Development*

| **Disempowered teacher leaders** | | **Empowered teacher leaders** |
|---|---|---|
| *The Realists*<br>*The Battle-Scarred Warriors* | *The Dream Believers* | *The Culture Guardians*<br>*The Strategic Career Movers* |
| o Top-down models of leadership<br>o Teacher/principal mutualistic relationships lacking/bureaucratic relationships prevail<br>o Low levels of trust – teacher professionalism not always valued<br>o *Weak* culture – lack of clear alignment; lack of shared vision and values in most cases<br>o Minimal forums for professional conversation, except when created in own *sphere of influence*<br>o Professional learning not contextualised – one size fits all predominates<br>o Networking not valued<br>o Teacher morale generally low; not inspired by their work<br>o Lack of principal and education system recognition for teacher leadership; teacher leader potential not realised<br>o Teachers do not feel safe to take risks – retreat to classrooms<br>o Sharing of ideas and resources not encouraged<br>o Individual teacher expertise not recognised. | The 'Dream Believers' escaped from 'disempowerment' and created their own context for 'empowerment'… together. The 'self-empowered' teacher leaders. | o Distributed or parallel leadership models<br>o Mutualistic relationships – teacher/principal<br>o Having the *right* people on the team<br>o High levels of trust and belief in professional capacity<br>o Clear alignment– everyone on the same page<br>o *Strong* culture – shared vision, values and purpose<br>o Structured forums for professional conversation<br>o Contextualised teacher professional learning valued<br>o Work with administrators on school-wide solutions to alignment<br>o Opportunities for networking – internal and external<br>o Teachers highly motivated and feel empowered<br>o Principal support and recognition of teacher leader capabilities<br>o Teachers feel safe to take risks – step out of comfort zone<br>o Sharing of resources and ideas planned for and celebrated<br>o Individual teacher expertise recognised and utilised to build professional capacity. |

In this study, I have observed from the data a particular and unique relationship between the teacher leader and principal in the *empowered* teacher leader categories – a mutualistic or mutually beneficial relationship. They both need each other – principals need teacher leaders to help build leadership density and capital in the school. They also trust their professionalism. Teacher leaders need the principal's support to provide the context for their empowerment in a safe and supportive environment – and therefore the relationship benefits both parties in the building of the school community.

The definition of *mutualistic relationship* in this context is a relationship built on trust and respect that allows for individual expression, the growth of each individual

within the relationship, that it meets his/her professional goals, while simultaneously building the intellectual, social and leadership capacity of the organisation. Similarly, D. Hargreaves (2001) highlights the importance of relational trust in establishing social capital:

> [T]he level of trust between people and the generation of norms of reciprocity (mutual favours) and collaboration … in a school rich in social capital, the high levels of trust generate strong networks and collaborative relations among members and stakeholders [which] strengthen intellectual capital. (p. 490)

The structural component of social capital is the capacity to sustain networks, which are generated through high levels of trust (D. Hargreaves, 2001). In this environment, a principal is committed to mobilising intellectual and social capital through the use of high leverage strategies (D. Hargreaves, 2001) which provide a space for teacher leadership. High levels of trust and risk present a view of teaching as a mature profession (Sachs, 2016) – a view of the profession that has:

> [T]he confidence to represent itself to others in ways that are trusted, valued and respected … members of the profession must establish trust among and between various stakeholders and constituencies and be prepared to take risks in shifting boundaries that can act as impediments to change. (p. 422)

Sachs (2016) reminds us of the effect the current performance culture and increased accountability has on creating conditions for a more risk-averse profession:

> When teachers' judgement and decision-making is questioned, it diminishes teachers' self-confidence, creativity and the moral purpose that sustain them in ambiguous and difficult situations. It also corrodes their ability to act with confidence and authority and weakens trust. (p. 423)

In a safe, supportive and trusting environment, and with an explicit focus on cultivating teacher leadership, teachers learnt about becoming a teacher leader (Dawson, 2011). They were enabled to work both autonomously and collaboratively with others (Bauman, 2015). This was particularly evident in the empowered teacher leaders category, where individual teacher expertise was recognised and utilised to build the professional capacity of the school.

### 7.2.1 Four contextual support factors.

It is evident from Table 7.1 and the *empowered* teacher leader column, there are four key contextual factors that contributed to sustainable teacher leader capacity development. These were features of the contexts for the teacher leader categories of the Culture Guardians and Strategic Career Movers – the teacher leader/principal mutualistic relationships factor, the organisational alignment factor, the professional learning factor, and the networking factor:

1. *The teacher leader/principal mutualistic relationships factor:*
   Teacher leaders and principals worked in mutualistic relationships where high levels of trust prevailed. Teacher voice was valued as processes of professional conversations were established so everyone had a voice. Principals identified teacher leader capabilities, encouraged and mentored growth and potential. They also had a strong belief in the capabilities of their teacher leaders and built capacity for teacher leadership through

environments that fostered mutual trust and respect. In return for their principal's support and trust, teacher leaders stepped up to the mark and realised their potential through mentoring provided within their respective contexts. They appreciated opportunities to contribute to the big picture of the school as valued professionals and felt safe and supported to take risks in developing their capacity as leaders in the school.

2. *The organisational alignment factor:* Both empowered teacher leader categories worked within contexts that featured a strong capacity building model. Parallel leadership was the prevalent leadership structure with a focus on developing teachers as leaders, thus increasing the leadership capacity of the school. A strong cultural DNA was observed in both teacher leader categories as everybody was on the same page. Everyone at these schools had been engaged in the developing of the vision, values and beliefs about learning and most importantly, there was a shared understanding about the prevalent leadership structure – distributed or parallel leadership. Staff felt empowered as they could contribute to the school's direction and teacher leaders felt empowered as they had a key role in designing the way forward. Alignment was also ensured through structured forums for professional conversation so that everyone had a voice – not just the loud or confident voices in the school. The principal played a key role in ensuring the right people were on the team to assist with capacity building across the school.

3. *The professional learning factor:* Teacher led contextual professional learning was part of the teacher leader role in designing the way forward. Shared beliefs about learning and teaching led to the development of a Schoolwide Pedagogy. Sustaining this required ongoing development and review of the professional learning requirements of staff. Sometimes this required inviting other experts into the school, while at other times, they drew on individual teacher expertise within the school – the key message was that they determined their unique contextual needs informed by their Schoolwide Pedagogy. The Culture Guardians were instrumental in sustaining what had been created at their schools by assisting and reviewing the professional learning needs on an ongoing basis.

4. *The networking factor:* Internal and external networking was identified as a crucial element in the feedback and refinement of the school's learning culture and in the creation of new knowledge in the form of their visions, values and Schoolwide Pedagogy. Shared understandings and development of the Schoolwide Pedagogy contributed to improved student learning. At the school level this meant networking internally and working together to mentor, share ideas and resources, and view demonstration lessons or lessons in other classes. Professional conversations and time for sharing were an important part of this approach. External networking provided for sharing of intellectual property at the district, interstate and in Laura's case, international level. This provided an outlet for further professional conversations and critique of their work, which in turn contributed to professional learning and building the professional culture of the school – and consequently, increasing the professional capital.

Of the five categories of teacher leaders that emerged from this study, only two categories, The Culture Guardians and The Strategic Career Movers, were enabled or

empowered to fulfil their teacher leader potential in their post-IDEAS contexts. The Realists and Warriors found themselves in disabling contexts with little or no capacity to lead, which left them feeling discontented and not able to fulfil their potential as teacher leaders. In the case of The Warriors, their teacher leader capacity was scaled back to such an extent they felt demoralised and retreated. The Dream Believers were also in a context that was not conducive to encouraging teacher leader capacity, however they chose to leave the system and create their own dream.

Three of the five categories of teacher leaders have not fulfilled their potential since IDEAS and are feeling constrained by the system and by their profession. These teacher leaders have not only lost the capacity to influence and lead, but these organisations have valuable and wasted resources that are choosing to leave. There is a certain strength of human spirit, belief in self as a leader and strong moral purpose in advocating for students that encouraged teacher leaders like the Warriors to fight the sustainable school improvement battle. These teacher leaders have experienced it, hence their passion and commitment and conversely, their despair when they see things not working – when systems are not aligned. Despite their best efforts, the context was not supportive, thus providing a segue to the final section of this chapter. What is the definition of a context that is supportive and would enable sustainable teacher leader capacity?

### 7.2.2   A definition of supportive contexts for organisational capacity building.

> **Context *n.*** the circumstances or facts that surround a particular situation, event etc.
> – Macquarie Dictionary (Butler, 2014)

Context is an elusive word, and quite often loosely associated with circumstances and facts of physical space and situation. The importance of context is generally espoused, yet there is a lack of clarity around a clear definition of this term. Etymologically, *context* is derived from the Latin *con*, meaning together, and *texere*, meaning to weave.

The participants' experience of context in this study demonstrated that physical context was largely irrelevant to growing teacher leader capacity. Even when they moved from one physical context to another, they continued to grow and learn as teacher leaders if their experience was supportive – Strategic Career Mover Lucy is an example of this. Conversely, if their experience was not supportive, they could not sustain an image of themselves as teacher leaders and they either chose to leave or retreat.

Taking the etymological derivation of the word *context* as meaning *together (we) weave*, it could be interpreted that context is contingent on what people build together and live through together in the weaving or creation of a culture. Teacher leaders in this study were part of a shared culture that created the conditions for an enabling realisation of themselves as teacher leaders. When they moved to a context where this image of themselves could not be sustained, because the way teacher leadership was conceptualised was different or non-existent, they were disempowered as teacher leaders. Several contextual factors were apparent in this study:

1. *Context is a lived experience* that people create for themselves in association with others – *together (we) weave*.
2. *Leadership influence had a temporal quality* – individual teacher leaders personally identified with an organisation's culture in a given context and continued to build relationships and develop the culture and become part of the saga of the organisation over time (Senge, 2006). Those involved in the work of leadership in school improvement processes exerted influence on organisational capacity over time. The immediate effect of these actions may not be obvious, but may be apparent after some time. This did not mean that leadership was not influential, but did mean that those looking for immediate effects may not see the benefits.
3. *Systems thinking* (Senge, 2006) was apparent in the mindset of the teacher leaders. They realised that their organisation was a place where they could create and change their own reality and had the leverage to do it. This mindset was not always apparent at the organisational level, where administrators were looking for immediate effects (Gronn, 2000) and support was lacking for teacher leadership.
4. A *human resource development view* of organisation (Owens, 2004) was evident in the principal's and organisation's assumptions about the way people work. Administrators had trust and confidence in teacher leaders and decision making was shared through parallel leadership structures. Further, mutualistic relationships predominated – there was reciprocity in the trust and confidence between principals and teacher leaders, as teacher leaders felt safe and supported in their work.
5. *Leadership constructions or reconstructions defined* – teacher leadership was clearly defined as an organisational construct and supported throughout the organisation by declaring a shared vision for leadership and through dedicated resourcing and mentoring.

The contextual support factors already defined in this study provide clear insights into developing a definition of supportive contexts for organisational capacity building – *organisational alignment, teacher leader-principal mutualistic relationships, professional learning,* and *networking*.

In arriving at this juncture, I propose the following definition of supportive contexts for sustainable teacher leader development:

> Context is an evolving, dynamic, socio-cultural lived experience that people create for themselves in association with others. In educational organisations, teacher leader capacity building occurs in contexts that provide the conditions for teacher leader engagement in *organisational alignment* practices, *teacher leader-principal mutualistic relationships*, *professional learning,* and *networking*.

## 7.3   A Final Word: Imaginings

This study has revealed that there are certain conditions where teacher leadership can flourish in an organisational context. As an outcome, a definition of context defined the following conditions for teacher leader engagement: organisational alignment practices; teacher leader-principal mutualistic relationships; professional learning and

networking. The definition provides some scope for *imaginings* as a segue into the final chapter.

Imagine if the energy and passion of the teacher leaders in this study could be harnessed by aligning the work of systems and schools to develop a shared understanding of leadership with a focus on building the capacity of teachers as leaders. Imagine if sustainability could be addressed through system-wide alignment across the multiple levels of culture (Fullan, 2005; Schein, 1996, 2004), with an organisation-wide *community* focus to improve student learning outcomes. Imagine if schools and teachers could have professional agency in their work in mutualistic relationships with systems. Imagine the power of systems and schools if all teachers could become Dream Believers, and unlike the Dream Believers of this study, were able to stay within the organisation to fulfil their moral purpose and dream! In Chapter Eight, the potential for organisational alignment is explored as a response to Research Question Three through the presentation of *The Teacher Leader Capacity Building Model* and a new metaphor for organisational research – *Leadership for Organisation as Community*.

# 8. CHAPTER EIGHT: Leadership for Organisation as *Community*: A New Metaphor Situating Teacher Leadership Within an Organisational Framework

> *For capacity building (for teacher leadership) to occur at the school and system level, it is clear that there must be alignment in thinking and a model for building teacher leader capacity across all levels of the education community. Leadership (for sustainability) is a capacity building process and fostering teacher leadership potential is everybody's business.* (Petersen, 2015)

## 8.1    Introduction

| Overarching Research Question | What understandings of teacher leadership emerge from the lived experiences of teacher leaders who have been through a process of whole school improvement? |
|---|---|

The purpose of this study was to reveal and interpret the lived experiences of teacher leaders who have been through a school improvement process that deliberately focused on developing the capacity for teacher leadership. As such, these teacher leaders have the capacity to influence cultural change processes in schools and education systems. The reality for a number of teacher leaders in this study was that having experienced this type of leadership, they felt professionally unfulfilled within their current contexts. They lost the power to influence beyond their classroom or immediate work context – they were the disempowered teacher leaders (see Chapter Seven). A number of features contributed to their disempowerment: the lack of opportunity to be innovative in creating networks for professional learning and pedagogical design; the prevalence of top-down bureaucratic structures; mandated professional development that is not contextually relevant; and instances of prescriptive pedagogy. Lack of teacher leader agency can have a significant impact on a teacher leader's ability to fulfil images of themselves as leaders.

These teacher leaders had learned particular skills and capabilities throughout the whole school improvement process and that potential is not utilised to effect within their current educational contexts. They are a wasted organisational resource. Conversely, the empowered teacher leader category (see Chapter Seven) highlighted contextual features that provided clear insights into how to bring teachers in and build the professional capacity of the school and the education system. These schools and systems recognised that each school was unique and that school improvement solutions must be localised to address their unique practice and performance within the local school community. A one size fits all approach would not allow individual schools to innovate, provide local solutions and improve their results. School improvement solutions must be localised to address the "identified problems of practice and performance" (Watterston & Caldwell, 2011, p. 650) within the local school community:

It is abundantly clear that the "one size fits all" approach to systemically controlling all schools will not move the nation's educational performance consistently forward. While we must share wisdom, knowledge and practice to improve school within a network, enabling school leaders to innovate and provide flexible strategic direction is essential to improvement at the local level and for the nation as a whole. (p. 650)

Similarly, Hopkins and colleagues (Hopkins, Stringfield, Harris, Stoll, & Mackay, 2014) found that there is a "delicate balance between individual initiative and school/system change, between internal and external resources and ideas, between pressure for accountability and support for change, and between independence and collaboration" (p. 275). While districts and education systems play a vital role in school improvement, there is a balance between accountability demands and support for change. Getting this balance right is the key to the successful alignment of school and system improvement. The role and style of leadership is fundamental to this process.

This chapter provides conclusions about the research problem for this study in response to Research Question Three – implications for schools and education systems:

1. Conclusions from the research, in the presentation of a new model for building teacher leader capacity and a new metaphor for the organisational literature; and
2. Implications and recommendations for practice for schools and education systems (Research Question Three).

This is followed at the conclusion of the chapter by recommendations for possible further research.

## 8.2   The Teacher Leader Capacity Building Model

The major contribution of this study to the literature on teacher leadership is a model for building and sustaining teacher leader capacity. The empowered teacher leaders developed their personal leadership capacity through learning to lead by leading. They did this in conjunction with contributing to building the capacity of the collaborative school-wide effort in a supportive environment. In turn, through their collaborative efforts they engaged with collective intelligence processes, resulting in a powerful contribution to new knowledge. Thus, the three dimensions of building teacher leader capacity (Figure 8.1; Table 8.1) that have emerged from this study include:

(1) *the personal dimension* – the individual teacher leader personal capacity that is grounded in one's educational motivation, values, beliefs and self-efficacy in the search for meaningful work (human capital);

(2) *the collaborative dimension* – the collective capacity that is necessary to drive sustainable cultural change and is established through networking, professional conversations processes and mutually beneficial respectful and trusting relationships (social capital); and

(3) *the collective intelligence dimension* – collective commitment to engagement with innovation, the creation of new pedagogical knowledge and evolvement through organisational self-critique; the attainment of

meaningful work that emerges from the collective capacity, or collective intelligence of the group (intellectual capital). The use of the term *evolvement* here suggests that this knowledge is not static, but may be in a state of continuously evolving, innovating and morphing as the dynamics of the group or organisation changes and new members come and go, adding value to the existing knowledge.

Each of these dimensions is essential to building the capacity of the teacher leader as a leader in the school's reform effort. Fostering teacher leadership potential has the power to improve the overall professional capacity of the school by empowering teacher leaders to build their personal professional selves in addition to working collaboratively on organisation-wide solutions for improvement to awaken the sleeping giant of teacher leadership (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009).

A focus on the personal dimension alone would only develop the talents of the individual teacher leader and not develop a coordinated approach to improving organisational capacity. A singular focus on the collaborative dimension neglects the development of the talents of the individual teacher leader and their contribution to the overall organisational capacity. Similarly, focusing on collective intelligence is not possible without due consideration of the development of the talents and capacity building of the individual teacher leader alongside a coordinated approach to the collaborative dimension. Each phase of this model needs to be developed fully to achieve overall teacher leader and organisational capacity for the greater good of any organisational community context.

How schools and systems can effectively implement sustainable leadership practice is an ongoing challenge. The problem remains with: (1) raising awareness about the power of teacher leadership as an organisational resource, which is the intent of this study; and (2) how systems and schools can find effective solutions for sustainable leadership practice. A shared system view of sustainable leadership practice that supports developing capacity for teacher leaders may be communicated through policy and action. *The Teacher Leader Capacity Building Model* provides a solution for implementing sustainable leadership practice.

Unpacking *The Teacher Leader Capacity Building Model* (Figure 8.1) and *The Teacher Leader Capacity Building Question Framework* (Table 8.1) will enable participants to engage in a practical exploration to reflect on and discuss the application of the three aspects of the model for their unique educational contexts.  In the spirit of the model, personal, collaborative and collective intelligence dimensions may be explored using cooperative learning strategies to reflect on the questions within the framework (Table 8.1) to engage teacher leaders and administrators in the process.
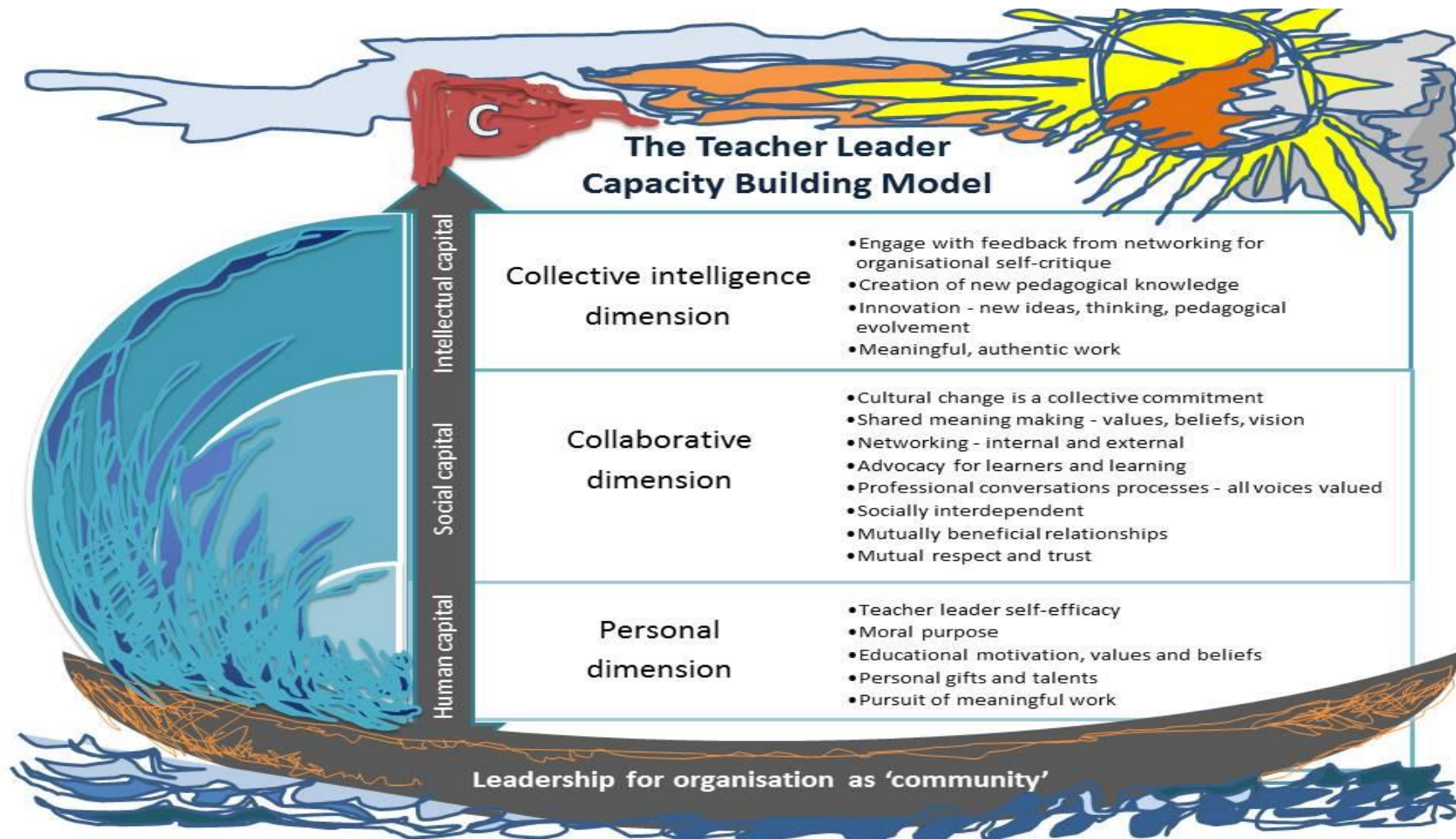
*Figure 8.1.* The Teacher Leader Capacity Building Model

Table 8.1

*The Teacher Leader Capacity Building Model Question Framework*

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**The Teacher Leader Capacity Building Model**

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Teacher leader capacity is developed within a generative, organisational community context which comprises three dimensions – the personal dimension, the collaborative dimension and the collective intelligence dimension. When all three dimensions are given priority, teacher leader capacity is sustained and organisational capacity for leadership and growth of human, social and intellectual capital is more likely to be enhanced.

**Teacher leader *personal dimension*:**

- What personal gifts and talents am I bringing to the workplace?
- What is my moral purpose and educational motivation in advocating for students?
- What are my beliefs about leadership and how do they impact on how I go about my work?
- How does my worldview reflect in my leadership and teaching and learning practices?
- What counts as meaningful work for me in my capacity as a teacher leader?
- How can I contribute to *the big picture* of my *community* in meaningful ways beyond the classroom?

**Teacher leader *collaborative dimension*:**

- How do we share and refine pedagogical practice? What is my role in that?
- How is our shared pedagogical practice responsive to our students' needs and the features of our community?
- Which internal and external professional learning networks in our community will provide mutually beneficial partnerships e.g. school clusters?
- How will teacher leader *expertness* be fostered and developed e.g. in professional learning networks, forums, workshops?
- What opportunities are there to share my expertise and lead or provide a mentoring role in professional learning networks?
- Which community groups, the Arts or sporting groups, government organisations or local councils would be a source for mutually beneficial partnerships?
- Is our pedagogical practice continuously illuminated through networks of professional learning and feedback?
- Do we prioritise establishing respectful, trusting relationships in our community?
- Do we facilitate professional conversations processes using protocols of engagement to ensure all voices are heard and valued?

**Teacher leader *collective intelligence dimension*:**

- Is our pedagogical practice derived from our community's culture – our vision and values and derived from the organisational community's vision and values?
- Is our pedagogical practice derived from analysis and synthesis of highly successful practice within our community?
- How will teacher leaders disseminate and critique their *expertness* within the community in the pursuit of meaningful work?
- Is innovation encouraged through authentic organisational self-critique of new ideas, thinking and pedagogical evolvement?
- How will each individual's contribution add value to the pedagogical evolvement over time to capture and recapture the richness of the collective intelligence?

(Aspects drawn from Andrews & Crowther, 2003, 2006)

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## 8.3 Implications for Schools and Education Systems – Research Question Three

This study has provided some powerful insights and findings that inform the implications and recommendations further on in this chapter. First, is *the power that resides with teacher leadership as an organisational resource* when situated in the right conditions. This study has demonstrated that the opportunity for teacher leadership can make a difference to the work lives of individual teacher leaders and to their principals. It has the potential to make a valuable contribution to the enhancement of organisational capacity for leadership and the development of human, social and intellectual capital.

Second, that currently, *teacher leadership is under-utilised as an organisational resource*, as evidenced in three out of the five categories of teacher leaders. For organisations wishing to retain top quality professionals, organisational capacity building must become a priority to ensure that teacher leader capacity is not lost to the organisation or to the profession.

Third, the *opportunity to build their own professional capacity as teacher leaders* remains a high priority. Today's teacher leaders, the awakened sleeping giants, are showing that they are here for something more and they will not hesitate to relocate to find it. Many of them still wish to remain as teachers in classrooms and connected to their students, but wish to use their newfound leadership capacities in an informal role for the higher good of the organisation – as a teacher leader. True to Katzenmeyer and Moller's (2001, 2009) predictions, today's teacher leaders see empowerment as their right. If they cannot find it in their current organisation in the fulfilment of their mission as teachers, this study has demonstrated that some teacher leaders will not hesitate to look elsewhere, as was the case for the Dream Believers.

Fourth, the opportunity to *engage in meaningful work and know they have the power to contribute to making a difference* is important. These teacher leaders experienced an opportunity to make a difference beyond the four walls of the classroom and wished to continue that meaningful experience. They are all advocates for the profession and have hope for the future. Their mission is underpinned by a strong moral purpose in their commitment to the well-being of students. They are looking for authenticity and meaningfulness in their workplaces and the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to their workplace through opportunities to contribute to cultural change.

Fifth, these teacher leaders valued opportunities to *build professional capacity through internal and external networking*. This involved the development of contextualised and continuous professional learning and the space to engage in meaningful professional conversations where individual voices were heard and valued. Continuous professional learning was prioritised at the school and system level through internal and external networks in these settings – professional learning that was relevant to their unique contexts, was frequently delivered and developed through ongoing mentoring by teacher leaders. Processes of double-loop learning were used to reflect on and critique their pedagogical design and professional learning that contributed to their school-wide approach to pedagogy. Teacher leaders had ownership of the ongoing learning process.

Finally, *organisational alignment that included shared system and school-wide views on leadership, with a specific focus on teachers as leaders* was essential to ensure the sustainability of teacher leadership. Teacher leadership was planned for and resourced. This was the case with the empowered teacher leaders. These empowered teacher leaders worked in mutually beneficial teacher/principal relationships with principals that believed in them and their capacity to achieve. High levels of trust and mutual respect were apparent in these relationships. Principals recognised teacher leader potential and provided opportunities for teacher leader growth. They also ensured they had the right people on board to assist them with the journey by using incentives to encourage teacher leaders to stay. These teacher leaders had found meaningful work within their school and system contexts because the school and system were aligned in their thinking and beliefs about leadership and professional learning. Additionally, the principals were supportive of and had a deep understanding of change processes.

These insights have highlighted several key factors that need to be taken into consideration in schools and education systems:

1. The need to move from thinking about leadership as the domain of the principal to thinking about leadership as a shared role, in the form of parallel or distributed leadership.
2. The need for principals to understand that their leadership behaviour relates to their knowledge and understandings of leadership principles: through relationships of mutual trust and respect; knowledge and understanding of change processes to assist others to realise their potential; knowledge of who they are as a leader and their preferred leadership style; and leadership for cultural change being a shared role achieved through models of distributed or parallel leadership – a form of leadership that is mutually beneficial and highly relational.
3. The need for alignment between school and education system views on leadership – one that includes formal and informal leadership roles with a clear focus on development of teacher leader capacity as an informal role.
4. The need for human potential and talent to be fostered and utilised as an organisational resource, or
   a. teacher leaders will go elsewhere in the search for meaningful work
   b. the organisation will be under-utilising valuable resources which in the long term would be costly to the organisation.

## 8.4   Implications for Sustainable Teacher Leadership

In the previous section, the model for sustainable teacher leader capacity building was introduced. In the following section of this chapter, this model is examined in terms of the context of a proposal for sustainable teacher leadership – the organisation as a community.

First, drawing on my findings, the definition of sustainability will be examined, with a focus on human and social capital for developing teacher leaders. Then the concept of *community* will be defined and redefined to determine a new metaphor for community for the organisational literature. Finally, implications and recommendations of the research findings for schools and education systems will be considered.

## 8.5  Sustainable Teacher Leadership – A *Distant Dream* or Tangible *Island of Hope*?

This study has found that an investment in education is not complete without providing opportunities for growing the human and social capital of our teachers and teacher leaders – the growing of their knowledges, skills, and talents in collaborative working environments that enable them to learn from each other. A clear focus on growing the capacity of teachers as leaders requires investment in their human and social capital to grow the professional capacity of the school and system. Without this focus, the maintenance of high leadership capacity for sustainable school reform and indeed, sustainability of teacher leadership will be a distant dream (Lambert, 2007).

What is sustainability and what does it mean in an education sense? Sustainability is a term which has long been in our consciousness in an ecological sense (e.g. Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). In education circles, attempts to define it in the literature explain what it is and what it is not, but there is little evidence to explain how it should be done. An ecological definition of sustainability proposes that if something is to be sustainable, it has the capacity to continue on without depleting the resources in its natural environment (Butler, 2014). For example, sustainable tourism can occur without any threat to the way of life of the community in which the tourism venture operates.

Fullan's (2005) definition for sustainability in education is the "capacity of a system to engage in the complexities of continuous improvement consistent with deep values of human purpose" (p. ix). Crowther and Morgan (2011) further claimed that "enhanced outcomes without sustainability have limited value in the ongoing work of a school" (p. 142). They also challenged the processes that led to the enhanced outcomes, the prospects of these processes for sustainability and proposed that leadership is a significant contributing factor.

Lambert (2007) similarly highlighted the importance of the leadership factor and described sustainable schools as those with "high leadership capacity" (p. 312). Leadership for consolidating success has been described by Crowther and Morgan (2011, p. 152) as having three qualities:

- A strategic quality for futuristic planning and succession
- An organizationwide quality, in the mobilization of a school's management team to provide the glue in the school's past-present-future professional learning activities
- An advocacy quality, in the work of the school's management team as custodian of the school's vision and SWP.

Taking the notion of ecological sustainability mentioned earlier and applying it to teacher leadership, teachers could and should have the capacity for leadership without depleting the organisational resources, but conversely, growing the organisational capacity in a "broad-based skilful participation in the work of leadership" (Lambert, 2007, p. 312), if planned and coordinated, as shown by this study, in a shared organisational approach. An investment in sustainable resources, in particular people, through the growth of human and social capital (Chick & Micklethwaite, 2011) and more specifically, teachers as leaders, appears to make

sense (see Chapter Two for detail regarding the United Nations 2005 World Summit).

Applied to schools and education systems, it means significant investment in educational resources. Yet the focus often appears to be on misplaced use of resourcing, including external mandates and technology as drivers for change to improve student learning outcomes (Fullan, 2011). This is often to the detriment of investment in those that make those improvements in learning outcomes possible – the teachers. The experience of teacher leaders in this study demonstrates that any worthwhile change relies on teacher leaders working together in professional learning communities to drive and improve shared and enhanced pedagogical change in their unique contexts, within and beyond their schools – that is the key to improving student learning outcomes (Crowther et al., 2013).

### 8.5.1   A focus on human and social capital through networking.

**Capital *n.*:** an accumulated stock of wealth; any form of wealth employed or capable of being employed in the production of more wealth.
– Macquarie Dictionary (Butler, 2014)

This study has highlighted the difference between organisations where social capital was high and human capital had been prioritised through the development of teacher leadership, and conversely, those where human capital and social capital were not prioritised. In the latter, teacher leadership and professionalism were not valued and networking was not encouraged. The Battle-Scarred Warriors were examples of this. In the former, the Culture Guardians and Strategic Career Movers were able to enact their teacher leader capacities within organisations that had a strong focus on the development of human and social capital within a community context. These teacher leaders were involved in developing and working with professional learning and networking within and beyond the school to increase the professional capacity of themselves and their respective schools, and in Culture Guardian Laura's case, the wider community.

Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) determined that "capital relates to one's own or a group's worth, particularly concerning assets that can be leveraged to accomplish desired goals" (p. 1). Capital therefore, is concerned with the capacity to grow the resources of an organisation to achieve company goals in order to sustain the organisation into the future. It requires a significant investment in people through the development of human and social capital: the development of human capital to grow people's knowledge, skills and motivation for their work; and social capital as the development of people in collaboration or partnerships with others in communities (Chick & Micklethwaite, 2011).

D. Hargreaves' theory on capital (2001) defined social and intellectual capital as essential for school improvement, when combined with leverage, the strategies used by a school or system to enhance their educational output. Social capital has two components – cultural and structural. The cultural component comprises "the level of trust between people and the generation of norms of reciprocity (mutual favours) and collaboration" (p. 490). The structural component is "the networks in which the people are embedded by strong ties" (p. 490). Intellectual capital grows from the "creation of new knowledge and the capacity to transfer knowledge between

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situations and people" (p. 490). Hargreaves maintains that "high levels of social capital in a school strengthen its intellectual capital" (p. 490).

Organisational sustainability, therefore, requires an investment in professional capital and people, that is, the development of their skills and knowledge through their social relationships and networks with others – in schools, that includes teachers. Teacher leaders and principals work on high leverage strategies enabling them to work smarter rather than harder (D. Hargreaves, 2001). Thus, the return on the investment in teacher leaders is improved cognitive and moral outcomes in a culture that promotes collaborative professional learning, high levels of trust, and a sense of mutualism and reciprocity (D. Hargreaves, 2001).

### 8.5.2  Ensuring sustainability of teacher leadership.

While there are studies and publications outlining the conditions for encouraging teacher leadership within classrooms and schools (Durrant, 2004; D. Frost, 2000; Lambert, 2003; Lieberman & Miller, 2004; Murphy, 2005; Sherrill, 1999), the focus often remains on the role of the individual teacher leader. This study has already demonstrated that the individual teacher leader cannot make a significant sustained difference without the support of the principal, the school and the system. The Battle-Scarred Warriors are evidence of this. Leadership is an organisational construct and requires the many levels of the organisation engaged in a shared understanding of, and in the work of leadership to ensure the sustainability of teacher leadership.

Where teacher leaders are involved in developing school-wide improvement solutions, there is evidence in a number of studies that student learning outcomes will improve. There needs to be a considered, shared system-wide view of teacher leadership to ensure the conditions for its growth and sustainability. Therefore, it seems logical that a focus on system-wide solutions to implementing teacher leadership and the sustainability of such an approach must become a priority. The survival of teacher leadership is an organisation-wide problem and therefore requires an organisation-wide solution. For this reason, I have proposed a new metaphor for the education system or organisation, which will be developed in the following section: *Leadership for Organisation as Community.*

## 8.6    Re-defining Organisation as *Community*

> *The quest for community will not be denied, for it springs from some of the powerful needs of human nature – needs for a clear sense of cultural purpose, membership, status and community.*
> – Robert Nisbet, Sociologist, 1953 (Nisbet, 2010)

This study has produced a model, *The Teacher Leader Capacity Building Model*, within an organisational framework called *community*. It has highlighted the need for the re-conceptualisation of organisations as they currently exist.

It is clear that in this study teacher leaders were enabled in a context where they were able to add value, contribute to the building of a shared culture, where there was a common moral purpose, and where relationships were important. These were organisations where people came together because they believed in something which they created together, where people were valued and they were able to grow, individually and organisationally. They operated together as a community to achieve

something quite extraordinary – something that goes beyond the concept of professional learning communities and learning organisations as described by Senge (1999), G. Morgan (2006) and others. They experienced something almost intangible that warrants further study. They created their own networks within an organisational community context – something that points to a unique concept of *community* (Figure 8.2).

Community, in this sense, is the social capacity building that occurs within organisations, and is based on strong relationships of mutual trust and respect. The definition of *social* in communities of learning goes beyond the coffee and morning tea banter that exists in staffrooms to a deep, meaningful engagement in dialogue with others. It is defined by networks of unique, trusting, collaborative relationships underpinned by shared beliefs and values. The internal and external networks provide a platform for sharing and critique of knowledge for the betterment of one's personal practice and for the long-term benefit of the organisation – a development of an intellectual capital or *collective intelligence*.
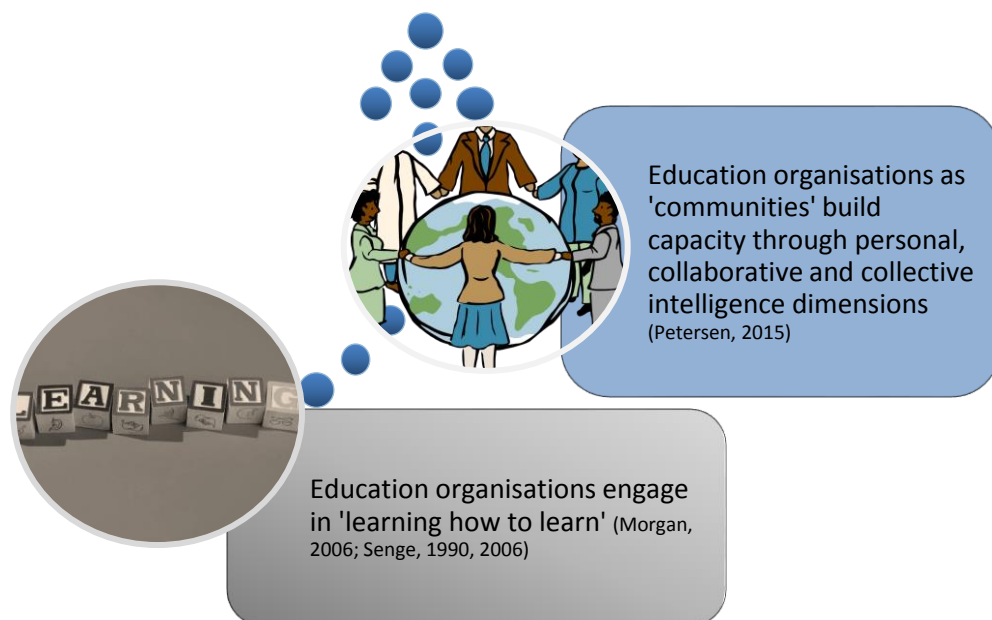


Education organisations as 'communities' build capacity through personal, collaborative and collective intelligence dimensions (Petersen, 2015)

Education organisations engage in 'learning how to learn' (Morgan, 2006; Senge, 1990, 2006)

*Figure 8.2.* Education Organisations Reconceptualised as Generative, Organic Communities

The concept of community within an organisational context is defined in the following section. This will establish the foundation for the new metaphor: *Leadership for Organisation as Community*. While there is much in the literature about professional learning communities (PLCs), it is not the intent of this study to reproduce that thinking here – see for example, Hord's (1997), Wenger's (2002) and DuFour's (DuFour, 2012, 2014; DuFour & Fullan, 2013) work on PLCs. This study is redefining the concept of *community* in terms of organisational capacity building to include a sustainable focus on teacher leader capacity building. This particular concept of community draws significantly on Nisbet's (1953, 2010) concept of community, the Leadership Research International's concept of *cohesive communities* (Crowther & Associates, 2011), with influence from Hord's (1997) and Wenger's (2002) concept of *professional learning community*, and G. Morgan's

(2006) metaphors for organisational theory to propose a new metaphor of community for organisational theory.

### 8.6.1  What is community?

**Community** is the product of people working together on problems, of autonomous and collective fulfilment of internal objectives, and of the experience of living under codes of authority which have been set in large degree by the persons involved. (Nisbet, 2010, p. xxx)

**Organisation** is an orderly, functional social structure (such as a business, political party, or school) characterized by identifiable people who are members of the organization and an administrative system. (Owens, 2004, p. 428)

The context of community is evident within and beyond the school – the school as a community and the school as part of a broader systemic community. Teacher leaders in this study understood who they were as leaders within their school communities. They worked with processes of *collaborative individualism*, which recognises that teachers are individuals with unique styles, talents and gifts, yet they are also collaborative professionals (Crowther et al., 2001). They had a strong sense of self-efficacy, understood their personal pedagogy, their preferred leadership styles and were driven by a moral obligation and advocacy for a better world for students and for education. Opportunities for collaboration and networking extended to the systemic organisational context. Consequently, they had strong views about working together with others towards a shared future for the betterment of student learning outcomes.

The school as a hub of the wider community (Crowther et al., 2001) includes individuals working together in collaborative relationships, within and beyond their school contexts. Therefore, the concept of networking warrants attention as an organisational community concept. Networking has come to the fore previously in a number of publications, including Seashore Louis (2008) with internal-external networking in PLCs; Stoll (2009) and the power of external networks for sharing across cultural boundaries; and Limerick, Cunnington, and Crowther (2002), who maintained that networks were important to modern organisations because of the difficulty of doing everything in-house. "Strategic networking can be both internal or external to an organisation. It enables synergies to be developed through communications strategies, ongoing sharing of professional practices, and refining through feedback mechanisms" (Crowther et al., 2011, p. 124).

The teacher leaders in this study have particular talents and gifts that they bring to the collaboration. Talents and gifts were utilised in some cases in the contribution to contextualised professional learning, along with the continuous desire to challenge assumptions and refocus on their purpose through double-loop learning processes. The focus on whole-school professional learning and collective new knowledge assimilates with G. Morgan's (2006) *organisation as brain* metaphor. These teacher leaders created learning organisations and were able to "innovate and evolve to meet the challenges of changing environments" (p. 112).

These teachers and schools also focused on their "corporate DNA … the visions, values, and sense of purpose" (G. Morgan, 2006, p. 99) that bind them together. They explored "mental models" (Senge, 2006, p. 8) that influence their understandings of the world and how they take action through an examination of personal pedagogical self. Thus, bringing into focus Morgan's (2006) *organisation*

*as culture* metaphor. These "patterns of understanding" (p. 134), shared values, beliefs and meaning, were part of the culture and "lived experience" (p. 147) for these teacher leaders.

Teacher leader professional capacities may or may not have been utilised in their current contexts. Where capacities were utilised in mutually beneficial, trusting and respectful school community contexts, teacher leaders experienced fulfilment, felt energised and that they were adding value to their workplaces as collaborative individuals. Using Morgan's (2006) metaphor for *organisations as organisms*, these teacher leaders were able to "influence the nature of their environment [and] play an active role in shaping their future" (p. 63). Where the school and organisational community did not offer such opportunities, the teacher leaders went elsewhere. The Dream Believers created their own community of collaborative individuals outside of their school and education system in the establishment of the Orphanage project.

Essentially, the concept of community is about people who willingly come together to achieve something because they believe in the cause and because they know they have the power to make a difference, as has been observed in this study. As Senge (2006) so eloquently noted:

> It may seem a bit odd to talk about "who" an organization is, or what an organization "stands for", but it is not odd if you look at it as a human community. As a community, the organization came into being because there were enough people who cared about something to pursue it together. Nike, for example, was created by runners who were passionate about running and about creating better shoes for runners. (p. 305)

Community, as described by Nisbet (2010), refers to a group of people that have a collective responsibility to some sort of agreement or identity. The concept of community is also relational in that individuals work collaboratively and unitedly towards an agreed goal or purpose. In the corporate world, this might be termed an organisation. Owen's (2004) definition of organisation is about adaptation and describes an orderly and functional social structure. This study extends this definition by proposing a model that is a generative model for building teacher leader capacity within an organisational community context. The challenge lies in applying the concept of community to education organisations – it is achievable, as several participants in this study have been part of such an organisation.

## 8.7   Leadership for Organisation as Community: A New Metaphor

The definition of organisation observed earlier described "an orderly, functional social structure (such as a business, political party, or school) characterized by identifiable people who are members of the organization and an administrative system" (Owens, 2004, p. 428). *Organisation as community* provides for the cultural dimension that is absent in the existing definition. Successful organisations exist due to having the right kind of leadership, people with the right expertise on the team (Collins, 2001) and the capacity to bring that expertise to the collaboration (Crowther et al., 2013). They exist in a culture of mutualistic, trusting relationships and shared understandings, where people come together because they believe in something, they

learn together, think together and feel valued in working together for the common good, as evidenced in this study.

Therefore, the proposed new metaphor for *leadership for organisation as community* draws on several of G. Morgan's (2006) metaphors– the organism, the brain, and the culture, with the addition of a new *network* metaphor, given the significance and value of networking that emerged from this study. In addition to Morgan's culture building focus on values, ideas, vision and patterns of meaning, I have included moral purpose, mutual trust and relationships which emerged as important aspects of the culture building for strategic networks, both internal and external to the school:

- *The generative element* (the organism) – related to the environment; contextual, organic, generative
- *The professional learning element* (the brain) – a learning organisation; focus on the learning and intelligence; professional learning
- *The cultural DNA element* (the culture) – focus on values, ideas, beliefs, patterns of shared meaning; shared vision, moral purpose, mutual trust, relationships
- *The strategic network element* – internal and external; focus on creating strategic networks of support; professional learning communities; professional conversations; leadership networks; advocacy; mechanisms for sharing, refining and feedback; critique of new knowledge.
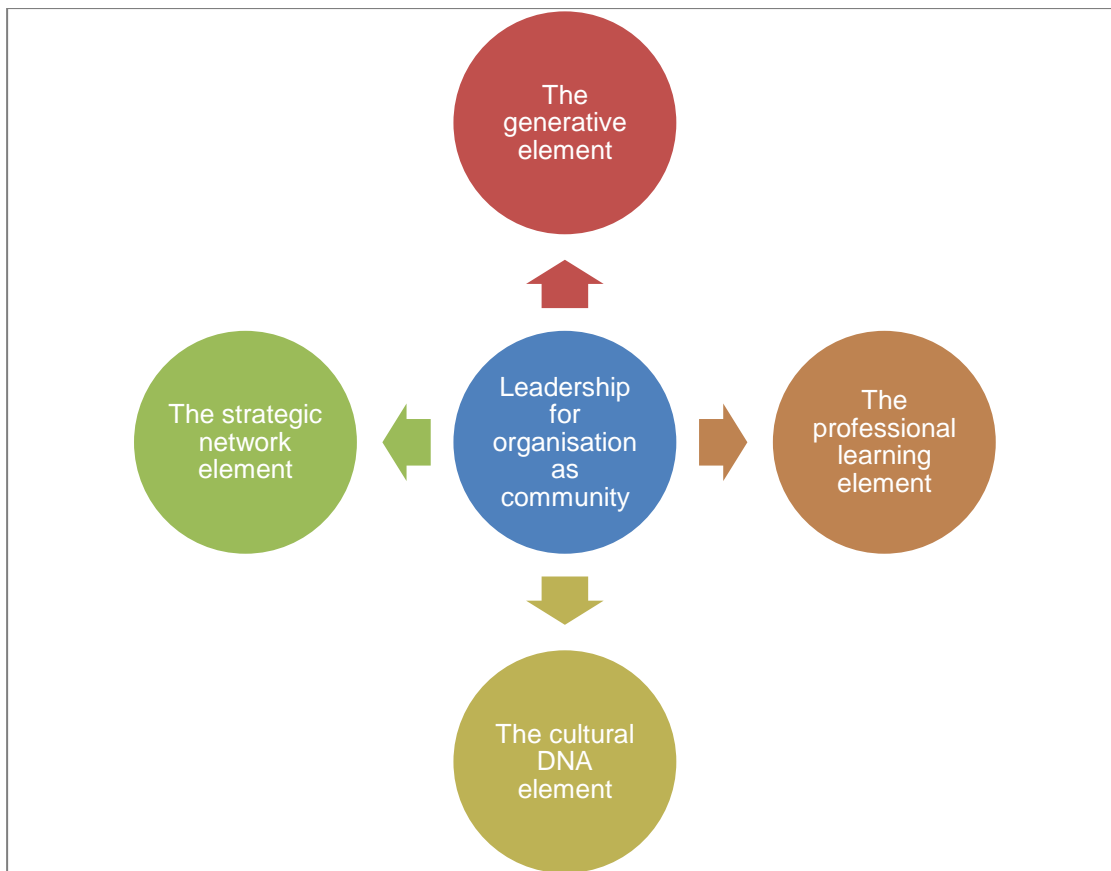


*Figure 8.3.* Leadership for Organisation as Community Metaphor

The *Leadership for Organisation as Community* metaphor would also require a particular type of leadership as the foundation of its operation – a relational or distributed style of leadership, hence the addition of *leadership* in the title of the metaphor. In this type of leadership, many people in many levels within the organisation are involved in creating and sustaining the vision for the future. See for example, Senge's (1999) advocacy for leadership communities in his taxonomy of three leaders – local line leaders, internal networkers and executive leaders – where cross cultural dialogue is paramount between the multiple levels of culture, as advocated by Fullan (2005) and Schein (1996, 2004).

Thus, the community metaphor, *Leadership for Organisation as Community* has been defined as:

> *Leadership for Organisation as Community* is a metaphor for the generative networks of educators, including school leader, teacher leader and internal and external networker communities. Each community engages in learning and the creation of new knowledge through mutually beneficial, collaborative and trusting relationships with others, inter- and intra-community.
>
> The community engages in:
> - Generation of shared beliefs, values and vision
> - Professional conversation processes
> - Collective commitment to innovation through networks, internal and external
> - Creation of new pedagogical knowledge and evolvement
> - Professional learning processes
> - Continuous commitment to the enhancement of individual and organisational capacity.

## 8.8 Imagining the Future: Implications for Schools and Education Systems

In this final section, I present four recommendations for schools and education systems to consider based on the findings from this study. The concept of community capacity building is focused on the importance of individuals willingly coming together for the common good of the organisation with the focus on bottom-up solutions. These teacher leaders are not in formal roles and therefore not an additional cost to the organisation. They are currently untapped resources with potential to increase their personal professional capacity and thus leverage the capacity of the organisation. With this in mind, the recommendations for building teacher leader capacity are framed by beginning with the contribution of the individual teacher leader (Recommendation 1) and building towards organisation-wide solutions in the final recommendations.

### 8.8.1 Recommendation 1.

Establish a culture of *communities of learning* at system and school level, with a focus on teacher leader *expertness* and pedagogy

The first recommendation is to prioritise a *communities of learning* culture at the system and school level. Teacher leaders would have a key role in the establishment of networks and forums thus enabling the development of teacher leader expertness to improve pedagogical outcomes in the school. This type of culture was a rarity in this study and it is evident that recognition of teacher professionalism is an ongoing source of frustration for many. As evidenced in the teacher leader participants in this study, exceptional talent is being wasted within the profession – education systems cannot afford to lose capacity by not drawing on these resources.

Many teacher leaders in this study were frustrated by not having their expertise recognised and the resultant misuse of their expertise as a valuable organisational resource. They know that (1) to improve student learning outcomes, and (2) to make capacity building sustainable, the focus needs to be on capturing and retaining the pedagogical expertise that resides in each and every classroom. They have seen the evidence within their IDEAS school contexts. Examples of utilising teacher expertness to work with communities of learning in this study were evidenced in the Culture Guardians:

1. Networking, feedback and critique utilised to develop pedagogical expertness – Laura received a bursary from her school to present her work on Arts and the local community at an International conference. She planned to further extend this work with the local Arts community in writing programs for the local council and was using her pedagogical expertise in the Visual Arts to work with teachers in the English department to develop visual literacy programs.
2. Networking, feedback and critique to develop school-wide processes of improvement – Jenny utilised external networks of support (systemic and University) by attending workshops and participating in external networking meetings and forums to develop her expertise in whole school improvement to assist the principal and the school in their journey for improvement. She became the school improvement expert in the school.

One of the fundamental principles of establishing communities of learning is to work collaboratively to build upon knowledge and expertise to create new knowledge that would not have been possible by working individually. This goes beyond individuals *working together* and having a *discussion*, or simply *sharing good practice*. It involves the use of networks, within and beyond the school, to share and critique their new knowledge, along with teacher leaders working with their shared pedagogical expertness. This is collective intelligence and is the synthesis and deep learning that occurs from the rich dialogue that emerges from learning together, thinking together and the creation of something new and wonderful that emerges from the combined strengths and talents of the individuals within any organisational community. The community culture of learning becomes an embedded way of working or the way things are done around here, thus surviving changing leadership, current trends and the whim of an individual leader.

### 8.8.2 Recommendation 2.

Establish leadership communities – include a focus on teachers as leaders

The second recommendation is for systems and schools to rethink leadership as an organisation-wide construct and establish leadership communities with a focus on teachers as leaders – what does it mean to be a leader of a 21st century school and how does one engage in capacity building and thinking about sustainable outcomes for our schools and our systems? In this age of accountability, there is more and more pressure on leaders in schools to improve test scores, NAPLAN results and increase our international ranking in the PISA study. Teacher leaders in this study identified that, as a system, we are approaching the problem solving for this issue *the wrong way*, using the wrong *drivers* – they believe they know the answer, as they have experienced it through successful whole school improvement processes. It lies with the expertise of teachers we have in our schools and it lies with capacity for leadership within schools to develop unique solutions to whole school improvement – and more significantly to have the agency to implement this important pedagogical development work.

Leading significant change can no longer be the premise of the hero leader. As was evidenced in this study, diminished leadership capacity results from the hero leader paradigm, when teacher leaders are disempowered and become battle weary and retreat. Significant cultural change involves a high commitment work environment, where teacher leaders are valued, and where people feel they are engaged in meaningful work. It involves a community environment that engages mutually beneficial working and trusting relationships, with a shared sense of purpose through the mutually agreed formation and enactment of vision and values – an environment that engages people's minds and hearts.

In Australia, with the move towards developing principal Leadership Profiles (AITSL, 2014a), the focus remains firmly on the principal as leader, allowing them to choose a leadership emphasis, depending on the phase of their leadership career and context within which they are working – an operational, relational, strategic or systemic focus. While the development of teachers as leaders may be implicit within this document in the *Developing self and others* Professional Practice Lens, teacher leadership development will not occur unless it is explicit within what is valued, explicitly stated in a shared vision and in the documentation at every level of the education system – national, state, district and local schools.

The type of principal leadership that was evident in the empowered teacher leader categories in this study was a blend of humility and professional will, typical attributes of what Collins (2001) called Level 5 leaders. They were highly relational and presented as networks of people, principals and teacher leaders, moving together towards common goals. These principals had catalysed commitment to change, were highly ambitious and compelling in their vision for the organisation and engaging and empowering people as part of the process. Teacher leaders in this study who reported satisfaction in their workplace were highly committed to the work environment and were engaged in the cultural changes over time that are part of *deep change* – they had ownership of the change process, they had teacher leader agency.

This study has highlighted the need to rethink leadership and develop knowledges about management of cultural change for school leaders within a system-wide

leadership framework – a framework that includes (1) potential for developing leaders' knowledge of capacity building and whole school improvement to sustain cultural change, and (2) a focus on developing leadership at all levels of the system, including a specific focus on developing teacher leader capacity to assist in the management of cultural change.

### 8.8.3  Recommendation 3.

Strengthen alignment between all levels of the organisation

The third recommendation is a call for strengthened alignment between all levels of the organisation. Schools may experience cultural alignment with their vision, values, pedagogical practices and professional learning activities. School and system alignment would require alignment across the three levels of culture (Fullan, 2005; Schein, 1996). This type of organisational alignment would include shared system and school-wide views on leadership, with a specific focus on teachers as leaders to ensure the sustainability of teacher leadership. Teacher leadership would be planned for and resourced.

In this study, where schools and education systems appeared aligned in their thinking about leadership, networking and professional learning, teacher leaders reported being valued as professionals in their workplace and felt they were contributing to something worthwhile. This was evident where there was a shared vision, values and the removal of bureaucratic organisational structures, to allow for the emergence of teacher leader professionalism.

Conversely, teacher leaders in this study identified feelings of powerlessness when their professionalism was not acknowledged or utilised and they did not have agency to act or use their teacher leader capacity. Generally, this was due to a lack of shared understandings and the prevalence of bureaucratic top-down structures in those contexts. Teacher leaders in this study are calling for alignment. While it may be happening in isolated pockets, there needs to be widespread commitment and implementation to ensure sustainable outcomes – this calls for alignment at all levels of the system.

Alignment within schools, between schools and with the system to find the interrelatedness and shared understandings of leadership would alleviate some of these issues – an alignment and sense of community responsibility that is not driven by bureaucracy and markets, but by innovation and networks. The Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) is currently setting the standard and modelling the way with an online community of practice, the promotion of teacher voice and sharing practice on their website, yet the notion of communities of practice and networks of professional learning is not evident in some teacher leaders' experiences in this study. Thus, alignment between local, system and national practice must be a priority.

Teacher leaders in this study experienced frustration when there was a lack of alignment between the values and beliefs about change in the school, the system and their beliefs about school-wide improvement and leadership. Bringing their whole selves to the workplace in the search for meaningful work and the authenticity of the work itself was important for teacher leaders in this study. The authenticity of the work was the context that allowed for teacher leader voices to be heard by being

engaged in fulfilling *professional* work that was valued and meaningful – for them, it was in the co-creation of the visioning of the school; the networking, both internal and external; and the professional learning opportunities.

Great organisations align their thinking about change – deep, meaningful change – and ensure they have the right people on board to lead the process. This leads to the final recommendation on alignment with the national and international agenda on teacher leadership.

### 8.8.4 Recommendation 4.

Strengthen alignment with the national and international priorities for teacher leadership

Nationally and internationally a number of reports signify a call for change in the profession with the focus on teachers as leaders and the development of communities of learning – including in Australia, the *Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders: A shared responsibility and commitment* (AITSL, 2012) and *Professional Standards for Teachers – Lead Teacher* category (AITSL, 2014b), and internationally the *International Summit on the Teaching Profession* OECD report (Schleicher, 2011, 2012). According to the evidence within my study, communities of learning are emerging in Australia, but not consistently, and it appears, only in pockets. AITSL introduced the *Charter* four years ago, at the time of writing. This document has some very clear and sound research-based guidelines for systems and schools to adopt professional learning communities – guidelines that are relevant, collaborative and future focused with teachers engaged in professional learning communities within and between schools. This is not evident in several contexts in this study, again with the exception of the Culture Guardians and Strategic Career Movers.

The *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers – Lead Teacher* (AITSL, 2014b) category requires teacher leaders to engage in high level professional activity within and beyond the school – they advise, share, evaluate, collaborate, negotiate, understand, design, develop, influence and guide, facilitate, promote and lead initiatives. Similarly, this activity needs to be supported to be actioned and for capacity to be built within and beyond the school. In two out of five teacher leader categories in this study, this activity was not evident, either at all or at the level of expected implementation, as per the guidelines. These teacher leaders, while they have the capability to act, are being denied an opportunity to extend themselves professionally by working in the capacity as Lead Teachers in their schools.

The OECD report from the *International Summit on the Teaching Profession* (A. Schleicher, 2011) in particular, *Chapter 4 Teacher Engagement in Educational Reform* highlighted that school reform will only work if it is supported from the ground up. The report noted the importance of providing teachers with time to engage in professional development and the creation of communities of learning to engage deeply with ongoing inquiry and group-based approaches that linked with wider goals of the school and system.

The evidence in my study has revealed that opportunities for internal and external networking have potential to build the professional capacity of the school and the system – not through external mandates, but through contextually derived

meaningful professional learning. Teacher leaders reported feeling empowered through a specific focus on processes of professional conversations to provide the space for teacher voice. Organisational self-critique was a feature using feedback from internal and external networks in the search for new pedagogical meaning in their work. They were the creators of new knowledge in their work, creating a new pedagogical meaning relevant to their unique school context.

I reiterate, only two out of five categories of teacher leaders in this study experienced favourable conditions for the development of professional learning communities. It would seem that it is our moral responsibility as professionals in education organisations to ensure that we create the conditions for: (1) teacher leaders to develop the skills and capacities they need to enhance their work experience and the capacity of the organisation; and (2) organisations to establish networks with the capacity for innovation and the creation of new knowledge, in communities that can make a real difference in the lives of all.

## 8.9    Recommendations for Future Research

The teacher leaders in this study have emerged from a particular process of whole school improvement – the Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievements in Schools (IDEAS) project. Therefore, they have experienced cultural change where distributed or parallel leadership models predominated and they shared common experiences as teacher leaders framed by *The Teachers as Leaders Framework* (Crowther et al., 2009; Crowther et al., 2002). The study found that where the conditions for nurturing teacher leadership prevailed, in an IDEAS or similar cultural context, teacher leaders were able to fulfil their images of themselves as leaders and were more likely to stay on and contribute to the organisational capacity.

As this study is focused on the lived experiences of teacher leaders following their IDEAS whole school improvement experience, I submit the following recommendations for future research into teacher leadership:

### 8.9.1    Recommendation 1.

That the concept of *organisation as community* be further explored for redefining organisational contexts.

This study highlighted the need for a re-conceptualisation of *Organisation as community* as a worthy metaphor for consideration. The teacher leaders as products of schools and systems in this study demonstrated that something special was occurring within these organisations and worthy of further investigation – an investigation into how leadership, including teacher leadership, is conceptualised throughout the organisation.

From my observations, and pending further investigation, an organisation of this nature would have shared leadership at all levels, and a focus on the cultural dimension. Capacity building would focus on human and social capital for the building of intellectual capital to improve overall organisational capacity and outcomes. Growing people and their knowledge and skills would improve the overall organisational capacity to respond to increased demands in the future – this is organic and generative, it takes time, and needs to be responded to in addition to the

administrative daily functions of organisational life. Several principals and schools operating within supportive, organisational systemic environments have successfully achieved this within this study. The Culture Guardians and Strategic Career Movers are evidence of this. These are the schools and systems where something special is occurring and that warrant further investigation.

### 8.9.2   Recommendation 2.

That sustainability of teacher leadership be explored as a construct in other post-whole school improvement contexts.

This study focused on the sustainability of teacher leadership once their sleeping giant had been awakened, following the whole school improvement process in an IDEAS context. The experiences of these teacher leaders were highlighted and the contexts that had empowered or disempowered their newfound capacities provided new insights into the implications for sustainability of teacher leadership and for educational organisations. My curiosity as a researcher wonders about the insights that could be gleaned for the sustainability of teacher leadership from the experiences of teacher leaders in other contexts and educational settings.

### 8.9.3   Recommendation 3.

That the role of the principal be further explored in creating the conditions for the nurturing and development of teacher leadership.

This study highlighted that the principal's role was crucial in creating the conditions for teacher leader capacity development and teacher leader agency. Principals needed a deep knowledge of two key aspects: (1) the type of leadership required to manifest cultural change; and (2) cultural change processes. Where this was not evident and teacher leaders had not established mutually beneficial respectful and trusting relationships with their principals, they felt disempowered and inclined to go elsewhere to experience meaningful work. I would therefore recommend further research into the role of the principal in fostering the conditions for sustainable teacher leadership, as this will inform the need for an explicit statement about developing teacher leaders in the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals: Leadership Profiles* (AITSL, 2014a).

### 8.9.4   Recommendation 4.

That the role of the education system be further explored in creating the conditions for teacher leader capacity development.

This study found that where teacher leaders were supported at the school and system level to enact their teacher leader capacities, they felt they were contributing in meaningful ways within their workplaces and were more likely to stay within the organisation. The organisation managed to foster and retain the expertness they had within, and thus gain valuable expertise to contribute to organisational capacity. This was clearly evident in the Culture Guardians in particular. These organisations (schools and systems) appeared to have a particular shared view on the development of their teacher leaders, evidenced by the networks of support and professional sharing and learning. I would therefore recommend further research into the role of the education system in fostering the conditions for building systems' capacity in the sustainability of teacher leadership.

### 8.9.5 Recommendation 5.

That research into the role and resourcing of generative professional learning networks be further explored as a way of developing teacher leader capacity.

This study found that teacher leaders developed capacity through advocating, leading, designing and mentoring in networks that enhanced their professional learning and the learning of others. These networks were generative and met the needs of the community, often extending to the local community beyond the school gates, as was evident in Laura's work with the Arts community. The *Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders: A shared responsibility and commitment* (AITSL, 2012) already provides a solid foundation for beginning this work – this charter could be developed further within individual community contexts to include the capacity for teachers as leaders of learning, as the examples in this study provide. It is therefore recommended that further research into the role and resourcing of generative networks be explored as an option to (1) enhance teacher leader capacity, and (2) by extension, build intellectual and social capacity to enhance overall organisational capacity.

## 8.10  Final Reflections

The participants in this study have all experienced a process that acknowledges the importance of building capacity for teacher leadership – the IDEAS project. While this process has been unique, in terms of current educational thinking it is not unique. The OECD in their 2005 summit on the teaching profession and the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership have flagged prioritising and supporting teacher leadership and professional learning. This study has highlighted that there is a mismatch between the thinking in the national and international agendas and what exists in a number of schools. For capacity building to occur at the school and system level, it is clear that there must be alignment in thinking across all levels of the education community, with leadership distributed and opportunity for teacher leader involvement. The *Teacher Leader Capacity Building Model*, developed within this study, is one step closer to making this possible.

As a former teacher leader in an IDEAS school, I feel I have been on this journey with my participants. I have shared and rejoiced in their successes and empathised and experienced their challenges. I, too, have been a Culture Guardian in my former IDEAS school, a Battle-Scarred Warrior, then a Realist in other contexts, and now a Dream Believer, creating my own dream. My dream for Australian education would be that all teachers could have the opportunity to be Culture Guardians or Strategic Career Movers if they so choose – that they would not have to be Dream Believers and leave the education system to create their own dream if they did not want to. What a powerful statement for education systems in this country to say that our teachers are here because they choose to be – they *know* they can make a difference by their contribution to building the culture and they believe in the shared vision for the future!

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Ethics Clearance

University of Southern Queensland

CRICOS: QLD 00244B  NSW 02225M

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AUSTRALIA

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OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND HIGHER DEGREES

Helen Phillips

Ethics Officer

PHONE (07) 4631 2690 | FAX (07) 4631 1995

EMAIL ethics@usq.edu.au

Wednesday, 7 December 2011

Ms Shauna Petersen
Faculty of Education
USQ Toowoomba Campus

Dear Ms Petersen,

The Chair of the USQ Fast Track Human Research Ethics Committee (FTHREC) recently reviewed your responses to the FTHREC's conditions placed upon the ethical approval for the below project. Your proposal now meets the requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)* and full ethics approval has been granted.

| Project Title | When the sleeping giant awakes: The lived experience of IDEAS teacher leaders and implications for education systems |
|---|---|
| Approval no. | H11REA143 |
| Expiry date | 31/07/2013 |
| FTHREC Decision | **Approved** |

The standard conditions of this approval are:

(a)  conduct the project strictly in accordance with the proposal submitted and granted ethics approval, including any amendments made to the proposal required by the HREC

(b)  advise (email: ethics@usq.edu.au) immediately of any complaints or other issues in relation to the project which may warrant review of the ethical approval of the project

(c)  make submission for approval of amendments to the approved project before implementing such changes

(d)  provide a 'progress report' for every year of approval

(e)  provide a 'final report' when the project is complete

(f)  advise in writing if the project has been discontinued.

For (c) to (e) forms are available on the USQ ethics website: http://www.usq.edu.au/research/ethicsbio/human

Please note that failure to comply with the conditions of approval and the *National Statement (2007)* may result in withdrawal of approval for the project.

You may now commence your project. I wish you all the best for the conduct of the project.

**Helen Phillips**
Ethics Officer
Office of Research and Higher Degrees

Toowoomba • Springfield • Fraser Coast

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# Appendix B: Phase 1 Questionnaire Survey for participants

Please answer the following questions:

**Gender:**
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

**Age:**
- ☐ <30
- ☐ 31-35
- ☐ 36-40
- ☐ 41-45
- ☐ 46-50
- ☐ 51-55
- ☐ 56-60
- ☐ >60

**Current place of work:**
- ☐ Kindy/Prep
- ☐ Primary School
- ☐ Secondary School
- ☐ Higher Education Institution
- ☐ District Education Office
- ☐ Other: Please explain

How long have you been in your current place of work?


Education system within which you work:
- ☐ State Education
- ☐ Catholic Education
- ☐ Independent Schools
- ☐ Other: Please explain

State/Territory in which you work:
- ☐ Queensland
- ☐ New South Wales
- ☐ ACT
- ☐ Western Australia
- ☐ Victoria

**Professional Mobility:**
Have you moved workplaces recently?
- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

If yes, how long ago did you move?

Was the move by choice, or transfer?


If by choice, why did you move to your new workplace?


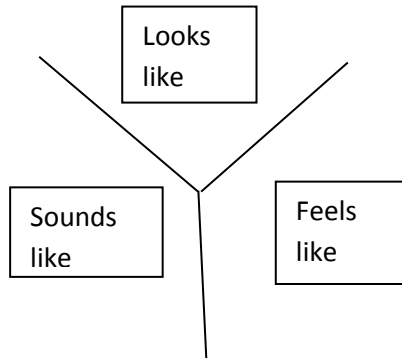Which educational setting were you working before your move?
- ☐ Kindy/Prep
- ☐ Primary School
- ☐ Secondary School
- ☐ Higher Education Institution
- ☐ District Education Office
- ☐ Other: Please explain

**Engagement with IDEAS:**
In which years were you engaged with the IDEAS process?
What was your role in the IDEAS process?

Did your role change during the IDEAS process? Please explain.

Complete the following Y-Chart on your role during the IDEAS process. What did it look like, sound like, feel like to you?

```
              ┌──────────┐
              │  Looks   │
              │  like    │
              └──────────┘
         \                    /
          \                  /
┌──────────┐              ┌──────────┐
│  Sounds  │              │  Feels   │
│  like    │              │  like    │
└──────────┘              └──────────┘
          \              /
           \            /
            \          /
             \        /
```

In your workplace during the IDEAS process, were you able to demonstrate teacher leadership capacity? Please list possible encouragers and inhibitors:

| **Encouragers** | **Inhibitors** |
|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ |
| ☐ | ☐ |
| ☐ | ☐ |
| ☐ | ☐ |

In terms of your work role, what have you done since IDEAS? (ie. are you in the same role or have you moved? Anything else?)

Please complete the SWOT analysis on your current role post-IDEAS. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this role in terms of your teacher leadership capacity? What are the opportunities and threats?

| **Strengths** | **Weaknesses** |
|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ |
| **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
| ☐ | ☐ |

Please provide any further comments or reflections.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this written response.  As mentioned in the introductory letter, this is the first phase of a study on teacher leadership and the workplace. You will be contacted by me if you have been selected for interview. Please provide your current contact details below:

Name:                         Phone:                         Email:

# Appendix C: Phase 1 Questionnaire Survey cover letter

Dear participant

I am conducting research on teacher leadership and the workplace for my Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). The topic is *When the sleeping giant awakes: The lived experiences of IDEAS teacher leaders and implications for schools and education systems*.

You have been selected as a participant for Phase 1 as you have been through the IDEAS process and have identified as a Teacher Leader during that process.

> To participate in this phase of data collection, please provide a written response to the questions attached to this letter.

> Estimated time of completion: 30-45 minutes.

Submission of your written response to me will be taken as your consent to participate. As I am the sole researcher for this study and I am bound by a Code of Ethics for researchers, you can be assured that your details and any information supplied will be strictly confidential and anonymity preserved.

From these written responses, I will be selecting 10 participants for further interviews on this topic. If selected for interview, you will need to commit to approximately one to two hours of your time – the process will consist of a semi-structured interview where a framework for discussion will be provided beforehand. The interview will take the form of a conversation facilitated by me, talking to you, face-to-face or via telephone or Skype (due to the geographical distribution of possible participants). Also note, even if an expression of interest in participation is submitted, that you still may withdraw from the research at any time.

The benefit of participation for you is that you may like to record your own personal biography and involvement in the project as evidence of professional reflection and sharing for Standard 7.4, National Professional Standards for Teachers (2011): *Professional Engagement – Engage with professional teaching networks and broader communities: Take a leadership role in professional and community networks and support the involvement of colleagues in external learning opportunities (Lead Teacher).*

Please don't hesitate to call or email me if you have further questions or want clarification on the commitment required for this research. Thank you kindly.

Yours sincerely

Shauna Petersen (M.Ed., Grad.Dip.Ed., B.Ed., Dip.Teach)
Core team member, Leadership Research International (LRI)
Lecturer, Literacy Education,
Faculty of Education, University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba 4350
Ph: 07-46311192
Email: shauna.petersen@usq.edu.au

# Appendix D: Participant information sheet and consent form



# University of Southern Queensland

## The University of Southern Queensland
## Participant Information Sheet

**HREC Approval Number: H11REA143**

**Full Project Title: When the sleeping giant awakes: The lived experiences of IDEAS teacher leaders and implications for education systems**

**Researcher:** Shauna Petersen

**Dear ……………**

I am conducting research on teacher leadership and the workplace for my Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). You have been selected as a possible participant as you have been through the IDEAS process and have identified as a Teacher Leader during that process. **I would like to invite you to take part in this project.**

**Outline of this project:**

To collect the data for this project, the researcher intends to collect written (or oral) responses to the attached survey, followed by further interviews with a small selection of participants. After analysis of the data, I'm planning to organise an electronic discussion forum for IDEAS teacher leaders more broadly to discuss the findings. This will highlight the emerging themes only and there will be no identifiable information concerning participants or their workplaces.

Your participation in this phase of the project will involve:

- Provide a written response to the attached questionnaire (if you prefer, I can phone you to answer the questions rather than providing a written response – please notify me via email or telephone if this is your preference). It should take you no longer than 30-40 minutes to complete this survey response.
- Post the completed written response and attached consent form in the enclosed envelope.
- If I would like to talk to you further about your teacher leader journey, I will contact you for an interview (this will be a chat with me, either by phone, Skype or face-to-face, depending on your location, and at a time to suit you). A separate consent form will be provided for this second phase once you are contacted.

**Other information:**
All participants are guaranteed complete confidentiality and any data collected will remain anonymous. Your real name will not be used at any time. All participants will be given pseudonyms and any identifying information (eg name of school, location) will also be given pseudonyms. Pseudonyms will be used in all written records and reports.

Only the researcher will have a record of who participated in this study and all records will be stored securely and confidentially. All electronic and paper forms of data collection will be kept for five

years (as required by National research ethical guidelines) and then destroyed. The data collected will be used in the preparation of a doctoral thesis and other possible journal and conference publications reporting on the research findings. The thesis will be published and available through the University of Southern Queensland library in electronic and hard copy formats.

**Voluntary Participation:**
Participation is entirely voluntary. **If you do not wish to take part you are not obliged to.** If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage.  Any information already obtained from you will be destroyed. If you choose to engage in the electronic discussion forum as part of a group discussion in the latter part of the project, then it will not be possible to withdraw individual data from the overall group discussion. Your decision whether to take part or not to take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will not affect your relationship with the University of Southern Queensland and Leadership Research International (LRI).

**Please notify the researcher if you decide to withdraw from this project.**

While participation in this project may use some of your valuable time, participation is voluntary and it is hoped that you will find participation professionally rewarding by engaging in the professional reflection opportunity. Perhaps you could even record your participation as evidence of Professional Engagement (Standard 7.4, National Professional Standards for Teachers [2011]).

Should you have any queries regarding the progress or conduct of this research, you can contact the researcher:

*Shauna Petersen*
*Leadership Research International (LRI)*
*Faculty of Education*
*University of Southern Queensland*
*West Street*
*Toowoomba QLD 4350*
*Email:* shauna.petersen@usq.edu.au
*Ph: 07-46311192 (or leave a message and phone number if I'm not available and I will call you back)*

My supervisors for this study and contact details should you require them are:

Associate Professor Dorothy Andrews    and    Dr Joan Conway
*dorothy.andrews@usq.edu.au*                        *joan.conway@usq.edu.au*
07-46312346                                                       07-46312350

Faculty of Education
University of Southern Queensland
West Street
Toowoomba 4350

If you have any ethical concerns with how the research is being conducted or any queries about your rights as a participant please feel free to contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Officer on the following details.
Ethics and Research Integrity Officer, Office of Research and Higher Degrees
University of Southern Queensland, West Street, Toowoomba 4350, Ph: +61 7 4631 2690   Email:
***ethics@usq.edu.au***

# The University of Southern Queensland
## Consent Form for Survey

HREC Approval Number: **H11REA143**

**TO:** Teacher Leaders

**Full Project Title: When the sleeping giant awakes: The lived experiences of IDEAS teacher leaders and implications for education systems**

**Principal Researcher:** Shauna Petersen

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.

- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.

- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.

- I confirm that I am over 18 years of age.

- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.

- I understand that I will be audio taped during the study if I choose to provide my response to the survey via telephone. The audio tape will be transcribed and stored electronically on the principal researcher's personal password-protected computer, with any hard copies stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home office. The audio recording will be deleted after transcribing. In accordance with national research ethical guidelines, these transcripts will be securely retained for five years.

**Name of participant**…………………………………………………………........

**Signed**……………………………………………………**Date**……………………….

If you have any ethical concerns with how the research is being conducted or any queries about your rights as a participant please feel free to contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Officer on the following details.

Ethics and Research Integrity Officer
Office of Research and Higher Degrees
University of Southern Queensland
West Street, Toowoomba 4350
Ph: +61 7 4631 2690
Email: ***ethics@usq.edu.au***

# Appendix E: Phase 2 Semi-structured interview Framework

*Information sent to participants prior to interview:*

## *When the sleeping giant awakes: The lived experiences of IDEAS teacher leaders and implications for education systems*

### Pre-interview reflection and preparation

In the survey data collected previously, a lot has been captured in terms of your experience - your teacher leadership role during IDEAS and your role since being engaged in the process. I'm now collecting data to further explore your concept of leadership and the context within which you currently work, and think about the implications for schools and education systems.

| Concept of leadership | o How do you see yourself now? What has enabled/inhibited this perception? <br> o How do you see your future? <br> o What is your current understanding of leadership? |
|---|---|
| Context | o Talk about your current workplace and how you operate in that context. |
| Explanation | o How would you synthesise or capture your experience eg in a metaphor, image or explanation? |
| Implications | o From your experience, what insights can you offer that might be useful for schools and education systems to consider? |

Following is a list of questions that I would like you to reflect on before we link up for a chat:

*Interview question framework:*

| Research questions | Semi-structured interview questions |
|---|---|
| Q1. (a) What have been the lived experiences of IDEAS teacher leaders that have emerged from a process of whole school improvement? | • Survey data<br>• Review experiences already captured from the survey |
| Q1. (b) What is the impact of these experiences on their **concept of leadership** in schools? | • How do you see yourself now?<br>   o What has enabled/inhibited this perception? eg further study.<br>• How do you see your future?<br>• What is your understanding of leadership now?<br>• How would you synthesise or capture your experience eg in a metaphor, image or explanation? |
| Q2. What emerge as **supportive contexts** for teacher leaders? | • Talk about your current workplace and how you operate in that context.<br>   o Who is involved?<br>   o What keeps you coming to work every day? |
| Q3. What are the **implications** for schools and education systems? | • From your experience, what insights can you offer that might be useful for schools and education systems to consider? |

## Appendix F: Sample email to accompany application to conduct research in Education Systems

Each Education system had individual forms and specific requirements unique to their education context. Below is a sample of the response returned to each system. To preserve anonymity, and meet the Ethics requirements of this study, the Education System application forms cannot be included in these appendices.

**From:** Shauna Petersen [mailto:Shauna.Petersen@usq.edu.au]
**Sent:** Friday, 16 March 2012 2:58 PM
**To:** researchandpolicy@███████
**Cc:** Shauna Petersen
**Subject:** Application to conduct research

Dear Sir/Madam

Please find attached a signed and completed application form for external parties to conduct research on department of education sites. Also find attached the relevant supporting documentation, as checked on the front of the application:

- Copy of survey (written response .docx) - Interview schedule will emerge from the data collected from the survey response.
- Information letters and consent forms for principals and teacher leaders
- Approval documentation from Human Research Ethics Committee (USQ).
- Copies of Certificates of Currency for insurance policies - professional indemnity, liability and student personal accident policies.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Kind regards

*Shauna Petersen*

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Toowoomba QLD 4350
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Ph: 07-4631 2699
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*Blessed are the cracked:*
*For it is they who let in the light* (Anon).