

*A Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
Doctor of Education*

*A narrative inquiry into the experiences  
of a leadership group working towards  
collective efficacy in a  
regional faith-based school.*



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***A narrative inquiry into the experiences of leadership group working towards collective efficacy in a regional faith-based school.***

**Abstract**

The narration of the inquiry is an actual account of a leadership's way of knowing their world and their relationship to, and within it. Inviting current educational and self-nominated theories to be deconstructed and reconstructed via their internal contexts required for their educational partnerships. Highlighting how issues of power and spiritual representation are central in the pedagogical shift, from self to collective efficacy which informs the educational practices as seen within a faith-based regional school. The work framed within a narrative methodology combined with an insider researchers' perspective, acknowledged, and built upon a coexisting working relationship with a school community.

The work carried out over a two-year period was explored through a series of conversations. Stimulating debate, enabling reflection in action and a reflexive practice to be explored by the leadership group and the researcher as a boundary rider to the leadership's thinking landscape. A landscape within the field text is one that centers and grounds the philosophical, ideological, and often emotional elements of the character's working schemas within the narrative. The traditional role of the boundary rider, is one who moves between fence lines, checking for strength and validity of structure. Here too, I see the role of a boundary rider as one who will be moving between the field texts, the rich dialogue shared and within the studies texts. Each provide a differing landscape of ideas, often setting not only a theme but highlighting the core elements that bound and curtail the ideas and stories shared.

These elements of focus were clearly annotated and prescribed in seeking and gaining Ethics Approval from Victoria University HRE-18-043.

The work focused on four core aims (which will be seen as the purpose or the intention of the inquiry) or questions of the inquiry:

1. Research and theorise the modes of pedagogical practice within a faith-based school.

2. Through the data curated, to assist the development of understanding collective efficacy.
3. To theorise the role of an insider researcher within the inquiry.
4. Reference a semiotic approach, thus enabling the researcher to unpack the conceptual threads of religious dogma.

Which in turn contributes to the human knowledge needed in supporting a development of an expert system. Which may be transferred to other cultural contexts and furthered aligned to the significance of education within a faith-based school.

The work produced four themes, a set of ideas, that is further analysed within the theorised findings of the thesis. These were not seen as constituting an end point of the research, rather a continued discussion for the researched group. Focusing on collective leadership, the work noted the impacts and tensions for what would be coined as a 'religious difficulty' as evidence within the researched faith-based setting. The work explored these ideas and concepts through a reflexive narrative lens noting, value in the concept and that learning is facilitated by knowledgeable others. What shifted within the work is not just the importance of time but rather the naming of the lived tension between the religious institution and that of the idea and ideal of faith, framed within an educative lens. It is these values and emerging trends or tendencies or working inclinations, that became evident through the field texts curated, to gain a collective efficacious shift in how the researched school could move forward in its aspirational goals for excellence, be it purely academic or fully immersed within a holistic / spiritual curriculum.

The work, in capturing the wonderings, and reflexive actions of the group, assisted a modality of systems thinking to be explored within the discussion chapter. Extending this thinking, constructed a dyadic mode of a re-imagined social semiotic artifacts, which is articulated as a symbolic key finding of the work.

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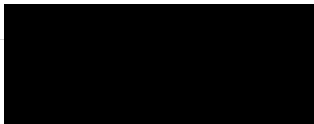
**Keywords:** Religiously, spirituality, collective, efficacy, praxis, habitus, reflexivity, reflexive, semiotic, pedagogies, discourse, socio-cultural, narration, entropy, and educational practice.

### **Doctor of Education Student Declaration**

I, Helen Schiele, declare that the Doctor of Education thesis entitled *How does guaranteed time and relational trust build collective efficacy in a regional faith-based school*, is no more than 60,000 words including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references, and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

I have conducted my research in alignment with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and Victoria University's Higher Degree by Research Policy and Procedures.

Signature

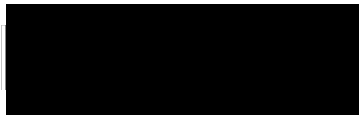


Date 18, April 2021

### **Declaration regarding Ethics Approval**

All research procedures reported in the thesis were approved by the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee and HRE-18-043 18 May 2018.

Signature



Date 18, April 2021

### ***Dedication***

*I would like to thank those who have traversed this storied landscape before me. Who as a guide have inspired and ignited my passion and commitment to the field of education. To the great explorers of the narrative of education, pedagogies philosophy and praxis.*

*To John Dewey, George Mead, William James, Lev Vygotsky,*

*Jean Clandinin and Loris Malaguzzi*

*Thank you*

## ***Acknowledgement***

*This has been a long and arduous journey, one filled with personal sacrifices and long periods of ill health and a worldwide pandemic.*

*Through it all, I saw this work as a calling, a work that I felt compelled to undertake and complete. During these years of inquiry, many have walked into my life, each leaving a footprint of wisdom, some knowingly, others by pure chance. Through this period of self-growth, as an educator and researcher there have been those treasured few that have been there for me, in my darkness and in my sunlight. Thank you to my mother Myra, a strong, and stoic Scottish woman, who instilled in me the values of never giving up and believing in oneself.*

*To my friend and guide Lynda, whose words of wisdom saw me in good stead.*

*To Irene whose sound counsel, navigated me through the toughest of days. To my loving partner John, who thought my words foreign at times, but listened with interest and warmth of heart. Thank you for standing beside me shoulder to shoulder and taking my hand when I needed that extra support.*

*Finally, my supervisor Dr. N. Hooley, a man of great intellect, humor, generosity of spirit and willingness to give of himself for the betterment of others. It is his belief in me that kept me going and helped to reignite my passion for my work.*

*For I was told ...*

*You are braver than you believe,*

*Stronger than you seem,*

*Smarter than you think and*

*loved by more than you know*

*Thank you all*

*Helen*

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## **Appendix One**

Survey tools and responses

## **Appendix Two**

Copies of Transcripts

- As recorded on site



## Prologue

### Organisation of the Thesis

I felt compelled to share an overview of how the thesis has been organised. To some extent the work remains true to the traditional elements of a thesis – including the following chapters.

- Abstract
- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Methodology
- Results
- Discussion

The thesis varies from the traditional format in both tone, and inclusion of an epilogue. As the author of the work, I will refer to myself, in the third person as either the ‘researcher’ or ‘narrator’. I appreciate that this modality of the third person, may be seen to academic by some. As an insider researcher, it was important that ‘I’ be reminded of a clear division of roles within the inquiry enabling me to be seen as the boundary rider to the living consciousness of the narrative being shared. It is a means for me to observe and listen with the intent to understand the group, through shared conversations. Seeing the work as pragmatist in method, the heart of this narrative is a plurality of truths. To honour the work, it must be acknowledged that within these storylines as offered by the leadership group, that there will exist varying truths. Truth will have differing meanings for each member of the leadership group. Highlighting the differing conceptual and subjective approaches to truth, eludes to the notion that there will be a multiplicity of truths in play. I am both a storyteller and a researcher, within this shared narrative, I am observing a series of beliefs that inform a notion of realism as evidence by the leadership group in a period of time. Clandinin (2007) sees truth as a key narrative dimension, that is it is intrinsic to any and all forms of autobiographical understanding (pp. 136). Given this work is centre around the shared dialogue of the group, it will be bound by the



conceptualisation of a lived truth whilst explore the narrative inquiry of collective efficacy.

Having settled upon a narrative methodology, I will refer to the participants within the work, using the following transferrable terms.

- Participants, Players or Characters
- Members of the leadership group
- Agents, Individual or Group

As this work resides within a narrative methodology, the terms 'narration' and 'narrative' will be used interchangeably. The work resides within a certain period of time and space for the leadership group. It was a time in which a state of relaunching the school's identity, financial obligations and leadership structure were dramatically changed. Living through this time I was capturing the story of the group. Within this work a narrative style has been developed, brought together through my own lived experience and knowledge, adding a further depth of contextual relevance, and deepening of the narrative being shared.

As a narrator, I will be looking through a lens of truth. For being pragmatic in state, allows the narrator the tools to note the metaphysical interchangeability of attributes. For these attributes within this narration, can be material or spiritual (singular) or a combination of both. Through the analysis of the field texts, (a term which refers to the collected data of the group) a consequence was the spotlighting of one truth over another. The experiential elements of the threads shared, oral definitions including the practical effects encountered by the group will be studied within the results chapter.

As I become a boundary rider to the shared landscapes, the funds of knowledge or fields of consciousness as William James (1902), described these sensations and attributes of learnings. For this is a lived tale, it is also one of exploration of the science of the mind. For the threads of this narration could be akin to the succession of states – William James (1899) referenced in his lecture: Talks to teachers - II 'The Stream of Consciousness'.

*There is a stream, a succession of states, or waves, or fields (or of whatever you please to call them), of knowledge, of feeling, of desire, of deliberation, etc., that constantly pass and repass, and that constitute our inner life. The existence of this stream is the primal fact, the nature and origin of it form the essential problem, of our science. So far as we class the states or fields of consciousness, write down their several natures, analyze their contents into elements, or trace their habits of succession, we are on the descriptive or analytic level. So far as we ask where they come from or why they are just what they are, we are on the explanatory level. (pp. 15 - 16)*

He continues to say - *In most of our fields of consciousness there is a core of sensation that is very pronounced. You, for example, now, although you are also thinking and feeling, are getting through your eye's sensations of my face and figure, and through your ear's sensations of my voice. The sensations are the centre or focus, the thoughts, and feelings the margin, of your actually present conscious field. (sic) (pp. 18)*

Engaging in what I have coined as 'pedagogical circles', which are seen as the day to day countenance of the educational landscapes of pedagogy, the culture of the self, the group and the organisation. It is the means in which knowledge is transferred within and by the leadership group. Being pragmatic in approach, allows for a narrative style to act as a series of indicators, of the spiritual state and of the temperament or present physical conditions as experienced by the leadership group.

In this thesis the term constructiveness, refers to the storied landscapes offered by the leadership group, framed with a mindfulness of the cultural funds of knowledge (Moll, 1992) and of the sensitivities needed to be awarded within a multicultural and multi-faith classroom. Ensuring the curriculum remains authentic, varied, and relevant to the cultural group and community. As Kouwenhoven (2003) stated, 'culture is an aspect that

pervades substantive aspects of the curriculum as well as the processes of design, development and implementation' (pp. 137).

The field texts collected, gives an account of a series of events. Giving the reader a sense of the chronological order, as experienced by the participants and bared witness to by the narrator. In being able to share this narration, with you the reader, provides me with the tools and language needed to share the story of this faith-based regional school.

Finally, the epilogue will be used as a devise to elicit an opportunity to relaunch, reimagine or extrapolate a framework that will allow faith-based schools to be authentic, and agentic to the curriculum and to the doctrine of the church.

In the acquisition of conceptional knowledge, what is created within the epilogue is an introduced semiotic framework. Which it is hoped, merits continuation of thought, testing the beliefs and values held within a pragmatic lens of a social semiotic framework. This will become an organising resource of human behaviour. One where the educational field is able to manage, and or control powers of conduct, which support and amplify the social and physical, linguistic, and cognitive approaches of teaching and learning. It is hoped that the framework becomes not one of constructiveness, but rather a series of abstractions that allow and or invite a collaborative way of being to enhance the collective efficacy of a culturally respectful curriculum being offered to all students.

### Introduction

I was born into what was then defined as a working-class suburb of inner Melbourne. Which saw its population, ranked as being both, low socio economic and from a non-English speaking background, commonly referred to, as English as a second language (ESL) community.

Growing up during the 1970's and 80's, one's identity was not shaped through one's own actions, but was commonly shaped by the power and voices of others. I draw upon these experiences, as a young Anglo-Saxon child sitting amongst a sea of faces and voices that were not from this land. For they would ultimately shape the person I would become. The values of respect, kindness and humanity were evident in the playground, but tragically were not replicated within the classroom. Student differences were always being drawn out, those who could read and write English, would be instructed to sit with those that could not. The suburb was a hotspot of multicultural activities, Mattes, retailers, and workplaces, seeing factories mark the skyline.

At the age of eight, I heard the below phrase uttered by our Principal at a school assembly, instilling a deeply held anguish within my own psyche.

*'Try your best boys and girls. And teachers, we know, you will only be able to teach these students to a certain point, for we all know, that these boys and girls, will all end up working in factories just like their parents do...'*

We were officially labeled as 'factory fodder' and as such, education had no real place, value or worth within our cultural landscape. I, however, went onto further study. Completing an Associate Diploma in Social Science in the Arts (Childcare), a Bachelor of Education, a Master of Education and now here working towards a doctoral thesis. All the while looking back, at that lost girl who was told, she would amount to no more than a factory worker. As an educator, I note that the curriculum of today, has made significant grounds in valuing the child's educational journey. It is often the cultural 'funds of knowledge' (Moll, L., Amanti,

C., Neff, D., and Gonzalez, N. 1992) of the child, can be seen as an enabler or blocker, as they move along their educational pathways. Operating within the educational space of faith-based schooling, and as an insider researcher, this work notes the tensions of honouring the ideas and spiritual catechisms of the religious dogmas at play. Noting alignment to the values, and aspirations as set out within the now reworked, *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (2020)*. The values written within the Declaration, are authentically aspirational and sought for as a current reality for each and every child. A wondering, is how does such a document translate into a national curriculum, that a) appreciates the funds of knowledge of each and every child, and b) ensures that this level of trust is invested, in the abstract capacity of a cultural context.

At the heart of this work is a need for a level of trust. Where the cultural and epistemological orientations and sociological positionings give rise to a theme of ‘double hermetic’ sociological knowledge (Giddens, 1990, pp. 15). This it is hoped will strengthen the level of trust, felt by the agents at play. Both in conceptual approaches towards their pedagogical praxis and meta languages, creating an expert knowledge-based system. Setting a guaranteed expectation and one that stretches the social systems within a faith-based organisation. Creating a time and place, where the semiotic resources (Leeuwen, 2205), and individual habitus generates a technological knowledge that evolves into a collective space. Enabling the child / student, teacher, and leader towards, a co-constructive perspective. Allowing the student to become empowered with the right to engage within a cultural schema that honours their own cultural identity, and contextual relatedness in positioning as a global citizen.

I come to this work through a realisation, of the importance to explore a collective efficacious pedagogical approach within the educational sector. The work has always been one that had an aspirational belief. One that sought to explore a moment in time, for a school experiencing significant cultural shifts, and thus reclaim or redefine their cultural and religious identity. The angst here is where does faith sit within these collective discussions? Further, where does the power of knowledge reside within the organisational structure of the school and church?

It is through the collected curated discussions, and the naming of critical aspects of core understandings of what is lived, known, and understood that may become an acute element of the paradigm between idealistic and realised truths. What this work seeks to achieve is to unpack the importance of a cultural, religious, efficacious curriculum that is collectively owned by all stakeholders operating within the school community.

I acknowledge within the writings, the role and importance of being an insider researcher. For this is why I actively fought to ground the work within a narrative methodology. In seeking to know and understand the cultural habitus of those actively involved within the inquiry, must be done within a narrative lens. It is noted and defended within this work that the field texts, due to the semiotic archeological attributes, cannot truly be defined as being one, or another. The meta-language used, and the discourse offered to and by the collective leadership group, allowed for an opportunity to reimagine and annotate the shared oral and symbolic artefacts offered by the group. With a reflexive lens, via discussions within the ethnological paradigms, a level of interpretivism, and observation in approaching the field texts as a series of questions, rather than a hypothesis was presented.

The term, collective efficacy will refer 'to the judgements of teachers in a school that the faculty as a whole can organise and execute the course of action required to have a positive effect in students' (Donohoo, 2017, pp. 3). Noting, that when efficacy 'is in doubt, teachers spend less on time on academics and are more likely to give up on students who do not learn quickly' (Donohoo, 2017, pp. 25). Based on this definition the thesis, may in fact, give rise to more questions. It is a work that disrupts thinking, rather than one that quantifiably announces a clearly defined set of empirical figures and outcomes.

## Chapter One

### Literature Review

*A narrative inquiry into the experiences of leadership group working towards collective efficacy in a regional faith-based school.*

*We are the archaeologists returning in the evening with their finds, and reading over their sketches, notes, and writings, seek to locate not only the subject or that object in a time, in a space, in a culture, but locate their relation to that subject or object, and join their own destiny to share those subjects / objects.*

Loris Malaguzzi

As cited at the Documentation, and educational research Centre Reggio Emilia, Italy

24<sup>th</sup> January 2017

Translated from Italian, whilst the researcher was on inquiry tour.

### Section 1.1

#### Exploring aspects of self, and of the educational and spiritual landscapes.

As a researcher, I relate to the quote above, seeing myself as the archaeologist, unearthing the attributes and qualities operating and made evident by the lived experience of the leadership group as we explore their stories. It is the unearthing of the storylines offered that it is hoped that the ideals of working towards collective efficacy can be achieved with the inquiry.

The idea of exploring a narrative inquiry, is one that has been developed over a period of time, and one that, as will be noted throughout this chapter has morphed into a deeper political, socio-cultural question. The quotation above, invited reflection upon the work.

As I gravitate towards this role, of an archeologist, peeling back the layers of the institutional dogma of faith-based and educational systems thinking. The inquiry is qualitative in approach seeking to enable a deeper level of understanding in how a school grapples with and works towards, a pedagogical approach of embedding a working notion of collective efficacy. Not necessarily one that enables the researcher or the reader, a way or means to quantify field texts through empirical statistics. But rather a means to share in the thinking, and connections at play between subject, semiotic objects and artifacts which influences the faith-based educational communities.

Having spent time with colleagues from the University of Edinburgh and as a guest lecturer at the Education University of Hong Kong, the rigor of the work was being continually questioned and challenged. Questioning that led to a space, where there was an awakening as to what was at the heart of the question. Could collective efficacy within faith-based schools co-exist within a harmonious and balanced relationship – seeking a level of respect between teacher and student or church and student? Or did one hold more power over the other, due to status or relevance held within the school and faith community?

What was it about faith-based schools that drove me to explore the tangents needed in shifting from self to collective efficacy, what was unique to them? I left Scotland and Hong Kong, with a newly woven rationale to the question. One that allowed both the breadth and depth of possible exploration into the perceived tensions within the religious dogma of faith-based schools.

Having worked with the characters within this narration, what we now see is a work that is evolving, into one where the environmental, political, and cultural aspects of the organisational beast, demand heightened attention.

The following chapter is an invitation to explore the readings, the works, themes, and inspirations that have supported this story to be told over time. As the reader, you are



asked to please walk this journey with a light tread, with a reflective lens, formulating your own judgment of the literature being shared as a narration.

In reviewing the aims, and ethics of the work, I will be working with four defined lenses as an extension, of the key questions posed, and will use the following to frame the literature review: -

Key Questions	Cited Sub Sections
Pedagogy both in practice and framework within the school setting	Pedagogy of practice
The role of, and the level of praxis – with key focus upon the architectural praxis of the collective leadership group.	The role of praxis
The growth of the group in seeking a possible shift from self to collective efficacy, both in terms of themselves as educators and leaders.	Efficacious states
The role of semiotic artifacts within a faith based educational school aligning itself with the religious art of faith in both imagery and language.	Recognising semiotic states

Table 1.0 Key questions and sub-sections cited within the chapter

The chapter will give the reader an overview of the emerging propositions cited within the readings, illuminating the pathway that has finally allowed me to capture an authentic retelling of a moment in time. A regional area - which includes all of the towns, small cities, and areas that lie beyond the major capital cities (Regional Australia Institute, 2019) faith-based school, which is developing a more complex, and richer identity, whilst balancing the faith and educational based outcomes within the life of the school (defined more fully within the methodology chapter). A faith-based school is one that teaches either the National or State curriculum and has a particular religious character or formal links with a religious or faith-based organisation as its funding or governing body. According to the Independent Schools website ‘many Independent schools are affiliated, with a particular religion or promote a particular educational philosophy. Some schools with common aims, affiliations, or educational philosophies, are governed and administered as systems’ (Independent Schools, 2021). *It is critical to note that the*

*religious affiliation of the school will not be cited within this work, as this will clearly identify the researched school.*

From here, I will be referring to myself as ‘the researcher’ as I wish to respect the role of an insider researcher, due to the deep interconnectivity I hold within and too the researched group.

### **1.1.2 Pedagogy of Practice**

#### **The disconnect between faith and knowledge from an educative lens.**

Section 1.1.2 will outline and define states of pedagogy of practice framed within school settings, under the operational constraints of a faith-based school. Facets of faith and religion will be defined and clarified as how elements impacting the spiritual and moral and cultural values of the wider school community.

What becomes a lived tension for the leaders within the educational community is how best to navigate, and contextualise the notion of a ‘good life’ within the mandated curriculum outcomes, culture, and pedagogical influences operating within the school’s individual learning landscapes. How does the school community tell and share their narrative, and funds of knowledge within these at times, opposing systems of beliefs, and values? Furthermore, how does a leader demonstrate, exhibit, and cultivate the aspirational values, of the parent, and faith communities, within a secular educational system approach to learning? This ‘religious difficulty’ it is thought by some, could be moderated through parental choice in enrolling their children into a faith-based school, which mirrors, and supports the family’s beliefs, and values. Theorists such as Bonnor and Caro, (2007) argue based on their findings that this trend,

*‘to seek an educational pathway more closely aligned to the family’s religious ethos puts our future generations at risk of becoming Homogenous. In Australia today, private schools continue to be subsidised by governments, yet remain relatively free from restriction’ (Bonnor and Caro, 2007, p. 29). This situation is unusual, and most other countries (including New Zealand, England, Canada, and the U.S.) either do not provide public funding to*

*private schools, or demand that these schools are subject to some degree of regulation in return for it (Bonnor and Caro, 2007, pp. 42).*

For the belief held by schools and educators, is that the religious dogma of faith will outweigh the social, and civic development of the child. However, for many of these faith-based schools, it is not only one of faith at play, but also the family's cultural backgrounds in scope. There is a genuine lived tension, and awareness by faith-based leaders within schools that to become a successful global citizen there is a need to upskill students with the capabilities to navigate relationships with others who are not of their faith. For the leader's role, within spiritual participation, and cooperation within the wider educational landscape, is pivotal in how the school engages within the wider community. Grace (2016) coined this as a state of 'advocacy of collaboration with others' (pp. 5). This faith-based school, it may be seen through the analysis, of the field texts that the elements of goodness, trust in humankind and solidarity are evident within the leadership group.

The researcher's own philosophical viewpoints have been shaped by and are closely aligned to the philosophies of Loris Malaguzzi. Claiming the rights of the child and in unpacking 'the Hundred Languages of Children' (Edwards, 1996), there was a true role for the municipality, engaging in a form of social, and cultural renewal that challenged the dominant position of the Catholic Church. This philosophy, in seeking out parental and child input, is key to envisaging ways to consolidate, and generate pathways of and to learning. What was always seen as an integral part of the educational system was the ideal that there was a place for the church in the educational upbringing of the child. That the entity of the church 'could give a spirit of tolerance, love of debate, the desire to analyse problems, and a refusal for overbearing 'evangelisation'. Further, there is the belief that 'religious experience must be integrated into culture, into expectations and the hopes, and issues of our times'. (Cagliari, 2016 p. 226). Here is an educational system, that has rationalised and positioned faith within the educational lives of the child, within the community comfortably, and with substance, knowingly appreciating the roles and consequences of operating within cooperative spaces.

In operating within this faith-based system, understanding the features of the faith of the researched school's beliefs, and values are necessary. The role of the church, within the researched school believes that by continuing to actively support schools financially, that they are providing a pathway of experiential learning opportunities, to a variety of families, which may not otherwise have been able to afford it. Thereby eliminating any economic discrimination in education.

The researched school has adopted eight core working principles as outlined below. These have been adopted from the faith- based commission that governs the school.

Within the faith there are eight core working principles:

1. Aiming for excellence, and the development of the whole person
2. Providing a thoughtful, and balanced education
3. Inclusive, and open – valuing all students
4. Positively affirming all that is wholesome in human life
5. Maintaining continuity with the past but thoughtfully responsive to education innovation
6. Pastoral care of all students especially those with special needs
7. Providing Christian studies, and promoting Christian values
8. Providing stability and reliability in leadership and teaching staff.

Combining these, with what is noted as being desirable, as Rinaldi, (2013) notes is being one that,

*“identified as one of the cultural places that can and must contribute to the definition of the concept of “new citizenship” by both acting upon it and developing theories around it. School is a living organism and a fundamental tool for a civil society. School is not a place only to transmit culture but to create it, to encourage critical thinking, creativity, and relationship. No longer can schools simply be reproducers of knowledge.*

*They are places where children and adults construct knowledge and their understanding of the world together” (pp. 25).*

This idea can be supported through the work of Gerald Grace (2016), who believes that all faith-based schools should be seen as ‘being open to others’ (pp. 1). Grace, (2016) writes, ‘in the certainty that the Spirit is at work in every person, the Catholic school offers itself to all, non-Christians included, with all distinctive aims and means, acknowledging, preserving and promoting the spiritual and moral qualities, the social and cultural values which characterise different civilizations’ (pp. 2). This could be said of any faith-based school. For a faith-based school can be seen as one, that services their community, that will influence both the cultural and theological concerns of practice. To become truly educative, what is required is as Grace (2016) notes is to operate within ‘a pedagogy of dialogue and encounter (an open pedagogy). Such a changed classroom culture would have clear implications for ‘being open to others’ (pp. 3). Further, that in ‘being open to others’, would give rise to acknowledging multiple-faiths and possible non-faiths, being brought into the classroom by students. This may cause a level of sceptical questioning regarding the core faith and that of other faiths, within an open dialogic pedagogy.

As an insider researcher who has experienced the tensions of working within an educational faith-based school, key strains that were observed, were perceived to be a chasm between the teaching of faith and educational guaranteed outcomes. These strains such as knowledge, trust, spirituality, and the role of leadership were all seen as catalysts of tension.

### **Exploring the theme of trust and knowledge**

The notion of trust is and remains, a core working concept of the work. Trust needs to be established by the group of players within the narration and will need to be acquired by myself as the narrator, in establishing a mutually trusting relationship to gain permission to record and annotate the leader’s levels of tacit knowledge. The work aspires to generate knowledge creation. Based upon the interdependence of the relationship between the

players of the narration, as the work strives to honour the knowledge and capabilities of the group.

Nahapiet and Goshal, (1998) states, 'trust may also indicate greater openness to the potential for value creation through exchange and combination. Further trust has to reside in the quality of the personal relationships that bind the parties through shared values and expectations rather than the intrinsic plausibility of the message' (pp. 255). It could be then suggested that trust is located in the individual's willingness to be exposed to another person's opportunistic behaviours without fear of appraisal. Seeing trust as one that is generated as an exhibited personal trait. A wondering, is in how the division of labor and roles within the leadership group, acts as a vehicle for disseminating the notion of faith as espoused by the church.

As the work is situated within a leadership team, in a school operating under the dogma of the church, and within an educational system, merits the exploration of where dyadic trust will sit. Dyadic in the sense of differing levels of operational trust based upon the perceptions of social behaviour, social and emotional cognitive correlations. Based upon the work of Schulte-Pelkum, J., Schweer, M. and Pollak, B., (2014). Trust is seen 'as a fundamental element in the pursuit of higher learning for its only through a sense of trust that students will embrace an empowering sense of freedom, and the exercise of this freedom requires a risk on behalf of students and their teacher' (Curzon-Hobson, 2022, pp. 266). Will this notion, that has been raised within such works as of Blau, (1964), Colquitt, Scott, and LePine, (2007), Mayer et al. (1995), Ferrin, Dirks, and Shah, (2006); and, Lau & Liden, (2008) be replicated within this social context? For education itself, is a social act, and as such operates within a relationship? All of which correlates to the notion that 'knowledge created by team members is especially critical to the effectiveness of knowledge intensive teams (Chung, 2011, pp 65).

Education is often cited as a system that operates in isolation, the old adage of give me my class, my students, my books and close the door, seeing teachers work in isolation (Mirel and Goldin, 2012) can no longer truly be operational in a world where the rights

of the child are paramount. Appreciating the level of co-trust evidenced within the group is critical in advancing an individual's knowledge creation. The work is seen to be interdependent in situation, for the discourse is jointly shared between the narrator and the players within the narration. It may be that the theme of trust, becomes evident as a social act, one that is a lived consideration of moderation within the work. As the work is located within an educational setting, it can be said to be operating within a series of organisational structures. Mayer et al (1995) (as cited in Chung, 2011).

*In team-based organisational structures, relationships cannot always be controlled by formal organisational procedures or policies and tasks inherently entail risk-taking. Since trust allows team members to expect social and economic exchange (conditional trust) and/or to perceive shared values and positive mood and emotions (unconditional trust) (Jones and George, 1998), such expectations and positive affective states promote knowledge. Co-worker Trust (Individual level) Knowledge Creation (Individual level) Task Interdependence (Team level), acquisition and transfer; that is, acquiring tacit knowledge that contributes to new knowledge creation should be easiest for those at the centre of a trust network (pp 67 – 68).*

Engaging within this type of research there exists a possible opportunity to construct new discoveries based upon tacit, confidential trust-based relationships. For trust, will be seen and should be seen within this work as a resource, because of the high level of interdependence required in establishing trust. Trust is then seen as both an attitude and as a behaviour. It is noted that trust cannot be truly tested here, as it has within other works of research, but rather through the discourse captured, and language used through the reflections offered by the players of this narration, may in fact exhibit elements of a 'dyadic trust' (Chung, pp. 67)

### **To trust in faith and the dogma of the church**

Berger (2016) explores the notion of trust, within faith. He attests that the opposite of faith is knowledge and that 'faith is trust' (2016, pp 41). Does then the teaching of faith-based curricular ideas within a school, avail the student of an opportunity to deepen their level of trust in knowledge and thus their faith? Thereby removing any falsehoods provided by the social consensus of the school and wider secular community. Berger (2016), continues to argue that dignity, faith, and freedom are all profoundly linked. Referencing this as a form of 'cognitive contamination, a process, where you may give up some elements of my faith that are not essential, while the core elements remain nonnegotiable' (2016, pp. 42). Does then the Australian legislative context, in guaranteeing a secular educational model, allow for the exploration and contextual alignment within a trusted faith-based school's curriculum?

In unpacking the notion of trust, it is also aligned to the working dyadic moderandi of the group. In holding to the national viewpoint of the tenets of religious freedoms, it may suggest that the notion of a relationship, to and with faith, is tightly bound to a level of trust. The notion of trust, within and of the church, may come into question as it is augmented within the educational State's system. It is noted that within an educational and religious setting, that there is and will always be, a level of hierarchy, accepting that trust in any relationship is both one of attitude and behaviour. What is then sought, when working within the narrative of a faith-based school, is to explore to what extent is relational trust between clergy and church, and between church and state, community, and student within the educational setting evident? How then, does a system invite students to 'reflect on a body of thoughts and immerse themselves in a communal life that seeks to live out its basic principles'? (Grace, 2016, pp. 10). Could it be argued that a trust in faith and in those who deliver the word of God, and curriculum-based outcomes, support the invitation of reflection of communal principles, as raised in the works of Grace?

Within the thesis, the term 'relational trust' has been framed by the influencing factors of the institutional and social constructs, operating within an educational setting. Relational



trust, 'is the inevitable result of repeated interactions with others in modern organizations. While personal relationships may be limited, individuals interact repeatedly with the same individuals, which leads to expectations specific to that individual or group' (Change, 2007, pp. 3). Trust can often be seen as an incidental operating factor and can be seen as one, with little or no value. However, trust that is shared between teacher and student or teacher and leader, can have a profound effect upon the others ability to flourish, as all are bound by a position of power and influence.

Taking a pluralist view of religious education, requires a level of respect for differencing modes of association. Truman, (1951) (as cited in Cerny, 2006) defines pluralism as 'a complex array of individuals and groups operates within multi-level state – and other institutional – structures with 'multiple points of accesses. 'These groups are inherently involved in a process of fungible coalition-building that is always at least to some extent in flux ('a great moving process': Bentley 1908) and they bring together multiple loyalties and identities' (pp. 86).

Noting the complexity of the leadership group operating within the inquiry, it might then be expected that the field texts, could indicate a meta-narrative within the teaching of values and scripture. There has been a number of studies carried out in the UK, within the Christian school sector. The studies of (Baker, 2013) and Francis, (2012) conclude that students who were exposed to religious teachings, demonstrated a higher level of personal and emotional well-being. Could this be said of our Australian students, in seeking out a strengthened well-being approach? As the work resides within a faith-based school, 'religious education should, among other things help, all students to appreciate that people who appear to believe and practice faiths very different from theirs may have something just as valuable in terms of potential for encountering the divine' (Davis, 2010, pp. 199). It could be questioned then, within a pluralist approach; how can an educational system 'teach' religious beliefs? This is not to say that faith-based education is detrimental to a child's educational journey, rather that the perceived religious difficulties encountered in delivering a balanced and conventional curriculum, may give rise to further tensions. 'Students need to develop some understanding of the kind of

relationships that they may obtain between one set of truth claims about an ultimate reality and another' (Davis, 2010, pp. 200).

In encountering the religious traditions of the church, seeking knowledge, trust, and a notion of justice, in accessing equity of knowledge, could become a significant exploration within the inquiry. Could the work become one of importance within the State and National educational fields? The researcher believes, education into religion is a continuation of education about religion. Seeing an individual's ability to understand via one's common concern for humanity, culminating in an education from religion. If the act of religion is one of social justice, does this not then align to the notion of collective efficacy? As collective efficacy, works towards, the betterment for all student learning outcomes.

Australian society holds one of the highest concentrations of religious schools compared to other OECD countries. 'Approximately 30% of all Australian Schools are affiliated with a religion, or 94% being an independent school' (Rowe, 2017). Seeing these schools affiliated to Anglican, Christian or other denominational faiths. The notion of delivering a model of curriculum which incorporates tenets of faith has historically been one surrounded by controversy within the Australian educational landscape. Religious education varies in each State and Territory, seeing secular approaches as a core commitment. It has and will remain a constant social act of growing interest and tension within a secular society. The very nature of espousing the virtues of one's faith over another, causes a juxtaposition to the core values of an Australian secular education system. The question to be explored within the work is one of future possibilities arising from and associated with the question, of 'how does a curriculum (Victorian or Australian) and that of the religious body sit in alignment?'. The hope is to have an educational system that is truly and authentically respectful, one that allows for the coexistence of differing world views, one that celebrates diversity of one's society. How do these varying perspectives, coexist within a system that is at face value accepting of all, but within the school's vision and mission statements align to only one faith? How do these values of trust and knowledge use the vehicle of the Australian or Victorian

Curriculums to ensure respect and equity for all within the current faith-based schooling system?

### **Faith or religion – defining points of tension**

In working with the ideas of faith, the researcher needs to define the attributed terms in faith-based schools, in grappling with the terminology used by the group. For often the terms of faith, religion, and spirituality are used interchangeably by the leadership group. Fowler, (1986 b) a religious theorist, provides an eminent definition of faith:

*as the process of constitutive-knowing; underlying a person's composition and maintenance of a comprehensive frame (or frames) of meaning; generated from the person's attachments or commitments to centers of superordinate value which have power to unify his or her experiences of the world; thereby endowing the relationships, contexts, and patterns of everyday life, past and future, with significance. Further, faith "has to do with the making, maintenance, and transformation of human meaning" (Fowler, 1986 b pp. 25 – 26).*

Fowler's (1981) notion of faith, is one that can be attributed to an individual's meaning system. It is the way in which the individual engages within a process of meaning making, as such it is not always, religious in thought or manner. It is that sense of the good life, that can be aligned to the notion of faith, and thus not religious in connotation. Faith is viewed as one operating within a relational state within an ultimate environment. That is a level of trust, in the seeing, and knowing of one's faith that provides the individual with a seen or sense of order, and a means of organising power of knowing one's mind. The ultimate environment is how we find order, and shape out our actions, based on what we see going on around us.

*'As imagination, faith forms a comprehensive unit of what we see in our ordered world, and deposits value, and power in it with regard to self, others, and world. Symbols, and metaphors can bring the shared images of an*

*ultimate environment together as expression. Often unconscious or tacit within a community, the ultimate environment poses a tremendous influence in a person's response to life' (Fowler, 1986 b pp. 24).*

The institution of the school disseminates the values of the faith, as such the term of 'faith development' as coined by Fowler, (2004 b) comes to mind.

*'Faith development theory takes seriously the narrative structure of life history. Here is found an unlimited source of field texts from which persons gain deeper insight into their lives and foster the development of communities of faith. In sum, the stages may be viewed as scaffolding for weaving the tapestry of meaning for one's life. The model for faith development is not a linear scaffold'.* (Fowler, 2004 b, pp. 11)

Compared to Smith (1995), who views 'religions as systems or structures consisting of specific kinds of beliefs, and practices, that are related to superhuman beings.' (pp. 893). Religion can be viewed as, a stable cluster of values, norms, statuses, roles, and groups, developed around a basic social need. Therefore, a 'religious life thickens, and solidifies community life, inducing a sense of attachment to the community, and its values' (Smith, 1995 pp. 906). Given the school is delivering two modes of thinking, one curriculum based and one of theology, that the above statement adds weight to the importance of acknowledging the role, that a school plays within the student's educational, and faith-based journeys.

What becomes the 'religious difficulty' for faith-based schools, is that one can be of faith, but not necessarily be religious. Or one can possess, both the elements of faith, and religious life, but not be seen to be living a spiritual life – thus not truly engaging within the act of being within one's faith. When the researcher considers the above points, it can be hypothesised that the absence of religion or spirituality does not mean, one is absent of possessing faith. It could be argued then, that even if a student is not aspirational in

embracing these elements of faith, religion, and spirituality, the student could aspire to a life well lived?

The final key term for notation, is that of spirituality. It can be defined as, a) the spirit of the soul. It is in the act of living of life, guided by the spirit of either faith, be it in the words of Christ or God. Or b) it is the act of engaging in meditation, prayer, the way one lives out their daily practices of faith. It is a state of being in the moment of reflection, and at one with Christ or God. What can be ascertained from the works cited, is that the aspects of religion, and spirituality, are actualised within the life of the school's community, and organisational structures, which all serve as elements of faith. Newman (2004) defers to Guralnik's, (1984) in defining spiritual as being one 'of the spirit or the soul as distinguished from the body or material matters' (pp. 106) and spirituality follows as 'spiritual characters, quality or nature' (pp. 106).

Faith is an individual act, spirituality and religion is a dynamic act of the organisation. It therefore suggests that the individual can be engaged in multi-dimensional layers of acquiring depths of faith. If it is believed that religion, and spirituality are the dynamic principles of teaching of the religion, how then does a school invite, encourage, and consolidate the faith of the student during their educational journey? What could be considered within this inquiry is the role of curriculum in espousing the values and principles of faith within the student's daily life and their level of interconnected activities within the school, and wider faith and non-faith-based communities.

### **Faith and educational learning outcomes, can they coexist?**

Victorian State education is referenced under *The Education and Training Reform Act No. 24 of 2006*, is deemed to be a secular construct. Within the Victorian (State) Curriculum there is a strong focus on acknowledging religious celebrations or festivals, and or traditions, giving students the opportunity to gain an understanding of the workings, and beliefs structures within the liturgies of religious practices, and faiths. Within the modalities of teaching, and informing students of the faith, core to classroom teachings is that the lessons delivered, ensure that they respect the principles of practice

of Australian democracy, including commitments to freedom of religion, speech, and association.

Operating as a faith-based school (the researcher has not identified the system or sector to which the research school is aligned, as noted previously as this may become a means to identify the school). For any faith-based school, this balance between teaching the mandated deliverables of either the Victorian or Australian Curriculum, woven into the elements of the faith of the school community, can often cause a tension or complexity in negotiating the breadth, and depth of the achievement standards, and outcomes, which are deemed to be an entitlement of every Victorian / Australian student. As such the curriculum enhances the individuality of the school through the lens of faith enhancing the perspective of world views held by the school.

This level of tension, and or difficulty is one that has been remarked upon by Australian educational theorists, such as Bonnor and Caro, (2007). What has always been at the heart of or seen to be a core founding principle in shaping the Australian educational landscape, is the notion of egalitarianism. A notion that has its genesis in the Australian colloquial landscape of a 'fair go for all'. It is this belief that laid the tenets that every child, 'irrespective of their family's wealth, ethnicity, culture or religious beliefs, should have access to a quality education that equips them to take their place as an active, and engaged citizen in society' (Bonnor and Caro, 2007, pp. 109). What could be coined as a 'religious difficulty' within the Victorian educational setting, is the balance between honouring the core learning objectives to support, the shaping of future Australian citizens, whilst respecting the diversity of religious beliefs, and traditions, which has shaped the multi-cultural landscape of the Australian community, is an actual lived religious difficulty or tension for some faith-based schools.

Within the secular educational systems, religion and education are seen as two separate entities, and as such religious teachings are seen to be taught within the Matte, or should be external to, the child's educational pathways. For others such as Pike, (2004) religion and education cannot be easily separated. Within a school setting, what is being delivered

is a curriculum that shapes the whole child. This is where the General Capabilities as defined on the ACARA website ‘encompasses knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions. Students develop capability when they apply knowledge and skills confidently, effectively and appropriately in complex and changing circumstances, in their learning at school and in their lives outside school’ (2021). There are seven core general capabilities, they are, Literacy, Numeracy, Information, and Communication Technology (ICT), Critical, and Creative Thinking, Personal, and Social, Ethical Understanding and Intercultural Understanding.

**The Australian Curriculum** (2021), <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/>

<b>Critical and Creative Thinking</b>	
<b>Elements</b>	Inquiring – identifying, exploring, and organising information, and ideas element
	Generating ideas, possibilities, and actions element
	Reflecting on thinking, and processes element
	Analysing, synthesising, and evaluating reasoning, and procedures element
<b>Elements</b>	<b>Personal, and Social</b>
	Self-awareness element
	Self-management element
	Social awareness element
	Social management element
<b>Elements</b>	<b>Ethical Understanding</b>
	Understanding ethical concepts, and issues
	Reasoning in decision making, and actions element
	Exploring values, rights, and responsibilities element
<b>Elements</b>	<b>Intercultural Understanding</b>
	Recognising culture, and developing respect
	Interacting, and empathising with others
	Reflecting on intercultural experiences, and taking responsibility

Table 2.0 The General Capabilities of the Australian Curriculum (2019)

These capabilities are seen to be 1) an entitlement of every child, and 2) the vehicle to add depth, and richness to a student’s learning journey. Availing the student of the knowledge to navigate their position within a pathway towards global citizenship. What

education does in fact, is to shape the character, the social, moral, and civic values of the student. The element of Ethics, sees students given the tools, resources and language skills needed to reason, make moral and considered judgments, learning how to way up individual rights, responsibilities, attitudes, and values. These are based upon a level of trust in shared knowledge and reasoning and as such may in fact become evident as lived tensions within the cited field texts.

With regards to intercultural understanding, students are made aware of the complexities, and attributes in shaping their personal, and community identities. Students are given a safe space to share their linguistic, and cultural backgrounds, drawing upon traditional artefacts that espouse the values, and beliefs of their personal cultural backgrounds. These are skills that support and enable a student to develop individual understanding to enable them to become global citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Personal and social capabilities give students the tools to make them aware of how best to support the social and emotional interactions with others. The focus here is drawing on the skills of being collective in thought, and collaborative in action. Drawing upon the individual's strengths, and core abilities, to ensure that they develop a mindful, hopeful, and optimistic healthy relationships with self, and others. Faith-based schools are battling a dichotomy, of how the system allows for differing elements, and concepts needed to be offered to a child in shaping their character and values - which Smeyers and Wringe (2003) defines as:

*'a time in which the future is not the consequence of a past and where what comes into the world cannot be inferred from what is already there. To be able to respond to such a future requires the capacity radically to expose oneself to question. It requires something different from a permanent movement of renewal, in which case it is immediately put to use and reinforces rather than interrupts continuity. Childhood stands not for what is possible, but for what is impossible. It cannot be realized, but its truth*



*can manifest itself. Confrontation with its truth, sensitivity to its truth, do not teach us: they change us (pp. 325).*

Moving from the spiritual and educational landscapes, to the second key question in framing the readings, that is exploring the role of, and level of architectural praxis of the collective leadership group.

### **1.1.3 The role of architectural praxis.**

The role of, and the level of architectural praxis of the collective leadership group will be explored using the work of Donohoo (2017) in support of the work of Kemmis (2008). Attention will also be given as to how the role of collective efficacy can be seen in shaping a leadership's groups ability to shift and empower student outcomes.

### **An educative framing**

Within the independent sector, schools have the right to choose between the State or National Curriculums. Within the independent sector there are some 132,000 students (Rowe, 2017 first paragraph) attending these schools, which are unique, autonomous, and diverse in operation. The sector encourages and represents the freedom of choice based on the social, economic, and philosophical faith-based needs of the child, and their family.

As a consultant, the researcher knows of the complexity of navigating a curriculum, and faith, are often compounded by the tensions brought through individual teacher's, and leader's own social habitus and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1990 a). This tension lives within the classroom, and can cause confusion for both teacher, and student riding on the boundary of the complex institutionalised capital space. It is through acknowledging these complexities, an opportunity may exist, to engage within a social act, that may allow a shift in, and deepening appreciation of the presence, and necessity to unpack the symbolism aligned to this tension.

In exploring the researched question, what is needed is an understanding of how does a Victorian faith-based school create an equilibrium between faith, and curriculum? For if the values of faith outweigh, what is to be delivered within the legislated curriculum frameworks, how can this become a lived truth for the student and how does a teacher reconcile this within their own level of 'pedagogical praxis' (Kemmis, 2008). If distorted in view, and in translation, can schools, and teachers within these schools create, and sustain a collective working efficacy (Donohoo, 2017) that authentically honours the holistic needs of the student (child), and the cultural communities within the school? Is it in protecting the time for leaders, and teachers to create a working habitus, through their skills and dispositions, (Bourdieu, 1990 a) to identify key working pedagogical philosophies of practice; that will create a collective efficacious community – is it the social actions of the group, that create these norms? It is here in these wonderings, in this reworking of what the question sought and placed emphasis upon, that whilst at the University of Edinburgh, a genuine need for the researcher, to see faith-based schools as,

*'a separate institution but as a specific, institutional situation of socialisation and of educational, cultural and political processes of responsibility for children, which cannot avoid offering to participate in building an educating society in which its contents and purposes can be debated, and integrated dialectically' (Cagliari, 2016 pp. 227).*

It is then the level of praxis, and semiotic artifacts that creates a reflexive, and social relatedness in building a trust, and appreciation of the cultural sensitivities. It is through the works of Mead (1929, 1934), Dewey (1916, 1933), Giddens (1990), Freire (1966), Bourdieu (1980, 1984, 1986), and Habermas (2003 b) that the researcher will become empowered to navigate conversations, and language raised around a culturally sensitive curriculum within a faith-based school. Such concepts of social habitus, cultural capital, pragmatism, and the notion of truth, enable a subtext for the researcher to work within, whilst disseminating the shared dialogue.

### **Discourse of architectural praxis.**

The researcher needs to view these framing pedagogies as raised within the research questions as the embodied qualities of the operating praxis, developed within an organisation. What is constructed and coded, is the added value, of faith within the educational system. Further highlighting the social practices of habitus (Bourdieu, 1972) and with the interrelatedness between the state of reflexive democratic socialisation, and of the epistemological orientations of the group, testifying to the mechanisms of truth, and trust within the shared language of the group.

Praxis is defined 'as an action that is morally committed, oriented, and informed by traditions in a field' (Kemmis, 2008, pp. 4). These are actions of practice that are both conscious and made with a high level of self-awareness. Kemmis refers to 'practice in one's field is not always a conscious act or informed act, one that is truly aware implicitly of the moral codes or social consequences of actions of the individual'. (2008, pp. 5).

In knowing, how learners know in differing ways, and of what is a necessity to be learnt, internalized, and reflected upon, is as McIntyre (1986), in Kemmis (2008 pp. 27) coined, 'the narrative unity of human life'. Praxis as argued by Kemmis, is one that is only developed through being awarded opportunity to engage in professional action, and reflection, done so through experiential learning. What is hoped is the wisdom of the group would enhance the individual's cognitive growth. 'Praxis also requires that learners deliberately seek to locate themselves in the professional field, and traditions of their practice' (Kemmis, 2008, pp. 29). Therefore, the researcher would argue that in developing a collective efficacious state, that the group must develop a sense of professional practice. Here too, the work of Dewey, and Freire, eminent theorists, place critical importance upon the shaping of the social constructs impacting the lived experiences of the individual who will educate others. The writings of Dewey are paramount to the work, with regards to his theory that education, and experience are linked. He wrote, 'I assume that amid all uncertainties there is one permanent frame of reference, namely, the organic connection between education, and personal experience' (Dewey, 1938, pp. 225). He perceived educational institutional systems, to be a means to

an end to transmit information, and skills to the next generation. As such Dewey believed 'that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative. Experience and education cannot be directly equated to each other' (1938, pp. 25). Developing a need for the teacher to operate on an experiential continuum, furthering experiential growth, seeing a level of betterment for the group's collective level of efficacious reflexivity. Ultimately being interactive, thereby seeing, the educational system as a new social order, as one that manipulates and models the way we think.

### **The relevance of pragmatism**

There are four principal concepts in the philosophical tradition of pragmatism based on the work of James (1908) and Mead (1934). The first, thought and learning begin in uncertainty in situations, that are ambiguous or dubious. Second, the outcomes of thought are habits of action that appease doubt. Third, the actions that resolve doubt also result in habits of mind that direct subsequent thought, and fourth, knowledge itself is productive: it results in behaviors, and beliefs that have observable consequences on our own lives, and on the mental as well as social lives of others. The role of reflection is one, of a schematic mode of interrogation and thought. For Dewey (1910), reflection was a means of storing past reflections, and a means to reinvigorate current knowledge. For the researcher the value here, is to enable the participants to consider and reflect upon their relationship to change, issues, and situational demands within the context of a faith-based schooling. As Dewey (1910) notes it is the 'duty of the instructor to help students discriminate what is observed from what is inferred' (pp. 87). Leading into a realm of 'social inquiry' in *Logic* (1938, pp. 503-04), what is sought in this work is to interact with a series of questions with certain types of inquiry, expressly aimed at 'the reconstitution of the very existential material which they are ultimately about' (pp. 492).

Freire's (1970) work, sought to empower the student through voice, and language. Even though the work is based upon the empowerment and capacity of the leadership group, they themselves can be seen as learners within this space. Freire (1970) in shifting the

notion that education was no longer seen as the banking of concepts simply, they become containers for what the teacher has deposited in their 'banks'. Freire believed that

*'knowledge, and culture are forever changing, and to be engaged in the act of knowing one's world is the greatest social human act. As education was sought to lead to action with reflection, therefore education is a state of praxis. This critical optimism leads to a strong sense of social responsibility, and of engagement in the task of transforming society'* (Freire, 1973, pp. 53).

What was sought, was to create a state of action in knowing, and knowing in action. To know in action, suggests that one has the capability to rationalise, and analyse experiences. Freire (1973) notes the importance of citing the affecting, and or attributing cognitive developments – noting the importance of the meta cognitive and subconscious reasoning. For here it is the work of Vygotsky (1978), who placed emphasis on the social factors contributing to the cognitive development of the individual's mindset, based on the premise that cognitive development will vary across cultural influences.

To draw upon the ancient Greeks, Aristotle (384- 322 BC) characterised education as a form of narration. Including a series of players, who enable a platform for the learner to bear witness to the testimonies of the lived experiences from the lens of truth sharing, disseminated by the teacher. In this case the teacher was perceived as an actor, the virtuous person aiming to do what is good for humankind within this tale of truth. However, the actor does not act alone they are influenced by and respond in relation to others. Kemmis writes on the importance of seeing both praxis, and practice as being influenced by the lived experience, demanding 'creative thinking, care, compassion and critical consciousness (Kemmis, 2008, pp. 5). These are referred to as extra-individual conditions. The wondering here in the realm of knowing in action, is to what extent does the individual's cultural, socio-political, religious self, become an influencing factor in developing the theory of pedagogical practice?

We know we are social beings, operating within a society, framed by, and affected by our social relations. It is here that the notion of the 'social macro-subject' (pp. 38) as raised by Habermas (2003) argues, 'that society can be superior to the individual – to compel people to understand the world in particular ways or coerce them into accepting whatever the state might want people to accept' (pp. 38). For the researcher this is case in point in enacting the role of the church and of delivering a faith-based influenced curriculum. 'Giving the individual the right of human agency is to see both the individual in 'mutual constitution' (Kemmis, 2008, pp. 38.) with society and culture. Within this work sits an educational system that can be seen as being coerced by the language and traditions of the church.

If the researcher accepts this concept, then what becomes of importance, is the notion that the educator becomes a bi-product of their own lived circumstances. Moll, (1992) defines the key 'term "funds of knowledge" as the skills, and knowledge that have been historically, and culturally developed to enable an individual or household to function within a given culture' (pp. 133). Moll further argues that integrating funds of knowledge into classroom activities creates a richer, and more-highly scaffolded learning experience for students. The work of Moll (1992) drew attention to the importance of the role of the lived experience of the individual, their work experiences of their families, and their social, and cultural experiences. It is here where knowing and understanding the knowledge base of those whom you educate and work with, are critical in navigating the pathways of cognitive growth, and development of the praxis of the self, and the group. What will be critical to this work, is the way in which the researcher, will a) be able to adapt the funds of knowledge of the group to gain a deeper appreciation of what they bring to the collective group, b) understand why this is important, to the individual practitioner, and c) how these shared fundamental principles of knowledge, and lived experiences will become evident within this captured narration. Kemmis (2008) describes these influencing antecedents as the 'meta practices' (pp. 58). Some educators, but not all may be fully immersed by the lived experience, and by those around them, but others may only be influenced by the possibility of practice in forming a state of individual praxis.

Kemmis (2008) characterises, these operating elements, as ‘dispositions’ (pp. 40). The first as noted, is the *episteme* – which ‘is the attainment of truth’ (pp. 15), developed through, and formed by the engagement of others, within the cultural, traditional theoretical aspects of knowledge that forms current educational practice. The second is the *techné*, as stated above the acquirement of skills, and knowledge of one’s practice, based upon the exposure to and by other methodologies of practice. The third is the disposition of *phronesis*. Which is one, where the educator becomes empowered and is enabled based upon sound empirical reasonings, and prudent actions, to enact, and effect socially moral political judgments, shaping the view of the greater good. Noting what is good for humankind, what is good for the student within the class and school community, finally shaping their own critical dispositions. All developed and refined through a modality of engagement. As previously stated, a school is seen as a living system, giving space and permission to become critical, and reflective in processing topics and social movements, and debates affecting the current socio-political educational landscapes.

In an educator in being fully cognisant, and operational within a modality of systems thinking, active discussion and participation, in professional conversation is critical to the cognitive development to the wider group, and individual. Kemmis (2008) adds to this notion

*‘for enhancing professional growth that the educator must acquire knowledge, and understanding from others who have gone before, and from others in their local, and professional communities. The educator is continuously made and remade through these encounters through her or his own experience, and through learning from the experience of others’ (pp. 41).*

To become professional, there is always an expectation that one is engaged within an active conversation, aspiring to gain further relevant knowledge. Thereby being able to participate, as a fully informed participant, within an educational debated landscape. This act of becoming an active professional participant, in a cultural discursive

communication, is leading the educator towards a state of emancipation. Practice is then based upon the philosophical, sociological, psychological, curriculum, and current educational theories.

It is the ability to communicate that allows educators, and the collective group to become operational within an 'intersubjective space', as coined by Habermas (2003). He referenced this as the logos of language, which exemplifies the sovereignty of the intersubjective space, justifying the subjectivity of the individual educator. Kemmis cites the following statement as penned by Habermas (2003) as cited in Kemmis (2008)

*The logos of language escapes our control, and yet we are the ones, the subject capable of speech, and action, who reach an understanding with one another in the medium. It remains our language. The unconditionness of truth, and freedom is a necessary presumption of our practices, but beyond the constituents of our form of life they lack any ontological guarantee. (pp. 42.)*

This ability to enter the logos of language, suggests that the educator possesses a state of *theoria of praxis*. Which is the attainment of a level of knowledge that allows the educator to understand the world. Given we are all human, we are therefore social in being, and as such any professional relationship is socially formed. Alongside the social interplay is the impact of the material economic formation or action, and reaction. For education is a social construct, and as such is operating within the political economies at play. This is often beyond the controls of the school but also may be impacted by the social, cultural, and economic status of the parental community attending the school.

### **Habitus of communities of practice**

The cultural diversity of any given educational institution reflects the characteristics of practice, skills, knowledge, and social connections in play or what is referenced as integrative practices. Here the importance of the language of the group, acts as an orientating dynamic to locate the educators within a social context. This not only



socialises the learning, but grounds it within a cultural context, which then creates the community of practice. Kemmis (2008) refers to the work of Leve, and Wenger to provide a definition of a community of practice.

*A community of practice is an intrinsic condition for the existence of knowledge, not least because it provides the interpretive support necessary for making sense of its heritage. Thus, participation in the cultural practice in which any knowledge exists is an epistemological principle of learning. The social structure of this practice, its power relations, and conditions for legitimacy define possibilities for learning ... knowledge within a community of practice, and ways of perceiving, and manipulating objects are encoded in artifacts. (pp. 54)*

Within the work of Leve, and Wegner (1991) they locate both learning, and practice in cultural, social, and material forms, based upon the impact, and aptitude of the individual's knowledge, and identity to and with practice, this builds upon the DuFour's (2010) work in establishing a Professional Learning community (PLC) as referenced within the Adaptive Schooling Model of Garmston and Wellman (2013). The works of Bourdieu (1986), in situating the individual habitus within the landscapes of social, cultural, and economic frames holds relevance. There is a universal sense that within any faith-based system of education that the vision, and mission of the school, and thus the religion operating within will have devised core values, and principles aligned to the curriculum offered. Within the inquiry the researcher seeks to align the work of Kant (*Critique of Pure Reason*, 1781), and Bourdieu within the concepts of 'Synthetic A Posteriori', and 'Symbolic – Cultural Capital'. Whilst the work of Kant (1781) reflects upon the impact of conditional experience, to shape an individual's cognitive thoughts, it is Bourdieu (1986), who defined an individual's social class. Social positioning and culture based upon the individual's level of knowledge, and educational experience. Shape an individual's cognitive thoughts, and reasoning, thus becoming our 'cultural capital' all of which adds depth of rigor and relevance to annotating and understanding the funds of knowledge exhibited and explored within the narration of the inquiry.

Bourdieu (1990 a) would refer to teachers, and leaders as being ‘agents’, who come to the field of education with a personal, and organisational map. The school itself is a multidimensional field. The workplace, the social groupings, and the friendship groups existing within the space, alert the researcher to the habitus that the agent brings with them. The existence of the habitus predetermines the behavior of the agent within the field (the school). Bourdieu (1990b) described, habitus, ‘as a product of history, producing individual, and collective practices, which in turn produce more history, framed within an accordance of the schemas generated by historical events’ (pp. 54). Given our dependency upon our human memory the notion of habitus fits within a narrative inquiry. The ‘habitus’ in this case will be the resources, and the combination of the amount of type of capital each agent has. The capital operating within the field is a social, and cultural one, which transforms into the symbolic capital, and dictates the position in which the agent enters the field.

In ascertaining the importance of architectural praxis, what is questioned, is how a level of praxis can enable a practitioner to move from self to collective efficacy, in regard to their own teaching practices and their operational stature within a leadership group. What are the enablers needed to occupy this level of practice?

### **Exploring the relevance and importance of Language**

In all these points raised within the lens of praxis, there is one overarching ideal, that all are evidenced by, created by, and influenced by the social relatedness enacted with, and by the other, within the life of the educator’s professional practice. In all these formulating relationships, the core operating ideal is the notion of trust.

Humankind within society operates within a new social type, the ‘information society’ or ‘consumer society’. For the work of Giddens (1990) refers to this as ‘post modernity’. Giddens, defines society, as a ‘course of ambiguous notions referring both to the social association in a generic way, and as distinct system of social relations’ (pp. 12). The researcher will attempt to reference society within the lens of social relations. Within

these social relations lay the notion, and value of trust, seen here as one operating within an abstract capacity. Giddens (1990) defines trust in the following statement:

*'it expresses the feeling that there exists between our idea of a being, and the being itself a definite connection, and unity, a certain consistency in our conception of it, an assurance, and lack of resistance in the surrender of the Ego to this conception, which may rest upon reasons, but is not explained by them'. 'Trust in short, is a form of faith, in which the confidence vested in probable outcomes expresses a commitment to something rather than just a cognitive understanding'. All of which, operate within an 'expert system – systems of technical accomplishment of professional expertise that organise large areas of the material, and social environments (pp. 27) noting that within this work, the social environment is located within a faith-based school.*

What may appear within the inquiry as a religious difficulty or tension is the notion that this element of trust is based upon a faith of belief, that all will operate as it is supposed to be. It is the attitude of trust which will play a key role in identifying the character's habitus. This narration seeks to enact the capabilities of praxis, and collective efficacy within a community of practice.

What is first needed to understand in approach and use of dialogue, as a key feature running throughout the research, is to diagnose if the organisation has a 'learning disability', as coined by (Senge, 1990, pp. 17). There are seven learning disabilities that prevent an organisation from learning, moving forward or experiencing success.

1. I am my position
2. The enemy is out there
3. The illusion of taking charge
4. The fixation of events
5. All of which have a time
6. The parable of the boiled frog
7. The delusion from learning from experience

#### 8. The myth of the management team (pp. 17 – 21)

Within this modality of thinking it is the ways and means of bringing together, the vision, mission, and aspirational goals for the organisation whilst seeing the benefits for the individual within a growth-mindset (Dweck, 2006). In noting the patterns of change the group / organisation can note the causality of the group's actions and note the multiplicity of effects. Feedback is crucial in ensuring that the group remains to the task at hand and that agreed outcomes remain relevant and realistic. For those in the educational field, it is one that offers an opportunity to engage within the human capacity to create and operate within a modality of generative processes. As schools are deemed to be places that shape students for lifelong learning pathways, should then schools not be seen, to be not only adaptive, but as an organisation, with the capacity to shape future growth and learning outcomes for all involved within the school community. As Senge (1990) cites that team learning 'is a collective discipline' (pp. 221).

In gathering these ideas together, the researcher is mindful of the work of Shotter (1993), who coined the term 'social construction of the mind'. Based upon Vygotsky's (1978) theories of the internalization of higher psychological functions, 'that by its very existential nature the subjective psyche is to be localized somewhere between the organism, and the outside world on the borderline separating these two spheres of reality' (Shotter, 1993, pp. 105). The researcher is aware in order to be fully cognisant of the working inner psyche of the group, there is a need to be attentive to the language of the semiotic, and reflexive states of being, to authentically weave the narrative being shared with, and by the group.

#### **Modalities of dialogue and the power that within it.**

The researcher's perspective has been significantly influenced by her formative training and educational roles in the traditionally female dominated workforce of early childhood education. This lived experience has shaped the researcher into one who is proud to call herself a feminist. 'Feminist methodology is not a particular method of doing research but an approach that emphasises inclusion, fairness, and humaneness, as well as the

pursuit of all evidence that can be used to transform society and women's lives.' (Hughes and Kroehler, 2008, pp. 29).

Power is considered as a byproduct of agency. This assumption leads to the view that each of the characters within the inquiry comes to the scene with agency and a means to enact that power within the group of leaders, and within the wider school community. According to Foucault, 'power is not something that can be, acquired, seized, or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip away; power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian, and mobile relations'. (Foucault, 1980, pp. 94). He further states that 'power, comes from below; that is, there is no binary, and all-encompassing opposition between rulers, and ruled as the root of power relations ...no such duality extending from the top down' (pp. 94).

Poststructuralism, according to (St. Pierre and Pillow, 2000) who offers a method for examining the functions and effects of any structure or grid of regularity that we put into place, including that which poststructuralism itself might create. Through examination and 'questions that are carefully crafted by the researcher who is in total control of their transcribed words and this "decontextualized interview text which is transformed through the coding process becomes that from which the conventional researcher constructs his or her story' (pp. 241) both modernist and postmodernist structures for viewing and analysing evidence exists. Aligning this work to that of the grand or metanarrative (Habermas, 1982) and (Lyotard, 1979/1993) assuming a poststructural theorisation of questions. Embedded within a discourse of postmodernity, poststructural theorising allows for 'questions interrogating the production of contextual meanings replace questions of knowledge or truth' (Barrett, pp. 80). It avails both the researcher and the reader of the work an opportunity to question, how we know what we know. The work to remain authentic to the narrative, must spotlight the positioning of the discourse and its functionality within the narrative is anticipated to become of critical importance to the work.

Questions such as:

- Which storylines are relevant within the narrative? (what are the leaders within the group sharing with the researcher, what are their essential narratives for further exploration)
- Whose interests are being served within this narration.
- What social meanings can be constructed and examined within the narration?
- What does the social meaning signify in relation to the theme of power?

Based on the work of Barrett (2005) further questions for consideration could be offered, although challenging and stimulating in their own right provide another program, post research or lens to critical incorporate in the discussion chapter:

- What is the cultural narrative offered through the use of language?
- What does this encompass for the characters within the narration and for the researcher, and how did they come to have this knowledge?
- What structures and privileges do the processes of objective evaluation support?
- What kind of knowledge does the work privilege?
- Who does it allow to succeed?
- For whom does it ensure failure for?

Within a poststructuralist view, it can be argued with reference to the work of Weedon (2004), that the character within the narration could be seen as 'subjects of cultural narratives, or storylines, thus poststructuralists reference subjectivity rather than identity. Subjects cannot claim to be authors of their ideologies' (as cited in Barrett, 2005, pp. 83). Poststructuralist agency does, however, 'acknowledge that we may be able to take up discourses that disrupt hegemonic cultural narratives, and given that language and practice produce structure, words and actions can be turned against those very structures they produced' (Davies, 2000a pp. 55). It does in fact avail the researcher accordingly an opportunity to review how these storylines have been acquired within the work. Lather (2000) suggests, feminist poststructuralism 'does not aim for mastery or "victory narratives," but instead, is a kind of self-wounding laboratory for discovering the rules by which truth is produced' (pp. 305).

McKenzie, (2002) concentrated the value, and challenges of feminist poststructural theorising for environmental education. Poststructuralism, according to Pierr and Pillow (2000) offers ‘critiques, and methods for examining the functions, and effects of any structure or grid of regularity that we put into place, including that poststructuralism itself might create’ (pp. 6). Here the postmodern notion of incredulity towards metanarratives (Lyotard, 1979/1993) does not assume that narratives are shared, rather become a combined cultural narrative, which are socially constructed. The use of a poststructural approach (as noted above) or understandings within this work, allows for another construct to be formatted within a modernist’s linear or fluid progression of open investigation.

Through the use of narration, the importance of dialogue and discourse, provides a means in which to review, and analyse cultural narratives. These include structures of notions such as humanism, critical pedagogy, modernism, and ‘scientism’ (Olson, 2008) which are produced, regulated and productive of the shared narration within the educational faith-based systems. Poststructural theorising allows the questioning of what is assumed to be normal or common sense may not be the lived or actual reality (Kumashiro, 2004 and Weedon, 2004). Embedded within this ideal of a poststructural theory, is an opportunity to weave a multiplicity of discourses into the work, seeing the ‘power of discourse to disrupt its effects and reposition ourselves’ Davies, 2000 b (as cited in Barret, 2005 pp. 84). For this reason alone, the validity of focusing on such a framing of ideas, strengthens the use of narrative methodology, with the focus of discourse, and dialogue, for each in its own right brings to the work an experiential level of doxa Bourdieu (1972), which is the starting point of finding knowledge within the natural, and social world.

#### **The shared discourse of the socio-cultural and political communities of practice.**

Accordingly, the notion of review as mentioned above gives the researcher a means to frame an understanding within multiple lens of viewing the cultural elements of the group. Society as such, does not develop in isolation, rather development is shaped by both the immediate, and larger environmental interactions. For the researcher the process of interconnecting and being in the state of ‘I – Thou’ as Buber (2012 - translation) coined

has been one of a lived experience. The social act of growing with, being supported by, and being influenced by the 'other' has always played a role in the development of the researcher's capacity, and formulation of the guiding pedagogical principles at play within educational practices. The crux of Buber's work is that 'we', as a human race find our meaning, and worth, through our relationships. Buber notes that the attitude of relationships operates on two levels. Firstly, within the 'I' which relates to the relationship with the use of an object, and or experience. Secondly, the 'I' within the 'Thou' is representational of a relationship with another it is not separated by, nor classified by discrete distinct boundaries. It is here that Buber, believed that the ultimate relationship was to draw us closer to God – the Eternal Thou. It is this ultimate relationship, which is one not based upon the physicality of experience, rather upon spiritual elements of the relationship, which is perceived within the 'I'. For the researcher the notion of 'I – Thou' was not perceived to be one based upon a relationship with God, but did however, become an exploration of spiritual connections within a philosophical pursuit of redefining pedagogical praxis.

The researcher concedes, the work may be seen to produce a divergent form of knowledge, viewed via a positivist (Giddens, 1974), interpretivist, or critical traditional approach to the work, seeing a notional role and function of discourse, as a means to an end. Being able to capture and draw out the linguistic semiotics (Saussure, 1991) employed by both the individual, and collective group of characters within the narration. As Bove (1990) explains discourse as a means to provide a:

*'privileged entry into the poststructural mode of analysis because it is organized, and regulated, as well as the regulating, and constituting, functions of language that it studies: its aim is to describe the surface linkages between power, knowledge, institutions, intellectuals, the control of populations, and the modern state as these intersect in the functions of systems of thought (pp. 54 – 55).*



By framing the narration within this manner of a systems of thought as noted above, exists a possible opportunity for the characters and the researcher within the narration, to view collective phrases, note the importance of silences shared into a transformative state of altered concepts, allowing for a possible revisioning of the unknown to a known truth. Enabling the collective to share in the value and importance in striving towards a collective efficacious state of being.

### **Responsive Leadership**

The above points cited, can be drawn under the educative lens of collective efficacy. Given this is a narrative inquiry, the work is centralised within the judgments made and offered by the leadership, effecting their capabilities and aligning the values and operating systems of both church and school.

We note within the work of Kemmis (2008) the individual teacher's architectural praxis could be seen to resonate with a teacher's sense of competence, thereby influencing their state of practice. The act of collective efficacy is a social one. Influenced by the socio-economic status of the student, the level of parental engagement and the student's level of agency. In ascertaining which one of these operating factors is the most crucial, there is one that remains a necessary constant, that is the school's leadership capabilities.

Bandura (1986) cited within the work of Donohoo (2017) writes, 'four sources shaping collective efficacy beliefs include mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and affective states. The most powerful source of collective teacher efficacy is mastery experiences. Basically, when teams experience success (mastery) and attribute that success to causes within their control, collective efficacy increases, and teams come to expect that effective performances can be repeated' (pp. 8). Another causal factor is the level of social persuasion, effected by and to the group. Reliance upon the groups working norms ensuring that all see each other as key and equally effective team members. Noting the social aspects towards ensuring collective efficacy also sees a dependency upon the group's motivation, performance and reactions impacting the overarching competency of the organisational group.

All operating elements can be seen as change agents which shape and influence the beliefs of the leadership group in affecting collective efficacy. In seeking a meaningful focus within the narrative inquiry, a framework for the groups thinking practices will need to be draw into the narrative, as a means to measure and or determine the groups collective shift of practice.

**Subsection: 1.1.4 The means and scaffolds sought to be efficacious in practice.**

The following section will review the elements of growth of the group in seeking a possible shift from self to collective efficacy, both in terms of themselves as educators and leaders. In being able to ascertain the group's ability to imbed or are enabled too, work towards a collective efficacious state, the researcher will reference a theory of action as articulated within the work of Donohoo (2017). Within this theory there are four key leadership practices that need to be committed too and enacted upon to ensure collective efficacy is an authentic state of praxis and practice.

Leadership Practice	Operating elements
Meaningful collaboration	What structures and processes are in place to enable the group to practice collaboratively? Is there protected time for the group to enhance their abilities to increase efficacy? Are the teams truly collaborative or are they siloed? Are all voices heard equally, or is one voice heard, thus polarizing the groups thinking?
Collegial relations	Conditions for independence - Freedom from scrutiny Ability to seek collegiate support and critique Ability to share in one's practice and routine What processes are in place to support joint-work and productive collaboration? Is the group's thinking transparent in problem solving to seek deeper understanding of pedagogical practice?
Empowering teachers	What opportunities exist for shared leadership? To what level can an individual member feel a sense of ownership and responsibility within a process of change?
decision making	What degrees of participation exist for a leader to effect change? From – assigned, consulted, shared decision making, initiated and directed and initiated shared decision-making levels of participation.
Questions to be considered	How do they come together as group? / How is this time protected? What does collaboration look like? What can be seen as a distractor to the groups thinking? What is the team's level of readiness? What supports are in place? What is their level of collective responsibility and working level of interdependence?

Table 3.0 Theory of Action – Leadership Practices in developing collective efficacy

In being able to constitute change this must be set at a collegiate level and not at an individual one. Donohoo (2017) writes, 'leaders need to set the conditions so that teachers feel the discrepancy between the current and desired states. The feeling of discrepancy will motivate teachers to take action' (pp. 49).

### **A state of reflexivity**

Reflexivity is the defining characteristics of all human action (Giddens, 1990 p. 36). Being guided by and made aware of what is impacting the causal behaviours of the group, within the system of a faith-based school environment the element of doing i.e. teaching a faith-based curriculum becomes a reflexive monitoring of action. The elements of traditional practice (of it has always been done this way) is a state of reflexive monitoring of action which is time, and environmentally bound by the structures put in place by the faith-based school. This is not to say that traditions cannot be changed, and or be adaptive over time due to the actions of temporal or spatial markings – all of which will carry importance to the collective community of practice, and the wider operational stance of the faith-based school.

The act of a reflexive state encourages social practices which are being constantly examined, and relaunched, based upon the sourcing of new, and received information about the status, and composition of practices. To be in a reflexive state within the inquiry would suggest that the researcher is not accepting of change for change sake but rather resides in 'reflexive monitoring of action' (Giddens, 1990, pp. 36).

In reviewing these ideals, and practices of modality, what will be sought, and driven by the literature in this area are seven elements of expert systems. To map out the juxtapositions that are operating within a state of reflexive modernity of trust could be transcribed in the following manner: Based on Giddens (1990), trust is influenced by several perpetuating systems –

- Confidence, and relevance of the individual behaviors exhibited within the group
- Time, and space

- Freedom of others
- Contingent outcomes
- Probability of love, honour, hope, and belief systems
- Symbolic tokens
- Level of correctness principles
- Relevance of the faith within the system
- Transformative scope, and sequence (pp. 53 - 54).

These ideals are complex and rich in the subtext being offered as possible through lines to the narration of the work. In weaving these ideas back to the operating elements of praxis, will in fact dictate and shape the characteristics and mode of pedagogical practice enacted by the whole school community. Here too, the level of praxis offered by the church through the doctrines and religious teaching will also be seen in play.

#### **The existence of doxa in alignment with collective efficacy**

The tension that is at the heart of the inquiry can be directly correlated to Bourdieu's (1990a) concept of 'doxa' – which are the rules that operate within a social setting, it is those (the other – the individual) within this space that judges and defines the roles of others within this space, and thus dictates another's status within the group. It is this concept of doxa that lays out the rules (the cultural codes) which will allow the researcher the opportunity to analyse the pedagogical practice in terms of social practice, to observe, and to conceptualise within the frames of an existing habitus. As such, habitus is the cognitive system of structures which are embedded within an individual (a collective consciousness) and are the internal representations of the external structures – imposed through the educational systems and the dogma of the church.

In analysing the doxa, the researcher brings to the inquiry a Kantian theory of 'A Priori', which in epistemological terms is to, distinguish two types of knowledge, justification, or argument. For it is the work of Kant (1785), and his stance on ethics (the idea of the moral or categorical imperative, thus people are not treated as a means to an end but rather their well-being is the moral goal) supports the Adaptive Schooling Model Garmston and

Wellman (2013) use of relational trust, collective efficacy, and collaborative cultures, explored within the chapter.

The notion of 'A Priori', allows the agents within this inquiry to openly acknowledge the inferences made within their own habitus. That is, to infer a reason based on knowledge that is causal in experience. This can lead the agent to experience a contradiction of 'A Priori', the idea to model the religious ideals of the school but when the experiences exhibited are at odds with what should be, thus a disconnect between the individual's level of praxis and the level of pedagogical practice.

There is an assumption as noted throughout the literature, that an experience presented in such a way, will occupy a certain area within the learning and systems thinking landscape. To draw upon the following insights under a collective term, the researcher once more returns to the work of Leve, and Wagner as cited in Kemmis, (2008), who coined the phrase 'practice architects' (pp. 57). Within habitus, there is the phonological logo, one that enable the archetypes of language, and discourse to be enacted, that is the way things are said and done. To reflect upon the phrase of a 'practice architect', offers an opportunity for the researcher, to explore and distill, what Kemmis (2008) refers to, as the 'meta-practices'. What power then is afforded to the teaching and learning of the curriculum within a faith-based school? For it can be argued that the element of faith is a powerful, cultural conduit in establishing the ways, and means that a curriculum is offered to students within the school, and as such creates the social, and cultural landscape in operation. These are the dynamic, and life changing consequences, that shape students' lives. Does the element of faith as an operational disposition allow the educator the flexibility, or give permission to be reflexive in practice, and critical in reflection upon the phronesis of their praxis?

In reflecting upon the effect of praxis within an educational setting, is seen to be one that is demonstrated by the individual. Praxis is an act of being consciously, and morally just, where the individual, is morally committed towards an orientation of enacting 'good for humankind' (Kemmis, 2008, pp. 42). Can this not be then seen to be a religious difficulty?

Some may argue that faith is not always just and may do harm. How then does a faith-based school embody agency, subjectivity, and identify in a reflexive state when the individual, and the group are constrained by the dogma of the church? Does this not then create a notion of self-depiction in formulating the notion of praxis? Praxis is also evaluated within oral, and social terms.

At this stage of the literature review the researcher believes that in referencing the importance in observing key attributes of practice architecture, may clarify the possible evident operating areas that relates to and constrains teaching practices. A further number of questions may arise to inform the field texts and discussion such as:

- What language, and theoretical orientations are in place that frame, and are privileged by others?
- Whose voices are being sought.
- What values, and virtues are expressed, and modelled within the life of the school?
- What resources are valued, and why?
- What is valued within the curriculum, such as extra curricula activities, and the theoretical orientations of the school?
- Does the school operate within a multi-disciplinary lens?

Based on Kemmis, (2008) work, the researcher may also consider, when consider what does the professional offering look like for educators?

- \* To build their collective efficacious state.
- \* To be empowered to make informed professional judgments
- \* Be availed a level of autonomy?
- \* To build responsive responsible relationships
- \* To reflect critically upon the collaborative lived state (pp. 279).

### **The SHALOM Model**

In understanding how these communities of faith could be measured, the researcher sought out a model of questions that would illuminate the thinking of the characters involved within the narration. A means to aligning their views of faith, to that of the school. The inquiry led the researcher to the SHALOM Model - Spiritual Health, and Life

Orientation Measure. This model provides a means of offering a series of questions that will not aggravate or will be seen to be subjective or accusatory. Rather it provides a means to give a sense of alignment to the level of faith, and the development of faith by the characters within this narration. As such to weave the story of the faith, religious and spiritual landscapes, impacting the communities of the school. Within the work, the researcher, will seek to challenge, and provoke (in the sense to gain reaction but not to be seen as hostile in gesture) the agents within the narrative by using a series of questions and statements as posed by the SHALOM Model developed by John W. Fisher (2010) (Ballarat University - now known as Federation University). 'The acronym SHALOM reveals its two components – spiritual health measure (SHM) and life orientation measures (LOM)' (pp. 108)

Fisher's (2010) work focusses on the notion of relationships rather than religion. However, in stating that, the working ideal at the core of his work, is that of the relationship of transcendence, and thus the connection of the self with God – the transcendent other. His underlying goal was to articulate these measurable points, as a way of knowing the level of importance in relating to God, thus creating a tool to enable the formulation of a level of sustainability, and one's ability to enact with one's spiritual wellbeing.

Fisher (2010) refers to 'spirituality as personal beliefs in God or a higher power' (pp. 105). What Fisher (2010) was keen to explore, was the notion of spiritual health and wellbeing. Where spirituality was described 'as the affirmation of life in relationship with God, self, community, and environment that nurtures, and celebrates wholeness' (pp. 107). What is of importance within the relationship to God, is the lived experience that the individual brings to the environment based upon their funds of knowledge, and cultural habitus. The researcher's attraction to adapting components of the model, in nominating several key questions for reflection by the characters within the narration, is believed to provide a theorised basis to the inquiry. Acting as a point of reference and relationship to the characters level of praxis and habitus to, and within the faith-based curriculum and school community.

Spiritual health or wellbeing is seen as a dynamic state of being, shown by the extent to which people live in harmony. There are five domains of health – physical, social, emotional, mental, and vocational, and four domains of spiritual wellbeing these are:

**Personal domain:** the relationship that one has with oneself to give a sense of meaning, purpose, and values operating in one's life.

**Communal domain:** denotes the level of depth of one's interpersonal relations regarding moral, cultural, and religious aspects of one's life.

**Environmental domain:** the sense of being at one with the world and natural environmental elements.

**Transcendental domain:** is the relationship one has with a deity – beyond human touch, and feel, a depth of interconnectedness with a spiritual being – God. (Fisher, 2010, pp. 107).

The SHALOM model is, therefore, two dimensional in creation, that is in responses sought from the characters of the narration were either an assessment of one's lived experience, or an assessment of the paradigm of spiritual wellbeing. The following diagram is adapted from Fisher (2013, pp. 328)

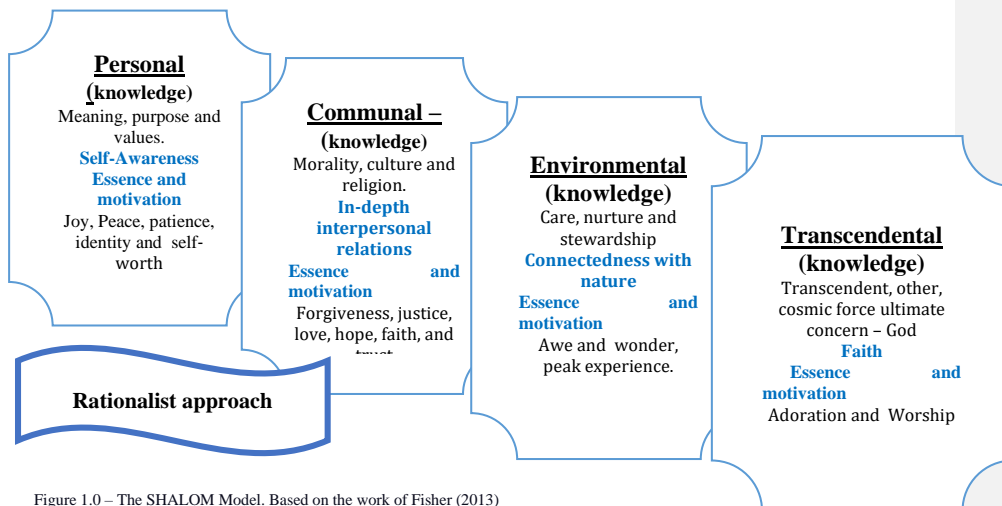


Figure 1.0 – The SHALOM Model, Based on the work of Fisher (2013)



### **Facilitating a culturally, and religious respectful curriculum**

Within all these ideals, values, and beliefs, the core aspiration is becoming a good person, living a good life. The Australian and Victorian landscape is one in which the social narrative is filled with a million voices from diverse nationalities, bringing with them their traditions, artifacts, stories, and collective memories, which shape the multicultural Australia we have today. Culturally responsive pedagogy is an approach to teaching and learning that uses 'the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively' (Gay 2002, pp. 106). Potentially playing a significant role in developing the high levels of harmony and cohesion within the educational systems. Societies assumption is that there is a respect of a multifaith classroom. What is the current juxtaposition is what is defined by Lingard (2007) as 'actually existing pedagogies' (pp. 246). Further Lingard refers to 'the dominant pedagogies as pedagogies of indifference or pedagogies of the same, summarised as being strong in care for students, but which mostly failing to work across difference and lacking both intellectual demand and connectedness to the world' (2007, pp. 246). Our educational system aspires to become one that is culturally, ethically, and linguistically diverse. The actuality is an educational system that offers a narrowly defined curriculum, pedagogy, and testing schedule. This creates a form of marginalisation of students, who are not inclusive of the norm and are unable to relate to the core values and rationales that sit within the Australian curriculum. Rather one that should truly acknowledge the value of embracing knowledge and an understanding each other's faiths, and values. As 'Australian classrooms are increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse, yet the evidence suggests that many teachers lack the confidence and/or expertise to engage with cultural difference in supportive and educationally productive ways' (Morrison et., al 2019, pp. 57). Here is case in point as the a lived disconnect between the cultural habitus of the students and in how this authentically weaved into and made relevant with the Australian curriculum.

Idealised as they are, how these outcomes are being taught and weighted within the class, amplifies systemic and often racially and faith-based levels of discrimination, often subconscious in act and language but none the less as harmful and depletive to the soul

of the child and the family within the school community. What is needed is an opportunity for the curriculum whether it be faith-based or not, to be delivered as a ‘broader culturally responsive framework, rather than being bolted on to existing colonising and assimilatory educational systems’ (Morrison, A., Lester-Irabinna, R., Hattam, R., Diplock, A 2019. p 38). Within a faith-based school there needs to be a ‘willingness to engage with society, beyond the boundaries of the community’ (Short, 2020, pp. 565).

For what is sought in an holistic educational system, one that offers a sense of becoming and belonging to facilitate the individual’s own sense of inclusion. The inquiry seeks to explore the complexity of the group in enabling itself within a collective efficacious modality and pedagogy, by the school, and community of the church. Culturally responsive pedagogical approach uses ‘the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively’ (Gay, 2002, pp. 106). The question then becomes; how do school leaders(ship) in a faith-based school navigate the tension between faith and culturally responsive pedagogy in the context of the Australian Curriculum? This is another religious difficulty, and tension facing our faith-based schools today? What is known within this work is that the culture of the system and that of the church influences the attitudes, values, and behaviours of key stakeholders. What is in scope is as Ladson-Billings (1995 b) highlights is in the importance of defining an opportunity ‘to develop students academically, a willingness to nurture and support cultural competence, and the development of a sociopolitical or critical consciousness (pp. 483) How can these tensions that may be exhibited and lived within so many faith-based settings be drawn out within this inquiry ? Thereby to ensure that respect and value is to be accorded to the faith of the school and community and to that of students seeking balance between learning of faith, learning of self, and learning of core concepts.

In acknowledging professional practice, the funds of knowledge, the histories, culture, and in ways of interpreting a lens of critical understanding of the group’s identity within the educational setting is sought for exploration.

### **Being adaptive not adapted**

What is meant by a professional learning and an adaptive community? The researcher entered the inquiry perceiving schools, as being both dynamic and living systems. A dynamic system can have two opposing faces. In differing circumstances contradictory faces or outward perceptions can be exhibited, as generally discussed within the work of Garmston, and Wellman (2013). ‘They can be complex yet have opposing elements of simplicity, and complexity within each operating face. As such schools are a living system, a living culture, that can create order, out of chaos’. (Garmston, and Wellman, 2013, pp. 2). It is being able to see the school as a living system, that the exploration of values, and beliefs held by the agents or characters of this narration, encourages an inquiry to expose, and shift away from the traditional default of established patterns, and predictable outcomes.

It is a belief that for every action that there is a reaction. As such, within a school setting, the learning space can affect and influence, the mood, and the quality of the educational exchange between teacher, and student. Working within a collaborative team, it is often a singular voice, one who is able to paraphrase, and respectfully encourage, and invite others to deepen their individual sense of meaning, and connection to the ideas raised by the collective group, supporting the collective efficacy of the group. Within this model there is a need for an awareness that not every member of the group must be influenced by, and ready to change within the system, for a systemic change to be affected.

Garmston, and Wellman (2013) note ‘what we most need to develop are the mental, emotional, and social tools for finding our way in these shifting landscapes. We also need new lenses to see the world not as a reflection of ourselves but as images of the many possibilities within the human landscape’ (pp. 1). This is done by exposing the leadership group, within this systems’ thinking approach Ghararjedaghi (as cited in Garmston and Wellman, 2013), referencing, four interacting factors in force, design, participation, iteration, and second order learning. (Garmston, and Wellman, 2013 pp. 4 – 5). All these elements will be drawn upon in provoking the leadership group to consider what is in, and out of scope, and what are the antecedents of causality of behavioral change, and or

display to enable a change within the cultural praxis of the school community. Especially in the area of second order thinking ‘is the adaptive learning that leads to more qualitative changes and requires challenging the core assumptions that are shaping behaviours (Garmston, and Wellman, pp. 4). This is where the inquiry aspires to sit within a conversational, and systems approach thinking modality, with the characters of this narration. First order learning – is delivered within the modality of developing new knowledge, and skills, which is often framed within the traditional guise of professional development, often quantitative in effort and change, seeing some form of impact upon student outcomes.

What is critical in unpacking the notion of collective efficacy, within an adaptive model, is having an appreciation of how the group works together, and how they will influence the ways they think about the work, what is of common workplace occurrence is what Dan Lortie (1975) coined as ‘egg-crate’. He discerned that the actual ‘work life in which autonomous teachers were organised by a culture of presentism, individualism and conservatism. In these schools’ teachers lived from moment to moment in their classrooms, and sought routines that were efficient, and energy conserving’ (Garmston, and Wellman, 2013. pp. 13).

Whilst on study tour the researcher cited at the Documentation and Educational Research Centre, Reggio Emilia, Italy, the following script –

*‘either education is a place of research, and the research produces new pedagogy, or it is the implementation of an offering that is delivered to (young) children, improving them within a message that is somehow constructed or coded in advance.*

The attributes of the adaptive schooling model are echoed in the words above, that education is a place of research, and to be in that place the adaptive schooling model has three clear elements. One, to be adaptive, that is being in a state of change, and clarifying identity. Two, to work within the set of dynamical principles as noted above, and finally

three, to work within a set of three guiding questions: - 1) who are we? 2) why are we doing this? and 3) why are we doing this way? These principles encourage the shift from self / personalised to collective efficacy, as explored in the work of Garmston, and Wellman (2013).

So how does a school enable change at an organisational level? According to Garmston, and Wellman, (2013) they offer a framework to enable this level of systemic change, operating with twin goals in mind. These goals operate parallel to each other, that is whilst developing the organisational capacity of the school, the school also develops the professional capacity of the teaching, and leadership teams. To break this down further, there are six capacities for adaptivity.

**1. Vision, values, and goal focus:** The goals and academic values the school holds, is an expression of the operating system that governs the organisational structure of the school.

**2) Systems thinking:** Enables practice to ascertain what parts of the organisation systems can be adapted for change.

**3) Initiating and managing adaption:** this is where the above three cited guiding questions come into play. ‘Who are we?’ ‘Why are we doing this?’ and ‘Why are we doing this this way?’.

**4) Initiating and using field texts:** A school can be field texts rich and be information poor. Need in placed upon identifying aspects of conceptual importance, to be used to cultivate and direct change.

**5) Developing, and maintaining collaborative cultures:** Occurs when teaching staff, and leadership feel empowered and have permission to accomplish change.

**6) Gathering and focusing resources:** Needs to include working aspects of the organisation. (Garmston, and Wellman, 2013, pp. 18 - 21)

The other side to this coin is knowing the importance of establishing the professional capacities needed for adaptivity.

A) **Collegial interaction:** Needs to be taught and modeled.

B) **Cognitive processes for instruction:** Being able to operate multiple projects and or multiple goals at one time.

C) **Knowledge of the structure of the discipline:** Combining content or curricular knowledge, with knowledge held of the organising schema of practice.

D) **Self-knowledge, values, standards, and beliefs:** it is what one stands for, modes of pedagogical practice, and philosophies of influence within the funds of knowledge of the teacher / educator.

E) **A repertoire of teaching skills:** Being influenced by new learning modalities, and semiotic artefacts to and of practice, continuing to strive for not just best practice but next practice.

F) **Knowing students and knowing how they learn:** In consolidating this relationship, distinguishing their learning style, and habits of mind, including aspects of cultural, gender, and faith-based attributes. (Garmston and Wellman, 2013, pp. 21 – 23)

These tools will be used to annotate the collected vignettes, and in analysing transcribed conversations. In establishing a working relationship with the characters, the researcher will draw upon, and have in place a set of norms, as based on the work of DuFour (2004).

These collective commitments are:

- Begin and end meetings on time.
- Stay fully engaged during each meeting.
- Maintain a positive attitude at team meetings – no complaining unless offering a better alternative.
- Listen respectfully to each other.
- Contribute equally to the workload.
- Make decisions on the basis of consensus. (DuFour, 2010, pp 16)

These will be seen to represent the protocols and commitments developed by the group to act as a guide in working together. As they are generated by the characters themselves, ensuring equity, and ethical codes of conduct are apparent, and recognised by all players within this narration.

### **Efficacious thinking approaches**

According to Garmston and Wellman, (2013), collective efficacy is a state of cognition. Based within the bounds of relational trust. ‘Namely, respect, competence, personal regard for others and integrity’ (pp. 17). Efficacious beliefs are very powerful because they guide educators’ actions. Garmston and Wellman (2013) noted that ‘collective efficacy is a variable that is amenable to change and that can affect teachers’ beliefs about their self-efficacy (pp. 77). If an educator believes that their beliefs, and values can do little to influence student achievement, it becomes an expected causality that this behaviour, and or belief will be manifested in their practice. However, where a school community shares a sense of collective efficacy, there is an increased possibility that the causality will be one of positivity, impacting student learning, and wellbeing. As Donohoo (2017) notes highly efficacious staffs show increased commitment and willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organisation also found that collective efficacy beliefs predicated commitment to the teaching profession (pp. 24)

Fostering collective teacher efficacy is an important issue within the research question. Enabling collective teacher efficacy is a desirable outcome of this narration, and one that is sought to be of importance in moving into the space of planned strategic efforts as the school reshapes their leadership team. What is critical here is in knowing of and understanding their historical or collective self, to be able to embrace the work of change and growth.

By wrapping the question within one of exploring the notion of ‘protected time’, based upon the work of DuFour (2004) it is the idea of protecting time for teachers, and leaders to come together to work in a collaborative state to undertake and sustain a school’s improvement. It is not the goal of finding the time, but rather of seeing how the group can make time. For when a school protects time for collaboration it will have an impact upon the culture of the school’s way of being and working. Donohoo, (2017, pp. 29) identified six enabling conditions for collective efficacy by the group they are cited below: -

### **1. Advanced Teacher Influence**

Advanced teacher influence is defined by the degree to which teachers are provided opportunities to participate in important school-wide decisions.

### **2. Goal Consensus**

Reaching consensus on goals not only increases collective efficacy it also has a direct, and measurable impact on student achievement

### **3. Teachers' Knowledge About One Another's Work**

Teachers gain confidence in their peers' ability to impact student learning when they have more intimate knowledge about each other's practice.

### **4. Cohesive Staff**

Cohesion is defined as the degree to which teachers agree with each other on fundamental educational issues.

### **5. Responsiveness of Leadership**

Responsive leaders show concern, and respect for their staff, and protect teachers from issues that detract from their teaching time, and focus.

### **6. Effective Systems of Intervention**

Effective systems of intervention help in ensuring that all students are successful.

Each of these points raised not only a depth of rigor sought by the researcher's question but adds another level of complexity to working within an adaptive model. In the uncovering and retelling of the perceptions of efficacy held by the individual, and the group, in determining their current landscape of organisational behaviour, and ability to change. This research question hopes to reflect upon the notion of the group's' efficacy at the organisational or collective level.

In defining the attributes, of collective efficacy, there is an awareness that leaders need to be within a mindset of cognitive process of readiness, to review, and reflect upon diagnostic information of performance. With reference to the collective efficacious level of the group's impact and level of performance within the leadership group?



What is needed in offering a state within a collective efficacious culture, will require a level of trust. This trust needs to be a predisposition, and one that should already be in play. For if leadership focuses time on building trust, then this protected time will not be seen as lost in the real work of the day, knowing, and improving student outcomes. What is observed within 'leadership practices that have a high likelihood of success: a) creating opportunities for meaningful collaboration, b) empowering teachers, c) establishing goals and high expectations and d) helping teams interpret results and provide feedback' (Donohoo, 2017, pp. 36) will enable a collective efficacious culture.

#### **Sub Section: 1.1.5 Recognising possible semiotic artefacts**

The role of semiotic artifacts within a faith based educational school aligning itself with the religious art of faith in both imagery and language. Within last section of review, the notion of semiotic artefacts will be drawn out. It is believed by the researcher, that having the narrative inquiry woven into the world of religion, that symbolism and the power of language of disseminating ones faith must be considered as an operating causal condition in the group's ability to attain collective efficacy.

#### **Semiotics the art of searching for answers**

In collecting semiotic artifacts as raised within research question four, may curate a resource of values, that could include the school's individual history honouring the school's collective memory. Van Leeuwen, (2005) argues that 'semiotic resources have a meaning potential, based on their past uses, and a set of affordances based on their possible uses, and these will be actualized in concrete social contexts where their use is subject to some form of semiotic regime' (pp. 285). In investigating semiotic resources, the descriptive qualities of the historical, cultural, and institutional components of the organisation. It will also note the language that is used with, and by the leadership group critiquing, and value adding to the artifacts. Leeuwen (2005) writes by

*'describing semiotic resources (artefacts) as signifiers, observable actions, and objects that have been drawn into the domain of social*

*communication, that have a theoretical semiotic potential constituted by all their past, and potential uses, and as an actual semiotic potential, constituted by those past uses that are known to be uncovered by the users on the basis of their specific needs, and interests' (pp. 4).*

Mead (1922) also notes that the 'inner conversation in which objects as stimuli are both separated from and related to their responses-is identified with consciousness, that is in so far as consciousness is identified with awareness, it is the result of this development of the self in experience' (pp. 163).

Language, for Mead (1934) was a means of reflexivity as it 'is the essential condition, within the social process, for the development of mind' (pp. 134). This for him was made up of symbols, aligning to two clear areas of content within our mind. One, our inner conversation, the conversation shared within the social group, and two, the imagery of the state of mind, relating to the behaviour of the functionality of the mindset. To be able to distinguish the individual's mind sets within the collective group or community of practice lies within the field of communication. Mead, (1934) stated the

*'significant symbol is then the gesture, the sign, the word which is addressed to the self when it is addressed to another individual, and is addressed to another, in form to all other individuals, when it is addressed to the self. Signification has, as we have seen, two references, one to the thing, indicated, and the other to the response, to the instance and to the meaning or idea (pp. 162).*

In having an ability to identify semiotic resources, the researcher hopes to articulate, and decode meanings, that are specific to a faith-based schooling system. It gives the researcher a cultural formation to draw upon, noting that in varying contexts an individual, and communities' practices may choose to indicate, and or decide a differing course of action. Creating what van Leeuwen (2107) coined as a 'semiotic register' (pp. 14) or resources as, 'social semiotics must continue to focus on the way changing social practices of meaning making and interpretation create changing semiotic resources for

creating ever new expressions of individuality, authenticity, brightness, energy, expansiveness and so on' (pp. 118).

Additionally, Mead's (1934) symbolic interactionism, offers a theoretical framework, addressing how society is created, and maintained through repeated interactions among individuals giving a lens of how to view interactions – enabling social exchanges on a micro-level. In viewing the semiotic artifacts of the group, the researcher could draw upon Meads (1934) four tenets of symbolic interactionism, to support in shaping identifiable semiotic artifacts and principles of operating levels of praxis.

1. Individuals function centered around their internalized meanings for an object or concept.
2. Interactions occur within a unique social, and cultural context that is aligned to the meaning assigned by the individual.
3. Meanings emerge within the social, and cultural settings.
4. Meanings are being created, and recreated through the interpretative process, and interactions with others within the social, and or cultural setting.

The theory of symbolic Interactionism of Mead (1934, 1938) accords with the narrative framework being established within this inquiry, becoming a triadic process, linking with the ideals of semiotics and the semiotic registry. Foucault's (1972) (as cited by Shotter, 1993, pp. 49) position this work 'as one that 'consists of not – of no longer treating discourses as groups of signs (signifying elements of reality to contents or representations) but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (pp. 37).

### **Charting the road ahead**

The charted road map provides an opportunity to create a series of semiotic choices. The reading around the research suggests a guiding road map, leading from the wanderings and wonderings of the researcher to a means of analysing the field texts and theorising new knowledge. The following diagram illustrates, key junctures within the research:

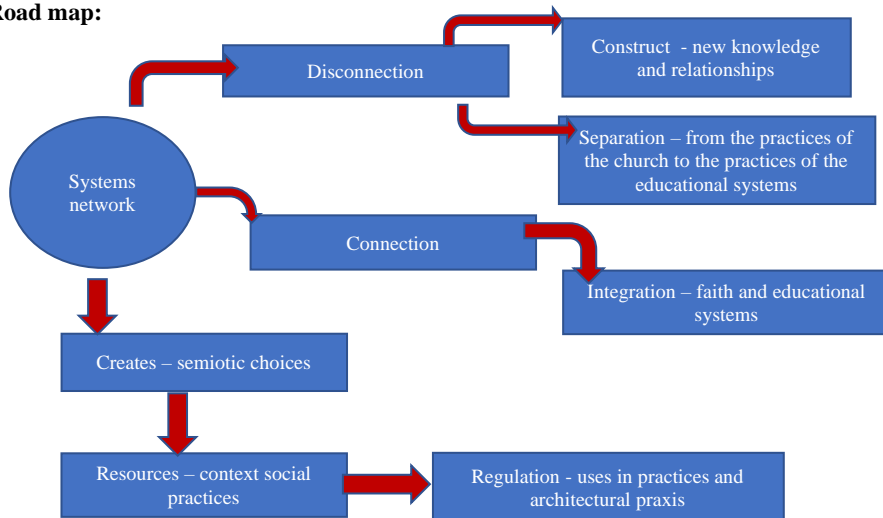
**Road map:**

Figure 2.0 Navigational road map

In navigating the road map, what is of crucial importance is to know that each pathway offers a varying form of inquiry, and or discussion of support. As such there will be no readymade answers or guaranteed outcomes based upon empirical numerical field texts. It is knowing that in navigating semiotic resources, and systems networks that there may be no clear answer at the end of the work, rather a series of propositions, and or hypothetical wonderings for future work.

### Sub-section: 1.1.6 Conclusion

In conclusion in reviewing the literature, it is understood that many complex and interrelated ideas have been explored as a background to the inquiry , it is noted that it will be a challenging task to ensure that all such matters are equally dealt with in forthcoming chapters, endeavoring to link together the conceptual threads in exploring the reached question. In reviewing the literature, major themes have emerged, seeing a lived narration, as one of a grand narrative. Albeit a tentative narrative in which it could be grounded in a foundational level of nourishment of learning through educational

experiences, and a pedagogical passion by those in the delivery of curriculum, and their ability to link, and draw out possible storylines of spiritual reflexive states of being.

Within this narration, is the church, its faith, its language, its dogma, its power, and its religious laws, and principles. As witnessed within the funds of knowledge discussion, to have knowledge is to have power and to have agency. Within a state of forced or leveled spiritual indoctrination the agents or characters within the grand narrative are taught, and or encouraged albeit in a subtle, and often in an unintentional manner to distrust their own learning spirituality and therefore their own personal narrative, and funds of knowledge. When one culture outweighs another, a level of self-doubt can be often silently internalised. This can be seen in the adoption of one approach over another or varying approaches towards the spiritual, and cultural aspects of faith which can cause a lived disconnect, and tension via the use of language, and the inability to share, and disseminate core values, and principles of practice of faith, and spirituality.

If there is a lived tension within the epistemological, and ontological realities, an aligned truth (wherever truth, exist within this space) of knowing, and being, can create a disconnect between place, and with those relationships coexisting within the space of a faith-based school and their educational communities.

What becomes evident is the struggle that the current educational systems face, in how to reconcile, the current ways of knowing, an organisational systems operating with 'other's' ways of knowing, and their systems. That is to say how does the Australian educational system acknowledge, and embrace new ways of knowing, and systems thinking into an authentic theoretical framework, that has the ability to be courageous enough to debate ways of knowing, and being, becoming a dynamic state of practice? The works cited have referenced the importance of giving equity to all voices and in highlighting the need to, authentic a lived truth. It is hoped that in exploring the system dynamics and level of operating praxis of those involved within this narrative, that lived tensions will be shared and explored through individual and collective level of habitus and praxis. Seeing the works cited the critical importance of the use of and modeling of

discourse as a form of diagnostic claims and responses from the group. It is here that the ideals of reason, power, and resistance reside. Freedom in being able to articulate one's own level of pedagogical praxis and reference to the individual characters' own funds of knowledge. Here truth can offer, a re-augmented set of claims or systems of thinking, which in turn offers a juxtaposition to the language used within this discursive context.

## Chapter Two

### Methodology

#### Section 2.1.0

##### Approaching the Research – Why narrative?

*Experience is what we study, and we study it narratively because narrative thinking is a key form of experience and a keyway of writing and thinking about it*  
(Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, pp. 18)

*I have never believed, nor do I believe now, that a story belongs to only one person. Stories are always plural, and their origins are infinite.*  
(Loris Malaguzzi 1991 - translated whilst on study tour)

Rather than being seen as a traditional in style, the chapter will be considered as narrative in its own right, as such ‘methodology as narrative’. This chapter will continue to be written in a narrative style, bringing methodology into the ambit of narrative understanding, encountering a number of broad and specific contextual issues for consideration of research approach, analysis of field texts and idea formation. This indicates that the context of the inquiry does draw upon a wide range of research thinking to inform the emergence of qualitative meaning. In general terms, the chapter is laid out in the following order of, educational setting, justification of approach, description of field texts collection, the role of insider researcher, questioning style, weaving in semiotic artifacts, strengths, and limitations of research. Thus, methodology and its components become semiotic artifacts themselves as part of the research process.

Narrative inquiry is defined by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) as the ‘collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a series of places, and in social interaction with milieus’ (p. 20). It is the aim of the inquiry is to capture the stories of these participants in the living moment both as an individual, and as part of a social positioning within the faith-based educational system.

The narration is an actual account of the group's way of knowing their world, and their relationship to and within it. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) notes the importance 'to be aware of the possibility that the landscape and the persons with whom we are engaging as participants may be shifting and changing' (pp. 175). Questions asked may support 'the way narrative inquiry illuminates the social and theoretical contexts in which we position our inquiries' (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, pp. 124). Acknowledging the use of language within the work as symbolic within this space. There is both a functionality, and containment of language within faith-based systems. Language will hold a reflective reality, creating a structured 'landscape' (a metaphor as developed by Clandinin, 2007, pp. 366) in which a discourse is constituted within a layering of metaphysical meanings.

### **Section 2.1.1**

#### **The educational setting**

The following is the annotated review of the educational setting offered by the researcher as a means to rationalise the choice of both the role of the insider researcher and that of a narrative methodology. It is truly believed by the researcher that not to align with either pathway would have been disingenuous to the work, and for the researcher personally, unethical. The researcher has walked alongside this community, within its differing incarnations, still knowing a few of the remaining players within the narrative.

Narrative methodology allows the researcher the means and the permission to explore a lived moment in time, through the lens of the players. Permitting a mode of self and collective reflexivity to occur in reviewing their dialogue shared, enabling annotations to delve deeper into the chasm of the disconnects (for connections see Figure 2, Chapter One) raised within the faith-based school. A reminder that the denomination of the faith of the school, will not be mentioned, for risk of easy identification.

It is a school, that due to its financial constraints, was left with little option but to align itself with an external funding body. The commission now funds the school's operating capital. By becoming contractually bound to the commission, comes with it an overlay of structures, rules and mandated levels of compliance as deemed necessary by the



commission. The school sees itself as one with a strong history of community engagement, and one that strives for excellence. A school where the values of innovation and progressive approaches to learning are celebrated.

The school seeks to support all their students via a safe and secure environment, one in which students are able to participate in all aspects of the school community. The school operates from Foundation (Prep – to Yr. 12 – Victorian Certificate of Education - VCE). Over recent years the school has commenced a building program which enables students to seek a variety of pathways for academic and pastoral endeavors – all funded by the faith-commission. It is a school that has within its written values, the spiritual and moral growth of the individual, within the school community, supported by highly skilled staff members. It is noted within the charter, that the school has a close association with the local parish and *‘students are encouraged to be active in local parish church and community service initiatives’* (as cited in school documentation).

The school possesses a strong sense of communal responsibility. Citing a biblical verse: *Treat others as you would be treated. Luke 6.31.* noted within the charter, the school comes with an apparent understanding of the importance of establishing and maintaining relationships internal and external to the school. It welcomes students from all walks of life, as evidenced within the school community. Further the school’s vision and mission statement include phrases such as enabling ‘academic excellence’, underpinned by the ‘core values of integrity, endeavor and community’. The mission statement, uses aspirational language such as *‘dynamic, innovative, and supportive learning environments, supporting the body, mind, and spirit, promoting principles and practice of democracy, will stimulate flexibility and adaptability to change, finally presenting appropriate opportunities to develop physical, social, and spiritual well-being’*. The objectives on the other hand, seek to explore and understand the values and beliefs of Christian faith. Striving to achieve success and to develop the whole child, and to encourage acceptance of their social and environmental responsibilities in the school, local community, and wider world. The school also values democratic principles such as

*'the rule of law, the values of openness and tolerance and encourage the inclusion of students from families from all backgrounds.*

Within the parental handbook the following list is provided, as a set of factors that will be considered in the admission process before an offer of a place will be made:

- *Families with siblings already at the school.*
- *Children living in the local community.*
- *Individual family circumstances.*
- *Outcomes of the interview processes.*
- *Children of regular church attending families \** (area of note - the researcher asks the reader to see this sentence as one of importance).
- *Children of parents who indicate a willingness to support (the faith) and community ethos of the school.*

Further stating; *'in the context of admission and continuing admission of siblings, 'community' means parental participation, involvement, and support for the school.*

*This is an ongoing commitment of enrollment, and must be seen as an obligation, not as a choice.*

Within the teacher handbook, predictable areas such as communication, attendance, hours of work, dress code, risk management, classroom responsibilities are listed. There is little mention of faith, no reference made of weekly chapel services or support for a teacher working within a faith-based school. In reviewing the handbook and the current website of the school, it is noted that since the collation of this field texts (2019) the school has employed 'another' Principal. With a reiterated website there is still little mention of faith other than the school's membership of the faith base commission, is of note, as we move into this narrated landscape.

### Section 2.1.2

#### Narrative themes

Kaplan (1964) defined methodology as ‘the inquiry —the description, the explanation, and the justification—of methods, and not the methods themselves’ (pp. 18). Thus he believed ‘the aim of methodology is to describe and analyse... methods, throwing light on their limitations and resources, clarifying their presuppositions and consequences to help us to understand, in the broadest possible terms, not the products of scientific inquiry but the process itself’ (pp. 23).

The following chapter seeks to validate the choice by the researcher, in selecting a narrative methodology, as the most apt vehicle to capture the story portrayed in a moment in time within the research group. For the researcher it is a means to be able to authenticate an account, giving agency, not only to the individuals own funds of knowledge, giving permission to explore, and articulate the tensions felt and lived by the group.

A narrative methodology of inquiry is deemed to be ‘personal and social (interaction); past, present, and future (continuity); combined with the notion of place (situation) – this set of terms creates a metaphorical three dimensional narrative inquiry space’ (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, pp. 50). In curating the results of the work, will in the end, tell a story of possible change and growth. For what the narrator, that is the researcher, is doing within the work is collecting stories about those within the inquiry. For the research questions aspire to be philosophical and epistemological in nature rather than statistically based. The work sits within a paradigm of pragmatism. As such the researcher holds the belief, that there can be multiple lenses of inquiry, and truths at the end of the narration. The work is derived in acknowledging the importance of social capital, the level of habitus which Bourdieu, (1990 pp. 54) describes as ‘a product of history, [it] produces individual and collective practices – more history – in accordance with the schemes generated by history’ as well as the notion of A Priori, Kant, (1781) within and of the group to share and explore the narration.

### **Habitus and an A 'Priori approach**

The researcher has chosen to utilise the writings of Bourdieu (1993) for this approach is deemed to be constructive in exploring, the notion of 'power' in development and social change processes. Here an educational setting is both social and cultural in structure. Set within a narrative methodology, relevance and importance is placed upon the social norms of the groups – which guides behaviour and thinking, what Bourdieu coined, as *habitus*. Power within this context could be defined as the level of hierarchy, and language used in influencing others. How does the group resist the power of other agencies such as the church and commission as seen as an external power to this narration. The work will be situated within the operational capacity of the leadership group, and the notion of power may prove to be seen as one culturally, and symbolically created, constantly legitimatised through an interplay of agency and structure within the educational faith-based school. As Connelly and Clandinin (1990) note, 'narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience' (pp. 2). The researcher is confident in making this claim, based upon the notion of A 'Priori, as Kant (1781) theorised, that one can hold knowledge, informing a series of truths based upon what is known, without experience. It allows the researcher as the 'narrative inquirer to represent the contingent, nuanced, and symbolic aspects of the findings' (Clandinin, 2007, pp. 20).

As the work is situated within a given time and space the experience generated cannot be implied in experience, that is A 'Priori (Kant, 1781). To engage within a set space and time, is actuated within a non-empirical setting, seen as a of series of perceptions contributed to the work by those in the narration, rather than producing a definitive set of traditional outcomes for the group to adopt. The act of collecting field texts is bound by a space and time, to be lived, a single object to be encountered, for the work can be seen as a precept holding an infinite number of parts, embracing a series of A 'Priori perceptions, which will embrace an endless number of ideas. Here the work of Kant (1781), referenced the ideas that space and time are the universal and necessary forms in which all things are perceived: space the form of external perception; time the form primarily of internal perception, as both a form or function of the facility of our

perceptions. These perceptions will or should become possible, validating both the participants and researcher's perceptions as a series of objects, of the senses, thus phenomenologically acquired a rational state of being objective. It is the act in forming these phenomenal worldly ideas that will ultimately be shaped by what the participants and the researcher are able to construct and as such validate the perception and knowledge formed into A *'Priori* understanding and relevance to the work.

Being set within a faith-based school, the second concept of Bourdieu's (1986) work is the notion of 'capital'. Capital within his work is seen to be a social, cultural, and symbolic construct. These elements can be taken from and influenced by the educational setting, the community and by the symbolic artefacts offered by the church. Each of these artefacts form a level of capital which may be seen as equally important to and by the group. For they in turn act as a stimulus in creating or transferring other forms of capital – amplifying the central role in societal power relations and a means to construct hierarchical paradigms. Bourdieu's (1986) work highlights the notion that

*'social order is progressively inscribed in people's minds' through 'cultural products' including systems of education, language, judgements, values, methods of classification and activities of everyday life. These all lead to an unconscious acceptance of social differences and hierarchies, to 'a sense of one's place' and to behaviours of self-exclusion' (pp. 141).*

The third aspect of Bourdieu's (1993) work which will aide in the unpacking of this narration is the idea of fields.

*'Fields are seen to be the social, and institutional arenas, in which an individual and or group express, and repeat their dispositions, and articulate their level of capital. A field, which tends to foreground the individual, or the visible interactions between individuals, at the expense of the structural relations (...) between social positions that are both*

*occupied and manipulated by social agents which may be isolated individuals, groups, or institutions. (pp. 29)*

The final aspect of Bourdieu's work which holds sway within the research, is the notion of doxa. Doxa happens when we 'forget the limits' that have given rise to unequal divisions in society: it is 'an adherence to relations of order which, because they structure inseparably both the real world and the thought world, are accepted as self-evident' (Bourdieu, 1984, pp. 471). It is within this notion of doxa, that the term 'misrecognition' – a cultural act rather than an ideological act should be able to be seen within the group's social, cultural processes and assumptions – spotlighting the power relations at play.

In viewing the narration, exists an opportunity to review and articulate the development of each agent (player) within the narration. Each of the agents brings a chapter (their own habitus) to the work. In essence, 'the idea that experiences grow out of other experiences, and experiences lead to further experiences. Wherever one positions oneself in that continuum – the imagined now, some imagined past, or some imagined future –each point has a past experiential base and leads to an experiential future (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, pp. 2). As such the researcher will be viewed as a methodologist within a qualitative methodology. Considered to reflect both the distribution of power and principles of social control. What we create within our society is a 'cultural relay – pedagogic practice that can be understood as relay, a cultural relay: a uniquely human device for both the production and reproduction of culture' (Lingard B. 2009, pp. 169)

### **The process of collecting field texts.**

The researcher will reference one to two survey tools from the adaptive model. It is important to note that the model is adaptive and not adapted. To be 'adaptive means to change form in concert with clarifying identity' (Garmston, 2013, p. 5). What is being sought from the base field texts being collected, is how the group envisages, and thus believes in its own capacity to produce results, and stay the course through their internal, and external difficulties to achieve their strategic goals. It is hoped that through these

tools the group in pursuit of its outcomes, for further exploration and organisational thinking approach may become evident.

Having worked within the educational system for some 30 years, the researcher has come to view schools as a living organism. It is through a metabolism of change, and flow that the narrative of this school will be articulated, with the aim to explore, how the school is addressing meaningful problems, rather than being viewed as a setting, that develops organisational capacities within a series of abstractions. What will be critical in unpacking this narrative, will be the ability to capture the true sense of the working community of the school. Communities don't just happen in schools. It is simultaneously a fragile resource, and a stage of being. Within a school there are many differing levels of communities both active, and reactive to the educational space. A community of practice is one that is aligned to the level of pedagogical praxis offered by the individual teacher and in turn, the teaching community as a whole school approach. There are student and parent communities and for this narration, the community of the church, internal to the working of the school, and external to the outward operating style, and connectivity to the wider local community. There is an outward and inward visible sign that both substance and energy matter. Energy is the power to get affective change through the binding together of the organisational relationships. It is through the unpacking of these complex workings and characteristics of the players in the story that the richness of the narrative will truly become evident.

In using Visible Thinking tools as devised by Perkins. D, and Tishman. R, (2006) in consultation with Harvard University, provides a safe means of translating the individual's thoughts and perceptions regarding the political, religious, and social capital of the school community. From here base line field texts may be ascertained through initial primary discussions with the characters. These discussions will be held on site within the school grounds (Board Room) during school hours, a maximum of 4 hours in length; Principal approval has been obtained. Time will be essential here in establishing relational trust and boundaries for all to work within. A visible thinking routine, known as 'Compass Points', will be offered as a vehicle, for examining both the individual, and

groups positioning. In collecting these varying viewpoints, common threads of understandings are hoped to be identified and ultimately shared back with the leadership group.

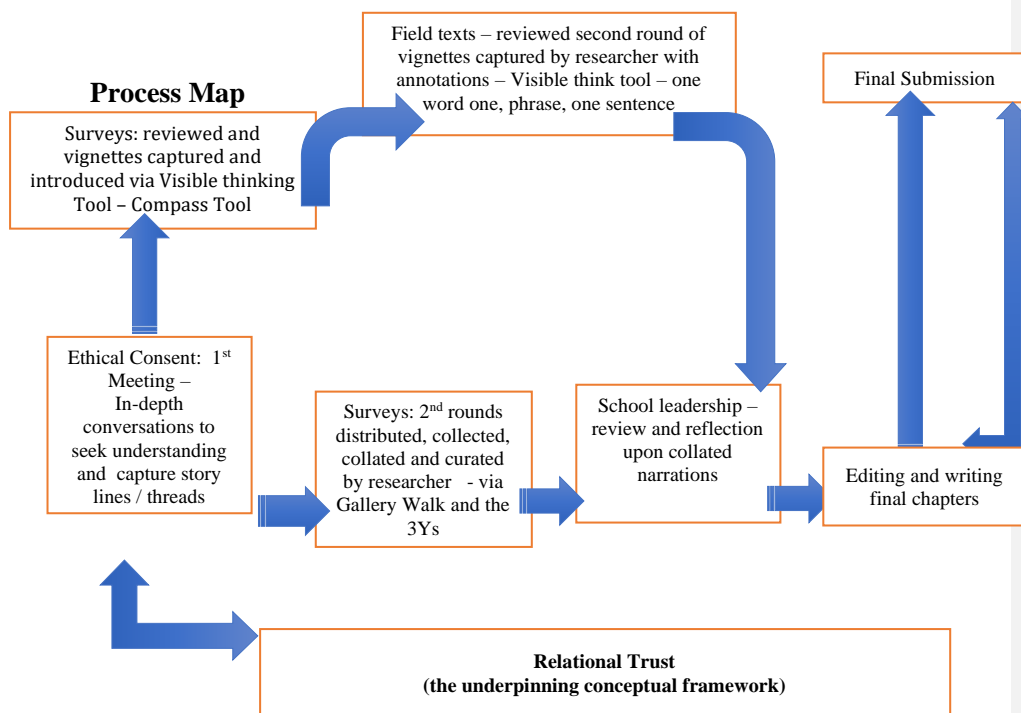


Figure 3.0. Process map - as designed by the researcher ...

### Visible Thinking Tools - Capturing thoughts and wonderings

The reference to Visible Thinking Tools is one that adds weight, and transparency to the notion of supporting the cognitive processes, adding rigour to the idea, that the creation of knowledge as truth is a cognitive, social, and emotional response. The routines are based upon the work of Ron Ritchhart and David Perkins (2000). The inclusion of these routines avails the researcher, a disposition of contributing mechanisms, that can be seen to influence the underlying, partly tacit belief systems, exhibited within the educational setting. It is by using these dispositions within the collection of field texts, that the



disposition may be aligned too or based upon a belief system of the individual. A possible outcome of the work once analysed, is the naming of a series of conceivable cultural and subcultural elements. It is noted; however, that in using these tools that they may in fact act as a blocker, by being perceived as a narrowing of the lens in which the leadership group interprets the findings offered.

It is evidence of the individual's schema, to a weaved patterning, which has been stabilised into an enduring disposition. A tapestry in forming the tacit modality, in developing an explicit value system that creates the individual epistemological stance. This becomes the schema of the individual's interactions within a social and cultural capital of operation. The culture of both the schools and religious communities clearly play a role in the development of the social, emotional, civic, and ethical dispositions, evidenced within the educational approaches. What they do in fact, gives a causality traditionally paying closer attention to the formative power of the cultural surround.

Once these thought lines have been identified the narrator will offer these collections of ideas back to the participants. During the second session, being some 2 hours in length face to face on site, allow an opportunity to take a visual gallery walk to discuss as a group their ideas.

The second Visible Thinking Tools— The 3Ys will be offered, asking each participant (the agents) to write a maximum of 500 words, framed within the following three questions: Given your thoughts on the political, religious, and social capital of the school community.

1. Why might this matter to me?
2. Why might it matter to people around me (key stakeholders within the school community)
3. Why might it matter to the world? (global educational faith-based systems)

The leadership group will have three weeks to create their responses.

The collected insights will allow the narrator an opportunity to curate a series of vignettes, that will honour the voices of the leadership team and will be truly transparent and accountable to the process of reflexive practice. For the purpose of this research, a vignette will be defined as ‘a brief evocative description, account, or episode’, approximately 200 – 250 words in length that emphasises a particular theme, for discussion.

The vignettes offered to the leadership group will see another Visible Thinking Tool used namely, ‘one word, one phrase, one sentence’ to be used to identify key themes and wonderings owned by the agents collectively. These will help the narrator identify supportive survey mechanisms (guided by the works of the Adaptive School Model – Garmston and Wellman, 2013). These can be offered to the players as another research artefact to collate and collect field texts, and evidence of pedagogical shifts. that can be used by participants to articulate collective efficacy in working towards a culturally and religiously sensitive curriculum.

The narrator will then collect base line field texts via the typed transcripts of the conversations, referenced with four key areas of repositories. Observational, methodological, theoretical, and analytical. This will create a draft socio – cultural story (written document) that in creating a depository for the group, will offer a possible narrative of how the players operate within the inquiry.

Prior to the end of the process, the participants will be given the opportunity to feedback and comment upon the possible tensions / themes / values and / or wonderings, identified within the work under a series of headings, seeking to identify where to from here within a faith-based school. Consideration of the field texts outlined, will form the basis of the analysis and discussion chapter of the thesis. What could be offered from these collated themes and insights, is a new social, political, and cultural landscape to be worked on by the group, using the above points to drive and articulate their next strategic plan.

### **The pathways to consider emerging landscapes of inquiry**

The role of the insider researcher is one that brings a mindfulness of objectivity, and awareness of possible bias within the inquiry and to those participating within the work. The researcher will share findings taken from surveys collated and shared vignettes subsequently captured following the reading of the transcript shared with the leadership group. This is to give agency to those involved to be able to have the social capital, to act and operate within the space as an active character; to become one who is empowered to view their current educational space with a collective lens rather than a self-efficacious one.

This work will seek to be reflexive, that is the researcher will adopt a theory of knowledge, enabling a state of reflexivity. As such the theory of knowledge resides within a pragmatist epistemological understanding of what it means ‘to know’ and what it takes to acquire knowledge from a Deweyan reflexive, inquiry approach to practice. Further as the work is in fact an epistemological inquiry based upon a philosophical approach of the nature of knowledge, belief, and truth, as referenced within the work of Chisholm (1989). Explaining ‘the reciprocity between language and reality’ (Clandinin and Connelly 2000, pp. 464), basing the work on a philosophical, sociological, and epistemological understanding within a qualitative method. ‘The epistemological contribution to research is essentially theoretical: It has to do with theories of knowledge. Epistemology is inescapable. A reflexive researcher actively adopts a theory of knowledge’ (Carter, 2014, p. 1319). In giving opportunity for the participants within the work to reflect upon what was gleaned from reading over the transcribed texts, and secondly for the researcher to analyse the transcript. Drawing out themes, issues, tensions, insights, and the working group dynamic.

### **The lexicon of language**

As noted in the prologue to the work, descriptive terms for the researched group are sought to be interchangeable. Enabling an explorative critique, as to their role and level of agency demonstrated during the length of the narration shared. A core element, in defining this work within a narrative methodology, was the importance placed upon the

use of language. The educational field is one that operates within a series of systems, and alternating environments, all affected and influenced by the cognitive, psychological, and technical and ecumenical approaches within the system of the school. As such the landscape offered within the school setting is one that is constantly moving. Garmston and Wellman (2009) argue that ‘we can make our world significant by the courage of our questions and the depth of our answers’ (pp. 38). For the essence of this inquiry is to see of a possible interplay at work, one based upon the cultural, and cognitive learnings, and collective knowledge of the group, creating new and unexplored landscapes.

In approaching this research methodology, the researcher was required to articulate a well-framed argument, to why this above methodology worked best within this inquiry. The work of Dewey (1933 and 1938), Mead (1934), Polkinghorne (1988) and Clandinin (2007) has had immense impact upon the relevance and contextual framing to this inquiry. The use of narrative methodology allows for the lived experiential dynamics undergoing change to be unpacked through the narration, which then becomes a heuristic device and a means of being able to understand the organisation. As humans we come to experience narration through life, learning and teachings. For the researcher the narrative is not an outcome of change but rather the origins of the field’s educational discourse.

It is here where the work of Dewey (1933) lends gravitas. He believed that the lived experience, was both personal and social in experiential recognition. For the idea here is that the agent is both active in the individual space and within a relational contextual manner. As such he saw the individual, as being imagined as one who brings with them experiences of the past, and with these experiences, will gain access to a new experiential future. As this inquiry plans to address the lived experience of all those involved, what is sought, is a line of inquiry, that may lead to another pathway and as such move the participants/agents within the inquiry into another aspect of this band of theory. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) states that ‘narrative inquiry is a way, the best way we believe, to think about experience’ (pp. 80). The narrative mode of inquiry gives merit to exploring a general continuity in individual lives. The complexity that must be included within the inquiry is one that honours the tensions felt and echoed through the work. The

causality of this is whether qualitative research can directly capture the lived experience, or how a qualitative inquiry could be used to evaluate the post structural moment.

### **Identifying artifacts**

Critical importance within the cited mode of methodology, is the ability to capture the notion of instability and differences felt by those experiencing change. It is here as the insider researcher, that the ability to become an observer, a hunter gatherer of accounts presented, that can be relaunched, as a series of connections between the lived and created semiotic artefacts existing. For the act of engaging within another human could be seen as generating an artifact. The semiotic quality of this artifact is one bound not only the iconic, or material symbolism of the artifact but also within the coded linguistics representations offered by the gesture, or conventions as shared by the leadership group. It is the role of the researcher, observer, and narrator that one is able to emphasise possible characterisations, summations, and improvisations of the lived encounters of the learning community. These encounters create a set of self-imposed boundaries, that allows for the vignettes shared to be seen as glimpses of possible pointers diverting from traditional values held by the group and the individual. As Bateson (1984) noted, 'though change and continuity are brought together by human agency, improvisation, and adaption to change allow the past to be connected and to have continuity with the future' (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, pp. 7).

This is a deliberate choice to dedicate this inquiry to a narrative methodology, for the ending is undetermined, the growth of the participants within the tale are unknown quantities. This invites the reader, to explore storied landscapes (metaphor as used by Clandinin, 2007, pp. 366) to be reflexive, in a more complicated and possibly ambiguous manner. The narration is an offering of a moment in time with no single truth evident, rather than a strict analysis, curtailed by diagnostic numerical empirical field texts.

For learning to occur, the field texts that could be sourced through a narrative landscape,

*'can help transform identity, interpret the meaning of the past, and even provide images of possible future,' further narratives 'are drawn from*

*cultural and personal models for arranging experiences in meaningful ways and for effectively communicating these meanings* (Clandinin, 2007, pp. 407).

This gives the researcher the permission to be ambiguous within the final account.

### **Navigating the storied landscapes, a reflection in action**

A critical element of the work is the ability of the researcher to be able to discuss the relationships in operation within the work. That is the relationships among reader, author / narrator, participants, the text itself, and the lived experiences, which are offered as semiotic artefacts. What this inquiry is endeavoring to do through the deliberate act of choosing a narrative methodology, is to pursue an opportunity to learn, through the experiences shared in the life of a school. The choice of narrative here, is a mode of professional practice.

It is a modality of operating within the realm of ‘knowing in action’ (p. 50) – as coined by Schon (1983), leads this work to become one of reflection-in-action – ‘which is central to the ‘art’ by which practitioners deal well with situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict’ (pp. 50). The researcher knows that in a level of ambiguity, ‘what’ is being explored, the issue of ‘where’ relations may be seen, is uncertain. What will aid this narration, is the notion that the work is trying to uncover a relationship, between the phenomenon of the group’s interactions and power, and the context in which it is occurring.

### **The importance of questioning**

The sourcing of field texts will be based upon collecting current and timely information. What will be critical in sourcing the field texts, is a means for the researcher to frame the questions offered within the protected conversation (in the sense that the time is protected to have all the key players within the narration present.). It is the work of Gray (2009) criterion for questioning, ‘promoting both the skill sets and tools needed by the researcher, to ensure or at least entrust an openness of questioning, one that does not distract or mislead the participant towards a pathway of unintentional reasoning’ (pp.

341). The researcher, trained as a Cognitive Coach<sup>sm</sup>, is able to draw upon the actions of 'nonjudgmental mediation of thinking, to focus on the cognitive processes, in liberating internal resources, and on accessing the five states of mind as the wellsprings of constructive thought in action' (Costa, 2015, pp. 12). The researcher comes to the work with a sound and effective trained intuition, of being able to ask questions, aided by the techniques of paraphrasing, pausing, and posing cognitive questions. These are not ones that are framed within the researcher's own interpretative filter, but rather are authentic to the listening processes of what was said. This will allow the researcher to respond in a timely fashion adding a deductive approach. For what is of importance, is to draw out the narrative from the characters within this narration, their issues, and theories of practice. This will enable the researcher to engage within the process of analytic generalisations, for what is lived within this cultural context cannot be assumed to be replicated within other like schools. Therefore, this narration will be truly unique to this setting and to this group of characters. Even though, there may be possible storylines that perceive to be reminiscent of other like schools, this narration will remain and hold true to the authenticity offered.

This inquiry will be a single study and as such will be holistic in approach. The researcher is looking at only one school and offering one question. The question, however, has been cultivated into a multifaceted one, one that will present multiple units of and for analysis. What will be questioned, is the possibility that the perception of other's cannot be formally validated. This awareness of a possible lack of formal validation, strengthened the conviction of the researcher to facilitate face to face meetings. Being able to observe the event, permits active participation within the moment, and thus lays the foundation in the building of analysed explanations. By pacing the sessions, the researcher believes that this will be of significance in providing time for adequate reflection, aiding in the attempt to analyse a theorised storied landscape.

### Section 2.1.3

#### **Complexity limitations and strengths**

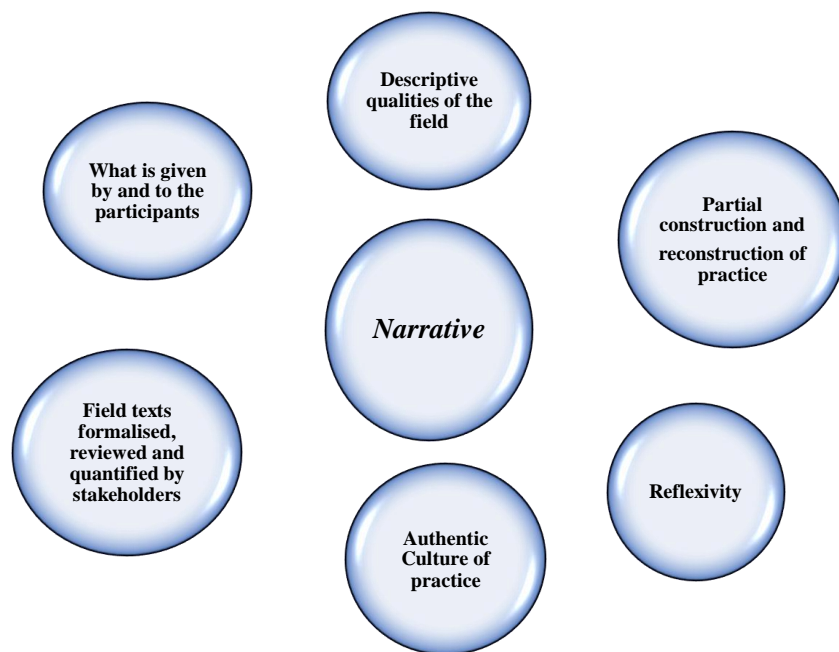
The role of the insider researcher is one that is of critical importance to the work. The role has been defined as the ‘study of one’s own social group or society or as one who shared the same characteristics, (cultural, biological or occupational)’. (Greene, 2014, pp. 2). In acknowledging this role, the researcher is no longer just seen as a boundary rider to the work but as one who moves between the role of a) the rider and b) an active participant to and within the work. By acknowledging a possible conceptualisation of a boundary for those operating within the inquiry, they are then empowered to nominate who is internal or external to the work based upon location to and within a boundary or boarder. ‘These draw our attention to the close connection between the struggles within each of us and our struggle with external forces as we locate ourselves in the landscape or narrative inquiry’ (Clandinin, 2007, pp. 58).

During this inquiry, boundaries will be viewed to reference or to group individuals within a group, or to articulate a self-imposed boundary by the group, due to their socio- cultural narrative operating within faith-based schools. It is perceived to be one that illuminates the storylines at play within this narrative. Given the work is situated within an epistemological perspective of narrative methodology, ‘the act of socialisation leads the individual to a space (a borderland) where there is a deeply held belief, regarding the moral standing and positioning within the group. It is in fact, not the crossing of borders but rather (the) traversing (of) borderlands’ (Clandinin, 2007, pp. 58) that the researcher seeks to explore further.

Investigation within the inquiry seeks improvement of our collective way of being as an educational system. One that seeks to strive to articulate key aspects working within a dogmatic faith-based educational system by becoming the insider researcher, it was felt that through possessing a deeper understanding to and of the problems faced by the field, that this would develop results that could lead to insights and possible summations offered by the group. Understanding the nature of research, through theorising the narrative further, the insider researcher sees these as a series of steppingstones, rather than locked



in processes. As the reader may note in Figure 4.0, there is an absence of directional arrows. For the aim of the process, is one of fluidity, allowing the researcher, and participants time and space to move between a conceptual understanding gleaned. What will be authentic to the work is the notion of truth, based on the experience by the participants to be realised, and explained by the characters / players as distinct from the outsider coming in, and overlaying a predisposed set of values which may or may not be the current reality that is experientially lived by the participants.



*Figure 4.0. Steppingstones of researched phases.*

The researcher notes, that perceived borders may become a lived tension within the narrative. It is these borderlands, that allow the players within the narrative to navigate between landscapes. Noting multiple plotlines of varying cultures, ideologies, and systemic thinking exist. Attributing value systems to be a point of difference, as a point of reference or a point of profound similarities, thereby seeking to discover a type, source, and or influence of the intersecting border lines.

It is believed that to acknowledge any possible personal bias that one must be an insider researcher to the work. Greene, (2014) believes to be, 'a total insider, the researcher must share multiple identities or profound experiences with the community they are studying' (pp. 2). To remain ethical and transparent to the work acknowledging that there are shared values, characteristics and cultural attributes that are owned by the group and the researcher, needs to be articulated within the discussion chapter. It is in this light, as an insider researcher becomes one of the researched.

Clandinin and Connelly (2007) state that 'narrative inquiry, positioned as it is at the boundaries of reductionistic and formalistic modes of inquiry, is in a state of development, a state that asks us as inquirers to be wakeful, and thoughtful, about all our inquiry decisions' (pp. 184). This is why, language of narrative inquiry will allow the researcher to describe the aspect of human knowledge and experience. It is this attraction for the researcher of the possibility to tell a new narrative using the funds of knowledge brought to the storylands, for this is what leads the researcher to become reflective in practice, and approach to the work. The researcher will be drawn to the aspects of the socio-cultural and political landscapes. It is hoped in the retelling, that there may be a sense that this narrative may have a causality for change.

The researcher believes this to be an opportunity to gain clarity as to how the research questions and practices at play, are situated within the landscapes in relation to the narrative inquiry. Situating the narration within the landscape a generalisable pattern of the groups lived experience. Having the work located within a Deweyan view, a 'narrative inquiry is an approach to the inquiry of human lives conceived as a way of honouring lived experience as a source of important knowledge and understanding' (Clandinin, 2007, pp. 42). It is this 'wakefulness' or mindfulness that the researcher seeks to channel within the work. Furthering the importance of noting the interconnectivity between the players in the narration and that to their external influences, evidencing their social dispositions.

To be ethical to the work, the words of Clandinin, (2007), hold true as one traverses borderlands ‘will find it necessary to steer between the Scylla of political naivete and the Charybdis of collecting stories from participants only to treat them as examples of an oppressive social structure’ (pp. 64) this in case being the system of education.

The insider researcher comes to the work with a better understanding of the issue at hand, for this is a lived issue. Allowing the researcher to grapple with and process any possible tensions that arise between the researcher’s own narrative history and what is generated by the narrative. With this understanding comes a trust in what is known, a familiarity with the cultural, political, and organisational aspects of the field. The researcher comes with a knowledge, that will contribute to the body of educational knowledge, and the bases of disciplines such as the sociology and pedagogy of the field. For understanding the fundamentals of the fields’ educational practice, and knowing the intrinsic elements of parent – teacher, teacher - student relations, make one more theoretically sensitive. Trust through knowledge, is a social milieu, one that supports, and or enables dialogue, rather than blocking with a set of presupposed assumptions. The insider researcher hopes to be accepted as one of the group. Due to a shared understanding that enables the researcher to extract the true intent, of a holistic, and authentically held semiotic practice of the field.

With this shared insight comes a set of expectations of behaviour and sensitivities. What is shared is done so based upon a shared trust. Based upon what is lived and understood as being aligned to the level of habitus of the group and their shared funds of knowledge. The level of confidentiality and sensitivity shown is heightened within this work. Working with reflective tools and authentically staying aligned to the ethical procedures attributed to this work are core to its working success. That is with this ‘insider knowledge’ comes an awareness that there is no room for nor ethical grounds that this work is prejudged. The offerings made by the group may not be evident or shared in other educational institutions but are in fact commonplace within this setting, as such may be seen as a limitation to the research procedure. This field texts cannot become a distractor

to the insider researcher but rather be seen as attributing equal ranking as the group has offered their intentional artefacts to the work. Saidin (2016) argues that

*'being an insider researcher gives three advantages to the research. First, an insider will be able to better understand an issue; second, he will not disrupt the flow of social interaction; and finally, he will be able to extract true field texts from the participants as he can relate well to them. In addition, a researcher's familiarity with the cultural and political structure of an organisation will help him to save time in trying to understand the issue he is studying as he already has some knowledge regarding the issue'* (pp. 850).

For the role of the insider researcher, the work will be based on a combination of observations occurring in the natural setting of the school where the participants are located. As such there will be a gathering of impressions of those participants, their exhibited behaviours, which will in turn involve the act of listening, looking, and asking questions that do not direct but rather seek to understand. As such the role of insider researcher and observer acts as an active contributor to the qualitative field texts sourced through the establishment of rapport and dealing with ethical issues.

One cannot lose that sense of intuition or sensitivity to what is seen as the familiar and the experiential elements of the field texts sourced. It is then critical that as an insider researcher that one is clear in what is being sought, avails the opportunity to gain impending characteristics of the educational pedagogical practices that would otherwise be difficult to access and or analyse. In answering some of the difficulties encountered within the dual role of researcher and peer, lies in linking the meanings and interpretations of the participants.

### **The art of conversation through an epistemological lens**

The art of conversation allows a form of narrative inquiry to naturally occur both within the field of the experience of the studied (phenomenon) and as a method, thus a tool for

inquiry. What will be of importance in annotating conversations, will becoming a boundary rider observing where the ego's and lived habitus among the group sits. Appreciating the silence, not as one of emptiness but rather as a notion of symbolic gesture, to that fact that the group may be struggling with a point raised offered by either the researcher or the other from within the group. The issue of power demonstrated within the group may be shown through the dominance of voice, the blocking of a voice or the drive to have one's opinions heard over another. The struggle to reconcile aspects of power may become evident in what the players may see within the reading of the transcripts. The group's generated and established norms and protocols seek to protect and add value to and within the work.

The concept of narration will be supported by the work of Vygotsky's (1978) theory of learning. That is that the personal experiences / knowledge has been socially constructed and as such when shared is done so, with the lens of cultural, historical, holistic, and collective influences. The idea of an epistemological viewpoint as one framed by the development of the self in connection to knowledge. It is through the group actively imposing organisation and meaning on the surrounding environment that may construct new knowledge in the process. The researcher is aware that knowledge and learning are 'social acts' in themselves as Hooley (2020) states and as such is evidence of the players thinking and the difference between each player, based upon their funds of knowledge and their cultural context and experiential learnings. The use of language of the group and by the group within a self and collective efficacious lens, adds to the environment, that the conversations are supported in an authentic learning location, containing the tools of conceptual language and symbols in authentic and holistic ways.

Given these conversations are held in a group session, the narration becomes a form of field texts. The juxtaposition for the researcher is that there are arguments for both a constructivist and critical perspective to co-exist within the conversations. Within a constructivist viewpoint the narratives are socially constructed based on or around conversational interactions, thus awarding equal value to both the researcher and the participants voices within the dialogue. The conversations are temporal in location, time

and space and become a marker for what is known and felt in that said moment based upon the lived experience shared by the individual and group.

### **Framing questions within an axiological lens**

The researcher will be looking for themes that emerge from the transcripts aligning to the epistemological perspective and noting that an opportunity to identify key political markers within the conversation may arise, thus viewing the work with a critical understanding. These markers as seen as linguistic tools, noting the political discourse, indicating the attitudes of the leadership group. Given that both perspectives may be in play, the dominate view will be evident within each transcribed conversation, via the use of language noting the differing stances and opinions offered within that point of time. Epistemology is also seen within an axiological frame. It is the values of the group which will guide the research, resulting from this narrative shared? 'Regarding the nature of reality (ontology), the creation of knowledge and understanding (epistemology), as well as the role of values and their influences on the knowledge creation process (axiology). In practice, such philosophical attention is of central importance to both the research process and implications of all scientific inquiry, since the quality of research comes from the reflective relationship between the researchers' philosophical positioning and how the research is undertaken' (Biedenbach, 2016, pp. 140). Further the term 'axiology' 'represents an attempt to bring together, and critically examine, a wide variety of already existing and overlapping questions related to the essence of goodness, right conduct, value, and obligation' (Biedenbach, 2016, pp. 140).

What is in question, is this story being shared, one that seeks to understand, or one that seeks to change the world for the better – for this is a true axiological perspective. If the latter, then what will be valued more forms the outcomes of this inquiry. Is it a more culturally and religiously responsive curriculum, within the Australian educational setting? An epistemological method is one that hopefully contains and references values where according to Carter, (2014), 'it profoundly shapes the researcher's conceptualization of the participant in field texts collection and analysis' (pp. 1321), validating, and adding significance to the researcher's role, who is changed by the

research process. 'Epistemology is also surrounded by axiology, in that the knowledge that is generated by a project will be discussed, evaluated, and justified in relation to broader cultural values' (Carter, 2014, pp. 1323).

### **Annotating dialogue**

Referencing the importance of dialogue, enables the individual towards an axiological position. For this inquiry will be value based, as it chooses to weave into the narration, the views of the other, seeking out the values and belief systems of the social group, via the coding of the transcripts provided. It is worth noting that the two elements of axiology and epistemology may cause a reactionary situation or may in fact skew the field texts. It is important to note, values are realised through the active choice of alternative future understandings, and as such help the players within the story, to become accountable to the ideals and values cultivated during the discussions. The transcribed and shared texts will be based upon a truth, in what was said and what was recorded, by recording everything, nothing is left out, thereby the element of judgmental harm, is reduced. It will be this idea of capturing the language of truth, within this narration, seeing truth as, a means of noting, that there are many approaches of telling the truth, thus reiterating the blurring of boundaries and notionally storied landscapes. Clandinin, (2007) refers to the work of Freedom (1997) in that

*'narratives often seem able to give us understandings of people in a way that more 'objective' methodologies cannot. This is because they often emerge from a true, rather than false, scientific attitude, one that practices fidelity not to that which can be objectified and measured but to the whole person, the whole human life, in all its ambiguous, messy, beautiful detail' (pp. 134).*

This will keep the researcher's focus on understanding rather than judging. It is this notion of a region of truth that seeks to be created from this work, it seeks to be a creative description of the narrative dimension. Clandinin, (2007) notes 'this dimension can open the way toward not only a more capacious conceptualisation of truth but a more adequate

and human framework for exploring the human realm' (pp. 137). Within the devised framework several key elements were identified, which resonated deeply for the researcher. The idea that the nature of research was 'living in practice', as Polkinghorne (1995) as cited in Clandinin (2007), saw value in 'studying conversations that yield narratives, either as field texts themselves or as descriptions of actions and events to generate stories' (pp. 148). Research gives meaning, construct, and context to the everyday. In designing this research, exists a desire to amplify the core ideal that there are stories within us and as such give's quality to the lived human experience. As indicated by Clandinin (2007), the process of this research is in fact the storying of stories. Writing in this way allows the researcher a process of reconstruction. As one transcribes, analyses, and interprets experiences. Offering another interconnective deeper level, for the reader to engage, and react to, with the lens of a cultural and socio-historical context.

#### **The power and relevance of language used**

By planning to record transcripts the researcher, is not only able to record with accuracy but is able to listen for the tone and pacing of the discourse as well as the language used. For language will become the reality of the work. It will serve in the narration to construct a sense of self, a sense of the collective self and a sense of the bias at play for the group and the researcher. Therefore referencing, what is said, how it is said and what remains to be said. Through this lens, the researcher is given the opportunity to view the text offered as 1) the language used by the individual within the group and by the collective group and 2) to articulate the social process the group utilises to shape the social relationships, systems of knowledge, beliefs and values for the group and the school.

It will be here that the importance of identifying within the text its descriptive, argumentative, and theorising elements will be advantageous to the theoretical aspects of the work. In identifying these core elements, the researcher seeks to ascertain central aspects of the relationships at play. Conle, (2001) noted too the importance the position of power could hold in a work, as it is hoped here to become an evident storyline of the narration within researched relationships. The context of culture being shaped by the group's use of language, allows the researcher the ability to place oneself within a wider



cultural setting. One, that includes the context of situation, and of both the personal and interactional context.

The researcher is aware that in approaching any analysis of the transcription that the lens of recognising one's personal agency and subjectivity to the work. For these moments offered in engaging with the language of the text, can become one of personal reflection or one of uncertainty. This cannot pre-determine an outcome but can only rather be offered a series of multiple lenses, to view the participant's world delineation.

As the researcher encourages and seeks to elicit stories from the participants, other techniques will be woven into the script offered. There will be an active seeking out of what is professionally significant for the group, to share professional stories, all of which will be drawn out through unscripted or spontaneous questions. The researcher is mindful that when engaging within these conversations, when appropriate, there may warrant a question to seek clarification and or to offer supportive commentary to ease a tension or to affirm, observations offered.

### **Becoming time bound**

As the researcher enters the inquiry there is a realisation that this work, is time bound and as such will not be an ethnography. The researcher appreciates, the inquiry will be dependent on the time taken to develop a rapport, and a level of relational trust that enables the sharing of authentic stories. The researcher acknowledges there may be limitations imposed to the work through this choice of modality. In asking the participants within the narrative, to collect their thoughts and capture their wonderings through a series of vignettes, may prove to be problematic. The researcher is aware that being within a school community, there is an expectation and acknowledgement that the school's organisational demands will take precedent over the inquiry. As such, there is an expectation that time frames, and allotment of times may need to be amended and or shifted depending upon the availability and access granted to the leadership team who are the characters within the inquiry.

As narrative methodology lends itself to be context reliant, the researcher can then weave a multiplicity of theories into the work, to scaffold and draw out the most accurate of narrations. The participants within the inquiry are highly committed and time bound by their positions. Giving time for this work was a) of critical importance by the Principal, in moving forward with regards to the strategic plan, and b) that it would be seen that it is the quality not the quantity of time spent together in drawing out key narrations.

### **Contextual entities**

By placing importance upon the educational setting as a contextual entity, the setting itself brings with it the opportunity for the participants to create possible social or political reforms. Connecting with the antecedents of an epistemological narration, acknowledges this connection. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) note that a 'narrative inquiry is relational' (pp. 81), placing a human quality to the work. Giving a means to stop, reflect, check, and recalibrate, the level of social equity and cultural climates afforded by and to the school setting.

Conversations that restore people from a state of disorientation to a state of being in community is sought. Within this work there is the desire to note the importance of the notion of collective efficacy, which is developed and enhanced through the ideals of a community of practice. It is this community of practice that will allow the researcher through a retelling of this school's narrative that a type of sensemaking will emerge. As such the element of sensemaking, will pertain to the quality and type of human relationships. Noting varying interactions between the internal and external stakeholders within and to the school which will be interpreted, analysed and deconstructed. This is a school, that has lived through turbulent times and is now at a point in time, when a richer (not necessarily fiscal) tale can be woven into the cultural context of the school. The narration is one, that has been influenced by external political forces, evolving into a new narrative, that is catering to a different audience, then once previously shared.

Within the interview space, the researcher is seeking through the offering of the transcripts, as a means to provoke a reaction to combine with a thinking routine or

question stem to engage in further debate, seeking to deepen the contextual cultural interplay between the characters within this narration. Clandinin, (2007) referenced the terminology of Holstein and Gubrium, (1997) a ‘new ethnography – described, it first allowing the storytellers’ construction of their own reality and then, as researchers, learning what we can from this about who they are’ (pp. 232). It is through this narrative collage of offerings, that the interpretative and analytical approaches will be sorted to exhibit and unpack with the story of the school’s faith-based journey. Giving the reader an opportunity to gain a historical sense of the creation of the organisational cultures of school and church, by knowing how this has shaped and availed opportunities for growth, leading this leadership to where they are now.

#### **Varying modalities of communication - Habermas’ theories**

The researcher is aware that for this work to be truly narrative in methodological approach, an appreciation and awareness of the work of Habermas’s theory (1984) of communicative action and his views upon social capital, needs to be highlighted. It is his ideas of communicative action, in which the players ‘in society seek to reach common understanding and to coordinate actions by reasoned argument, consensus, and cooperation rather than strategic action strictly in pursuit of their own goals (Habermas, 1984, pp. 86). It is as Salemo, (2004) who writes, ‘without a deeper understanding of this side of human action, liberation is impossible (pp. 213). Further ‘it is the aim of communicative action to acquire human understanding. Habermas sees this type of goal-orientated action as central to modern life’ (Salemo, 2004, pp. 213).

In weaving together these ideas Salemo, (2004) synthesises the ideas of Habermas (1984) into these following words

*‘it requires removing restrictions on communication and liberating the concept of rationality. In doing this, he wants a new understanding of reason that goes beyond its instrumental form and transcends its classical definition in traditional philosophy in which reason was confined to propositional statements about the objective world. (pp. 214)*

The researcher seeks to draw a connection to the ideals of connecting truths, and of social capital of the self and the group's (that is the participants and the school's) social capital. By engaging in communicative action there is the possibility, to create a space for the social capital of the school, and the group to be discussed and acknowledged as the agents of change, within the social narrative of the school's development. As Habermas (1984) argues that conditions for argumentative action are

*'believed to be ideal ones. This means that in the discourse there is no other force than the force of better argument. Not inner (example prejudices) or outer (ideologies, short of time, short of knowledge) restrictions determine the outcome of discourse. Only the force of better argument the guidelines of which are immanent to the language itself - determines the speech situation. In the ideal speech situation, systematically distorted communication is excluded (pp. 177).*

To draw upon this work further, Habermas (1984) defines four key conditions for his 'ideal speech situation' to occur. The following are annotated points of his work.

1. Firstly, for all who engage within the dialogue must do so with a level of equality and a level of freedom which avails the player an opportunity to counter and question any claims made.
2. Secondly, all who participate within this dialogue do so, with an equal level of affordance to assert, recommend, explain and or challenge, the validity of any presentation made.
3. Thirdly, all who participate do so with a level of integrity, honesty, and transparency in relation to inner and conscious subjective viewpoints.
4. Finally, all who engage in the act of dialogue and conversation do so, with the right to refute, challenge and account for their own and that of the others viewpoint and or offering.

To quote Habermas (1984 a)

*'the ideal speech situation is neither just an empirical phenomenon nor construction but, in the discourse, fulfilled condition of reciprocity. This*

*condition could be - but not necessarily - counterfactual; when it is made counterfactual, it is operatively acting (working) fiction. Thus, I rather speak about foreseeing or anticipating of the ideal speech situation. Anticipation alone is not a guarantee for that we dare (...) establish rational consensus; at the same time the ideal speech situation is a critical standard by which actually achieved consensus can be questioned and also legitimated (verified) (...) ' ( pp. 180).*

It is the notion that within the reading of the shared texts, that each player within the conversation is picking up, listening, being affected by, and reacting to a specific generated idea from the collective and individuals within the group. For what is seen to be a critical outcome of this work, is that there is no guaranteed ending, but rather a series of insights that allow and invite the reader to create their own interpretation.

There may be those who would argue that is assuming the work will be both narrative and qualitative, that an existing tension will become evident. Whereby 'field texts, analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions are tested with members of those stake-holding groups from whom the field texts were originally collected, is the most crucial technique for establishing credibility' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, pp. 314). According to Denzin and Lincoln, (1998), 'validity is not a relevant criteria measure in qualitative research as qualitative research offers an illustration of what occurred, this position will doubt all criteria and privileges none...such criteria would flow from the qualitative project, stressing subjectivity, emotionally, feeling, and other antifoundational factors' (pp. 277).

### **Working protocols- making meaning**

The use of digital tools will be utilised during the collection of the field texts. The conversations will be held face to face, the time allotment may be decreased, but the time taken to travel there and back from the researcher's place of residence is some six hours. This was a weighty decision for the researcher committing to a whole day on the road for what may be only a few hours of face to face contact. For being within the group, the

ability to truly see the dynamic of the group at play will add a richer analysis in unpacking the groups collective efficacy.

It is noted during this chapter that as the outcome will not be a guaranteed or truly measured result, for the storylines will not be known and as such may need to be further explored. It is for this reason as stated the work will be through a qualitative lens. It is in offering the research question to the group and unpacking key components of the questions that the researcher will best learn from the participants. It will be through the establishment of key working protocols and norms established with and by the group that will aim to support the development and progression of the studied field texts. There is an awareness that in offering a general question that the responses given may change or avail an emergence of a new set of questions, in needing to answer key wonderings and knowledge offered from the group / participants within the narrative.

Given the work will not be based upon mathematical or statistical field texts, the way the researcher will code the transcripts will be of importance. The researcher will seek to group sentences, creating a text segment or line coding which will determine the meaning of the groups / individual's thinking, forming categories for description and analysis. Thus, the field texts shared will rather offer a description of the place, time, and individual and group's knowledge base. The aim is to draw out the descriptive qualities of the work, identifying themes giving the reader a rich complex picture of the social habitus of the group. Reflecting upon and interpreting the meaning of the field texts sourced, in weaving in the researcher's own reflections may create a more theorised meaning of and to the work.

The work will seek to draw out and identify key principle attributes and actions. Which will provide a complex picture of the group's relationships and working dynamic within a faith-based school. In acknowledging this work may be one long narration, it will though, aim to be realistic and seek to demonstrate to the reader, that what was read was and is, an actual account conveying, as noted the very complexity of the phenomenon or

process at play. The choice or summation of selecting or gravitating to a qualitative approach can be streamlined in the following manner

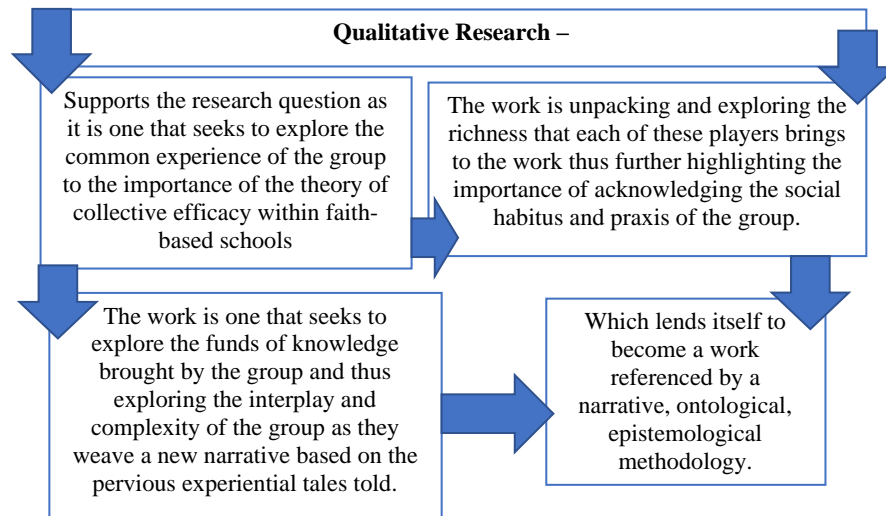


Figure 5.0 An indicative qualitative approach

What can be brought into question is whether this work is one based on a mixed method philosophy. ‘Mixed methods research adopts a pragmatic method and system, based on a view of knowledge as being both socially constructed and based upon the reality of the world we experience and in’ (Gray, 2009, p 204). Given that there are varying modes of questioning being developed within the work such as being a blend of pre-planned and participatory / emergent questions. The inquiry will reference a survey tool, seeking to deepen a level social and emotional understanding. What is sought is the weaving together of the varying storylines which will generate an understanding of the work.

What the inquiry ultimately seeks is to create a narrative with a sense of trustworthiness of the storied landscapes offered. It is in fact a story of what was shared, based on truth and trust. Therefore, credibility is sought of the field texts sourced. Validated by the checks and balances afforded by the players, within the narration and authenticity, with

empathetic, sensitive, engaging respectful explanations and interpretations considered are hoped to be sufficient.

As the work seeks to be narrative, there will be a systematic approach and a level of affordance to the structure of the language and the meanings generated by the shared dialogue / discourse. To ask where the meaning comes from, suggests a modality of structuralism in play. The work may not offer a fixed endpoint, rather may only invite the reader to construct their own meaning from the read text. It is hoped that a deeper level of poststructuralism ideas such as truth and knowledge, will become evident as emphasis is placed upon the underlying systems of language practice. It is here that the work of Foucault (1988) lend support to espousing a definition of poststructuralism, that is one that offers a causality of indemnity, of power knowledge and truth. For as the work sits within a poststructural and postmodernity, the writings of Foucault (1983) can be referenced not as an transcendent absolute in adding power to the work, rather enabling the work to investigate and question the multiplicity of forms offered as rational codes and cultural semiotic practices within the discourse. Foucault, (1983) explains this within the following remarks:

*'What reason perceives as its necessity, or rather, what different forms of rationality offer as their necessary being, can perfectly well be shown to have a history; and the network of contingencies from which it emerges can be traced. Which is not to say, however, that these forms of rationality were irrational. It means that they reside on a base of human practice and human history; and that since these things have been made, they can be unmade, as long as we know how it was that they were made' (pp. 133).*

As this is a social act their level of interaction suggests that as the players within the narrative interact, they will construct a meaning that will hold real and meaningful patterns. These patterns will be a product of social systems of meanings rather than purely an individual act. What will be analysed within the work is the language being used by the group, for it is this language that will, as noted previously, construct the reality of and for the group, as a form of ideological critique as referenced in research question one.



Greene, (2014) references the work of Taylor (2011) stating.

*'where the researcher-self is part of the other's narrative, the narrative, the researched and researcher become entwined. The researcher, then is forced to look both outward and inward. To be reflexive and self-conscious in terms of positioning. To be both self-aware and to acknowledge intertextuality as part of the field texts gathering and writing processes'* (pp. 9).

It is here the researcher will have to honour multiple methodologies to ensure respect of the complexities of being the insider researcher. For the researcher in adopting this research method, the field texts may elicit an opportunity for 'self-critique and reflexivity' (Greene, 2014, pp. 11). Allowing for an interdependent and interconnected portrayal of the work. 'The work will be two-fold in that it will be a research biographical and autobiographical in understanding, creating self-knowing' (Clandinin, 2007, pp. 125)

There may be a tension seen by some, but not by others as an opportunity to rationalise the truth of the self through an autobiographical lens. This work assumes to be one, that cannot be widely validated through empirical methodologies rather through the articulation of the autobiographical self that will give a permission to state a perspective, as Gazzaniga (1998) in Clandinin (2007) states, as a 'narrative-as-fictive-imposition' (pp. 136). Given that this narrative is one that cannot be truly validated but rather is one that gives a veil of actuality in that, this is a story of a point in time. What can then be created is a new storied landscape as a region of truth rather than one tightly bound. The aim of the inquiry is to create 'a more capacious conceptualisation of truth (within a faith based educational system) to form a more adequate framework for exploring the human realm' (Clandinin, 2007, pp. 137).

The work in framing epistemic questions, to be able to pose questions to the research group, based upon their practice, seen as knowledge and their status of knowledge. Epistemology leads to a state of recognition of symbols, words, and concepts. A representational epistemology results in signs and language as taken to be accurate

representations of the external world. Gray, (2009) views this representation of epistemology as a means to orientate ones thinking towards an end state rather than a process of change.

The players within the narrative are invited to construct their own meanings in differing ways even though the inputs are based upon an ontological approach. This work can be located within the work of Dewey and Mead's – symbolic interactionism. Being located within the players practices and lived experiences this reality is dependent upon the human interactions sought and their ability to take and make meaning from interactions. Meaning, therefore is constructed via the process of social interactions aided by an ability to modify accordingly, based upon the experiences encountered at the time. What both Dewey and Mead note, is that, meanings created are not fixed, as they can be revised and reshaped based upon the experience encountered by the self and the group.

As a final comment for this section, reference to the general approach of symbolic interactionism can be made. Symbolic interactionism explains the individual within society and their interactions with the other. This interaction explains our sense of social order and change. As we are dealing with a cohort of individuals within a social grouping, who are in fact engaging within a social process. Their interactions will elicit, invite an understanding of the meanings the characters place on objects, events, actions, and the ideas of the others within the narration. It is this categorisation of meanings assigned to things and or objects that dictate how they act. That action will be dependent upon that assigned meaning. Each character within the story will assign different meanings to and of things. However, it is in knowing that over time that the meaning of something can change. Or can be altered due to the experience lived in and by the group, that will be of importance to this inquiry.

### Section 2.1.4.

#### Ethical elements of the work

Whilst honouring the development of each character within the narrative and ensuring the norms and protocols of being an insider researcher are instilled, the final point to be raised is that of the ethical viewpoints and lens that the researcher must always be mindful of. For what is evident within a narrative methodology is that as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) note that ‘ethical matters shift and change as we move through an inquiry. They are never far from the heart of our inquirers no matter where we are in the inquiry process’ (pp. 170).

As this is a narrative inquiry, there is the belief ‘that narratives unite our lives’ (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 171). What this now does is avail the researcher the time and space to think upon the type of questioning being offered to those within the inquiry. As this inquiry is based on values and beliefs, bound by funds of knowledge, how does the researcher craft a question that is ethical, which will in all probability, be asked in a moment of time, bound by the encounter of the group. In crafting a question, the researcher must remain ethical and conscious of the responses given within the encounter. In narrative methodology, the researcher becomes a part of the narrative, as one who seeks understanding from the words shared. It is living in this moment of the lived story, that the researcher must be mindful of as the ethical issues emerge from the work. Blasié (1993) as cited in Clandinin and Connelly (2000) states,

*‘The events in our lives, places we have been and the people we have known, keep coming back. Our life is one long novel and as we work our way through the second half its small wonder we never escape those crucial first pages, when the light was set for all time, when the world is an intimate place, and all its inhabitants were known by name. They were all at the dance and they got their hands stamped on the way out. They can wander back without paying, without warning at any time they want’* (pp. 172).

Mindfully and sensitively engaging within the group, where, all are invited to participate and aware that they could leave at any juncture of the inquiry. Ensuring that all-times the work is to be shared with participants, to seek feedback and importantly not to impose opinion, rather to draw upon outcomes, that are available for ongoing consideration from the group.

Within this chapter there is a mindfulness, a consciousness of the importance of the role of researcher, one that is not taken lightly. One that comes with a sense of the importance of being authentic to the story being shared, that is done so to weave in the contextual environmental facts that may distort the story at play.

In weaving a narrative which is the act of storytelling, the social act of human interactions, the researcher is somewhat tentatively attracted to the works of Lyotard (1984), and seeks to utilise elements of his writings to add to others' positioning upon the notion of a 'metanarrative' and as such the 'grand narrative'. In this regard, 'metanarrative' is taken to mean exploration of the language in the expression of storytelling at the local level, while 'grand narrative' refers to those laws, principles and customs that impose or guide groups of people including countries. Lyotard (1984) develops what he calls a

*'pragmatics of narrative knowledge' in which narratives determine criteria of competence and performance, defining rights of what can be said and done in a particular culture. Local or little narratives (petit re'cits), in sharp contrast to the game of legitimacy played in the West, provide immediate legitimation" adding "they are legitimated by the simple fact that they do what they do" (pp. 23)*

### **Concluding remarks**

Whilst what is sought, is narrative in essence, capturing the 'metanarrative', or the local ideas and protocols of the research participants, as they grapple with expectations of broader institutions such as church, government, and community. Further it could be aligned to a term coined as 'multinarrativism', a term generated by Collins (1998), Danto

(1995/1997), Gress (1998) and Duchesne (2011). Namely, Danto (1997) argues that this term ‘mandates that at any given stage there is an inauthentic and an authentic mode of being, the former pointing to the future and the latter to the past’ (pp. 45). These various concepts of narrative and metanarrative may or may not be analysed from the field texts to follow, but at this stage, they seem to provide an interesting way of thinking about how professional colleagues interact in educational circumstances. They may be pursued in a more thoroughgoing way in future reading, discussion, and research.

The research design is a mode of reflective practice within a community of practice. Noting the potential to discuss and rationalise the issues facing a faith-based school. Adding it is hoped, rigour in the articulation of the themes, the storylines raised within the collected field texts, via dialogue, vignettes and in understanding how the storied landscapes have evolved for each of the characters within this narration. As noted throughout this chapter, this is a narration set in time, one, not able to generate a full field texts set, but rather a set of ideals and values in progress, grounded in a faith-based educational setting.

The role of the narrative is to weave the stories of human characteristics together, our ways of being to create a cultural narrative of this particular storied landscape. It is the eventual weaving of multiple narratives through ongoing research, to give us the reader a multiplicity of viewing lenses, and storylines which can be followed, be it the narrative of the church, the educational system, the school itself, or of the staff and students who reside within its halls, all offer a narrative.

This work seeks to remain authentic to the ideas raised earlier in regard to communicative action, thus supporting the social action of the group that will demonstrate the critical analytical perspectives of the work. For it this level of critical thinking being afforded to and by the work, that it is hoped will ultimately aid in the understanding of the inherent continuous, dynamic, and dialogical processes related to the contextual setting of a faith-based regional school.

In drawing these ideas together in the use of the narrative as a form of meta or multinarrative can be surmised in the words of Dewy (1957)

*We are weak today in ideal matters because intelligence is divorced from aspiration . . . When philosophy shall have cooperated with the force of events and made clear and coherent the meaning of the daily detail, science and emotion will interpenetrate, practice and imagination will embrace. Poetry and religious feeling will be the unforced flowers of life. (pp. 164).*

It is the continuing process of harmonising the social acts of the interests of others, whilst detaching the self, that will capture the narration of a faith-based schooling setting. The chapter has drawn upon a wide range of research and theorists, which has influenced the researcher's understanding of the processes of research, noting the significance of methodology as a narrative. It is hoped rather that this chapter will offer multiple through lines in viewing the following chapter – analysis of field texts.

### *Chapter Three*

#### *Field text results*

#### **A narrative inquiry into the experience of a leadership group, working towards collective efficacy in a regional faith-based school.**

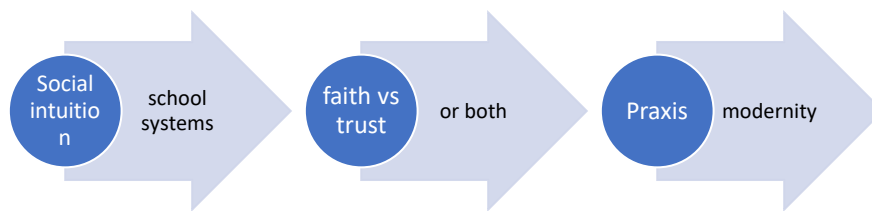
##### *3.1.0*

##### *Elements of the work*

The narration of the inquiry is an actual account of the leadership group's way of knowing their world and their relationship to, and within it. Thereby inviting current educational and self-nominated theories to be deconstructed and reconstructed, via their internal contexts required for their educational partnerships. Highlighting how issues of power, and spiritual representation are central in the pedagogical shift from self to collective efficacy.

The work itself eventually, acts as a catalyst for motivating a deeper analysis of the schools' structure and position within the community, supporting the reimagined schools' strategic plan. Seeing a discourse that was both reframed and remodeled as the group embraced a reflexive approach.

In reviewing the aims, and ethics of the work, the researcher worked within five defined lenses or frames as cited in the previous chapters. These principles are mapped as a continuum of thinking modalities and reflective states which could be augmented in the following manner.



*Figure 6.0 Semiotic thinking modality*

The discussion chapter will explore these concepts to explain the scale of systems in place, citing practices being impacted, in whole or in part by the social knowledge evidenced, in the system networks. It is of critical importance to the work that it remains authentic to the narrative spotlighting the positioned discourse and its functionality within the narrative.

### **Section 3.1.1**

#### **The lived reality of the School's leadership team.**

The first, and eventually only survey task offered to the leadership group, was devised by Garmston, R. and Wellman, B. (2013). Before unpacking the annotated field texts, the researcher must note, that only 5 of the respondents out of the possible 6 completed the survey, the principal neither met the deadline, nor completed any of the set tasks. The principal would often remark during post-group meetings with the researcher, that this work would benefit his team, and he would review the team's feedback as a tool to understand his team further, whilst only participating in the group's conversations himself. This lack of committing to task by the principal remained a constant thread throughout the work. The principal's lack of authorship spotlighted a notional thread of position of power and of influence too and within the leaderships' systemic thinking modalities.

Having met with the team in an introductory session, the researcher decided that due to the reworking of the timeline proposed by the school, only one survey could be offered to the team. In scanning the variety of survey tools offered by Garmston and Wellman (2013), the selected survey had to elicit information about the individual players within the narration. The researcher nominated – *'Norms Inventory – Rating Perceptions of Myself'*, (Appendix One) as having the greatest opportunity to gather quantitative field texts about the individual player, with the aim of seeking a perception of where the individual player saw themselves within the leadership group and the wider school community. Within this survey there are seven key ideas, including three sub questions to be ranked from lowest 0 – to highest 4. The completed surveys are to be found in Appendix One. The following colouring coding's offered within the graphical representations below.



- **Blue: Sub-question A**
- **Orange: Sub-question B**
- **Grey: Sub -Question C**

Why are the following seven ideas critical to the research question? As the researcher brings to the work a narrative of the self and thus a level of experiential knowledge especially in the area of cognitive coaching and processing, each of these elements of pause, paraphrase and pose connects to the importance in affording a learning environment. To cause any level of abstraction for the self and of the other requires the use of these processes to create, to draw out and or reflect upon stored information.

It is within these stimuli of pause, paraphrase and pose that conditions are created to enable the self and or the other to engage in the act of processing. To engage within a conversation, is not only a social act, it is also an act of engaging within, complex cognitive discourse. The affordance of wait time or pause, suggests a mindfulness of the importance in enabling/providing /empowering the self or other with the time needed to retrieve, relaunch and or re-imagine a response to the verbal interactions.

The act of paraphrasing is the act of attentive listening. In being able to 1) remove the 'I' from the sentence and to replace the word 'you' tells the other, you have authentically heard what was shared within the dialogue. There are three types of paraphrasing, acknowledge and clarify, to summarise and organise and finally to shift discourse to a higher or lower logical level.

Finally, the notion of being able to pose, or to offer a question that will confirm, shift or stimulate the others level of abstractive cognitive thinking, is of huge importance to the group's ability to operate within a heightened state of collective efficacy and craftsmanship.

For in all these seven survey questions offered to the group, gives the researcher an opportunity to know how the individual saw themselves, their level of positioning, value, place and therefore sense of power they hold in supporting and or directing conversation.

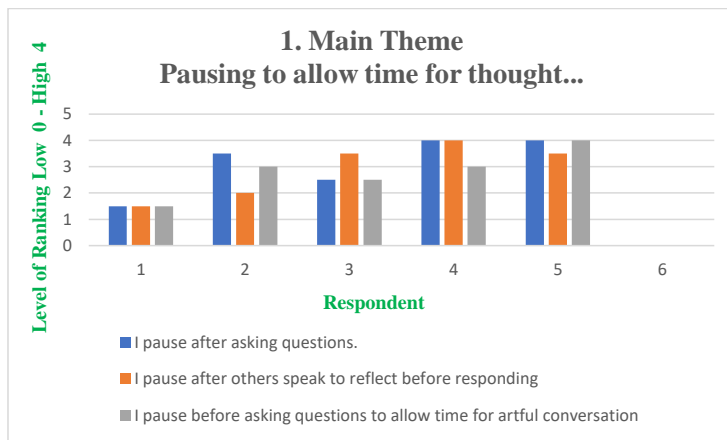
Giving an insight of the level of architectural praxis operating within the group as a whole and based upon the individual's level of funds of knowledge.

### Section 3.2.1

#### Overview of the intent of the proposed survey question

As noted, only five out of the six respondents completed the set task. Leaving the researcher without a set of benchmarks or working parameters to understand and or analyse the principal's working skill sets. What is not collected, what is not shared, is an absence of the working funds' of knowledge, to be reflected upon, but with absence, comes an awareness of what is not being said, and offered to the work by the principal in choosing not to be a part of the field texts collected.

#### Main Theme One



The first theme is of critical importance, for being able to 'pause' before asking or responding to a question, suggests based on the researcher's experience as a Cognitive Coach<sub>sm</sub>, that the player, is engaging in some level of thought or level of abstraction before offering or asking a question. This suggests that the respondent is able to use the

'pause' as a tool, to give themselves time, the permission to take a breath and respond with a heightened sense of responsivity and causality to the offered or posed question.

#### **Annotation / reflection of field texts**

**Respondent (1)** ranked themselves quite low across all three sub-questions, suggesting this leader / player, sees themselves as the problem solver, responding in haste, from their point of view, rather than attentively listening and responding with the other in mind. Secondly, in not offering a 'pause' after asking a question, you deny the other the opportunity to be awarded 'wait time' – time to remember, think upon, and or reflect upon the question or suggestion offered. This may suggest that respondent (1) is time poor, or is unable, to confer the gift of time of /for reflection to the other.

**Respondent (2)** places themselves moderately, within the ranked field texts. Seeing themselves in the role of a coach or is mindful of the skill set needed in weaving a constructive and reflective conversation. This is not to say all conversations are reflective, they can be problem-solving or planning in nature. By ranking themselves lower, in response to sub question two, suggests to the researcher, that the respondent is mindful of the importance of a 'pause' within the conversation and in nominating a lower categorisation is in fact noting an area of self-improvement to be worked upon. By ranking themselves higher with regards to sub-question 1 and 3, sees the respondent as one is who is, respectful of the other within the conversation, and is able to afford a pause as an opportunity to highlight what is of importance to be asked or offered by the other.

**Respondent (3)** has ranked themselves slightly lower than respondent (2), noting a heightened efficacious state of being, with regards to sub question 2- by giving themselves the permission to wait and then to respond to the other, suggests the importance of offering a question, or statement as one of intent and one that is aligned to the needs of the other.

**Respondent (4)** has ranked themselves, above average level, discriminating towards a highly efficacious state of the other, showing a strong sense of craftsmanship in the area of weaving a conversation, that empowers or seeks to support the other. By ranking

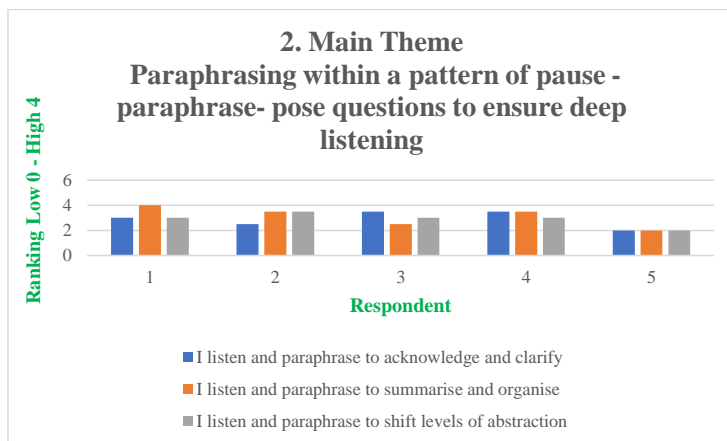
themselves higher with regards to sub question 1 and 2, suggests a sense of importance upon their voice being heard within the conversation, one that is seen to have merit and worth in regard to what is being offered to the other.

**Respondent (5)** shows a greater sense of continuity across all three responses. Noting the importance, of the 'pause' being forwarded to the other and also in regards awarding themselves the permission of 'wait time' to offer an opinion, what may be seen, as one of having gravitas.

### Main Theme Two.

#### Overview of the intent of the proposed survey question

The group's ranking of self provides the researcher with an insight into the individual's idea of self. Ranking perceptions, of how they, lead their teams, to create a culture of relational trust- building a collegiate level of efficacy.



#### Annotation / reflection of field texts

**Respondent 1** - listens to seek to understand and is able to shift levels of abstraction, seeing themselves to be highly effective in enabling the paraphrase, to be used to organise

ideas, to be able to listen, however; they do acknowledge the need to clarify for greater sense of intent, as they have ranked themselves lower in this sub-question.

**Respondent 2** – out of the three sub-questions they have ranked themselves the lowest, in their ability to paraphrase, to acknowledge, and clarify for intent and meaning. Seeing a greater sense of importance placed upon being able to rank, summarise and shift level of abstraction of the other.

**Respondent 3** – is highly attuned to being able to listen, to seek, and to clarify for understanding, noting a lower ability, in being able to summarise and organise ideas and opinions of others, feeling somewhat comfortable in being able to shift level of abstraction.

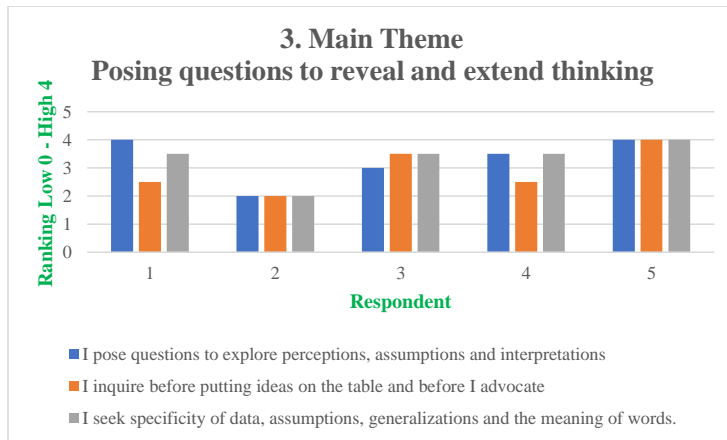
**Respondent 4** – seeks to clarify and understand others, able to summarise and organise other's ideas and thoughts working on being able to shift abstraction.

**Respondent 5** - It is interesting to note the difference between theme 1 and 2. For respondent 5 ranks themselves lower here, suggesting either a disproportionate sense of value to the importance of the use of the paraphrase. This respondent could be seen as the most balanced, in this area of being able to use the paraphrase, to clarify, pose and organise ideas of the other, noting higher levels of abstraction.

### **Main Theme Three**

#### **Overview of the intent of the proposed survey question**

The importance of this theme is the level of affordance, the respondent awards to inquiry, to support their degree of understanding, to ensure that they are fully informed and prepared before offering opinion or thoughts to the wider group.



#### Annotation / reflection of field texts

**Respondent 1** – able to process to deepen level of understanding – seeking to identify key aspects of field texts but notes a level of hesitation in putting ideas forward, which suggest that this respondent's level of authority within the group is of lower status.

**Respondent 2** – even though this ranking is the lowest in all three sub-questions, they are all of equal ranking, which suggests either 1) a sense of humility to the level of influence within the conversation or 2) seen to be an area, as yet to be developed within their role.

**Respondent 3** – Is high in ranking, seeing the area of inquiry and specificity as of equal importance. What is of interest is the lowest ranking score is awarded to where the other sits, within the conversation. Noting the importance, that they place upon seeking the perceptions of others, may suggest that their own opinion holds greater weight than the opinions of others.

**Respondent 4** – here the respondent is able to inquire and specify key elements within a conversation, there is though, a lack of correlation to being able to ask pertinent questions. The wondering here, is where does this respondent sit amongst the group and what level of authority, do they award to themselves; or conversely awarded by others. An inability in the lack of seeking permission to inquire suggests a lower sense of self and thus power

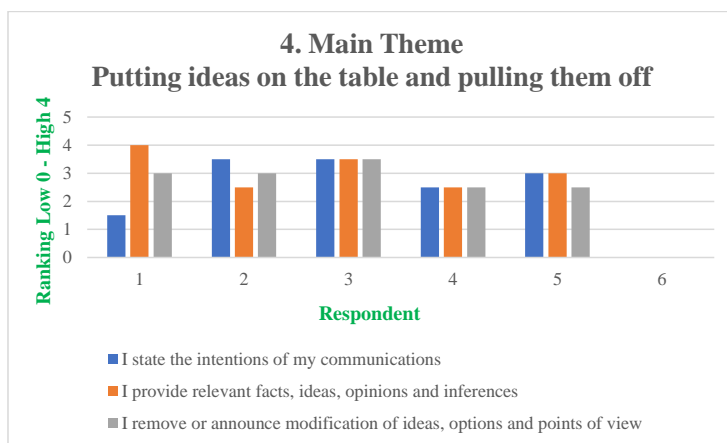
within the group. This is an interesting reflection as all five players who completed this task are all heads of schools.

**Respondent 5** – sees themselves as balanced across all three areas and is able to deliver the necessary skill set in being able to pose questions to extend thinking of and for the other. This suggest either a) a greater wealth of experience to draw upon or b) they like to take the lead and drive the course and outcomes of the conversations had.

#### Main Theme Four

##### Overview of the intent of the proposed survey question

The importance of this idea is in how and what the respondent draws upon in communicating their ideas and opinions. Noting their ability and or willingness to moderate, adapt or change points of view. What will be in scope, is the notion of self-importance, if there is a lack of willingness to hear other's points of view, or to adapt to change.



##### Annotation / reflection of field texts

**Respondent 1** – is able to provide relevant facts, tends to adapt too and offers points of view but seems to lack confidence in being able to communicate their own intentions. However, there is a willingness to support and modify ideas accordingly within a conversation.

**Respondent 2** – is more willing to give personal opinion but does not draw upon facts in doing so. They are able to modify ideas, based upon others point of view, which may suggest that this respondent, is easily shifted by the opinions of others.

**Respondent 3** ranks themselves as moderately successful in all three areas, seeing value in being able to state intent, substantiated by relevant facts, ideas or opinions, and sees value too, in being able to support or modify current viewpoints based upon input of others.

**Respondent 4** ranks themselves as equally successful across all three areas; compared to others within the leadership group, they see themselves as lower in skill set and thus confidence. Not being able to fully trust and rely upon facts to support their own point of view.

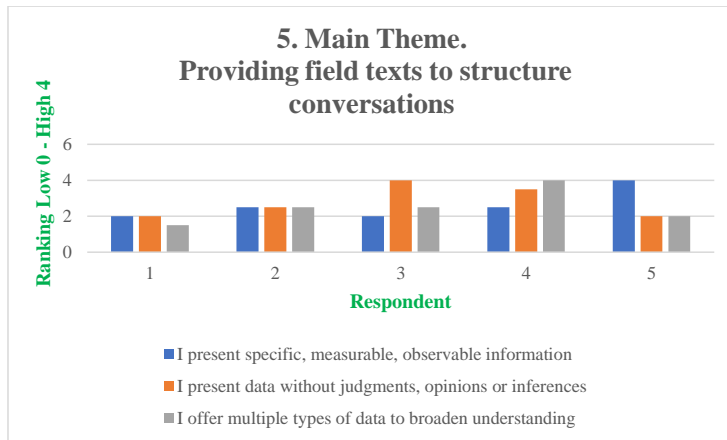
**Respondent 5** is confident in offering opinion and in using data to reinforce ideas, however, shows a lack of willingness to alter opinion based upon the input of others, thus not operating within an efficacious state of being.

### **Main Theme Five**

#### **Overview of the intent of the proposed survey**

What is of importance within this offering is the notion of ‘I’ and their own ability to present, broaden judgments and influence other’s ways of thinking. Within sub-question 1, the ability of the respondent to use data in a measurable and observable manner suggests a level of accountability and transparency is in play. Sub question 2 notes the affordance of offering suggestion without judgment and bias. And sub-question 3 notes the importance of offering a modality of resources to support the other’s level of abstraction.





#### Annotation / reflection of field texts

**Respondent 1-** has ranked themselves poorly across all three areas. Noting a level of inability to use measurable data, without referencing their own personal bias. A leader to rank sub-question 3 at 1.5 may suggest a lack of confidence, or inability to use data sets, or varying modalities, to shift a level of abstraction of the other, within their team. This may suggest two things 1) that the respondent perceives themselves of low ability or 2) holds little sway / influence with others.

**Respondent 2** – in a leader ranking themselves at 2.5, across all three levels, in the attributing skill set in providing structure to a conversation is of concern, based upon systematic leadership theory (Senge, 2006). Not to be able to present data, in a measurable and informative manner, nor to be able to present data, without bias, suggests that the respondent may lack the skills to master the art of conversation. A bold sweeping statement, but to hold oneself so poorly within the area of structuring conversations, is key in identifying the level of architecture of praxis in play for this respondent.

**Respondent 3** – is the first respondent to identify as holding a level of proficiency in noting the importance of presenting field texts without personal bias and or judgment, rather uses field texts to moderate and give an holistic overview of the situation at hand. This respondent sees value in an efficacious approach.

**Respondent 4** – rates themselves poorly, in being able to present data effectively and with the level of accountability needed within the leadership group. They do however,

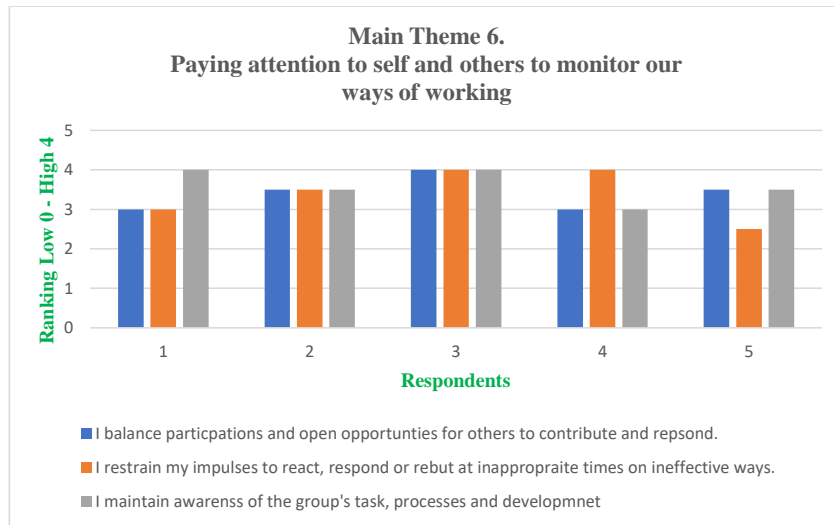
rate themselves well, in being able to present data without bias or judgement. This suggests a level of affordance in the other, seeking other's point of view, and offering a broadening sweep of data to inform the other.

**Respondent 5** – is able to use data effectively, ensuring accountability and transparency of data used. This is their highest level of ranking out of all three sub-questions. They then rank themselves very poorly, with regards to sub question 2 and 3. Noting an inability to remove personal bias and judgment, and to use varying modalities to support other levels of cognitive abstraction. To be a leader, requires the ability to remove the 'I' from the group conversation, to ensure transparency, to offer a heightened level of permission for all staff to generate debate and offer opinion. This respondent is either unable or unwilling to shift the lens to the other and thus sees value in only their own thoughts and opinions.

### **Main Theme Six**

#### **Overview of the intent of the proposed survey question**

Within this theme the notion of balance, restraint, and the ability to maintain a groups way of working is brought into focus. What is sought is where value is being placed upon the others ability to have access to and equal participation in contribution. It also seeks to align the respondent's capacity to gauge oneself and ability to withdraw and thus not seek to control and or direct conversation, the groups way of working – they operate within a distributive leadership design, not that of a direct line managerial style



#### Annotation / reflection of field texts

**Respondent 1** – believes themselves to be moderately successful in this area of awareness. In being able to balance opportunity for input from others, and to restrain their own impulses for controlling, or disrupting conversations, or the groups way of working. Noting this level of self-awareness the researcher wonders, if the responses to sub-question 3, in maintaining awareness, suggests level of control in knowing what the group is doing, rather than being seen as of support to the group, given their lack of inability to provide opportunity for contribution and cognitive abstraction? The researcher notes a subtle sense of power and control over the groups working abilities.

**Respondent 2** – has a balanced view and one that sees an affordance of equal portionality to their raking of 3.5. This suggests a stable view of the importance to provide balance, opportunity, restrain and awareness. All key attributes in awarding distributive leadership and collective efficacy within this leader’s team cultural dynamics.

**Respondent 3** –also has a balanced view and one that sees an affordance of equal portionality to their raking of 3.5. This once again suggests a stable view of the importance to provide balance, opportunity, restrain and awareness. All key attributes awarding a distributive leadership style, and collective efficacy within this leader’s teams

cultural dynamics. Especially given, all three ranking respondents are situated at 4.00 at the highest point of the scale.

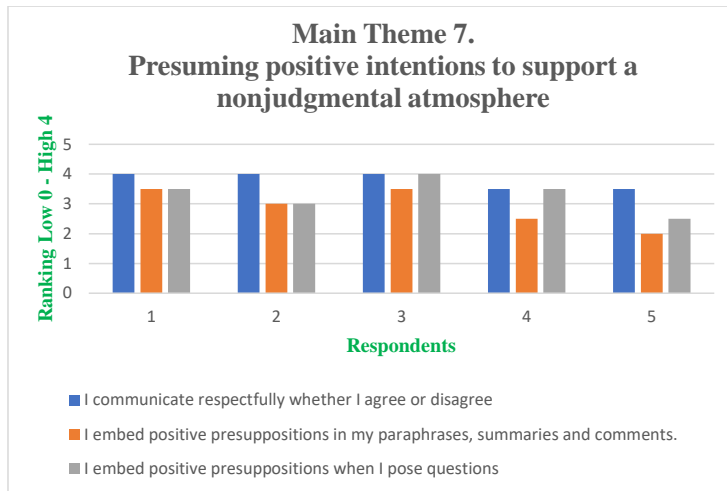
**Respondent 4** – is a mixture of responses and levels of affordance for their working group's dynamics. They are aware of the importance of restraining their own impulses and the use of language, has upon the groups working dynamics. What is at odds with this personal reflection, is the lack of value or ability to provide opportunity for the other, to contribute to the work and their ability to have an awareness of the group's performance. Does this suggest 1) a lack of ability to support and maintain the drive of the group or 2) is it a level of affordance of trust in the group's ability to stay on task?

**Respondent 5**– once again a mix-match of skill sets. This respondent is able to balance and give opportunity for the other within the group to contribute to the discussion and maintains a level of awareness of where the group is, with regards to a task. However, as the respondent is unable or is unwilling to restrain their impulse to rebut, or disrupt the group, the researcher, sees sub-questions 3 response as one of control and power over the group.

#### **Main Theme 7.**

##### **Overview of the intent of the proposed survey question**

This theme addresses the notion of language and power within the group. The use of language can either be used by a leader as a) to build capacity of the team or b) negate the work, worth and value of the other within the group's dynamics.



#### **Annotation / reflection of field texts**

**Respondent 1** – shows the mindfulness of the importance of embedding positive presuppositions in the use of questioning, paraphrasing and summarising comments. Suggesting not only a respectful but safe learning environment for their team, exists.

**Respondent 2** – has a heightened sense of the importance of communicating in a respectful manner, but is unable, to embed positive presuppositions.

**Respondent 3** – Has a heightened sense of the importance of communicating in a respectful manner and ability to include positive presuppositions when questioning, which suggest a more reflective and considered approach to questioning. However, this is not seen with regards to sub-question 2 where in offering a paraphrase, summary and or comment would suggest that the respondent is more ‘I’ driven and less mindful of the other’s opinion.

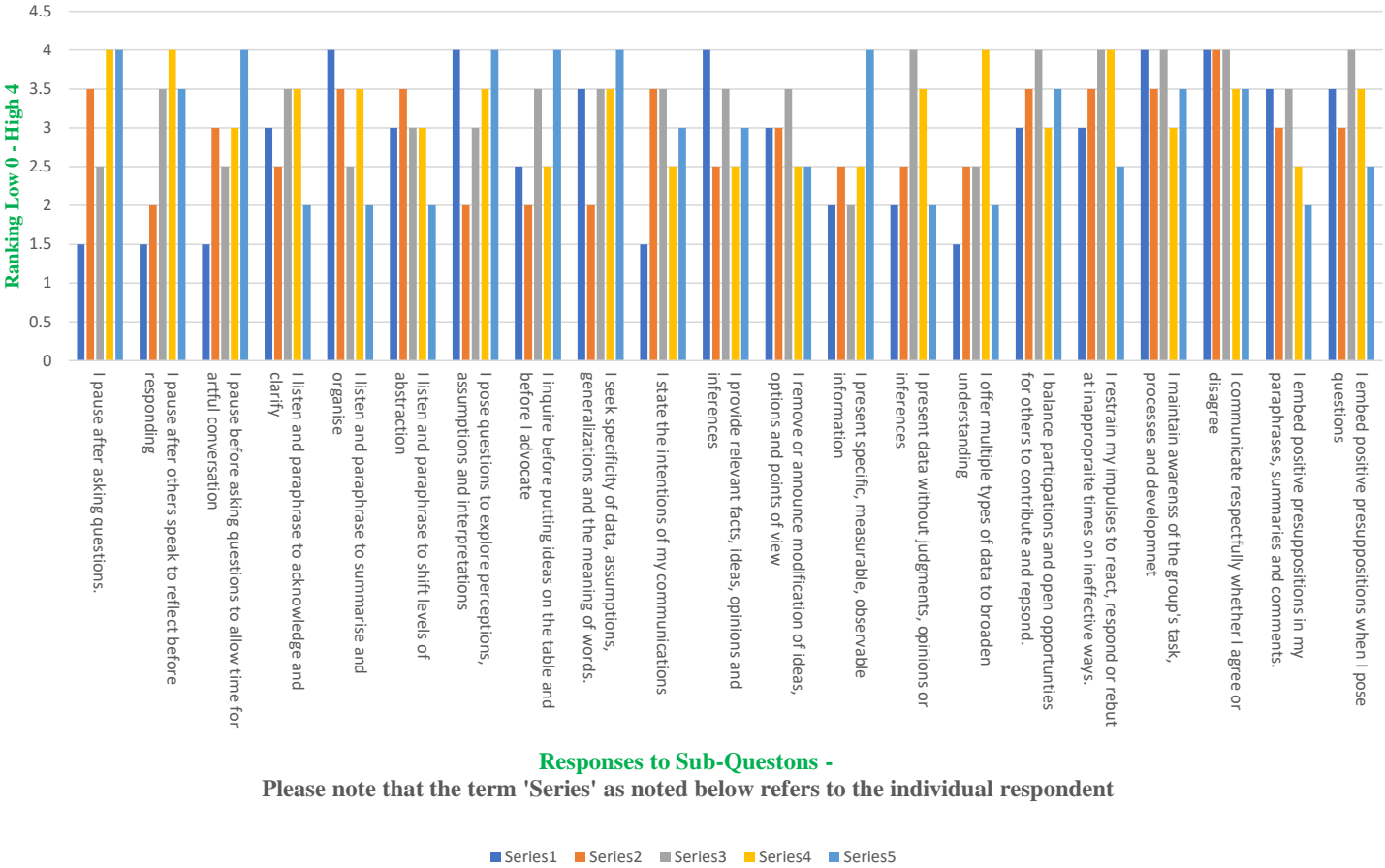
**Respondent 4** – as with respondent 3 – they too have a heightened sense of the importance of communicating in a respectful manner and ability to include positive presuppositions when questioning. This suggests a more reflective and considered approach to questioning. However, this is not seen with regards to sub-question 2 where in offering a paraphrase, summary and or comment would suggest that the respondent is more ‘I’ driven and less mindful of the other’s opinion.

**Respondent 5** - as with respondent 3 and 4, respondent 5, has a heightened sense of the importance of communicating in a respectful manner, which suggests a more reflective and considered approach to questioning. However, their response is the lowest ranked with regards to sub-question 2, thus suggesting that the respondent is far more 'I' driven and less mindful of the other's opinion when offering commentary to the group.

#### **All seven themes combined**

In offering a collated chart below, the researcher endeavoured to trace a common theme, a series of strengths if you will, of the skill set needed to operate within a collegiate leadership style. One, where the leader considered the other, and one that allowed for the complex cognitive levels of abstraction to occur within an educational setting. Instead what is gleaned is that there are varying levels of skills, none are well qualified in managing the skills to restrain self-control and or are able / willing to seek and thus bestow a level of collective efficacy and shared ownership of ideas to their teams. In curating this field texts, the researcher is able to see these themes echoed within the language used within the transcribed conversations of the group as they evaluate their cognitive reasoning.

Combined 7 Themes



Responses to Sub-Questions -

Please note that the term 'Series' as noted below refers to the individual respondent

### Section 3.3.0

#### Knowing our characters through conversation

##### Our first encounter

The researcher held four conversations over a 12-month period, with the leadership group. (Full copies of the transcripts can be found in Appendix 2). After each conversation the researcher transcribed the full conversation in its entirety. This transcript was then offered back to the leadership team to reflect upon. The researcher also annotated the transcript, with the purpose of identifying through lines or ideas as generated by the group. With each offering a visible thinking tool was also provided to enable the players the strategies to work through the conversation within a safe framework.

Given the school had worked within a PLC model, by encouraging the leadership group to devise their own norms and protocols, would be key to establishing a protective space to share and explore the groups thinking.

They were

##### 1. Respect we all wear different hats

- Parent and leader.
- Observations are about the role and not personal.
- Each is availed the experience of feeling comfortable in the professional learning space.

##### 2. Disagreeing well

- As a staff, we are able to disagree well.
- We can all voice opinions.
- We respect everyone.
- We communicate openly.

##### 3. We respect that we are contributing value to the team.

- We put aside egos.
- We know we are all contributing to the good of the school.
- We work as a tight collaborative group.



#### **4. What is said within this focus group is confidential**

In reviewing the norms and protocols, the researcher offers the following points as provocations to use as possible through lines of inquiry. The term provocation is seen within the work to stimulate interest through an offering such as a visible thinking tool or inviting the leadership group to engage within the conversation.

As these norms and protocols have been crafted by the group, they in fact highlight several key areas of tension and a mindfulness in how the group has previously operated, not wanting to repeat these behaviours within this protected working time for reflection. The sections below shall unpack these protocols further.

##### **Unpacking thinking**

##### **1. Respect we all wear different hats...**

- In acknowledging the varying roles within the school, noting the level of hierarchy that goes with the position, there is reference to power, authority, and perception within the group's dynamic.
- Issues of contamination in creating spaces of tension, were raised especially in noting that a leader can also be a parent, thus having differing roles and levels of authority within the wider school community. This was a labored point by the group, which suggested that criticism is taken personally, as it seems to be delivered in a manner that assumes to be of an individual attack, and not a professional reflection or critique of pedagogical practice.
- This was of critical importance for the researcher to be mindful of, as this notion needed to be awarded space, to ensure that all players within the narration feel a level of comfort, suggests too that this has not been the norm in the past.
- 

##### **2. Disagreeing well.**

- To disagree well, suggests that in the past that disagreement has brought tension and as such some voices may have been or have felt to have been lost in communication and thus transparency.

### **3. We respect that we are contributing value to the team.**

- The language here offered by the group is interesting as it suggests, egos and power are of concern to the group.
- That there may have been in the past hidden agendas aligning to the status of the few rather than the good of the wider school community.
- That meaningful collaborations are sought by the group.

### **4. What is said within the focus group is confidential**

The wording posed here suggests previously, that confidential issues were raised within a public domain, generating gossip, and misconceptions became the norm rather than respecting the line of communication. Process and or protocols put in place (if there were any) to ensure authentic, transparent, and timely information was shared with key stakeholders, seem to have been absent amongst the working groups of the school's educational and administrative teams.

These storylines developing within this narration at such an early stage, suggested to the narrator, that being the insider researcher could become fraught. Individuals within the group may have assumed that a possible bias be awarded to some, and not to others within the group. For the insider researcher to remain authentic to the narrative, the storyteller of this narration, had to be ethical, accountable, and transparent to the field texts collected and curated at all times. The above norms and protocols acted as a prologue to the narration, suggesting a history of mistrust, resentment, and doubt in the other and of the other within the group. The language used was a portent of things to come. During the session, the principal welcomed the researcher to the team, and noted the journey that had been shared by the researcher, with the school and leadership members. Alerting the team to a past collective knowledge of the school and the lived tensions and plights as experienced by the then leadership team. The researcher has identified the players, by a personal pseudonym. Their titles have been cited here, for their title and role saw alignment to their position of hierarchy and perceived power, place, and operating praxis

of the individual leader. Further, the researcher has given each of the participant within the leadership group a pseudonym – that will be used in the narrative inquiry.

- Head of Senior School – Sam
- Head of Middle School – Matt
- Head of Junior School – Joyce
- Principal (P) - Bob
- Business Manager - Madge
- Head of (Name of Religion) Faith – Sally

The researcher invited each team member to share their educational journey, what brought them to the school and what drew them to the educational field. From the group some had started in other fields of endeavours such as law, nursing or glazing, but felt compelled to return back to regional Victoria, to have the support of family and friends and in doing so believed that a change of profession was warranted.

Others were led to the field of education as they were inspired by their own personal educational experience, i.e. a particular teacher of influence. It is here in sharing these experiences, that the players within the narration start using emotive language, the notions of what is valued and how these values shaped their personal and professional belief systems are revealed. These experiences are also grounded within the values of rural and regional settings. For many of the players within this narration have their funds of knowledge squarely located within a regional community. The values of mateship, work ethic, community, and support are all held and can be seen as themes of operating praxis for some of these players. Values of staying within community are also evident within these conversations. Within these reflections value statements of the school emerge, such as *'we have got the potential for a really good school here... excited about the growth of the school'*. Reflecting a positioning as to where the school is located, within the communities' wider ranking perceptions, to that of other schools within the municipality.

When reflecting upon their personal educational journeys, the influence of setting, and values of other religious orders were showing as having a long-term influence, and impact

upon how these players were enacting their dialogue within this narration. One player (Bob) noted that in entering into the field of education they started in the catholic system and saw themselves as catholic. This is an example of a tensions between two differing religions. For this player to see themselves as spiritually catholic was accepted but to become outwardly catholic, living the values of faith daily, was a lived tension, seeing the player leave the catholic educational system and move into the independent sector. It was realised by Bob, that in deciding not to become a member of the catholic church would in fact prohibit further advancement within the leadership structure of a catholic faith-based school. Bob) is now of the faith of the researched school.

One key player within this narration – Sally – is the longest serving staff member on the leadership team. This character brought a sense of authenticity via choice of language used, based upon their collective memory, and at times could be said, to be offering their own ‘gospel of reflexivity’. They come to this role, as one who was brought up in the doctrines of the Catholic church and reflect upon their personal angst of religious affiliation. Now being the Head of Faith (this is not a clerical role) but rather one that supports the values of the faith being shared within the school’s community. They comment here ...

*“Heading to where I am now, I am head of (name of faith) Identity, which I really enjoy. I really like the idea of this position and what we are trying to build here, and I love the idea of us being a faith-based school and what that means for our community, our families, and kids.*

*I am a Catholic, and it’s funny I probably had many moments where I thought gee I am much more (name of faith) now, than I am Catholic. I think in terms of that’s how about I feel about (name of faith), it is so inclusive that’s really resonated with me in particular the last couple of years.”*

*“We have staff that are really frightened to have these conversations around faith and spirituality. I find that strange, why wouldn’t you have*

*(Sam) conversations, or at least try and identify where you sit, you know we are not converting everyone, we are not bashing the bible on people's heads. We are just talking about all the good things that it means to be a person of faith. So, that's where I am some 13 years later. (sic)*

For the researcher this is an exciting attribute of consequence offered to the group. How has this lived tension been observed by the leadership and does this lived tension of enacting a faith within an educational setting reiterate to the other players within this chapter?

As a boundary rider to this level of consciousness being raised the following statement was offered to the group by the researcher, more as a provocation and as a way to disrupt their thinking in this area of faith...

*"So (it's) how do you bring staff to have that confidence to articulate that conversations of devotion, for if it's the value of the leadership group to espouse the values of an (name of faith) and you have staff that have friction to or a reluctance to understand that, then how does that sit, when you are trying to move that direction forward".*

Within the story, when Bob was present within the dialogue, he is very keen to instigate the first response to any question or provocation given to the group. Here is another example of power, by setting the tone for the group. Bob offered the following statement, about the team's willingness to shift and adapt to grow...

*"To give themselves over to something bigger and yes, we are a faith-based school, absolutely no doubt about it. But as (Sally) said we are not here to bash the faith; we are here to protect the faith in a sense. We are here, we have people of many faiths, they are all valid, they are all valuable members of the community and we need to assist them to become comfortable in their own faiths as well, as well as us, to become comfortable in our own faith."*

Here the notion of communication is raised as one of importance and necessity for the group to manage. What is of interest, is the language offered here by Sam, who notes communication to be about openness and honesty but then offers this statement, realigning the notion of communication to that of effective relationships, stating...

*"That we get the people to do what we want them to do and maintain (Sam) relationships. Its relationships that are the key for me".*

Matt has on this day, has just met with the leadership team for the first time, so this dialogue is insightful and opportune in gaining a deeper narrative of the team he is about to engage with. When referencing his team, Matt, always refers to them as 'his little team' and speaks of the aspirational qualities, such as continuing to learn, as core values, he would like to instill.

Madge, offered an insightful reflection noting that all within the team, are here through a myriad of experiences and variance of choices. No one has had a clear pathway to get to this point in time. Madge tends to offer these pearls of wisdom, to the group, with confidence. Could this be, a) due to the fact that they control the money or is it b) being administrative rather than educative in role allows for a convenient disconnect to be held within their relational status within the group – another example of power at play? Giving a timely reminder of the importance of persistence, perseverance and ownership of action taken, seems on reflection a targeted offering. Reference is made to the challenge of the role within the school, to offer the breadth and depth of curriculum subjects sought by the wider local community, financial constraints and inputs must be considered. This process was referred to as 'akin to herding cats' by Madge. Here the notion of how one's own values and beliefs can influence or act as a caveat to advocate for a particular type of expenditure over another.

It is interesting that through this dialogue that the conversation shifted from faith, to that of what the group can bring to the table - strengthening the idea that when Bob was present, he did set the tone. The narrator assumed the role of the Chorus within an ancient

Grecian play, offers back to the players their words, ideas, and thoughts, seeking an approach to articulate opinions shared earlier.

Tensions start to rear within this drama, of staffing issues and remuneration. This is balanced out by the Sally, who reminds the group of their collective knowledge – noting the trials and tribulations that the staff have struggled with, to get to this point in time. This, is a school where the staff survived from week to week, not knowing if their next salary would be honoured. There is now a stability and sense of security that has not been previously felt by this community.

Sally reminds the group of the importance of building relationships and the level of professionalism needed to be invested in professional relationships. Matt offers an external observation. Having recently joined the school community, the known experience of the school, was informed by community reflection and knowledge. The opinion being shared here was that this was a school of growth and change, one that was being noticed within the wider regional community. Here Bob reinforces this point, noting investment in assets and improving infrastructure. Bob notes the importance in seeking financial assistance from the faith-based commission. Citing the difference from when he first arrived to now. Noting the importance of partnerships, relationships, and connections. Showing the shift in stature of the school within the wider municipality, the idea here is to win the population over, ensuring that the school offers quality faith-based education. Sally realigns these challenges of growing quickly, as positive stretches and not like those faced previously, now they are working towards a sustained growth pattern rather than just one of pure survival.

In offering a reflective statement back to the group, of how does the leadership group support such a level of expansive growth – Joyce offers the following subjective statement

*“Maybe organisation and honesty and timely organisation. You know we have to be honest at the end of the day – there is probably a level of not*

*dishonesty but perhaps not telling the full story which has probably struck us down quite a few times”.*

The idea of honesty and trust is now on the table, citing a lack of confidence in policies and procedures used or not, within all levels of the school community. This causes a lack of trust in structural issues within the operation of the school. During this stage of dialogue, Bob has left the room for another meeting – note the change of tone in dialogue, being shared by the players.

Trust in another is also being raised here, or lack of trust in another’s abilities to ensure what is being deemed to become a whole approach has gone through a consultative process seems to be absent here. Consultation, commitment to staying the course and being able to refine how the executive team works, to become more reflective and accountable to the process, are being raised as issues of concern by the team. The division of sub-schools within the whole school are starting to show – first reference to personality clashes. Joyce notes a lack of being confident in their ability to share in a collective approach in working with the other members of the executive team. Factions are starting to appear aligning middle and senior together, showing a lived disconnection to the junior school.

The first real example of a lack of cohesion is brought up by Sally who states

*“And it might be a little bit of a tension but it is hard also and I am talking about the kids now, yeah our middle school is 5 – 8 we have had lots of conversations recently about how our 5 - 6 cohort feels about, they are in limbo in no man’s land there”.*

This chasm is supported by Sam, who also notes that they leap from year 4 – 5 into middle school area. This has been pressed as a ‘sales push’ – a smooth transition into year 7, for this year level is traditionally seen as the start of senior school. The lens being shared is one of a student perspective. Again, the researcher offers the provocation of how does



this team of players enhance the motivation of other team members to ensure that the breadth and depth of curriculum changes and school structures raised, are shared, and adopted as a whole school approach?

Madge noted that gossip and speculation are rife and is acknowledged as an area of concern and one that needs to be addressed. Setting clear boundaries and expectations of behaviour are being offered as approaches to negate these behaviours – building the capacity of the team and building a sense of value within the teams is raised once more.

The notion of engaging in a difficult conversation is raised but is counteracted with the idea that as a leadership group these conversations could be prevented in the first place. Again, the themes of consultation and transparency are raised. Here Sally references that the current climate within the school is one of toxicity, where there is a level of mistrust and one where staff are fearful. What is being shared within the public area is based on rumor and innuendo. The need for timely accurate information to be shared with key stakeholders is seen to be an imperative in moving forward. This is what will give the leadership, the players, control over the school's narrative.

### **Concluding remarks.**

From this conversation, we have been awarded the insight into the psyche of our key players within this narration, and we have witnessed, two differing types of dialogue one that is possibly, unconsciously directed by the language offered by Bob when in attendance, and the other when Bob is absent. There is a shift in tonality, in directing and naming key tensions as lived by each of the players.

What we have gleaned is the inner workings of the group of players, be it positive or negative. We have identified clear storylines, now coded within four areas of analytical type:

- Consultation (Observational)
- Communication (Theoretical)
- Transparency (Analytical)

- Power / position (Theoretical)
- Self-doubt (Analytical)
- Belief and values of the self and of the collective group (Theoretical)
- Respect (or lack of) (Observational)
- Faith (inclusivity and affordance of opportunity to grow the school's capital)  
(Methodological)

These storylines will be explored within the discussion chapter. In sharing this transcript with the players, the researcher offered their narration, framed within a Thinking Hats Routine. This was discussed at the end of the above session – all seemed willing to use this tool, as each had an awareness of this tool. This document can be found in full within Appendix Two. This task also asked the characters to write 250 words around their own insights of what was shared by the group.

What occurred, was not predicted. In that the tool, would attract a level of negativity rather than one, that could be used as a measure for curating possible further actions and or outcomes. What was revealed was a series of negative comments, not to be viewed as areas for growth or reflection, rather led towards a deficit approach, as to what was preventing movement forward. The act of curating key ideas was a means to select or organise ways of connecting, expert knowledge as offered by the leadership group.

This would need to be seen as a limitation of the visible thing tool. The choice of tool was a desire of the researcher to offer a framework, where each player could safely offer opinion, allowing for both positive and negative comments to curated. What occurred was deficit theorising. The researcher had to reimagine and review, what tools could be given to the characters of this play to enable a mode of reflexivity to occur, one that gave permission to be constructive in response. As a facilitator within the narrative inquiry, the role is one where the offered frameworks, are used safely by the group. At times, the group could be said to be unreceptive, even disinclined to authentically hear the other within the shared landscape. In ensuring that the norms and protocols, were truly met by

the group, the researcher felt ethically bound to offer the visible thinking tools as a means to invite opportunity for all to be heard and respected within the shared dialogue.

As we move into the second of our conversations, the researcher had to be prepared to take on possible negative feedback and thus change mode of engagement.

### 3.4.0

#### Deeping our level of understanding

##### Second Discussion - February 2019

In meeting at the start of the academic year, the researcher met a team rejuvenated and enthused for what lay ahead. What the researcher also found that in seeing Bob as the conduit for disseminating transcripts and tasks, that not all were shared in a timely fashion, which prevented a whole team response to be annotated in regard to the first meeting held. This would become another unexpected limitation in the inquiry – as the researcher assumed that Bob would honour commitments made.

In reviewing the Thinking Hats routine, the group defaulted to a negative stance, where the hat of ‘logical’ was seen as a negative settings. The researcher offered a lens or a mindfulness of seeing these as a series of challenges and or stretches. The researcher found ‘wait time’ was needed by the group. Given the survey results shared in the opening section of 3.1.0, shows this to be a foreign concept and one that is not used regularly in conversation. Silence, for this group was one of discomfort.

In reviewing the field texts with the group, the researcher felt compelled to remind the group that this was their script. It was not added too, nor edited. These words, these concepts, were their own. Upon reflection this brought a level of uneasiness to the group’s consciousness. This level of awkwardness was compounded by Sally who felt a need to refute what was shared. Noting that the intentionality behind the comment, in engaging within a faith-based space, was one targeted between staff and student, rather than leader and staff. There was a reoffering, seeing a shift in the level of cognitive abstraction, noting

that some staff, do feel a level of discomfort in engaging within faith-based conversations with students.

Bob noted that students in Year 11 and 12 (Victorian Certificate of Education – VCE) are required to complete religious studies as a 1 / 2 subject, with further expectations to complete these studies as 3 / 4 subject. The school has also employed a Chaplain, who works within the school community two days per week. Faith-based teachings and conversations are now seen as an active aspect of the wider school, especially in senior level. Increasing the shift in abstraction of cognitive dissonance, in regard to the teachings of faith, strengthened through the levels of governance and compliance as dictated in the terms of reference in signing to the faith-based commission.

Bob notes ....

*“So there has been a significant change over the last couple of years where we are able to discover who we are as (name of faith) or the way we approach ourselves as a faith-based education community are significantly more developed than they were in the past.”*

The researcher posed the question - What does faith-based education, need to look like and include to be balanced and holistic in approach? Giving ample wait time – which must have seemed like an eternity the group offered the following thoughts...

**Matt:** *“I guess for me, not coming from this type of system, coming from a Government school, it provides a bit more of a purpose. I think some values and some morals, how you conduct yourself as a human being, is what stood out to me, as well as the faith component, like Eucharist and stuff like that. It is something that you can always draw back on when the kids aren't quiet towing the line, just respect, it the types of things”.*

**Sam:** *“It provides an avenue to open up the discussions; you can put it into that context”.*

**Matt:** *“It’s about being a good person that is at the core of it.”*

**Sam:** *“It’s an easy and obvious way to frame up the conversations through the context of faith based.”*

**Joyce:** *“And reflect.”*

**Sam:** *“I think when you have got that down pat; you can have the conversations that can then stem more into the faith side of it. I was a bit worried about jumping into the faith aspect and I am getting to understand that it’s not all just about being a good person, there is a bit to this, I want to find out a bit more, and more about Jesus and that side of it.”*

**Sally:** *“I like that it gives us a back-ground in going for service and encouraging kids to serve to be involved in activities that they are not necessarily of benefit to them but in service to others. So altruistic activities or social justice initiatives, the way we do this gives us a scaffold for that.”*

It could be said that a faith-based community provides a sense of purpose, values, and morals for this group of characters within this narration. The language of being ‘a good person’ is a powerful statement and may become an emergent theme. This highlights the work of Buber – the concept of ‘I and thou’. Bringing to the forefront of our working consciousness, the notion that one can be spiritual but not of faith. Or could it be for this group, a means to draw upon the notion of seeking ‘one’s God Given potential’ – a means of encouraging a student’s sense of service? The notion of understanding the ‘Jesus’ side of things purports to an absence of knowledge and a willingness to become informed to ensure the messages of the faith can be translated into the class with authenticity.

During this session the researcher offered the group a visible thinking tool – namely the ‘3Ys’ ... the 3Ys ask of the individual

- Why is this important to me?
- Why is this important to my community?
- Why is this important on a global perspective?

around their ideas of faith within a faith-based school. The group was given some 15 minutes individual thinking time before coming back to the wider group.

The notion of faith, serving as a moral compass was a poignant moment within the conversation. This statement drew all the other underlying ideas together, the notion of guiding one's beliefs and values, to facilitate harmony etc. Acting as the chorus once more the researcher posed the question, 'how does this notion of a moral compass (which can be aligned to the notion of doxa and praxis) serve them within their leadership roles?' Once again, the themes of communication and honesty, a possible theoretical or observational theme, were raised by Sam, as the team echoed Sam's words and sentiments within their own feedback. It becomes a lived action, a compassion of modeling authenticity. The notion that one could be assuming a position of authenticity but yet when perceived by the other, is proven not to be the case, was raised by Sally and attracted laughter from the group, which could be seen as an act of humiliation and was seen in that light by her.

What was drawn out by the group's conversation, was a lived tension in being able to support a person because they are a 'good bloke' to coin an Australianism over poor work ethics. This became a lively debate, of how to best hold these difficult conversations around work-place issues, curating a 'good culture', being respectful and honest and trustworthy. Being able to seek parental feedback was seen a point of measurement to gauge the success of the operating sub-schools within the whole school. The parent community are seen as the 'real community' which seems to be a disconnect to what was being shared earlier for what is at the heart of their actions and interactions is the welfare of the student.

What was seen as of greatest importance was the notion of protecting time another observational theme, to ensure collegiate conversations. This notion is one, where the

time allocated is protected, with the agenda set and not appropriated by any other topic and all participants remain present. Since changing the membership of the group, it has diversified the teams thinking and approach- so rather than being just the three heads of the sub school, they now have Sally and Madge. This level of diversity has added weight to the cultivation of collective efficacy – shifting the values of the group. Sally noted *that the team is seen to be working as a united group* - there is a belief from the group that they are no longer working to their own hidden agendas, even though there is a belief that the sub-schools are working in silos.

### **Concluding remarks.**

In reviewing this second session, the characters offered key storylines within their shared narrative:

- A shift from dysfunction to collective efficacy (Methodological)
- Communication is still an area of exploration and refinement (Observational)
- Honesty and respect were still being sought (Analytical)
- Trust and mistrust seem to be simmering below the surface (Observational)
- Faith – defining the beliefs and values of the group and the wider school community, providing as it was noted ‘a moral compass’ of *modus-operandi* (Theoretical)
- Tensions arose around where needs were being met, the needs of the student or the needs of the parents, for they were seen as the real community. (Observational)

This transcript was typed and shared back with the group which led us into the third session with the group.

## **Section 3.5.0**

### **Our third discussion - Naming the tensions**

During this third session – the aim to utilise their thoughts in a more streamlined fashion, to be of greater support to the team as they were entering into a whole day of strategic planning in the following week, which the researcher would be a part of was deemed to be a main foci.

The session started by reviewing the norms and protocols of the group. Seeking consensus, the researcher sought their feedback from their reflections gained in reading the second session. Each were asked to note key words and or themes that resonated for them when reading the transcript. Via the visible thinking tool of one word, one phrase and one sentence.

**Sam**– “honesty, openness, action, consultation, direction, professional relationships, connected action, direction”.

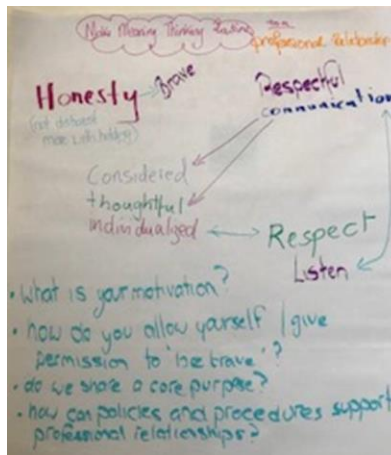
**Joyce** – “Same as the SAM, respect, integrity, open communication, consistency, and transparency”.

**Matt** - “Transparency, faith, faith journey.”

Image taken of working notes as scribed by researched group

**Sally** – “Support.”

After the discussion the term ‘*professional relationship*’ was decided upon to be the words unpacked by the group. Again, taking stimulus from a visible thinking routine, the researcher asked the group to write down one word, step back, review words and then add onto another word. What is sought from this routine is for the group to see and draw out a series of connections. Next, group ideas together, noting the connections and themes arising from their insights. Using different coloured markers the characters of this narration crafted their own tale.



Rigorous conversation was had around adding the word ‘brave’, linked to the idea of ‘honesty’... in line, with having difficult conversations was agreed upon as being necessary, in an honest and forthright manner.



Next was to review ideas and note any questions that arose.

The following were documented:

What is your motivation?

How do you allow yourself / give permission to be brave?

Do we share a core purpose?

How can policies and procedures support professional relationships?

Sam noted

*“Because of some of what we have to do, will inherently compromise relationships and in a leadership role obviously the better communicator you are, the less likely the relationships will be compromised. But it’s just part of the job description, is that at some point, you may need to ask or say something, or somebody to do something and they are not going to like, so compromise your relationships within it ...”.*

The concept of crossing borders was raised as a lived tension – an occupational hazard. As the meshing of roles, influenced by the individual’s practice and through the core values of the School and Church, create a ‘border crossing’ of ideas and emotions to coexist. The issue is then, of how does the group deal with compromise, and what strategies do they put in place to support themselves to transverse these borders? What was seen as an antecedent in not being tight, re policy and procedures, was seen to be a ‘hangover’ of being financially restrained, causing a sense of flight, fight or freeze in staff. From here the characters were asked to pen their final thoughts and write a definition of a professional relationship at (name of school) is ...

Late in the discussion, the notion of how the ‘identity of faith, impacts the relationship upon professional status’, was raised by Sally, this was then narrowed down to that of roles by their roles by Sam. Sally promotes the identity of faith, within the school, Sam’s role is to lead the senior school. Given the core purpose of the school is to educate children with a faith-based curriculum, can these align with the notions, of honesty

respect and communication? This caused a heated debate to occur, none could seek total agreement. What was eventually penned by the group as their definition of a professional relationship reads as ...

*“A (name of school) a professional relationship recognises that the fulfillment of the school’s potential is the underpinning core value that governs our interactions, in practice the interactions are conducted in a respectful, honest, timely and considered manner.”*

The group were then asked to engage in a ‘backward by design’ mode of thinking. If this is their professional relational operating base, what does the classroom need to look like, sound like to operate within a faith-based community? This caused further debate for the core purpose was seen as purely educating the children, the faith-based elements seemed to become of secondary concern.

After significant wait time the characters offered the following words for consideration...

- Safe
- Stimulating
- Accepting
- Inclusive
- Respectful
- Challenging
- Spiritual

When the group stepped back and absorbed the words, the comment was offered that these words could be representative of any faith-based school, there was nothing that offered a link to the specific faith of this school, which illustrate the gospels of their faith. Then the bold statement was offered by Matt – “*are our classes faith-based?*” The following commentary was then offered by Sam –

*“do they acknowledge faith, you know we have got the prayer tables and the cloths and everything else, so even if it is symbolic of faith, someone could argue at worse maybe that it is superficial, but it is there none the less.”*

The real tension between what is lived and authentically lived within the classroom culture is becoming evident as an undercurrent of conflict. Bob, who has arrived back to the room, was taken the process shared and then, argued that in having ‘*these artefacts may be seen as superficial*’. But ‘*they go to the trouble of putting them there...*’ seems dishonest to what is understood. To be relevant and authentic in alignment to the values and beliefs as outlined in the faith-based commission documentation compared to what the school says and does. The group’s discussion augments the differences between faith, and that of faith and journey, how is this catered for, or supported by the school, drew out further tensions of differing levels of commitment to this form of holistic education. What occurred within these conversations, is the calling out that the school seeks to be more inclusive and spiritually based rather than solely aligned to the one faith.

### **Concluding remarks**

When considering this narration, what the researcher observed was a pivotal in the thinking, that to ensure the desired point of difference, is to be aligned to the beliefs, and values of the faith-based commission. In this scenario, the school now faces a real stretch in thinking and a need for repositioning. Can the school adhere to the doctrines as outlined in their faith? Can they do this authentically, for in not doing so, could they risk losing their funding and risk their own level of ethical operating praxis? What are the storylines we have borne witness to:

- Communication (Observational)
- Trust (Analytical)
- Symbolism (Theoretical)
- Spirituality vs faith and being of faith... (Theoretical)
- Respect (Methodological)

These documents were quickly turned around as they were then taken to the whole day of strategic planning and used as a starting point with the wider school community.

### 3.6.0.

#### **Strategic planning day – A coming together of narratives**

As a boundary rider, the researcher was able to observe the appointed external consultant facilitating the day. The researcher was able to listen attentively, to the conversations being conducted. It had been established and agreed upon that the researcher's working notes and conversations would be used as part of the day and that observations collected on the day, could be used within the annotated field texts set, as a part of the working thesis.

#### **Setting the scene**

The day included the current executive team (the players within the narration), members of the school Council and Chair and the school's Chaplin. The day was segmented into four stages of discovery.

1. *Where do we want to go and where do we want to be?*
2. *Staff/ student / parent – from the surveyed field texts collected within the focus group - What is the story important to them?*
3. *Exploration phase – what is possible, what is realistic and what is the challenge and opportunities.*
4. *Creation phase – strategic imperatives, headline actions, drill down – what can happen, what can be included within the executive processing and operational workloads?*

The school is situated in regional Victoria, seeing growth of population, the school draws upon – demographic field texts, to act as a predictor of what the regional town will look like in 5 – 10 years' time. Questions and wonderings that were generated by the characters of this narration –

- What will the school look like then?
- What do people (internal and external to) think about the school?
- What role does the Faith Based Commission play in the direction of the school?
- What is student and staff engagement like?
- How could the school become an employer of choice?

- What are the infrastructure and facilities needed by the school?
- What cultural values are in play?
- What will community relationships need to look like?

The notes below highlight the four key areas of exploration and the working themes as curated during the discussion. Noting that the place of chapel and faith within the school, will become interwoven within the annotated narrative shared within the three key themes.

Figure 7.0 Chapel and Faith forming identity...

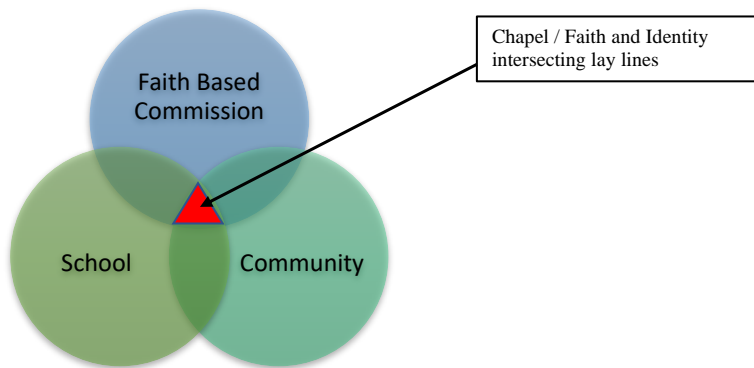


Figure 8.0 and 9.0, provide a sense of the story lines of inquiry, raised, and discussed on the day. The figures signify core ideals, and principles of practice as held by both church, governing body, and school community. These are driven by the values of the church as the financial governing body. Seeing the tenets of the church spotlighted and framing the cultural signifiers which would directly influence communities of practice. Figure 8 and 9 draws these point out further, grouping and annotating key aspired outcomes.

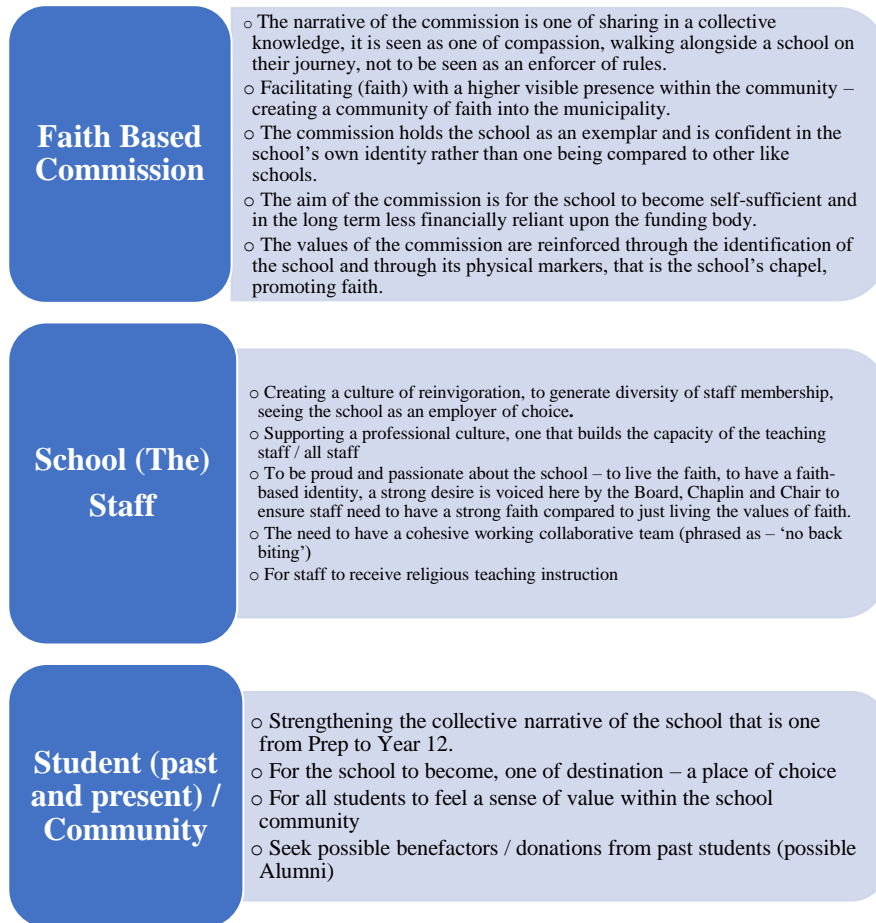


Figure 8 The three pillars

### Community (internal and external)

The faith-based commission has a very strong directive on what community engagement needs to be, as demonstrated by a school, to ensure the values of the faith-based systems are respected and are upheld within the wider community. The following two rounds saw and heard a similar line of discourse being shared amongst all key players. It is of importance to note the influence and impact the attendance of governance had on the discussion, it could be said that their presence especially that of the Chaplin, did ensure

that the themes raised and strategic goals noted were tightly aligned to the values and beliefs of the faith based commission. The final and fourth stage saw the 5 key priorities annotated and a statement of tautology being embraced by the group. For the group in defining ‘what does it mean for the school to be of faith’, will need to be rationalised, ‘how does this become a faith that is lived’? ‘How does this become the language of the culture of the school’? ‘How is this ensured within the school’s identity, confirming a lived practice of faith-based identity’?

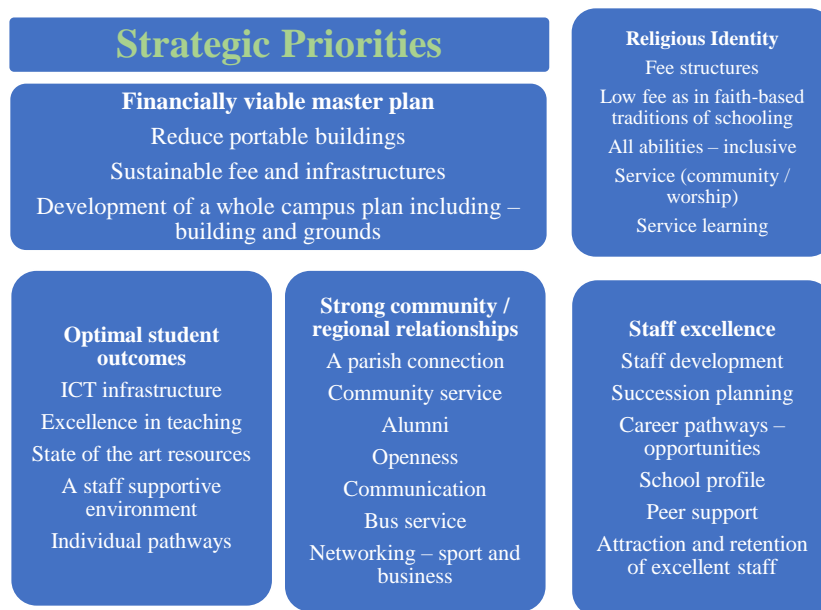


Figure 9 Strategic Priorities

In figure 9, we see the coming together of the narrative of the day, noting five key areas to explored and considered by the school’s Board and leadership group. All of which will need to be communicated and considered by the school’s parental and student communities. On reviewing Figure 9, seeing all the cards laid out, there seems an absence of student agency, student voice and of curriculum development. What is seen is a snapshot of a school seeking excellence through semiotic signifiers such as buildings and

infrastructure, connections to faith-based institutions and strengthened business opportunities

In moving forward, the characters had to name the most significant issues for the school in realising the 5 strategic goals. They were, the perception of the school in the wider community, ensuring that the school is seen as one of excellence, one of academic merit, a school of choice, for the facilities and curriculum offered. The need to pivot the community's perception, was seen as of core relevance in obtaining the strategic goals and sustained growth of the school.

### **Concluding remark**

What storylines generated in this chapter, noted that even though the commission is deemed a benevolent provider and a compassionate one, rather than an enforcer of rules, saw the use of directional language. In that the school culture, must be seen in advancing, one that is tightly aligned, to the notion of faith and identity. Within this narrative, other key storylines were echoed and raised within this discussion, highlighting the power relations at play, and seeing a strengthening of the importance of the delivery of religious teachings within the daily life of the school

- Culture (Theoretical)
- Power – positioning (Analytical)
- Language (Observational)
- Faith – identity (Theoretical)
- Governance and compliance – who will this effect? (Methodological)

### **3.7.0**

#### **Differing storylines of the field texts collected**

This was to become the final session with the group, which was not known to the researcher at this point in time. The researcher had asked the players to provide feedback upon what was articulated within the strategic planning day. Using the visible thinking tool of 'The Compass' each directional point asks for a specific response, to an idea or proposition. Also, they were to note their insights in reading over the previous transcripts.



### Visible Thinking Tool – Compass Points

**E** = What *excites* you about this idea or proposition to become a school of academic excellence within a faith-based setting?

**W** = What is *worrisome* for you, ... as above?

**N** = What do you *need* to know or find out about, ... as above?

**S** = What *stance* or suggestions do you have for moving forward ... as above?

The following comments were offered by the players within their written responses.

#### Excites

- *That this is a unique idea, that is embraces our already strong sense of community and that those who work within are honest, ethical, and moral members of our community.*
- *A holistic approach to educating a young person. Developing moral compass and spiritual health and wellbeing. Nurturing their readiness to be a good citizen.*
- *Appears to be a genuine team-based attitude among the exec*
- *A school of academic excellence in faith-based setting offers something different to the local secondary college*
- *Public perception of school delivering both academic excellence and a faith- based experience that includes church ritual, will in my opinion create the notion of an exclusive school. The appearance of exclusivity, hopefully backed up by quantifiable academic success, will be our biggest asset in a marketing sense. Parents will want to be able to say they gave their children that experience, the private experience.*

#### Worrisome –

- *We are not placing faith high up on our agenda, that we as a group of professionals are not living and modeling faith. Academic excellence is very separate to faith*
- *The pressure to meet targets (student intake) and the financial burden can often make for compromising situations*
- *Honesty amongst stakeholders*
- *Some parents and students may be put off by the faith component*
- *Publicity about Christian religion may put some parents off*
- *In reality I think our biggest challenge will be attracting the right kinds of kids.*

- *We are a community-based school operating under the edict to accept all comers. In order for the school to grow we need 'a sugar hit' of students who come to us, or indeed stay with us, in order to persuade genuine academic success and are prepared to accept and demonstrate the faith-based aspects of our school.*
- *We need to create the image of a destination school.*

#### **Need to know**

- *I am not familiar with what targets, strengths, weakness, or strategies exist in the middle and senior schools to measure or invigorate academic excellence.*
- *Look to other like schools and learn from their experiences and challenges*
- *Do students need to complete units 1 – 4 in religious classes?*
- *Could the religious component be met thru (sic) a retreat and religious camp or day?*
- *On a practical level it would be beneficial to have curriculum resources that enable practical expressions of faith within the classroom.*

#### **Stance**

- *I believe once we are recruiting for quality rather than quantity our proposition for academic excellence will increase as will our endeavor to embrace and live more wholesomely to be a faith-based school.*
- *Moving forward in a positive way with a real plan and purpose is an exciting prospect.*
- *(Name of faith) offers a great compass for students to live by*
- *I am fully supportive if the proposition I think that it is critically important to introduce as much formal structure around expressions of faith and academic excellence within out school.*
- *This will – further reinforce our image as a 'private school' where you send your kids for an excellent education and a sound moral framework.*

Could be noted that staff in flux, one in which their values, brought to the educational profession are being stretched, or being pulled into an area of discomfort. Not due to the religion itself, but rather how does a teaching staff, hold the values of the faith, which are so tightly owned by the church into the daily life of the school and general community? There is a level of uneasiness, even though the school is one of inclusivity, in seeking to be one of choice of destination, which for this group of players sees a new storyline being

woven into their tale of growth. How can they be a school of choice, one where academic pursuit is regarded highly, over honouring the journey of the child no matter their academic ability?

In reviewing the day experienced by the characters of the narration the researcher was mindful of the SHALOM Model. Believing that introducing this tool here, may be of support to this group of characters, as they navigate the narrative given to them to enact, as the executive team.

The researcher offered the following as provocations for the team, based on the work of John Fisher from what was then the, University of Ballarat. He devised the SHALOM model or questionnaire, which are based upon four domains of spiritual health... Personal, Environmental, Communal and Transcendental.

#### **Using these four domains of the SHALOM Model**

The leaders were asked to respond to the following questions...

- How or do these domains exist within the school?
- What do these domains look like in the school?
- Rank them in order of importance according to your viewpoints?
- Please explain why you have ranked them in this order.

Seeking dot points and only a short paragraph for each domain. What was desired was that the headings offered within this tool, may act as a provocation, a supportive framework in enabling the characters a safe passage to explore their tensions as noted in previous discussions. The characters in this narration were given several weeks to contemplate this task as it was encouraged to be used as a tool within their executive meetings in the coming weeks. The notion of spirituality is seen as a complex idea, as it can be perceived and experienced in a range of ways - cognitively, intuitively, emotionally, behaviorally, culturally, and socially. The second part of the task was to respond to the following statements ...

**Q. What is the spirituality of the school under the headings of.**

(a few sentences under each heading)

- Moral values
- Attitudes and actions
- Social
- Cultural

**Q. What is the schools ....** (a few sentences under each heading)

- Religious commitment
- Religious engagement
- Religious social conservatism
- Religious skepticism
- Religious struggle
- Ecumenical world view

Knowing that this was a deeply reflective task, mindfulness was given to the time needed for the players within this narration to respond in a meaningful fashion. What was shared is annotated under series of headings.

**Personal**

The collective consensus was that there is a genuine sense of embracing all newcomers and identities, giving voice and opportunity for exploration of self. There is a belief from the group, in having a confidence in themselves, to support others, There is a strong belief too, that in catering, to the needs of individuals through learning pathways, based on strengths and weaknesses, the pastoral care supports, encourages exploration of personal growth. Strengthened through the ideal of the personal self, and inner peace offered through connection to one's faiths. Here we see a reflexive mode of offerings from our players of this narration.

**Environmental**

There is a belief that this is an area that could be improved upon, there is a perceived absence in nurturing the spiritual health of staff and students. Embracing nature, especially being within a rural, and regional community, is seen as an imperative to the ideal of honouring the land. This combined with ensuring spaces are aesthetically beautiful, peaceful, and calming, spaces that cater to the physical and spiritual needs of the student are sought. A place to enjoy and reflect within spaces is indicated and is believed in being critical in developing the grounds program of the school. This is also evident as the school uses the Indigenous Lord's Prayer, rather than the traditional wording as this is seen to have a stronger connection to land.

### **Communal**

Strong and active commitments exist in supporting community endeavours, enhancing the notion of togetherness. Establishing learning spaces, for the school as a whole, is seen as one of safety and inclusivity, ensuring that the students are able to be, and feel supported. The school's motto is exhibited as a further connection to the sense of community, an example of the interconnectedness that exists between school and the municipality through partnerships of care and relatedness.

### **Transcendental**

Multiple opportunities for students to develop a personal relationship with God in a communal and individual manner are sighted in being in existence within the school. This is facilitated through daily prayers, liturgies, and symbolic gestures within the classrooms. In offering whole school Mass and Eucharist, it is seen as an opportunity to learn and explore other faiths, for only a small proportion of the student community is of the (name of faith).

<b>R. 1</b>	<b>R. 2</b>	<b>R. 3</b>	<b>R. 4</b>	<b>R. 5</b>
Communal	Personal	Personal	Personal	Personal
Personal	Communal	Communal	Environmental	Environmental
Transcendental	Environmental	Environmental	Communal	Communal
Environmental	Transcendental	Transcendental	Transcendental	Transcendental

*Table 4.0 Respondents rank the four areas of spiritual*

Further, the researcher asked the leadership group to give examples of and to briefly note what these statements triggered for them. This allowed the researcher a means to see the anchor points of faith and connection to living the faith of the school as an individual leader and as a collective member of the leadership group. As such these comments were cited in full to honour the intent of the author.

### **What is the spirituality of the school?**

#### **Moral values**

- School presents as an accepting and loving Christian community
- Integrity (we are honest) Endeavor (we try our hardest) Community (we look after each other. – the School’s Motto...
- It is expected by the leadership group for all staff to model the high moral values of the school. To model respect throughout daily interactions and in behaviors displayed. It was noted *‘we hold a moral compass that assists and guides us in our teaching and learning as a community’*

#### **Attitudes and actions**

- Inclusive and Christian in nature
- Participation in community events
- Staff to model the values as noted within the school’s motto, act as a catalyst to explore authentic ways, and means for explicit teaching of the school’s values. This led to a belief that this will support the spiritual growth of the student, especially in encouraging them to become reflective upon action and deed.
- Through the roles of Chaplin and the Head of Faith, a greater sense of commitment to a holistic approach in educating the whole child, is being enacted upon within the school community.

#### **Social**

- Importance is placed upon community interactions and fostering a sense of being part of a bigger entity. There is a focus on developing strong relationships and partnerships to nature this desired state of community.

#### **Cultural**

- Embrace all diverse backgrounds within the school – thereby creating a culture of inclusivity, one where tolerance is expected.
- With regard to staff and a ‘culture of spirituality’ there is a perceived divide with some staff choosing to ignore ‘*that side of the school*’ and others willing to explore and encourage spirituality.

### **What is the school’s religious values...?**

#### **Religious commitment**

- Committed to engaging with their own faith-based aligned parish, and by providing opportunities for students to express / develop their own faith.
- Students from P- 10 must attend Religion and Values Education Classes
- Commitments to the faith

#### **Religious engagement**

- Encourage faith-based thinking and belief that there is a reasonable level of engagement from the student body and teaching staff.
- Whole school Mass and Year level Eucharist is offered and is expected that all students attend.
- Connection to faith-based institutions
- Connection to faith-based commission

#### **Religious social conservatism**

- A strong belief that the school is and is perceived to be relatively liberal in viewpoint and stance.

#### **Religious struggle**

- Was noted by one character that there was an impression, held by some staff of being uncertain, doubtful in their abilities in having faith-based conversations, combined with an awareness, that some students and staff do not hold a belief in God.
- Religious skepticism and Religious struggle proved both complex and daunting for our players, so the default was that these elements were not answered.

#### **Ecumenical world view**

- Engaging young people within a faith-based conversation was seen as learning opportunity

- There is a notion that this is a developing ideal –through embracing diversity, learned methods of contemplation and reflection, time to explore questions of purpose and meaning is strengthen through the traditions of faith and in learning about other religious orders.

During our conversation the researcher reminded the players of their depiction of the classroom and that it could be one seen in any faith-based school. It was not seen as unique to the school nor ‘brand’ of faith. Asking the players for their thoughts of the strategic planning day – tensions soon appeared amongst the players. It is important to note that the (P) was absent for a significant period of this discussion.

It should be stated that in setting the strategic goals, there is a close alignment to the values of the faith-based commission. In unpacking this with the players, it was noted that what is espoused by the commission, and what is the actual reality of the operational mode of the school, were in opposition to each other. The school actively seeks out opportunities to express the multiplicity of faiths, existing within the school community, rather than ‘the one’. It was noted a large percentage of the school community is not of the faith, and in actuality the school captain was of a middle eastern faith. The lived culture of the school is one that is seen to be inclusive of community. The sharing in another’s faith was seen as key pivotal action, in embracing the other. Sharing in their religious journey was seen as an act of acceptance and understanding.

There is an awareness from the characters that due to the geographical nature of the school, that significant proportions of the community are already choosing to come to the school. There is a belief or an assumption, held by the parental community, that their child is actively heard and listened to within the school. Students are valued and respected within the school, as this is a school, which is not viewed as being a part of a larger operating educational institution. Rather it is one that can cater for a child who may not be able to adjust to the requirements or be catered for by a mainstream school.

It was during this conversation that the changing of the school’s name was raised, and the implications that this elicited within the wider community. This is an independent school,



but within the name change, the use of the word ‘Grammar’, now evokes an alternative imagery for parents. The characters noted that this adds weight to the strategic goal of becoming a destination school. This is now seen as a means to attracting parental groups to the school. The discussion is robust and personal bias and leanings are coming through. The school is seen by some as ‘*not that type of private school*’. For it is vital for this school to remain as a place of affordability in line with the ethos of the faith-based commission. Which in itself is a true disconcert in what was put forward within the 5 strategic goals.

There is a real tension being voiced around knowing the parental groups, some see them as new money, seeing the school as one of destination. Others believe, that as this is a regional area, that it is one, where families are choosing to attend this school, and to make these sacrifices to send their child there. Others believe that within a shift in organisational structure, combined with the physical changes to the building and grounds, that this will cause a swing in demographic, seeing a change in clientele, will ultimately see a difference in the type of student and academic success generated within the school. The school has shifted in community standing, from an almost ‘special needs school’ to more of a school of choice. The tension raised here, is that in taking students with such varying academic needs, that they are not always able to access the necessary resourcing, nor the staff, to support the child. Staff are endeavoring to cater to these needs, but the gap remains. Due to the size of the school community, it was seen to be a niche school and one that was able to cater for the stretches faced by a child. In changing the schools name, the school removed itself from an explicit religious named school, to that of a more ‘private school’ perception.

Angst was divulged, with regards to the notion, that to sustain financial growth, the school has to ‘take all comers’, when they get to that tipping point of critical mass, there is the realisation, that this will become a school of selection, and with that a shift away from supporting students with significant learning needs. Further tensions were raised. Will faith support the growth of this school? Will it be of help or hindrance? It was noted by Sally

*"I don't think we can discount we are a Christian school and we do have expectations that your child will partake in our liturgies, those sorts of things and sometimes it is tempting to say to a family no, no, it's not like that, it's all about being a good person and it absolutely is, but it's also about what that looks like symbolically, and what we expect of our students in terms of their involvement in those rituals you know, so I think we have to be really careful in how we respond to families."*

*Sam added: "I think those religious symbols and those sorts of things in the room, they are symbols, they are symbolic, that's what they are there for, being in a room that has those religious symbols, really is the physical manifestation of being in a faith-based school and learning the curriculum, they are not intertwined necessarily but they are, we call them tokenistic, but you can look at how much of religion and religious rituals are tokenistic, it is a symbol, it is in the room and it coexists, there are times when we can use our faith in curriculum based activities, like English and religion and in society and there are those times, but they are not always intertwined and nor should they be, or do they need to be in order to be a faith based school?."*

### **Concluding remarks of results.**

As a starting point for this process the researcher refers to Diagram 6.0 'An indicative qualitative approach' shown earlier in this chapter. The figure provides a frame to illustrate the researcher thinking qualitatively about field texts and key themes arising. From the field texts and in relation to the diagram, a number of research themes can be drawn. At this point it is the researcher's role to read into the field texts, understandings, and wonderings, noting newly forms storied landscapes. These themes will be explored further within the following chapter, although they are not necessarily discussed individually.

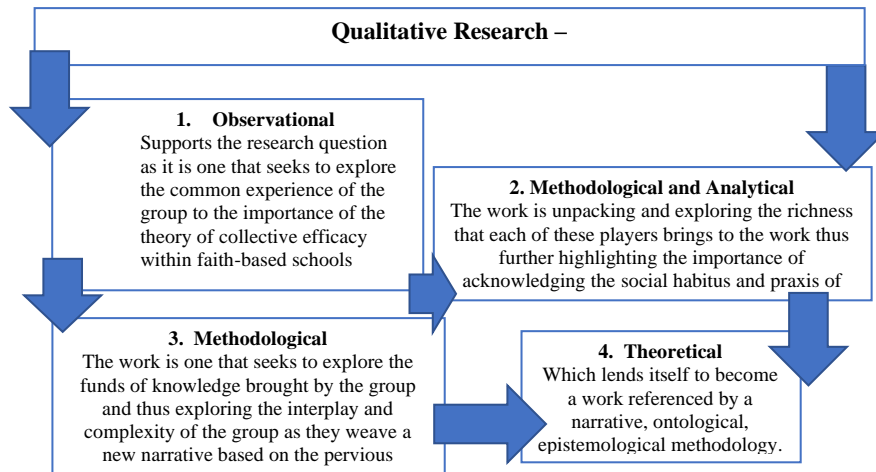


Figure 5.0. An indicative qualitative approach

**The Four key themes are as follows.**

**Theme 1. Observational –**

Compiling conversational scripts. (Aligned Box 1)

**Theme 2. Methodological and Analytical**

Finding meaning amongst artefacts. (Aligned to Box 2 and 3)

**Theme 3. Methodological**

Validity of narrative. (Aligned Box 4)

**Theme 4. - Theoretical**

Validity of Language. (Aligned to all 4 boxes)

**Theme 1. Compiling conversational scripts**

Voices are enabled to be authenticated and aligned with the core themes arising from the discussion such as trust, power, and faith. Amplifying the importance of community in action, whereby communication follows an agreed protocol, informal or otherwise, depending upon the relational trust evident between the players. Noting the sense of commitment of a shared view of what is real within a faith-based context.

### **Theme 2. Finding meaning amongst artefacts**

Throughout the conversation key artefacts are spotlighted as signifiers of contention and agreement, thereby highlighting the significance of the positioning of the artefacts within the social act of education. Such artefacts are translated and reimagined into what can be described as a social semiotic arrangement. It is these artefacts of practice that are generally brought to bear to elicit tentative meaning to be followed by a more systematic reflection.

### **Theme 3 Validity of narrative**

Narrative methodology gives merit to the use of dialogue as a means of curating and sourcing field texts from the collective energies of those within the discussion. Giving a level of authenticity and affirmation to the funds of knowledge and level of operational praxis as evidence within the curated vignettes. The use of narrative allows the researcher to traverse varying storied landscapes, that may be tentative in the beginning, enhancing the opportunity to deepen levels of contextual understanding.

### **Theme 4 Ubiquity of language**

When language is recognised in the role of meaning and reason, it authorises all to be able to express themselves freely whilst in association of others. There is a recognition of language as the basis of human communication and understanding, not always appreciated in formal research projects. The importance of the work is the reliance and trust upon what is shared and how it is shared. It is the act of reflection upon one's own words that gives a permission to understand the self and where the self sits within the collective. Moving towards a more accurate and unambiguous relationship to the world.

In reading and reviewing the themes above, it appears that through their honest, cyclic application over time, that the human exploration of difficult ideas is not an easy task and is at times messy. This causes a sense of disruption. In exploring difficult ideas and challenges and in the pursuit of new knowledge, it can be proposed that 'humans are narrative beings'. These stretches will be furthered discussed through theorised findings in Chapter

### ***Chapter 4.1.0***

#### ***Discussion***

#### ***A narrative inquiry into the experience of a leadership group working toward collective efficacy in a regional faith-based school.***

At this stage of the research, a number of themes have emerged from the field texts and provide a means of reflecting upon the process involved, in the human engagement with difficult and confusing ideas. These themes repeated below, form the basis of thinking and theorising within this discussion chapter, producing a number of provocations as research outcomes (see Figure 5). Seeking to widening the storied landscapes, traversing between landscapes and border crossings, to avail a deeper contextual relevant understanding of what is in scope for the researched setting.

#### **The Four key themes are as follows.**

1. Theme 1, compiling conversational scripts. (Aligned to this Box 1) – Analytical
2. Theme 2, finding meaning amongst artefacts. (Aligned to Box 2 and 3) – Observational
3. Theme 3, validity of narrative. (Aligned Box 4) – Methodological
4. Theme 4. language – contestation is infused throughout (Aligned to all 4 boxes) Theoretical

Coming to this work as an insider researcher, and utilising the strengths of a narrative methodology allowed, for an opportunity, to enhance the role and power of a social semiotic approaches, within the lens and voice of a semiotician. The following artefacts have been assembled:

- to collect and document semiotic resources which in this case, is the collective memory of the school's leadership team.
- to consider how these resources could impact and affect the historical and cultural being of the school within the context of the social grouping, as a means to effect change through critique and inquiry.
- to develop and discover new uses for existing social semiotic resources. Offering of a social semiotic omnibus, that categories everything that is out of place, within the structure and culture of the group and naming categories of the system (in this case the

elements of the church and faith-based school). In curating of a new social semiotic compendium, adds to the sense making of the complexities offered in the sometimes-contradictory terms and reflective practices within the professional learning community. This compendium will in fact help to draw out the contexts that are commonly discussed within and by the leadership group. It is noted that the school operates within a series of social environments. Including the educational setting, the faith-based setting, and principles of values as held by the funding body. within the social schemas afforded by the funding body.

It is through the exploration and discovery of how these four storylines can be seen as a sign, a signifier of an observable form of expression, action and intents which elicits a new signified meaning. The actual semiotic potential not only constitutes what has occurred in the past, and has been held as a preexisting narrative, but now has the potential to uncover a new reoffering based upon the social context of the educational faith-based setting and the context and power infiltrated by the religious dogmas of the church. Gibson (1979) referred to this is a level of 'affordance', giving an incarnation of the potential use of a given object. This work allows the semiotic potential to communicate a revised and reimagined set of resources, faith based in nature and their uses within an organisational setting, not confined to the field of education.

This gives the researcher the permission to be ambiguous within the epilogue, seeking a way and means of capturing an inquiring construction. The narrative then allows the inception and documentation of the learning that occurred through the developing storylines and through an intensity of the storyteller's voice. A powerful agency exists through the virtue of uncertainties of learning. There is an eagerness to understand in a more complex and nuanced way, the experiences of individuals as they compose their storied lives on storied landscapes.

This work will be bound by a philosophical system, which is not only systematic in nature but also substantive and interdisciplinary in their ramifications, with regards to possible political outcomes. For in education we are holding space for the learner. It is through

accessibility of language within a lens of contextual relevance that there can be a pedagogical shift of practice for the teacher and leader.

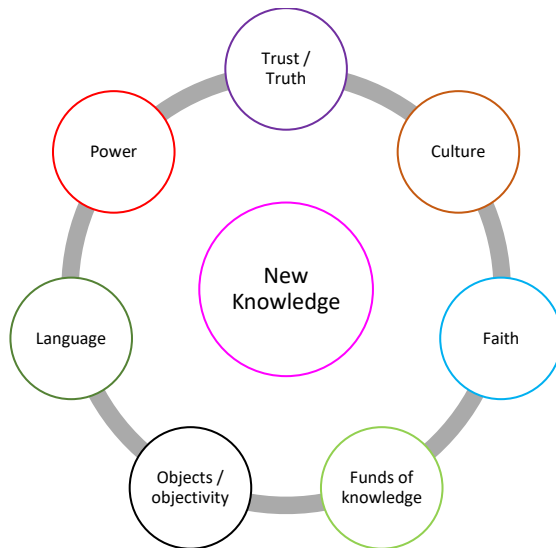
### **Section 4.1.1**

#### **Where to from here? - What the findings have invited us to explore**

The graphic below shows a cyclical approach of the macro – which is viewed by the researcher as a singular act, instruction or process that magnifies into a multiplicity of lenses. The intent of the work seeks to extrapolate new knowledge and levels of understanding through processing:

- a) annotated field texts
- b) what this means for the national educational system at a school level, and the system as a whole within a faith-based independent school.
- c) how this has impacted the researcher's levels of architectural praxis and relational trust to and of the work.

In considering the design of the principles of knowledge, a cyclical viewpoint was needed to be considered as a provocation, allowing for all seven points as illustrated in Graph 9.0. This may stimulate debate, necessitate an appreciation for what both the organisation and the individual / groups offered as the first level of keystones, of the researcher's core working principles. These core principles drawn out from the field texts, will become the guiding and formative tenets in a newly devised social semiotic framework, penned as an epilogue to this narrative.



Graph 9.0 The researcher's core concepts of newly formed knowledge

#### 4.1.2

##### Principles of knowledge

###### The narrators / insider researchers core concepts of newly formed knowledge

Each of these elements will be briefly annotated, seeing the epilogue to this narrative as the vehicle in how these principles could instill a collective efficacious approach within a school or organisation. More importantly ensuring that all are guided by the concepts of practice required in establishing the conditions necessary in offering a culturally, religiously, sensitive, contextually relevant curriculum or dialogue.

**Trust / Truth:** The notion of truth as seen from the vantage point of the insider researcher and from the characters within the work of the organisation, sit within a level of trust that is afforded to each other, as players within the narration. The notion of truth offered by the curriculum and the elements of truth espoused via the doctrines of the church, may need to separate the notion of trust / truth noting the connection between what is believed in relation to what is experienced and how this is accepted over time



**Culture:** The values and beliefs held by the culture of the organisation. The culture of the leadership group, and of the wider school community, and by the church, noting the importance of how each cultural element interacts and intercedes, with one another, citing the causality of these interactions. For within this work the notion of culture sets the tone of operation and interactions with the other.

**Faith:** The notion of faith is two-fold. Firstly, the act of having complete trust or confidence in a group, someone, or something and secondly, the notion of faith aligned with a belief in the doctrines of the faith within this inquiry. These are based upon the spiritual convictions of the group and individual and/or other within the religious teachings of the church.

Given the work is situated within a faith-based setting the notion of faith and spirituality are core themes that become emergent through the work. The notion that one can be of faith, without being spiritual or conversely one can be spiritual whilst not being aligned to a faith, acts as a lived tension for the players within this narration.

**Funds of Knowledge:** The realisation that to know those (players /characters) within the story, is in having an awareness of their funds of knowledge (Moll, 2010) and willingness to understand the other within the narration. This is critical in awarding due respect, to enable and enact a culturally, religiously, sensitive, contextually relevant curriculum within a collective efficacious state.

**Objects / objectivity:** The objects within the educational landscape are used by the faith-based schooling system, are impacted by the objects and dogma of the church. This eventuates into a tension and chasm of relevance, place, description, and objectivity to where these religiously symbolic objects reside within the educational and cultural landscape.

**Language:** The use of language by the characters within the narration impacts the culture of the group, contained by the language offered by the independent school and faith-based systems. Annotating how the use of systemic based language influences the architectural praxis of the group – is a central and pivotal theme of the work.

**Power:** Power becomes a provocation to be explored in how discourse intercedes and aligns to the notion of power. Who is benefited by the power, or what organisation is benefited by this power, what does this power look like and can it be seen to weaken a minority within the faith-based educational setting?

**Knowledge (newly constructed):** All these above elements have expressed a newly formed understanding and appreciation of the faith-based educational settings. These elements need to be considered and ratified by the educational setting to ensure that collective efficacy is awarded and held by each stakeholder within the educational setting.

These elements cited above could be aligned to those needed to move into a second order thinking paradigm. A school will need to be seen as a learning space that is ready for and seeks to be rigorous. Challenged in adapting to and moving towards qualitative changes, and challenges. Knowing that this will cause a level of discomfort in reflecting upon school values, and based assumptions within the professional learning communities of practice.

### **Section 4.1.3.**

#### **Systems, symbols, and values unpacking the notion of truth and trust through semiotics**

In the previous chapters, reference was made to the use of semiotics within the field of inquiry. It is believed by the researcher that as this is an actual account of power in time, that further semiotic categories need to be explored. The proximity and level of interaction engaged in and with the researcher and the players of this narration via discourse, evokes a connection to social semiotics. What is needed is a level of understanding, of how the educational system works as a systematic rather than institutional based one. As such there is a desire to note the related interlocking

influencers that give rise to what is often seen to be chaotic, and complex systems within human organisations, supporting an understanding of the organisational language and the social givens of language within the group.

Given that education itself is an act of social interactions, the characters within this narration are experiencing elements of social life. It is the use of these multimodal socio-cultural aspects of semiotics that will be explored further within this chapter. The researcher refers to the use of multimodal when weaving in other forms of energies and domains of inquiry. As the work seeks to generate new meanings from a series of social acts, then differing theories and approaches must be considered. When these two aspects of the cultural and social semiotic aspects are brought to the forefront of analytic thought, an opportunity arises to ask questions around making new meaning. These are all social acts that are being transcribed. With this comes a level of affordance in the area of choice. Choice by the individual players in what they bring to the discussion and how they respond and react to what is offered within the discussion. This gives the narration not only direction, and a level of explicitness in choices being made, enabling selections and newly formed knowledge designed and communicated. It is within the conceptual representations displayed by the characters in this narration, that a level of affordance and social agency exists. By offering a social semiotic view the researcher is able to offer multiple lenses to view the work through and create new meanings of knowledge.

de Saussure (1974) coined the phrase of 'synchronic linguistics' which is the study of a language in one particular period. It is also known as descriptive linguistics or general linguistics. Synchronic studies look at what associates with, what, and in how these differing parts of linguistics interact at any given time. In this aspect of linguistic study, it is recognised by the researcher as a means to capture the common terms of understanding and attributed values afforded to the core themes and vocabulary as referred to by the executive team.

It is due to the causality and relational positioning of the researched school within the educational system, that align to the notion of one of pure values. The language and

terminology used within an educational, rural faith-based school suggest multiple systems at work. Each system holds individualised terminology and co-shared terms, that will become interrelated and relational in trust of nature, and of value. It is in the working relationships of combining a series of differing ideas, that forms in the combination of synchronic identity. It is through this symbolic identity that a complication of applied restrictions and arbitrary understandings emerge. What is of critical importance, is the provision of adding value to the symbolic language, with regards to its positioning and representation within the systems. Within this positioning and recognised importance that the system holds within society, and in how the sign or symbolic images gives definition. The interpretable identifiable complexities as an operating element within the systems become a key area of exploration within this work.

The level of abstraction awarded to the used religious terminology, offers a connection into a world of terms, that can cause conflict and tension for the layperson or non-religious person. Even those espousing, to be one of affiliation to an order or religion, can be developed to illustrate the comparisons and tensions at play. The language of faith, spirituality and religion are all core ideas operating in the system of the church. Within the educational system they can reside in misalignment and cause a division of friction, with the level of operating praxis. For these tensions are both cultural and social in manifestation. As such these religious icons or tokens, act as a disrupting force of discomfort and confusion, in where and how they are aligned within the educational curriculum and the core values of being a faith-based school. For in being both cultural and social in objectivity, these artefacts, of language and symbols are representations of the church's identity, are seen by the researcher as a series of social semiotic products and resources. How are these resources then aligned to the researcher's newly constructed principles of knowledge?

#### **Section 4.1.4.**

##### **The potential of social semiotic resources**

In refining and then extending the researcher's core principles of newly reimagined knowledge, there is the potential to curate and annotate a series of social semiotic signs, to act as a provocation in exploring the synchronic linguistics of these semiotic artefacts.

It is an aspiration of the work, that this new knowledge, enables a multimodal discourse, which will provide any organisation the ways and means to navigate situational discussions. Specifically, in the arrangement of the language being used within the operational setting. In realising the full potential of these semiotic artefacts and resources, reference needs to be made to the social aspects and positioning of these artefacts.

The notion of power and trust, trust and knowledge, faith, and knowledge, are all intertwined within this work, providing an account of the connected storylines. Noting the language in use, and in the social givens of the vocabulary, ties to symbolic artefacts of the social positioning of religious icons and terms used within a faith-based school. It is through the 'social givens' as coined by Kress and Hodge (1979) and through Foucault's (1981) 'term of 'discourse' that this work will generate a source of meaning directly related to social interactions, as a means to 'consensual knowledge' Habermas (1984) as cited in Kress (2011, pp. 35). The 'social givens' here, are clearly aligned to faith-based knowledge, and the means in which language and knowledge, of a faith-based educational system, codes and disseminates this knowledge amongst its social community. Social semiotics is viewed by a semiotician, as one that is shared, via varying communication modes, and nodes, of transference of knowledge and meaning will be shaped by the social environment, be it framed within the politics of communication. It is noted that each setting within this narration operates, not only within its own paradigm but also within a socio-political sphere. This narration witnessed a series of acts, that in the re-composition of forming new knowledge, there exists a cross-cultural communicative multimodal characterisations. It is in how these acts can be organised, challenged and relaunched to give a working capital to a series of social semiotic resources and artefacts that has been revealed.

Within the researcher's core principles of newly formed knowledge, a further incarnation is realised in curating a social semiotic text. Weaving together the storylines, that were annotated within the field texts analysis chapter at the end of each transcript, and vignettes shared by the characters within this narrative. These storylines result in the composition of the semiotic entry which gives an interpretation of the social order of this narrative,

which can be translated into any organisational setting. This point too can be aligned to the level of power displayed within the narrative. To track the social changes of the collective group of players, generating a sense of order to the community in helping them to explore the principles of order and belief and values, as semiotic principles of doxa and collective pedagogical operating praxis. This then honours the tensions raised as lived, authentic and as visible tangible areas for further exploration within their operating levels of doxa, and which is seen as the groups operating beliefs or attitudes.

These manifestations of semiotically constructed discourse, have become a comprehensive account of power in social interactions within the researched group. It is the ideological arrangements of systems thinking of strongly held views of the group, at a socio-political level of learnings, that will have the greatest impacts upon the level of semiotic resourcing. Fashioning an ability to make new meaning, augmenting a new affordance of the positional modalities within a faith-based school. What has been suggested as an outcome is both social and cultural in manifestation as discussed later in section 4.5.0. It is a way and means of realising, and honouring the agency of the players within this narrative shaping their social agency. For this school operates within multiple paradigms. It is one that operates within a series of social environments, the educational setting, the faith-based setting, and within the social schemas afforded by the funding body. Combining this with the social characteristics of each of the players, impacts the cultural resourcing and means in which communicating core principles of collective efficacy and trust are transcribed.

## **Section 4.2.0**

### **Findings**

#### **Landscapes of Practice - The social characteristics of the education setting.**

##### **What does this mean for a social semiotic resource?**

As a lived storied landscape, the use of language annotates the level affordance awarded to the social and cultural aligning of the religious tokens, seeing a difficult and emotive tension put forward. At the end of the last chapter, the researcher shared with the reader

a series of vignettes which highlighted the position (or lack thereof) of how these religious artefacts were seen and woven into the daily life of the school in a transparent and meaningful manner. The varying landscapes that the leadership inhabits through their professional practice. These landscapes become evident within their role as a collective leadership group. Their role within the wider school community, and in how they interact and communicate within another.

Both Sally and Sam were engaged in a robust dialogue regarding the potential use and level of affordance aligned to these religious icons. What is evident throughout this whole narration, is the differences between the operating core purposes of each setting: that of the church, and that of the school. Each brings with it, a certain level of expectation and set of operating principles, beliefs, and values, based upon a philosophy of practice and praxis of mission.

The notion of truth and belief sit within a school-based setting and the values of the church. Truth in what is being taught via the established educational curriculum and truth within the tenets of faith. The mandated educational curriculum, which is bound within the General Capabilities, deemed to be an entitlement of every Australian child are the guiding themes of personal and social, and ethical capabilities. The church purports a truth in the word of God and as such a truth in one's relationship with God - a belief in the word of God as truth, a complex set of truths to be furthered explored.

If the core purpose of the school is to educate and support in the shaping of the individual into a 'good global citizen' to coin a generic phrase, then the curriculum must be one based on ethical standards of practice and knowledge. Availing a curriculum that allows the child to become informed, empowered within the capabilities of inquiry, reflection, and rationality. The child comes away with key points of knowledge, skills, and the ability to apply understandings and to think critically, to collaborate, to be creative and to be able to communicate as an effective member of the group. Then how can this be authentically delivered and entrusted to students, when such powerful operating elements of the church, through liturgies, icons and symbols and ritual are not truly owned,

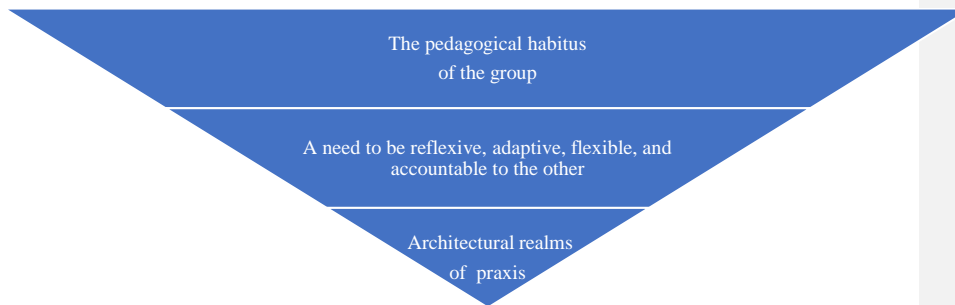
understood, or valued by the school's leadership? Is this not a level of mistrust or an inaction in being? Or is it really the level of power that one doctrine holds over another? Sally noted the discrepancy of how the school involved its pupils within the ritual of faith and how it responds to the students and families. By a parent sending their child to the school, they are enacting their right of choice, based upon the mission and vision of the school, combined with the religious teachings that the faith brings with it. The faith-based model in turn shapes the values and supports the modeling of daily interactions of the operating community groups within the school. In the school seeking and procuring funding from the faith-based commission, they are strengthening the bonds between the rituals of faith and that of the teachings of the faith.

For in accepting the funding model, offered by the faith-based commission, it comes with a series of contractual agreements. One being an adherence to the gospels of faith. The expectation here is that the Church is seen as a lived entity, which is witnessed by the community through artefacts, icons, and symbols of the church. Be it the chapel, religious icons, displayed within the classroom and via the school's mission and vision statements.

As the school operates within a faith-based system of education, a necessity to become innovative ethically, epistemologically, and pedagogically are critical elements within the storylines offered. Through the act of ritual and tradition, an opportunity to become reflexive, and introspective exists. Within the work an opportunity existed to examine one's own belief systems noting how the research process impacted the researcher on a personal and academic level. This will be explored further throughout the epilogue. By being reflexive attention is given to a reimagined educational system, that allows for and/or welcomes a deeper connection with 'one's self of being – 'I – Thou'. This can be translated into daily practice of connectivity as acts of knowing and being with others. The angst for those in faith-based systems, is having to seek out permission to review and to challenge religious content. For the ways of religious knowing can be and needs to be actualised and lived through both the curriculum and daily classroom practices. This could become an outcome of a lived plot or conflict, enacted through the grand narrative of the faith-based educational systems. The architectural realms of praxis, a need to be



reflexive, adaptive, flexible, and accountable to the other, is sought when transforming the pedagogical habitus of the group. The diagram below is a visual representation of the researcher's thinking regarding the archetype needed to be traversed by the group and individual when engaging within a reflexive state of architectural praxis.



*Figure 10.0 - archetype of thinking - within a reflexive state of architectural praxis.*

The level of praxis that challenges these traditional paradigms are what in fact marginalise our students, and educators within the educational system are impacted by these traditional notions. The inquiry will be enhanced by the philosophies of Freire and Bourdieu, to enable the voices of those within the narration, by honouring and valuing the leaderships groups level of habitus and operating doxa within the narration. Participation within the collaborative construct of examining, and reexamining the possibilities, of self-determination of affirming or defining with clarity of meaning. Curating a language of cultural identity and well-being of knowing and understanding of the operating educational systems, within a global construct – of faith and learning continua of the educator's professional practice. What is known, is that to be spiritually aware one needs to be cognisant of the mind, body, and heart of those involved, be it in a passive or active state within the grand narration.

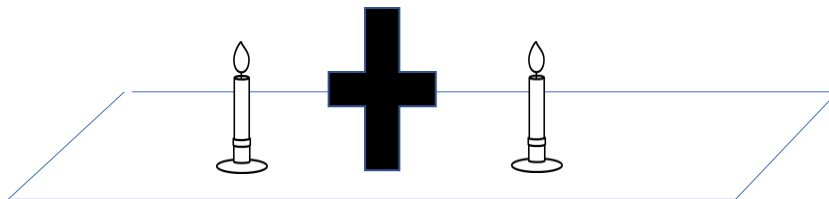
The storyline of power emerges through three separate threads. Firstly, as a form of status, secondly, as one of social justice in providing empowerment to others, and thirdly, as a form of resistance to the perceived domination of the church's will, and dogma evident within the classroom. If that can be seen as an actual truth by the group, or in this case,

be seen as an inconvenient truth, this could become an outcome or possible ending for this grand narration. What can be seen as a lived tension within the group, frames a series of signposts. These are not purely iconic but rather seen within the work as the weaving of a cultural convention of an artifact be it linguistic or material in form. This signpost if taken in a form of an icon, can also be seen as affording a level of affordance to enable identification of the realistic self. In giving this level of agency to the self, a sense of indexicality as an object of reality appears. Agency, within this studied setting, can be seen as one of relational power, focusing upon human relationships, as these remain unremitting within the narration. Even though they remain a constant to and within the narration, they too can be modified, and can become unstable. Be it based upon the changing values, the place, and the language used in referencing the representational semiotic artefacts. Power relations can be coded to produce a set of strategies, concepts, or principles at play within the narration.

For the narrator, there is the recognition that resistance, and freedom are ongoing practices which give clarity to the relation of power. These are seen to be subtle strategies, and structures operating within faith-based educational systems and gives the characters within the narration, and you the reader a foundation, a belief system that allows the consciousness of thinking. This then enables observation and description to give purpose, generating possible new knowledge pertaining to the material, religious, educational, and social worlds operating within the narration. What is known is that there is a relationship between truth, and knowledge, and truth and power. Further, that truth and knowledge are not always pure, it can be said, that the knower and the known are interconnected. What can be spotlighted is the fact that knowing, and truth will be seen as a critique of an epistemological ongoing question. As this is a narrative set in a point in time, there is no clear ending that can be empirically or absolutely diagnostically equated to you the reader.

The notion of truth and power can be clearly witnessed through the placement of religious icons or tokens. The image below, a simplistic representation of a prayer table as found in the classroom, highlights the importance of the icons as signifiers. Within a semiotician framework, the signifier or representations is the form in which the sign appears. The tokens as

coined by the group, give symbolic interpretation to the relevance and importance of faith within the classroom. The use of the cross upon a prayer table, candles to be lit in times of prayer and deep reflexive contemplation, are ways of connecting to faith, enhancing a sense of one's spirituality and relationship with, and of faith. The 'prayer' table as referenced by the players in the narration, in fact does not bring with it a sense of calm, rather a sense of discomfort for some, for these symbols' tokens carry little value and affordance within the class.



*1.0 Illustration of semiotic artefacts displayed in the classroom*

If these 'tokens' as coined by Sam are seen, as not being intertwined with the life of the classroom and hold no relevance within a 'faith-based school' are these not an actual contradiction of terms and thus espousing a mistruth?

As a school that is clearly aligned to one faith, that expects all students to attend liturgies in Chapel, how can this sit within another's faith, from other cultural background be truly meaningful? The notion that we believe in the one God, is a powerful theme and ideal, the words, texts, symbols, and icons carry meaning and weight, within each interpretation of a religious texts. If these symbols are not truly seen as having value, or are recognised for the symbolism that they offer, but are rather seen as tokenistic, does this use of term, not devalue these artefacts? Or is it rather seen as a gesture, to be at least 'flying the flag' to coin a phrase to be authentic? How does a school accept and welcome all others, when only one faith is borne witness to? How can a school ask of its School Captain, who at the time of this tale being woven, was of another faith and wore garments that were representational of the faith, expect this student to attend Chapel and recite the words of another religious text? Is this not asking a student to be complicit in an act of betrayal of their own faith?

How does an ethical teaching profession operate with sound and entrusted pedagogical practice, if they too are complicit in the act of living this mistruth? For if affordance is not truly lived and transparent, how can these operate within the ethical standing of the leadership community. Or can it be offered in another way? Can the lack of understanding and knowledge act as another series of semiotic artefacts? In knowing, and understanding the level of affordance given to these symbols, and signifiers of faith, if absent in knowing and being, can the transference of entrusted knowledge be enacted? If that knowledge is not present, and accounted for in the first place, what is the level of truth being forwarded into the cultural community? Given the use of semiotic social artefacts, is this an antecedent in untangling the discussions held by the group as they rationalise the place, value, and affordance of these signifiers?

If there is an absence of knowledge in being able to articulate the signifiers of importance within the life of the school, can a player be held to account? Are they complicit indirectly, in using materials to misdirect or not truly connect with the faith of the school? For knowledge is power and power is in having knowledge. These semiotic artefacts are all social contracts, of the cultural habitus currently held by the school during the time of this storied landscape.

What both the narrator and you the reader have witnessed is a series of lived tensions. In viewing the players responses to the SHALOM Model, and to the surveyed questions, these characters within this narration come to this storied landscape, with little or no knowledge. They bring with them knowledge, based around either another's faith-based system or desperately seek to give platitudes to the funding body for whom they are employed. Blame cannot be laid totally at the door of the characters, for language given to them lacks meaning. The notion of faith and of spirituality is noted as a deeply relational one based on truth of knowing and of trust in what is known.

### **Drawing the storyline together**

What the field texts has provided is not necessarily a series of tensions that are commonplace but rather a set of storylines which are elicited new for this cultural setting. These faith-based issues raise deep philosophical questions and set the scene to explore the social semiotic perspectives within this particular situation. There were times when the narrator adopted the role of a chorus. Bringing the story lines to the forefront, not to misdirect, or to show a level of power within or over the group, but rather to provide opportunity to explore meaning given by the group.

The field texts reviewed presented a series of tensions pertaining to the use of language. Power here is aligned to the reference made to the schools renaming, thus aligning the school to their desired student demographic. However, this seems to be in juxtaposition with the funding body, which seeks to be egalitarian, offering access to all and ensuring a level of collective equity is owned by the student. What we see in this storied landscape is one, where language gives status and sets the school apart from the other schools in the regional area. Thereby placing the school as one of opportunity, noted as ‘seeking to become one of choice or destination’. What this leadership group is grappling with is how do they leave behind a previous incarnation of being a school that supports the downtrodden, catering for a student who does not typically fit into the mainstream setting. To a place where the socio-cultural capital of the school becomes invested in students with aspirations, academically proficient and of means? There is a desire to shift the standing of the school within the wider community. However, if the language and knowledge base sitting behind these drivers and signifiers cannot be leveled in a mindfulness of collective efficacy, awarded to each student and staff member within the school community, can this be seen as a lived truth?

Not being able to act with honesty and trust creates an insurmountable tension within the social contracts and learning horizon of the school’s consciousness. What is needed is a semiotic registry of social cultural artefacts and resources, that enable mindful dialogue to be shared and seek clarification of practice. To be, in fact, pragmatic in considering the act of education and how each of these players is able to deal with their fellow humankind.

What is needed then is a system of ideas which can be created, owned, and understood by all. Protecting the time to ensure collective efficacy within faith-based schools becomes a default position rather than an exception to the rule.

### **Section 4.2.1.**

#### **Praxis of Social Semiotics for Professional Learning**

##### **Theorised Findings - A provocation in constructing social entropy**

The discussion so far has remained at the level of description. It is now important to articulate a deeper explanation of how the group grappled with the interactions of difficulties arising from the inquiry. To this end, the notion of entropy will be considered, in theorising the ideas of differing concepts circulating within a system. Entropy explains why a reactional state is enacted one way and not another. Classically, entropy is often claimed to be a state of disorder or described as the messiness of a system. But what is sought here is a means to create order. The researcher in this case will reference the work of Clausius (1887) in utilising the potential of an entropic state. Entropy will be viewed not as disorder, but rather as a series of differing ways, that a collection of semiotic resources can be gathered, curated, relaunched, and arranged within a social educative setting. Crafting a series of semiotic artefacts or signifiers may increase the level of probability of operating within an entropic state by a group (as discussed later in the text). As this work is set within a social and cultural habitus, it is aligned to a level of messiness or the complexity of the group's thinking.

Entropy is seen as a measure of disorder, based upon the Greek word of Entropein for transformation and change. Entropy within this narration is seen as a means to rationalise a progression of transformative ideas, arising from a series of tensions offered by the studied group. A theory within is that through the constant evolutionary reformatting of working levels of praxis within the educational practice, that change is not disordered. Rather change is transformative and necessary in seeking outgrowth. Clausius (1887), viewed entropy as a change function, impacting states of energy and generated outputs, influenced by another state of matter or being.

Entropy could be argued, to be seen as an element of a system, offering a series of microstates that once changed become a macrostate of systems thinking. Entropic thinking as an outcome of the work, believing this state to be one, that may enable differing ideas to exist within a group of people, viewed as divergent energy levels. Entropy will be seen as being able to connect, rather than exclude or difficult to access because of differing energy levels. This will be explored later within '*dispersing energy of self*' subsection.

#### 4.2.2

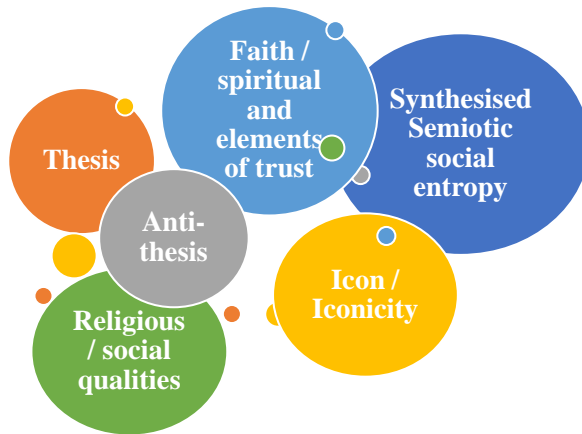
#### **A further provocation of the findings**

#### **A new frontier for professional learning**

##### **Praxis of Social Semiotics for Professional Learning**

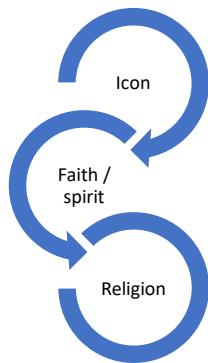
Within this work the reader and the researcher have become immersed in a tale of division, misconceptions, and frustration, combined with a sense of pride in profession. What is seen as contextually relevant to this particular researched setting, is a series of tensions that have mirrored other like settings. For these lived tensions could be seen within any faith based or organisational setting.

The idea here is that a series of social acts permeates a semiotic registry of concepts. Thinking that supports the notion, in clarifying acts of honesty and trust as the big idea. An essential question to be synthesised, into new forms of knowledge, and understandings. In envisaging these artefacts, the graphic below seeks to illustrate the differing concepts in scope.



*2.0 Illustration Synthesised new concepts of new knowledge*

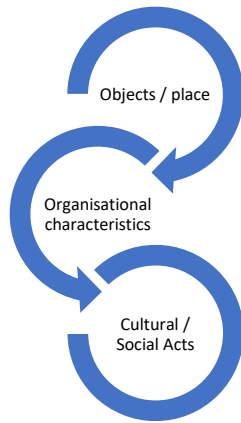
In bringing this semiotic registry of resources together there are three core containers of conceptual approaches in play. The illustration below highlights the importance of the fluidity and interconnection between each core conceptual receptable.



*3.0 Illustration - Conceptual Receptables.*

To take each of these receptables and to rename them, using generic terms that better suit any organisational setting they would be re-arranged in the following manner.





4.0 Illustration – Retitled conceptual Receptables.

- To explore and analyse these containers of knowing and being further – what is in and out of scope, when questioning and aiming to synthesize new semeiotic resources? To return to *Illustration 3.00* - based upon the three core operating ideas elicited from the researcher group, the following points would be in scope. core organisational characteristics

#### **Analysing these concepts further as theorised outcomes of the work**

##### **Icon / Iconicity**

The notion of icons resides here. The question is, are these religious symbols an icon, or rather are they iconic in value, and place within the educational setting? How are these icons or tokens, as coined by the group, rationalised into the setting? How do they relate to these icons as a form of connecting ideas and positioning to those of a religious value and beliefs to that of the taught curriculum? Where do the personal funds of knowledge sit in relation to the community of the church? How does the teacher balance the opposing dogmas at play, with regards to how the curriculum is offered in collaboration with the religious teachings of the church?

Courage of leadership, in giving permission and protected time needed to have these conversations. These are the original tensions of the thesis, that must be explored and rationalised by the group. In discussing these semiotic artefacts and as such signifiers of

faith, value can be placed upon either, in being seen as an icon or as a representation of a religious act be it in a place of iconicity. For these icons are in themselves symbolic of words and in this case, language of the church. If the latter, and icons are held in a state of iconicity, it could be argued that this state, avails an opportunity to identify any relational causal factors, noting the similarities between the form and meaning of the icon. Clarifying where an image, such as a religious icon sits within the cultural capacity of the group's internal and external operating signifiers, offers meaning in being able to formulate new knowledge and understandings within a series of re-augmented semiotic resources and signifiers.

### **Faith / spirituality**

Here the elements of trust and truth reside. The use of language within this semiotic resource avails the individual and the group an opportunity to explore language tone, type, gesture and meaning. Language used can carry persuasive meaning and with-it power. It is a means in which one can be elevated or decimated. The old adage that the pen is mightier than the sword, is a case in point. In aligning the notion of truth and trust to that of the use and value of language, has proved prevalent and rich in offering within this researched work.

The use of language be it descriptive in modality and type, viewed either through the lens of the dogma of the church or that of the enacted curriculum, can be either beneficial or destructive in nature. You the reader have seen through the vignettes how language can be used, to direct and manipulate the storyline, to cause doubt, to spread rumour or to espouse a mistruth. What is also seen, is that language can empower, enhance through the words of God as cited by Sally, or give strength of character as espoused by Sam. When language is used it is delivered from a base of conceptual understandings underpinning offerings, thus afforded with a level of inference.

If the inference is based upon a mistruth, then language can be distorted and can lose meaning and can in fact misdirect and misconstrue, the original concept / understanding. It is here the notion of faith and spirituality, aligning the self to either being spiritual in

faith or to be of faith, without a level of spirituality is explored. It is also in knowing the truth behind the concept posed, that both the self and the group can formulate an agreed understanding to what is being offered.

What is critical when questioning what is being offered, that a mindfulness is generated in seeing where power exists, who is benefited, and who is negated in the exploration of understanding of truth.

### **Religious / social qualities**

The last of the storylines. The last of the entropic social semiotic states to be explored resides within the operating social capital of the organisation. In this case its religious qualities. Be it religious or not it, is the cultural capital of an organisation at play. It is where the notions of power and relational trust become evident. The use of language in offering differing states of cultural and social capital, impacts the habitus of the group and their mode of systems of thinking. When afforded time of reflection, a re-imagined thesis of thinking, a new anti-thesis is created. In this case the notion of an anti-thesis is viewed as a negation of the original thesis. Formulating a second stage in the process of dialectical reasoning. Dialectic reasoning is seen here as the base to the discourse, set between two or more people holding different points of view about a subject. Whilst each seeks to establish the truth through reasoned methods of argumentation of discourse to systematically support an idea, action, or theory.

Each system brings with it a series of microstates. Within the work, a microstate is deemed to be, the number of differing possibilities or arrangements of the entropic social semiotic states. One in which each microstate is transformed into a macrostate of semiotic resources. Thereby, seeing the macrostate as the most likely or probable outcome. The language of the church is one that holds power, influence, a level of fear but also a level of hope. When this microstate is understood, afforded value of place within another setting. This can be transferred into a symbol of reflexive being, an anti-thesis of transformative change, which becomes a resource of semiotic social and cultural influence.

### 4.2.3

#### A critical provocation of thought

##### Synthesising the findings

When energy is dispersed, this energy becomes accessible, and may combine to form new knowledge and understandings. What is evident is that a newly construed entropy of social semiotic systems of ideas, clarifying the social semiotic approaches afforded to the level of praxis and practice of the individual character. As an outcome of the work this may become a way and means of enabling engagement in the acts of semiotic linguistics.

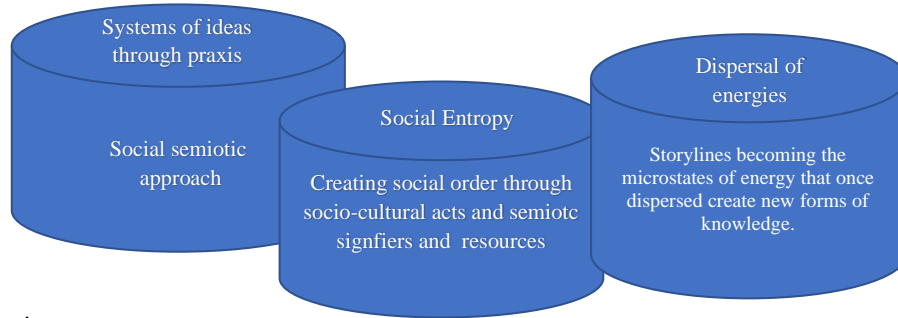
In creating a new social order there is the possibility of developing new understandings of practice, in the social act, in this case within the educational setting. Classically, entropy is often claimed to be a state of disorder. But what is sought here is a means to create order. Crafting a series of semiotic artefacts or signifiers may increase the level of probability of operating within an entropic state, channeling the level of dynamism, or containers, to hold the level of energy needed to engage within a set dialogue. Also, to being mindful of an order or system of social structures, interactions and behaviours in establishing a process of change. This energy will spread out and may cause a change of state. In this work, the researcher holds to the notion that each storyline can be seen as a microstate – offering differing states of energy. By affording differing levels of funds of knowledge dispersed at the group's point of need - these states can then be seen as signifiers of energy and matter. The energy needed within each microstate, previously described as storylines, allows for a variance of probability but will still require the same level of energy to be elicited by the player. Within this state of entropy, the researcher theorises that even though the microstates or storylines offered, hold a multiplicity of values within varying belief systems. They do not require the individual to increase the level of intensity and energy within an offered microstate. Rather the level of entropy is a direct measure of each energy's configuration of probability, or as a measurement of the energy's spread over a period of time. What is required is a dynamic system to enable higher levels of entropy. Noting the change of microstates, may clarify the semiotic, and social readiness within the faith-based schooling system. Increasing the level of momentum may as an outcome from the work, create a form of dynamic and systems

thinking. In sustaining the momentum of the group, is critical as a support in continuing a narrative for change. A lack of momentum by the group, will abandon a need for change. Environmental factors will be viewed as either complex or less ordered. Either factor can be seen as a reduction of complexity or an increase in the complexity of operating microstates.

### **Dispersing energy of self and others**

What is now evident, is that the series of microstates in its raw form, can become information. In the very nature of dialogue within the social acts of education, exists a microstate, becoming refined when experienced and internalised as a value. Based upon the philosophical, pedagogical, religious, or moralistic acts of education. Each interpretation is forwarded a level of semiotic relevance, generated out of an operating system. Each social act therefore can be said to be an entropic state. Each of these states can either become enhanced or devalued at an informational, sociocultural, or spiritual level. It is known in the laws of entropy that each state be it informational, symbolic, cultural, or communicative will reach a state of being, which can no longer exist in its current form. What we have borne witness to in the narrative, is the breaking down of these conditions. Each state has reached its borders of influence, creating a circumstance of possible misunderstanding, powerlessness, or disorder, evident within the field texts analysis chapter. What this work seeks as an outcome, through utilizing the semiotic artefacts and signifiers as a positioning of social entropy, to code the values of growth, to create new knowledge with the least possible level of resistance. It is this modality of systems thinking that allows for a dyadic mode of imaging in the social semiotic artefacts. Illustration 5.0 below symbolizes the key findings, as annotated above - *that each social act therefore can be said to be an entropic state*

*Theory of praxis of social semiotic dispersal*



5.0 Illustration Theory of praxis of social semiotic dispersal – The key outcome of the work

In identifying the conditions of consciousness needed for change, an awareness of the ontological and axiological paradigms of the lived group will act as either a positive or negative causal factor. The levels of affordance imposed to and on the social acts, via creativity will increase or decrease the dispersal of entropic states. The order sought, can be viewed through the diverse tendencies of systems, which will require greater inputs of energy and time to ensure emergence into a social semiotic state. Creating a new purpose of self, in organising forms of knowledge through the protection of time and reflexive states of being. Given this work sits within a system of faith and a system of education there needs to be a recognition of the spiritual distribution. The researcher would argue that the social semiotic signifiers, are based on the spiritual rather than as a material object. An opportunity exists to engage in dialogue, to investigate, to explore and discover new social attributes which are actually more economical within a time bound framework. What is hoped for as an outcome of this work, is the possibility to increase knowledge and, dare it be said, wisdom. One bound within a communicative, spiritual, informational, and cultural entropic realms of energetic dispersal. What is sought, can be purely aspirational, but there exists an opportunity to support others in the level of transference of knowledge. If a group of players were to engage within this process of systems thinking of social semiotics there would be minimal loss of information. Rather seeing an increase in the level of creativity and knowledge. The notion of entropy supports a state of

functionality, hence the importance of seeing the storylines as microstates. Within this theory the level of entropy cannot be measured. But what can be calculated is the change that occurs in a state of entropy. What is beneficial to an entropic state, is that it requires no explicit energy, for these are spontaneous acts that occur by osmosis.

To bring these ideas into a natural conclusion, the researcher leans towards the work of 'Hegel's dialectics' (Maybee, 2000). Hegel believed that a series of actions, or discussions, moving from a thesis, to an anti-thesis, would form a new synthesis of ideas. Creating new knowledge and a new thesis. For Hegel this was not revolutionary but rather a dialogue of necessity. Moving from challenge to challenge, or error to error, in the aim to reconcile one's life. In the act of wrestling with the tensions of the thesis, and in creating the opposing anti-thesis. An opportunity to elicit the positive qualities synthesized into a newly formed incarnation of ideas. Further the works of Freire and Habermas as cited throughout the work, in regard to communicative action and the use of dialogue as a form of linguistic semiotics may enhance the conceptual thinking, held within an entropic state and semiotic dispersal.

Once more an aspiration of this work, is that these ideas can be synthesized into a new or better approach in operating in a faith-based educational system, or for that matter in any organisational setting. For in any setting there exists the opportunity to grapple with previous errors and tensions to formulate new synthesised approaches and ideas. All who operate within the educational field do so with a level of care and thought – a duty of care if you will. It is in how we treat the arrangement of ideas and in seeing the multiplicity of these arrangements that will impact how they are viewed and utilised within the organisation. As such an educational setting exists within a living system of thought and as such will be both positive and negative in entropic state.

### **Epilogue 4.3.0**

#### **Reflections from the borders of the researched landscapes.**

The researcher has been forwarded an opportunity to enter into a reflexive state. Empowering my own voice, within the role of narrator and in how I have developed as a researcher, academic lecturer, and educator.

As noted in the acknowledgements, I have not endured an easy road, long periods of illness, doubt of importance of this work and a world pandemic saw significant delays to the thesis. However, through my journey I now arrive at a destination not previously considered. A destination that has seen the influence of others, some significant, others almost sleight of hand in transforming my work, resulting in an outcome I believe to be of significance. With regards, to how the field may approach professional learning, and, in the way, collective efficacy is viewed as a necessary element of operating architectural praxis (Kemmis, 2008).

When I first started this research the aim of the inquiry was to capture the funds of knowledge and thus the narrative that each character brings with them into their educational space. The focus was to be two-fold. On the one hand, exploring the learnings that each character achieves within the transition from self to collective efficacy; and on the other, an inquiry on the importance and impact of growth as an insider researcher within an epistemological framework mindful of the level of reflexivity. I sought to be authentic and culturally relevant to the context in which I was operating. The structure was to be mindful of the practice in evidence. Development of practice would be identified through unpacking of the narration as a critical link to the notional subjectivity of the work within a faith-based educational system.

Reflexivity for me is a state of empowerment, as this gave me permission to examine my own belief systems and my own pedagogical practice. Whilst reviewing how external systems of beliefs may influence the outcome of the work, has reformed me as a researcher and as an educator. As one who guides, and supports others' professional practice, it has seen me become more attentive to the silences, and to what the other offers



in discussion and dialogue. In formulating these states of reflexivity, has in fact become a conduit leading to new principles of understanding, constructing an innovative system of ideas pertaining to a entropy of social semiotics.

Returning to the original thesis of the work. I viewed the research as one being framed by four key questions. Why these questions? What was I trying to uncover in terms of social practice and praxis? In review, all were and remain equal in importance. I have no sense for the need to reorder the questions posed within my ethics application. Rather it is in the importance of what the questions has offered as a new storied landscape and storylines into, how we as educators, interact and operate within our own field of architectural praxis.

The four areas of research were to:

1. Research and theorise the modes of pedagogical practice within a faith-based school.
2. Through the data curated, to assist the development of understanding collective efficacy.
3. To theorise the role of an insider researcher within the inquiry.
4. Reference a semiotic approach, thus enabling the researcher to unpack the conceptual threads of religious dogma which in turn contributes to the human knowledge needed in supporting a development of an expect system which may be transferred to other cultural contexts and furthered aligned to the significance of schooling within a faith-based..

Rather than attempting to comment on the degree to what of the above questions, have been amplified within the discussion of the thesis, I will utilise the offering of the epilogue as a means to distill the essence of what the questions are indicating as an elicited thought process of systems thinking. Therefore, the discussion set out below is a more generalised overview of the outcomes arising from a faith-based situation but is also noted as one as applicable to other settings.

### **A storied landscape of practice**

Reviewing the importance of pedagogy of practice as the way a teacher delivers their conceptual understanding of the curriculum offered is critical in how the leadership acts as conduit between the faith-based system and in emphasising key aspects of the curriculum. It is the art and science of teaching. It is the way in which we hold the educative space, enabling, inviting, and inspiring students and others around us to become life-long learners. For some of those operating within a faith-based school, the system binds them to a certain way of being and thinking. It is interesting as an outcome of this work, that the teacher's voice is individual and is offered with a tone of loneliness. It is a voice seeking solidarity from others on sharing a collective approach and common language of understanding of the semiotic artefacts operating within the classroom. It is also in being able to annotate and note the importance of an artefact within a teaching practice.

The notion of collective efficacy is always been one, that has held resonance for me as this was absent for the greater part of my educational journey. Firstly, being described as factory fodder and, secondly, being deemed as one who was not academically strong. Where was my advocate, where was the belief in me – in supporting my right, my entitlement to an individualised educational pathway. Still today, we see in classrooms a narrowing of the child's educational scope for empowerment. However, this scenario is decreasing with the notion of differentiation and individualised learning pathways, empowered by the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration. But we are not there yet. The notion of collective efficacy remains an absent setting to this work. Yet there is a shift within the profession in thought of practice, and aspiration for students. It will be in the coming together of pedagogical praxis, that will bring about an alignment of the fields of habitus that semiotic artefacts can be developed to inform an entropic state of thought and systems thinking approaches.

### **A storied landscape of reflexivity**

Whilst engaging within a framework of personal reflexivity within the role of insider researcher, I could not be judgmental, nor could I not allow my collective memory of

what was, what had been and what had been imposed upon those within this setting become a guiding influencer. I had within my own funds of knowledge, their historical narrative in scope. The role allowed me to enter into a more reflexive state of review and refinement, as I brought both their world and my world of educational systems into a shared landscape. Creating new borders of understanding and new landscapes for further exploration.

### **A storied landscape of semiotics**

Finally, I hoped my work would allow me the affordance of weaving into the narrative an option to explore the role of semiotic artefacts. I never dared dream that I would re-imagine the power and place of semiotics. In now seeing myself as a semiotician, I was able, through the anti-thesis and in the merging of micro and macro states, to elicit a new social semiotic entropic state of systems thinking. It is hoped that in this inquiry as it is offered to you the reader that I have not toyed with these questions in a simplistic manner but dialectically explored and theorised the notions raised. This work has been of pivotal importance to me as a researcher and to me as an educator. Having crafted my educative lens of operating praxis for over 35 years this work has allowed me to dare to dream of a better system of education. The work of Mead and Dewey is deemed as nothing new, but as an educational system we as yet have not truly embraced a reimagined bold way of enabling collective efficacy.

### **My final perspectives of the story shared**

Operating within a series of educational systems, as both a student and educator, in both the state and faith-based independent sectors, I bore witness to the complexities operating within these spaces. Due in part of the teachers' social habitus within the academic and cultural capital operating within the educational setting. These tensions lived in the classroom and caused confusion for both teacher and student riding on the boundary of the complex institutionalised capital space.

It was in acknowledging these complexities, an opportunity was sought to engage as a social act, becoming an agent of change orchestrating a process of shared practices. It

also invited a shift in and deepening of appreciation of the necessity to unpack the semiotic symbolism aligned to this tension. I believe that I had an experiential journey, allowing me to see the artefacts brought to this narration, as an augmented series of entropic semiotic artefacts and resources. Which can now be curated and utilised within any setting to explore the thesis and anti-thesis of transformative microstates of change. This occurred to me to be a significant finding of the research and of the importance of the work. One that could be of significance to fields of operating architectural praxis.

### **Learning within a COVID19 landscape**

It was during the pandemic and surviving some 125 days Melbournians were locked down. My work in education saw me support students who reside in the public housing estates of inner Melbourne. It was during this period from July to December, that I met with residents twice weekly, I spoke with students, families, and leadership from all three educational settings that my doctoral work held additional new meaning.

Collective efficacy, I found was missing in all these conversations, especially those within an educational setting. Cultural and personal sensitivities were presumed to exist but yet not understood and unfortunately not valued in some quarters with regards to the lockdown. In continuing these conversations across all three sectors in advocating for the students and families within these public housing estates - an efficacious state of being is sought. What is needed is the mutual affordance and appreciation in knowing each other's values. One that will respect the differing levels of energies of microstates. For me this is critical. To be actively engaged, to ensure collective efficacy is an active state of entropic dispersal, moving and shifting reimagined and strengthened states of being and matter, needs to be at the heart of our practice.

### **Conclusion**

In seeking to establish collective efficacy and in the need to explore and honour the funds of knowledge that each individual brings with them into the setting be it educational or commercial in operation is urgent. No longer can we remain silent to the educational systems within which we operate. We as educators, we as writers of policy and curriculum must ensure that we support all, in empowering a learning space that is collective in

efficacious state. Entropic social semiotic artefacts may permit a transference of the energies awarded to these discussions, due to the influences of change. These states of what was seen as disorderly, actually bring order and newly formed knowledge, with an opportunity to qualify a new learning landscape. The importance in moving from the thesis to anti-thesis are the semiotic entropic artefacts. Empowering the individual and giving voice to many within the collective group. Availing a sense of efficacy to all and ensuring that new understandings, approaches and knowledge of the operating fields of praxis can be launched and relaunched, shaping, and reshaping the praxis of one's field of operating practice.

### **Reflexive growth – impact upon the self**

What effect has this research had upon me? Do I see knowledge in a different way? These are two questions that have come front and center of mind. As I review, reflect, and refine my practice and thinking processes, I can see significant growth for me as a researcher, a philosopher and in how I think.

In considering this level of growth, I am cognisant of how I interact now, as a consultant and facilitator of knowledge of pedagogical practice. I felt compelled to take on the role of a facilitator within the narrative inquiry, not to distract or to deviate the dialogue, but rather in offering question stems, or thinking tools as frameworks that supported a sense of equality within the dialogue. Thereby offering varying platforms for all key players to be heard, as it was noted that there was a presence of unwillingness and at times defensiveness within the conversations shared.

As a writer of curriculum, students' agency, needs to be more present and authentic than ever. In ensuring a mindfulness of the funds of knowledge that the other brings is forefront in mind. In ensuring a reflexive landscape, in providing a facilitated learning opportunity through active dialogue. An example could be, in the protecting of time for educators and leaders to come together, respectful, and mindful of the operating fields of doxa, engaging within a reflexive state of being. To refine a teacher's architectural pedagogical praxis, to ensure that what is being taught is considered with a multiplicity of lenses. The lens of

cultural and religious relevance, and respect, a lens of sensitivity of and to the other funds of knowledge. To have the time to understand, to inquire how the curriculum, can support the vision, mission, and values of any educational setting, are significant threads of thinking, in shaping the cultural narrative and landscape. To reflect, to question where and how these operating causal factors intertwine within a given educational system, be it faith-based or otherwise. These are critical elements to be analysed in order to further understand how the offered entropic social semiotic artefacts can shift collective efficacy.

Indicating my own level of engagement within key ideas has been cathartic. Deepening my relational understanding as to how a researcher views the world. Leading me to question as to why would I do this work? Why would I seek to challenge and disrupt my own values?

What I seek as a learner and as an educator, is to strive to next practice. I wish to pursue further opportunities as a researcher, to support, explore and share the importance in what I can do with this newly formed knowledge of principles. How can I take this work further to aide my colleagues and students upon their right to an enlightened and emancipated educational pathway? Now is the time to engage methods of opening up this narrative and welcoming varying applications of thought and implications of what it means for me as a researcher.

### **My final words**

I am humbled that I can present a work, that it is hoped, will have significance in the area of educational faith-based systems. It is through the outlined provocations a sound basis to continue the discussion through the storylines offered. By encouraging deeper engagement within the entropic states of social semiotic artefacts that educators and leaders will authentically seek and validate all voices within the storied landscapes of education. As educators we hold the educative space, we hold the voices of all. By being supported by a theory of praxis of social semiotic dispersal, that entropic social semiotic artefacts, will empower and increase the momentum of collective efficacious shift.

*A Coda*

**By Principal John Caird, wrote in his introduction to the *Philosophy of Religion*.**

***Cited William James (1902) *The Varieties of Religious Experience* p 304***

*'Religion must indeed be a thing of the heart; but in order to elevate it from the religion of subjective caprice and waywardness, and to distinguish between that which is true and false in religion, we must appeal to an objective standard. That which enters the heart must first be discerned by the intelligence to be true. It must be seen as having in its own nature a right to dominate feeling, and as constituting the principle by which feeling must be judged. In estimating the religious character of individuals, nations, or races – the first question is, not whether their religion is one which manifests itself in emotions, more or less vehement and enthusiastic, but what are the conceptions of God and divine things by which these emotions are called forth. Feeling is necessary in religion, but it is by the content or intelligent basis of a religion, and not by feeling, that its character and worth are to be determine.'*

## Glossary of Terms

**Aim:** the purpose of the intention of the inquiry (first raised within the abstract)

**Archaeologist:** is seen in the unearthing of attributes and qualities operating and made evident by the lived experience of the leadership group as we explore their stories. It is the unearthing of the storylines offered that it is hoped that the ideals of working towards collective efficacy can be achieved with the inquiry. (pp. 8)

**Boundary Rider:** The traditional role of the boundary rider, is one who moves between fence lines, checking for strength and validity of structure. Here too, I see the role of a boundary rider as one who will be moving between the field texts, the rich dialogue shared and within the studies texts. Each provide a differing landscape of ideas, often setting not only a theme but highlighting the core elements that bound and curtail the ideas and stories shared.

And

**Boundary rider** as an insider researcher, it was important that ‘I’ be reminded of a clear division of roles within the study enabling me to be seen as the boundary rider to the living consciousness of the narrative being shared. It is a means for me to observe and listen with the intent to understand the group, through shared conversations. Seeing the work as pragmatist in method, the heart of this narrative is a plurality of truths (pp. .1)

**Collective efficacy:** will refer ‘to the judgements of teachers in a school that the faculty as a whole can organise and execute the course of action required to have a positive effect in students (Donohoo, 2017, pp. 3).

**Crossing borders was** raised as a lived tension – an occupational hazard. As the meshing of roles, influenced by the individual’s practice and through the core values of the schools and church, create a ‘border crossing of ideas and emotions to coexist. (pp. 135)



**Curating** key ideas was a means to select or organise ways of connecting, expert knowledge as offered by the leadership group. (pp. 128)

**Facilitator** As a facilitator within the narrative inquiry, the role is one, where the offered frameworks, are used safely by the group. Who at times could be said to be unreceptive, even disinclined to authentically hear the other within the shared landscape. In ensuring that the norms and protocols, were truly met by the group, the researcher felt ethically bound to offer the visible thinking tools as a means to invite opportunity for all to be heard and respected within the shared dialogue. (pp. 129)

**Field Texts:** a term which refers to the collected data of the group)

**Hope:** within both the researched and field texts the notion of hope, is as one of aspiration, a desired outcome that may become evidence throughout the inquiry but given this is an exploration through a narrative inquiry this cannot be guaranteed (first raised on pp. 4).

**Landscape:** landscape within the field text is one that centres and grounds the philosophical, ideological, and often emotional elements of the character's working schemas within the narrative

**Landscapes of practice.** The varying landscapes that the leadership inhabits through their professional practice. These landscapes become evident within their role as a collective leadership group. Their role within the wider school community, and in how they interact and communicate within another. (pp 165)

**Pedagogical circles:** operate within the day to day countenance of the educational landscapes. It is what exists within these circles of pedagogy, the culture of the self, the group, and the organisation, it is the means in which knowledge is transferred within and by the leadership group. (pp 3)

**Political Markers:** identify key political markers within the conversation may arise, thus viewing the work with a critical understanding. These markers as seen as linguistic tools, noting the political discourse, indicating the attitudes of the leadership group. (pp. 87)

**Protected time:** based upon the work of DuFour (2004) it is the idea of protecting time for teachers, and leaders to come together to work in a collaborative state to undertake and sustain a school's improvement. (pp. 54)

**Provocation:** is seen within the work to stimulate interest through an offering such as a visible thinking tool or inviting the leadership group to engage within the conversation. (pp. 119)

**Relational trust:** has been framed by the influencing factors of the institutional and social constructs, operating within an educational setting. Relational trust, 'is the inevitable result of repeated interactions with others in modern organizations. While personal relationships may be limited, individuals interact repeatedly with the same individuals, which leads to expectations specific to that individual or group' (Change, 2007, pp. 3). Trust can often be an incidental operating factor and is one, with little or no value. However, trust that is shared between teacher and student or teacher and leader, can have a profound effect upon the others ability to flourish, as all are bound by a position of power and influence. (pp. 17)

**Storylines** are relevant within the narrative? (what are the leaders within the group sharing with the researcher, what are their essential narratives for further exploration) (pp. 38)

**Social semiotic compendium** is seen as a tool to aide in the sense making of the complexities offered in the sometimes-contradictory terms and reflective practice within the professional learning community. This compendium will in fact help to draw out the contexts that are commonly discussed within and by the leadership group. (pp 155 – 156)

**Social semiotic omnibus:** categories everything that is out of place, within the structure and culture of the group and naming categories of the system (in this case the elements of the church and of faith-based school). (p 155 – 156)

**Trends** or tendencies or working inclinations, that became evident through the data curated, to gain a collective efficacious shift in how the researched school could move forward in its aspirational goals for excellence be it purely academic or fully immersed within a holistic / spiritual curriculum.(noted within the abstract)

**Truth:** is a key narrative dimension, that is it is intrinsic to any and all forms of autobiographical understandings Given this work is centre around the shared dialogue of the group, it will be bound by the conceptualisation of a lived truth whilst explore the narrative inquiry of collective efficacy. (based upon the work of Clandinin 2007 – pp. 137)

and

Seeing the work as pragmatist in method, the heart of this narrative is a plurality of truths. To honour the work, it must be acknowledged that within these storylines as offered by the leadership group, that there will exist varying truths. Truth will have differing meanings for each member of the leadership group. (p 1)

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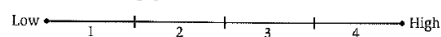
Zipin, L., & Brennan, M. (2003) *The suppression of ethical disposition through managerial governability: A habitus crisis in Australian Higher Education*. International Journal of Leadership in Education. 6:4, 351-370, [DOI:10.1080/1360312032000150742](https://doi.org/10.1080/1360312032000150742).

## Norms Inventory

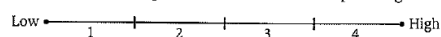
### Rating Perceptions of Myself

#### 1. Pausing to allow time for thought

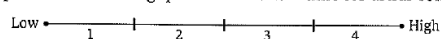
A. I pause after asking questions.



B. I pause after others speak to reflect before responding.

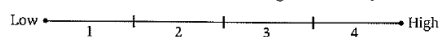


C. I pause before asking questions to allow time for artful construction.

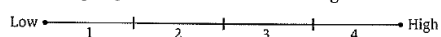


#### 2. Paraphrasing within a pattern of pause — paraphrase — pose questions to ensure deep listening

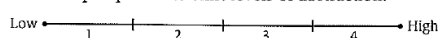
A. I listen and paraphrase to acknowledge and clarify.



B. I listen and paraphrase to summarize and organize.

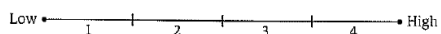


C. I listen and paraphrase to shift levels of abstraction.

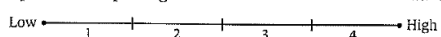


#### 3. Posing questions to reveal and extend thinking

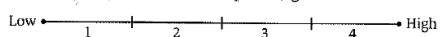
A. I pose questions to explore perceptions, assumptions and interpretations.



B. I inquire before putting ideas on the table and before I advocate.

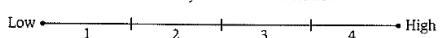


C. I seek specificity of data, assumptions, generalizations and the meaning of words.

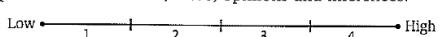


#### 4. Putting ideas on the table and pulling them off

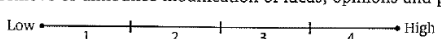
A. I state the intentions of my communications.



B. I provide relevant facts, ideas, opinions and inferences.

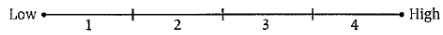


C. I remove or announce modification of ideas, opinions and points of view.

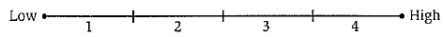


### 5. Providing data to structure conversations

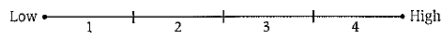
A. I present specific, measurable, observable information.



B. I present data without judgments, opinions or inferences.

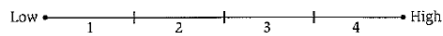


C. I offer multiple types of data to broaden understanding.

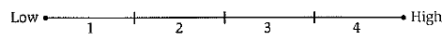


### 6. Paying attention to self and others to monitor our ways of working

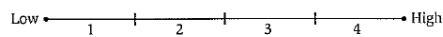
A. I balance participation and open opportunities for others to contribute and respond.



B. I restrain my impulses to react, respond or rebut at inappropriate times or in ineffective ways.

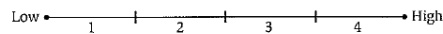


C. I maintain awareness of the group's task, processes and development.

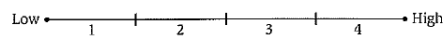


### 7. Presuming positive intentions to support a nonjudgmental atmosphere

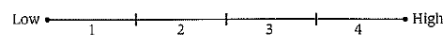
A. I communicate respectfully whether I agree or disagree.







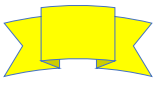
B. I embed positive presuppositions in my paraphrases, summaries and comments.




C. I embed positive presuppositions when I pose questions.



Thinking Hat color Characteristics	Vocabulary	Possible Actions	Commented [MU1]: This was a document that seemed to attract a level of negativity rather than one that could be used as a measure for curating possible further actions and or outcomes – what seen as critical negative comments where not seen as areas of growth and for reflection rather as ones that were leading towards a deficit theory / approach as to what things are done or preventing movement forward.
 <p><b>White: Neutral</b> objectively Facts, figures, information</p>	<p>Upward growth of the school Come a long way from where we are now Doubled student population Highly skilled Honouring the values of Anglicanism Balancing fiscal needs of a growing school</p>		<p><b>Commented [MU2]: •</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Level of positively as the group are able to clearly identify clear points of success such as the doubling of the student population</li> <li>•A sense of knowing that the school culture has changed over time</li> <li>•The sense of Anglicanism is one that is raised repeatedly but as yet is not fully articulated by the group</li> <li>•How does this sense of faith interview into the culture of the schools ethos, vision and mission statement, thus how does the dogma of faith balance out to the needs of the curriculum and the values held by the wider community</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Black: Logical negative</b> Critical judging, checking</p>	<p>Previous and some continued difficult times, Valued contributions- economic imperatives Facing challenges in a positive light and frame of mind, Wearing too many hats Not bible bashing Closure vs. growth Getting people to do what you want them to do... Shifting mindsets Being highly organised Taking risks, pushing comfort zones Need for timely honest organisation Tweaking things to make them work for my school Scheduling announcements Being tight on who knows what and when Stopping the gossip and leaks – controlling what is shared in the public arena. Moving teachers between year levels – removing negative blockers and creating better working collaborative spaces in the junior school Missed opportunities with regards to the absence of the junior school at faculty meetings Ensuring greater sense of value being in the student cohort from 5 – 8 (what are the points of different - sense that this area is moving backwards). Working in silos Clash of personalities – managing ... Demands of building a bigger school, structure, and staffing Absence of policies and procedures</p>		<p><b>Commented [MU3]:</b> This section threw the group the black hat was seen as being negative rather than observing the language used by the group to identify areas of critic and shifting mindsets The language used here gives support to why the norms and protocols were crafted in such a way, the wearing of multiple hats, the looseness on produce, working in silos, removing blockers seeking a timely honest organization</p> <p>What was not picked up by the group in reflecting upon these areas is the notion of what was and what can be – Questions How do they as a collective reformed group now seek to work to a differing set of values when there is still a lingering tension of what was... There is also a sense of melancholy throughout this section in highlighting the missed opportunities and a fear that the group maybe moving backwards...</p>

 <p><b>Red: emotional view</b> Suspects, opinions, emotions</p>	<p>Nurturing role, roller coaster Disheartened Deep reflection Frightened to discuss faith and spirituality Various entry points into education, moving backwards, reevaluating goals and ambitions, blame game... Shifting comfort zones Timely communications not being done... Overly stressed, fear, feeling safe Creating a hierarchy of needs re expenditure and value adding to decision making processes Need for transparency and accountability (shared)</p>		
 <p><b>Blue: Process control</b> Thinking about thinking, organisation of the thinking process, discipline and focus, leadership</p>	<p>Opportunity for potential growth Forward towards smooth transitions, Similar mindsets, incarnations of leadership groups Work together as a team, collaboration, shared goals <b>Leading through faith.</b> Being able to identify elements and of belonging to faith-based values Creating an inclusive multi faith and cultural community... Communication, open and honest – developing effective reciprocal communicative pathways with key stakeholders How to model good behavior Shifting mindsets Being highly organised Celebrating being a part of a bigger group / picture</p>		<p><b>Commented [MU4]:</b> Highly emotive language is being used here stress, fear, reluctance – the shifting of comfort zones offers the researcher a deep glimpse into what was and how the group has been moving forwards to right these perceived wrongs We know from research that it takes about five years to shift a culture of thinking and of aptitude to claim a higher purpose and a revised set of semiotic artifacts through a collective shared language.</p>
 <p><b>Yellow: Logical positive</b> positive thinking, concentrated on advantage, call to action</p>	<p>Opportunity, exciting Working closely together, All systems go. Feeling valued <b>Being a person of faith</b> Inclusivity Persistence - Bright future Excellent reputation in the community, highly valued, diversity of community and growth of community. Growth of VCE, growth of subject areas and content knowledge Sense of enthusiasm</p>		<p><b>Commented [MU5]:</b> Here is evidence that the group has a varying lens to enact future proofing the school Smooth transitions, shifting mindsets, being organized, modeling behaviors What appears again is the idea of faith – leading through faith is a powerful statement but as yet one not truly unpacked equally by the whole group Question How does the group enact the sharing of language to build a shared practice of faith and curriculum How does the group ensure transparent means of communication given there are still those amongst the groups that still hold a fear of reprisal?</p> <p><b>Commented [MU6]:</b> Again the notion of faith appears – being a person of faith how does that balance out within the sense of self identity and that of being within a collective group that needs to adhere to a national curriculum and work to the needs of the wider multi faith community?</p>



 <p><b>Green: Creativity</b> New ideas, change...</p>	<p>Plan to grow collaboratively Best outcomes for students Best educational institution Reviewing elements of faith and how best to model these values Being prepared to be a part of something bigger than themselves Creating conversations to generate continuous learning spaces Being a part of a highly dynamic team, excitement, growth, challenge Shared leadership roles, decision-making procedures, policies, and processes.</p>	
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**Commented [MU7]:** Again, the idea of faith has been raised within the of creativity – modeling and aligning to and with the values of the school (in its contextual setting and within the wider diocese of the Anglican faith  
There is also a foreshadowing of what is desired by the group – in clearly articulating policies, producers, and processes...

**Transcript of focus group...**  
**Research School**  
**Researcher: Helen Schiele**  
**University: Victoria University**

**Date: November 2018**

**Those in attendance**

**Principal, Business Manager, Head of Junior, Middle and Upper Schools and the  
 Director of Anglican Faith...**

**Code:**

**Researcher: text highlighted in blue**

**Where the school's name is cited text will read (Name of school – NOS)**

*Before recording the principal gave an overview of each of the staff's credentials, which the researcher felt should not be recorded and role within the school's leadership group.*

*Note: all participants have signed the ethics approval form and were willing to have conversation recorded... once the researcher had time to express the intent of the work and the role of the insider researcher and said connection with the school*

*We also set the working norms for the group, so the focus group felt free and able to share wonderings, insights and able to offer statements that may challenge but are not and will not be said or translated into a statement of critical reflection upon another colleague's practice.*

**Please note that text cited is a direct transcript of what was shared within the focus group**

**Transcript.**

Researcher: What I would really like for you is to share with the group your journey in education, what's lead you to [NOS] what made you hang your shingle outside ... [NOS] and your journey to get here... so wherever you would like to start the process.

Head of Senior School: -

So I will start, (thank you) I left school, I grew up here, I did my schooling in (Name of college), went to Canberra, um in 96 and studied arts law up there did a variety of different things, spent the last ten years prior to coming back here working in Melbourne as a barrister's clerk, and decided for family reasons that I wanted to bring my kids up in the country and we decided to move back up here and this was just before the birth of my second child.

We had no family support in Melbourne, as our families were all still here, so we moved back up here. I could not do what I was doing in Melbourne up here so I decided to completely review what I was doing in my life and I have always been drawn to teaching in some way or

**Commented [HS8]:** This is an open invitation by the researcher to gain a working knowledge of the group's collective funds of knowledge but more importantly an shared understanding of the individual habitus of the group is ingrained habits, skills and dispositions. It is the way that individuals perceive the social world around them and react to it.

**Commented [HS9]:** Came from the local area, studied elsewhere and has returned to the regional location with own family and able to reconnect with family.

**Commented [HS10]:** Initially studied arts law – became a barristers clerk.

**Commented [HS11]:** Family values an support were a strong incentive to return home.

**Commented [HS12]:** Had to review work practices, and seek out new options for a career path.

another, whether tutoring or teaching people guitar what it is was, I knew I enjoyed that premise. So, decided to go into teaching and completed my Grad Dip. I spent my year at (name of another school regional school) enjoyed that, but I knew that I really wanted to teach older kids so I got the opportunity of working at a P – 12 school here and really wanted to be here, so I joined three years ago and I have been enjoying it ever since.

**Excellent**

So, pragmatism is the short answer. It's been great ever since.

**That was a huge commitment to change your life path and profession**

Yeah it was good, it was exciting.

### Head middle school:

The main reason to become a teacher was I had a wonderful year 12 teacher who inspired me. I changed schools in year 9, it was really a tough time, and you know friendship groups and things like that. I had a wonderful home teacher, who broke down some barriers with me, being a year 9 boy, teenage boy trying to act a certain way, she was really good, she was really big on emotional learning and that type of thing, she inspired me, and I still value her to this day. I had an amazing year 12 teacher, who was very, very inspirational and I thought that would be a great career path. I also grew up in the country, went to university at Monash in Churchill, down near (name of regional town) where I grew up. I went to university for two years and decided that this may not be for me, so I decided to take leave and worked on the farm for a year and thought that's probably not me either, after the farm stint, I moved to Perth to some Uni there and also done work there, long story short, is that it took seven to eight years to finish my Uni course but I think that, that year 12 teacher was always at the back of my mind that, is what I wanted to do and I think that all the life skills I had helped me in teaching.

Yeah been working in (name of regional town) for seven years I have two young boys another on the way and I feel it is a good time to be closer to home, closer to family but I am also really excited about potential growth that (NOS) that has got. I see a lot of kids go to (local catholic school) travelling long distances each day, being a parent I don't think I want my child on a bus for a couple hours per day when we have got the potential for a really good school here. I want to be involved I am really excited about the growth of this school.

### Head of Junior School

I went to the state high school and my mum put money towards my education she was a single mum and in year 9 she sent me to a very small religious, a very religious school in (name of regional town), after two terms we decided that after two terms that it was way more religious than educational and sent me to an Anglican school in Melbourne, so I finished year 12 there. Went into nursing and finished my nursing degree, I am a good nurse to any one I don't know but I am horrible to my family.

So, I did nurse and specialised in disability worked at Kew cottages institution, which a lot of people dreaded. I found it completely inspiring, then I got fed up with the industry where the patients, the residents just became a number it got to a point where I was working for a nursing agency managing nursing shifts and one of the staff said "don't fill that shift tomorrow morning that one hour shift (name of patient) to get out of bed and don't worry about the afternoon when he gets back into bed it can just stay for the day it's not worth our

**Commented [HS13]:** Had always been drawn to the notion of teaching and supporting others (the notion of praxis, moral, ethically sound rational of seeking to support human kind.

**Commented [HS14]:** Would rather work with older students – suggest a co-collaborative teaching style, rather depository (Freire) in the early years.

**Commented [HS15]:** Deweyan idea - They focused upon the links between an individual experience and their thoughts in relation to actions. To all intents and purposes, pragmatists do not believe in the notion that there are a set of foundational beliefs which underpin all others. They prefer to assess beliefs and methods of inquiry in light of their usefulness in achieving set goals and/or their consequences.

**Commented [HS16]:** Inspired by a teacher, that positive driving force to seek out a path of good, the idea that his educators level of praxis was influenced by the social relations and working constrain to seek out a path of education.

**Commented [HS17]:** Value, inspiration of the other – ZPD cultural and social influences upon the educators own academic life as a student – translated into a replication or modelling of ...

**Commented [HS18]:** Regional link – social and cultural habitus. Not sure of pathway – sought life experiences – the lived experimental social and cultural capital

**Commented [HS19]:** Worked within the regional landscapes thus able to craft out a level of empathy for students growing up on the farm, regional isolation, and dislocation from metropolitan type lifestyle – understand the impacts of environment climatic changes

**Commented [HS20]:** Drawn into the field due to past reflection – was this idealized, romanticized or truly lived – impact upon the cognitive and self-valuing individual.

**Commented [HS21]:** Again, a strong desire to return to the regional centre to bring up their own family, to crea ...

**Commented [HS22]:** Wants to invest in and be a part of a school that is one of value and of influence within the ...

**Commented [HS23]:** Had a religious education at school – single parent home.

**Commented [HS24]:** Felt education was religiously out weighted

**Commented [HS25]:** Completed schooling within an Anglican faith-based school

**Commented [HS26]:** Completed nursing degree good nurse to others not able to show empathy to own family

**Commented [HS27]:** Specialised in disability care – strong advocate.

**Commented [HS28]:** Strong sense of the injustices within the health care system

money or the phone call to get a staff member". I so went and got (patient name) out of bed and put him back in later, so I then decided I can't do this anymore where is the human factor. So my partner and I bought a caravan park down in (Regional area) on the coast, ran that for five years, worked really hard for five years and got fed up with the general public, so we went traveling around Australia with our two young children and we decided that before we left that we decided that we needed to be up near (name of river) we love being near the water (between name of two regional towns) where our requirements and a friend found a property that we are now living.

So, we moved there, and we enrolled the boys to (school name). Had no I idea what I was going to do for employment, I was a nurse, I could fall back onto that. The principal at my son's school said when I dropped them off, "what are you going to do with yourself today"? I said, "well I thought I would go into town and look at the shops." Principal said, "we'll be quick I have got you an interview at the special school at 10.30 I think you would be really good doing education."

So I rocked up to the special school, that's where I met (finance manager name), worked there six months as an aide and realised pretty quickly that I was more qualified to work with [disable], than anyone in the school. So, I decided that I better go off and do my Grad Dip. So I did my Grad Dip through (name of college), worked at the special school for eight years and moved the boys from (school x) to (NOS) nine years ago and was just waiting for that right job to come along and as soon as I saw the head of junior school advertised, so I thought yep this is my break and this what I need to do, I do love students with disabilities but I do just love children in general and really wanted to give mainstream a go and have not looked back at all. Just really love the role that I have, seeing the little ones come in on orientation day and meeting their families and getting a real feel for what their family is like. I do love a chat and I do love talking to them and really look forward to handing over our year 4s into year 5 to the head of middle school where we are thinking the same, that nurturing role, what junior school does will not be as nurturing in the middle school but there will be an element of that. I really look forward to creating a really smooth transition, having a really similar mind set with the head of middle school, so parents don't see it as a huge transition and neither do the students and working really closely together.

Wow that felt like a job interview.

### Principal

Yeah it is

So where to start ... if I go back to pre-2000, I had it been in business for a long time I am a glazer by trade, a music teacher by profession, I am a qualified teacher but a glazer by trade. I had my own glazing business, for a variety of reasons I moved on from that and wanted to get into back into education, I wanted to get into education. I had been in education in the 1980's, so there was a part-time job at the (school x) I am a saxophone teacher that was the job I applied for and quickly became aware that teaching had changed considerably since I left and came back again.

It was a very exciting place to be and there were positions that came up in the school reasonably quickly for me to move into the classroom, which I did and then to move into leadership. So, as I had my own business for some 20 years or so I was looking to do something, to make a difference. So in the end I became a deputy principal at the school, so obviously went through year level and department leaderships roles and then became

**Commented [HS29]:** Seeking to honour the human factor

**Commented [HS30]:** Worked in family owned business in a regional township

**Commented [HS31]:** Again sought lifestyle change to bring they own family up regional property near the river system

**Commented [HS32]:** Worked with students with disability strong sense of self worth

**Commented [HS33]:** Sort change of career pathway and to move into mainstream education – applied for head of junior school

**Commented [HS34]:** Values the role early years in the primary seeking to establish the foundational building blocks and establishing a sound working relationship with family and students

**Commented [HS35]:** Believes to have a similar mind set to that of head of middle school thus enabling a smooth transition between schools.

**Commented [HS36]:** Started as a tradesperson but was also a music teacher. Had own business but wanted to return to the educational field.

**Commented [HS37]:** On returning to the field noticed the considerable changes in the field

**Commented [HS38]:** Was fast tracked through the educational system to take on a leadership role

**Commented [HS39]:** Has a sound working ethos and a social, economic capital

deputy principal which was mainly behavior management and then acting principal – and the catholic education office was very keen to offer me as position as principal but first I had to become a catholic.

That was probably not going to happen, not for any reason but I just felt was I not going to be that much different as a catholic as I am an Anglican now?

So, I knew from this, that my trajectory had to change and move out the catholic education model which I really love, I love Catholic Ed, there is a lot about it that is really, really good. So obviously I moved into Anglican. So, I moved out of catholic education and moved in the Anglican education and moved into the (... foundation) then moved into working with students with or dealing with disabilities in learning at (...name of college) in (name of regional town) I was there for just over a year as an assistant director over there. I really loved that; it was fantastic.

Then a job came up at (name of regional town) as head of senior school, so moving into this role was fine having been deputy principal. So this job came up (name of school) at head of senior school which I went for and I was successful, the very next day the principal at (...college) asked me to be director of learning at (name of previous school) back in (name of regional town) but as I had just accepted the head of senior school at (name of regional town), had this not happened I would have happily taken on that role, I loved it, working with those kids, very challenging working with those parents, extremely challenging but at the end of the day the difference you are making to the children's lives is spectacular, actually.

So I went across to (name of regional town) the head of senior school role there probably there was not a lot to do, very, very good kids, not a particularly faith based school even though it purported to be, it wasn't particularly faith based which I was really missing that element of education so I was looking for something else, so leading an Anglican school came up – so I thought why not, what could possibly go wrong? (Laughter from the group)

So, I applied for that and wasn't in (name of regional town) for a year and it was a difficult decision to make, I was home now, but right now I am there on weekends not during the week.

I was electing to move away but I felt that is if I stayed at (name of regional town) I had no challenge, the students were very well behaved, there was no behavioral issues at all, the principal there was not keen on establishing any new programs and I could see that I was going to sit in an office and not do much and I thought I just can do that.

The school is great but this was boring me to tears, so I decided to move so applied for this role and was successful and that was six years ago, so this is my sixth year, so I started on Remembrance Day, 2012 and it's been a roller coaster since then really, and looking back and sometimes looking in the moment one wonders where one is going but when one looks back we have come such a long way.

I worked with many incarnations of the leadership teams and they have all been marvelous all the way through obviously there has been some difficult times, one can't be an executive officer of such an organisation without difficult times. But all of this comes with a way forward and you sit here years later, and we are looking at almost doubling the population from when I arrived. If we look at it the right way, so now it's all systems go, especially in these last few weeks in looking to establish the leadership team for 2019 and looking at the enthusiasm of the community to our school particularly in the last few years I can see a very, very bright future. We continue to grow and I think we can do well, my plan is always to

**Commented [HS40]:** Offered principalship but had to convert to Catholicism – decided that converting faiths was not going to change the educators own lived practice or who they were.

**Commented [HS41]:** Appreciated the values offered within the catholic education system but knew that due to be non-Catholic that further employment progression would be blocked.

**Commented [HS42]:** Also moved into Anglican faith based school and entered into working student with disabilities

**Commented [HS43]:** Appreciated the role and the complexities offered within the role

**Commented [HS44]:** Took on role in senior leadership within a faith based school, however there was an absence of faith and the educator missed this element of teaching and input into the students

**Commented [HS45]:** Strong regional links – wanted a challenge

**Commented [HS46]:** Six years in the role of principal and has valued the challenges and growth offered within the role.

**Commented [HS47]:** Appreciates the complexities of the working dynamic and the challenges faced by the team

**Commented [HS48]:** Doubled the school community, new team, believes in the sense of collaboration and belief in the school

continue to grow as a team, as a collaborative team and work together towards the shared goal of making this educational institution the best one that is can possible be and for the people of (name of regional town) district.

**Thank you**

No worries

### Business manager ...

Umm, am a (name of regional town) I was born and raised here went to primary and secondary college here. Um, I started my working career at (name of company) in (name of regional town) on the production line because my mum told me that I couldn't sit around the house doing nothing.

I wasn't an overly great student at school, but I did okay, I guess. I worked on the production line at (name of company) I did shift work in the end, I ended up on staff down there, um people probably didn't realize but I did a lot of work presenting (name of company) foods and presented to leadership. So, I was sent to Sydney to do work around leadership groups, developing teamwork and fostering partnerships with shift workers and looking at how different personalities and how everyone has different characteristics and how they bring them to create an effective team.

Basically from there I was asked or was sponsored (name of company) to do a university degree, I chose to do a Bachelor of Commerce and so I did that part time, anyway I ended up getting a couple of years into it and decided that I did not want to work at (name of company) anymore and I went into tax accounting here with (name of company) who (NOS) has a good working association with, worked there for a couple of years.

My husband was working within DET as a computer tech at the time and noted that there was a business managers job at (name of college) was coming up and I should go for it because with your qualifications. So anyway, of I went, so when I left (name of company) one of the girls said I thought you would be a big highflying accountant. I did not think of myself that way. So that was my step into education and worked therefore seven years, had a great time and learnt a lot had a supportive principal at the school to develop my skills and I was on all the teams and had a lot of opportunities that were outside the school so I had a lot of opportunities to develop my leadership skills, so I owe a lot to her for my career. Then I had children then I was keen to get back into the workforce but on a part-time capacity, so I sold myself to the principal at the special school and that's where I met (head of primary school). I was working two days per week then and my husband lost his contract with DET. That was a really tough time for my family, so I resigned from my position at the special school and went over to (name of college) and was there for a couple of years. The reason I did that was that I job sharing at the special school and I needed to have some more hours to be able to support family, while my husband got back on his feet.

Then at (name of college) was a really challenging time for me, at the (name of special school) where my contribution to the leadership was appreciated and asked for and I struggled with that at (name of college). And then I did a leadership course down there and it was probably sitting at that training that I decided I had to get out.

The only person who could change my career path whilst sitting in this job, I was going to this job in tears, so it was me that had change this. I had to make the change and I realised I wasn't coping.

**Commented [HS49]:** Born and raised within the community – had to earn they're keep

**Commented [HS50]:** Worked on the production line and moved through into a leadership role

**Commented [HS51]:** Was seen as one with potential and commenced further study financed by the company

**Commented [HS52]:** Changed pathway and ended up in business and taxation

**Commented [HS53]:** Low self-esteem and believed that they would not be successful

**Commented [HS54]:** Had a sound and beneficial mentor in the principal at previous school to build capacity

**Commented [HS55]:** Took parental leave to start a family – returned to work and started at the same Head of Junior was employed at as disability teacher

**Commented [HS56]:** Family stress – empathy

**Commented [HS57]:** Felt disempowered in new role and decided to become empowered and change pathways



(NOS) had advertised for a business manager before, I read the job description. I said that was far beyond my ability, that wasn't the sort of business manager that I am. Any way they persisted, and they say life begins outside your comfort zone and I stepped in from 15 -16 years in state education into the independent schools.

Got a whole new set of rules and regulations, but you know they are all the same, but it's based on what I know. I have not looked back, I must say, I came in and it was great to be back into a position where my skills as a business manager are appreciated by the organisation.

I left state education with being disheartened by the business managers I had in schools their contributions weren't probably valued by school leadership and in particularly where I was coming from. So, I was really excited, and I don't think I have looked back since coming in here and working with (name of principal) and the Anglican Schools commission.

I really enjoyed the challenges of the school and it's a growing school so, from a business manager point of view has big issues in regard to financing a growing school. But yeah, I am really looking forward to my next few years here and all the challenges that is brining. You know I am adamant that life begins on the edge of your comfort zone; you have to put your hand up and say yes sometimes, so yes, just keep working forwards.

**Thank you**

### Head of Anglican Faith.

Well like (name of business manager) I grew up in this area I grew up in (name of regional town and regional schools attended). Could not wait to get out, so I did as soon as year 12 was done. Went to Melbourne and studied prosthetics and orthotics not very well, I got advised to take some time off and to reconsider my study options, which is code for (name) best you find somewhere else to study.

It's interesting as I had that teacher inspiration when I was at school around PE Health. I had a teacher who was a great teacher – still teaches locally. Who told me one day that I was not competitive enough in a PE class. I was about year 10, I don't think that's the right thing, that I am not very competitive (group laughter) well sometimes – maybe...

Well I always had in the back of mind that not how to do this, if I was a PE teacher, I would be encouraging every kid to have a crack. Anyway after rethinking career moves and what not to do, I thought about going back a human movement degree – Dip Ed at (name of Uni), then I couldn't wait to get out, so the minute I finished, I got on a plane to travel and was away for 4 – 5 years.

In that time, I worked in education in the UK, it was an eye opener in so many ways. I think it made me a much better teacher than if I jumped into work here. I went into education recruitment while I was there, so the opportunity to establish a branch of the organisation I was working for in London, so when the firm wanted to move into Australia so I came home and set up their entity in Australia. I did that for a couple of years, but it was a working from home scenario due to the time differences. We were in Melbourne, we had a good circle of friends, and it was no issue working in Melbourne from home, so we were still very social and had good connections.

Then we moved to (name of regional town) which made working from home really hard in a small town like (name of town). So, I had to make a decision, if I was to go back to a real job. And over that time since (NOS) had opened I had always kept my eye on what was happening

**Commented [HS58]:** Changed sectors

**Commented [HS59]:** New systems, rules and regulations to work by – far more self-management than there is in the state sector

**Commented [HS60]:** Empowered in this role, values and appreciate for the skill set brought and the vision

**Commented [HS61]:** Born a raised in the local area – with family still in the area.

**Commented [HS62]:** Felt restrained by the region

**Commented [HS63]:** Advised to take on another career path

**Commented [HS64]:** Inspired by another teacher – PE – encouraging every student to have a go

**Commented [HS65]:** Studied was desperate to leave – spent time in London only one to have worked overseas

and an ear to the ground through my mum, you know asking her what she had seen or heard about the school in the community.

So, it was really timely, that when I had decided to go back to work that a PE position had come up at (NOS). So, I got that position, so that was 13 years ago. I have worn that many hats in the last 13 years it's not funny. So, my first year I taught every kid in the school PE and we were Prep to year 12 then, composite classes, classes were much, much smaller.

So, overtime, I grew into a head of school role, as no one else did any organizing for sports, so I did that, then had a secondary position, had a deputy position, head of senior school. I had a variety of different hats.

Heading to where I am now, I am head of Anglican Identity, which I really enjoy. I really like the idea of this position and what we are trying to build here, and I love the idea of us being a faith-based school and what that means for our community, our families, and kids.

I am a catholic, and it's funny I probably had many moments where I thought gee, I am much more Anglican now than I am Catholic. I think in terms of that's how about I feel about Anglicanism, it is so inclusive that's really resonated with me in particular the last couple of years. Not just that I have taken on this role but it's the contemporary issues, things that are going on in the world, you know those sorts of things. Makes you reflect on your faith. I am really looking forward to encouraging that same type of reflection in our staff, which I guess is one of my KPI's if you want to look at it that way.

We have staff that are really frightened to have these conversations around faith and spirituality. I find that strange, why wouldn't you have those conversations, or at least try and identify where you sit, you know we are not converting everyone, we are not bashing the bible on people's heads. We are just talking about all the good things that it means to be a person of faith. So, that's where I am some 13 years later.

Thank you

The reason I wanted to start off with that first question is for a) for me to understand where you are at and b) sometimes it might have been the first time you have really heard everyone's journeys and narrative.

You were obviously two when you started working (referring to head of junior school). So, it's quite interesting to hear, because then you suddenly think, gee done this career or that career you have got a whole new skill set that we were not quite sure or aware of in that narrative. It's really interesting that you bring up that tension of faith where it sits within the curriculum and the leadership group and that's something I would really like to draw out within this work.

Having worked within so many faith based schools you often find that the vision and mission says X but what is actually happening in reality is 3.29 – it's such a disconnect and a tension, because what is espoused is not often what is the real lived reality.

So it's how do you bring staff to have that confidence to articulate that conversations of devotion, for if it's the value of the leadership group to espouse the values of an Anglican faith and you have staff that have friction too or a reluctance to understand that, then how does that sit, when you are trying to move that direction forward.

So, these are some of the conversations I am hoping we can unpack and understand as we move together.

So, thank you for those conversations. The question I would now like to put out to the broader group is when you think about the skill sets that each of you have brought to the

**Commented [HS66]:** Close community link and desire to know the success of the school

**Commented [HS67]:** Longest serving member of staff on the executive

**Commented [HS68]:** Held several teaching and leading roles within the school spent some away from the school and returned being offered the role of Anglican faith –

**Commented [HS69]:** even though she is catholic herself she is now living a reflexive process of faith – a live tension in how she lives the values of the catholic or Anglican faith based values and religious dogmas.

**Commented [HS70]:** Encouraging reflexive practice in reviewing the contemporary aspects of faith based education

**Commented [HS71]:** Seeking to have these conversations of faith but is meeting reluctance from staff – how can be this be addressed within a faith based school community – within a level of pertaining to level praxis and operating level of collective efficacy.

**Commented [HS72]:** Seeking relational trust but more importantly trying to grasp the habitus and funds of knowledge the staff bring with them both educationally, socially, culturally and religiously.

**Commented [HS73]:** Core idea to be further drawn out and unpacked

**Commented [HS74]:** So it's how do you bring staff to have that confidence to articulate that conversations of devotion, for if it's the value of the leadership group to espouse the values of an Anglican faith and you have staff that have friction too or a reluctance to understand that, then how does that sit, when you are trying to move that direction forward crucial point here



table as a new leadership role, what is it, you are going to think is the most valuable of the skill sets that you have to enable you as a leader within your own leadership role independently and as a collaborative leader with your peers? So, I would like to open that up to the group and to get feedback of the groups thinking.

### Principal

Well if I could start, what I am hearing is inclusivity and I think that is absolutely critical. The preparedness to listen to know and prepare to listen to share ideas with one another and preparedness to include one another. That's critical because if are going to move forward we have to at least start, we have to have those skills, it's probably stating the obvious, there is no doubt that is what I am hearing around the room, that people are prepared to be a part of something, something bigger than themselves.

To give themselves over to something bigger and yes, we are a faith-based school, absolutely no doubt about it. But as (name of head of faith) said we are not here to bash the faith; we are here to protect the faith in a sense. We are here, we have people of many faiths, they are all valid, they are all valuable members of the community and we need to assist them to become comfortable in their own faiths as well, as well as us, to become comfortable in our own faith.

We cannot afford to be exclusive in a multi-cultural society but we have to be inclusive, we have to encourage those people to become a part of, to experience what we do, but not necessary feel obliged to be converted to what we do, at the core of it all, is faith – part of that core is the concept of live and let live, a village needs to raise the child and we all mean something together and even though we are Anglican I mean – apart of Anglicanism is inclusivity.

### Head of senior school

I feel like for me, it my previous job. I spent a lot of time dealing with judges, barristers, and heads of big law firms and quiet often I would be dealing with them when they were angry about something. I had to call them when (name of company) \$10,000 per day barrister they had, had to brief them for the last six months was now unavailable for their trial, which starts tomorrow. I had to be able to deal with that person, who thinks that they are the most important person in the world basically. I had to placate them to do what I wanted them to do, by the end of the day and it's the same with judges, judge's barristers.

You know you can't have that brief you have to have someone else. So, these skills will translate well when dealing with parents and stakeholders in general in education. But, these are easily transferable skills and I like to think that communication is something that I can bring to the leadership group and having dealt with extremely high stake situations, I think that this is an asset that I value and something that I can see that we all in a group have.

Communication as we said before, the communication skills to be able to communicate with each other openly and honestly but also with parents in a way that we are effective i.e. that we get the people to do what we want them to do and maintain those relationships. Its relationships that are the key for me.

If I annoyed that partner at (name of company) and they stop briefing my barrister that is a massive deal, that is millions of dollars for the company gone, so we had to maintain relationships but we had to be effective, that's the balance.

**Commented [HS75]:** Skill set of the group – senses work

**Commented [HS76]:** Inclusivity – is there not a disconnect when you to be of the faith-based community and yet honor one's own faith?

**Commented [HS77]:** Willingness to embrace a level of connectedness and readiness to become learning architect and practice architects in enabling personal and collective praxis

**Commented [HS78]:** Interesting point of difference to protect faith

**Commented [HS79]:** The melding of two faiths

**Commented [HS80]:** Interesting term that is used repeatedly through conversations Anglicanism inclusivity

**Commented [HS81]:** Status and level of intellectual hierarchy

**Commented [HS82]:**

**Commented [HS83R82]:** Overall her bring leadership, communication skills ability to placate, honesty

## Other insights

### Head of middle school

Well - This is my first day, so I am clearly learning a lot (laughter from the group).

So, this is great, thank you, what an opportunity to get to know your team members really well. So, thank you, for making the time today I really appreciate that.

I just think when we are in the industry of kids learning, students learning, so next year it's about stepping out of your comfort zone. It's the biggest role I ever taken on, taking on that role of being head of middle school, so I will be learning every day and hopefully I can bring to my little team of teachers that it's okay not to know everything and to empower your group to continue to learn.

I think if I can do that with my little team, then the students can see that as well, you are just modeling that good behavior. Yeah, I am really looking forward to continue to learn and gaining more skills, so if the students can see that, it would be great.

### Head of Finance

I see what is really interesting, that sitting around this table, that no one has had a path from where we are that has been finished school, gone to university into their teaching or accounting, so the thing is, that every one's story has had, you know, you don't get to your goal whatever that may be, on this smooth line. Everyone has gone this way and then it's gone back, and you have had some sort of change or some sort of reflection. Blaming other people, well we have all sort of done that, in our past lives, we have what I like to say had to 'put on our big girl undies on' more than once...

It's a really important mindset, that you always look for a solution and you sometimes you have to go back. We have all gone through education that was not a smooth path, so okay we have gone and given up the NETFLIX and studied. So, if we can impart that into our students, that persistence and not being the victim. Especially with my group of girls, I love mentoring them, that persistence will pay off and just having that – the glass is half full, positive attitude and you have to change your own destiny. Get out of your comfort zone – with big girl undies on and this group is really diverse group from education and diverse paths.

### Head of Primary

I think mine, would be, you know what I can bring to the group is organisation. I am really super organized you know, all my reports are now ready for today, there is supposed to be a whole day for reading reports. I just like to get things done well before the due date and I think that is a really needed skill for us to have as professionals. But most importantly as a skill for our parents to see the school can be organised.

I think possibly, that something we really need to work hard on, moving into a future where parents know exactly what is going on, what they need to know, what activities are going on, what does it look like and so we have been starting that and we have been moving towards that, but I think it's good to bring those organisational skills upfront.

Any other insights – ... before I offer another question.

**Commented [HS84]:** First day at the school and first meeting as an executive team member

**Commented [HS85]:** Wiliness to shift social, cultural habitus

**Commented [HS86]:** Create a culture of learning from mistakes and a wiliness to learn – the (rule Senge)

**Commented [HS87]:** Leading by example

**Commented [HS88]:** Powerful statements here about how they all stated in differing pathway to where they are now and the power of reflection of self-empowerment to change the situation

**Commented [HS89]:** All had a troubled pathway and all sort out new pathways to reconnect and reinvent themselves. All though have returned to cultural and social habitus of their childhood home

**Commented [HS90]:** Pointing out differences in approach highly organised and structured wanting the school to become more regimented and organised

**Commented [HS91]:** Seeks to provide structure for parents – feeding them information – controlling undertones here.

When you think especially for those of you who have been here for several years and through various leadership styles, when you think about where you have come from, how would you describe your current reality of (NOS) where does (NOS) now sit? If a stranger, was to come up to you and say tell me about this school what does it look like, sound like, feel like, what does that reality look like?

### Head of Senior school

I have experience with that all the time and I always say the same thing – it's exciting and we are now in a place we are growing. It's an exciting place to be as a teacher, I am genuinely excited to see where it ends. It's dynamic and there are things that are ... still little things, that need to be ironed out as you would expect as any school that is growing. The way we are and structurally we are struggling dealing with it, the staffing thing. There is the money thing, and just trying to figure it all out and it will happen and it's exciting to see where the cards will fall, as I always said, I have actually articulated this within my family. Really, it's exciting to be a part of developing the direction and to have a hand in what it looks like.

### Head of faith

I would say I still feel that way, even after 13 years here. I think that some of the staff that do have longevity here, do still feel that way. We are still having a hand in this constantly growing and evolving school, definitely. So yeah, I think even though some members of staff who have been here a long time and me being one of them, you still feel that excitement in the growing and changing. I think particularly for some of us, we relaxed over the stresses that used to be around – as you identified. It feels different now, people have relaxed over the stresses over I am going to have a job next week, next month, next year and with that out of the picture, for me that what does it look like, feel like sound like, that's how it feels different. People don't feel that angst anymore, people feel secure and safe, and they then can be excited about a future. I don't think I am speaking out of turn on behalf of the group.

### Finance

I think what is really exciting is being a part of a much bigger picture being a part of ASC. I find that is something that I often talk about with families that we are not just (NOS) in (name of regional town), we have got two other schools in our area that are a part of the Anglican Schools Commission and then we have got a massive group over in Western Australia that are just a phone call away. You know I have been over there on holidays and have been welcomed and really do feel that you are not just part of (NOS) that you are a part of a much, much bigger picture and you have got resources available to you.

### Faith

So, for our kids that actually go to Perth they can be involved in the service-learning stuff is great

### Finance

So, the excitement is far bigger

### Faith

**Commented [HS92]:** Describing the school

**Commented [HS93]:** Names issues of concern, staffing, financial other little things – still a high level of energy and belief in the school.

**Commented [HS94]:** Strong sense of ownership in navigating the progress and development of the school

**Commented [HS95]:** Strong link to the school both in a spirit, historical and communal sense

**Commented [HS96]:** Staff generally believe that are active participants in journey of the school growths and believe that have a heard voice.

**Commented [HS97]:** Huge area of angst to get over and to establish relational trust and belief in the longevity of the school having been so close to closure and loss of employment

**Commented [HS98]:** A belief that staff feel staff, secure and positive about the future growth of the school and thus reshaping the cultural habitus of the collective community.

**Commented [HS99]:** Sense of being a part of something bigger, a sense of a being a part of the family of the church and this larger community / congregation, a true sense of being welcomed.

**Commented [HS100]:** Reference to being a part taking an active role within the traditions and rituals of the faith

I think with the current VCE classes, if we are a bit smaller and you have to partner with another, we choose to partner with our sister schools first, I don't even talk about this as a partnership now, we talk about this as, just what we are doing – we are working closely with our schools so my PE year 12 class work really closely with the (Name of college) year 12 class. Kids get good about that, too that becomes quiet empowering for them they get to see the bigger picture.

**Commented [HS101]:** Extending the links and building the broader community of practice through faith-based connections and educational pathways

#### Any other current realities? What about a fiscal point of view?

##### Finance

It's trying to herd cats, as I describe it – growing a school is a challenge because you know you get this chicken and the egg – you know we need to spend money, we don't have the money. There is a lot of planning that needs to go on. Because it's really hard, because I am very big planner, a goal setter and it can be a bit of an issue at times, because if you get tunnel vision, you can miss an opportunity that present itself to the group.

**Commented [HS102]:** Growing a school

So, part of my personality is not to go when (name) says something, I don't go we don't have the money, so taking breath and pondering how we can get it to work. I am seeing that we have got a lot of planning to do for capital growth and maintain and building a permanent school as opposed to the demountable school that we currently got, so that is a massive drain on the financial resources of the school and then being able to balance that with staffing our school with the best possible teachers and not having that massive teacher student ratios that parents are coming and not wanting to send their children here as well.

**Commented [HS103]:** Interesting commentary – question about who controls funds and who has input here – the notion of tunnel vision suggest one direction

So, it is a very big balancing act. Financially, from a point of view and trying to get going on (name) point that we will have some money at the start of the year but historically we have been a school that has never had surplus funds to spend on things.

**Commented [HS104]:** Planning, seeking out all voices within the school, to visualize future growth

I think sometimes, with administration and with people's personal beliefs and goals around how to spend money, will also come into the decisions in school. Some people are risk takers and some people aren't and you know for this school to go forward, we will have to spend money and we will have to go into debt and will have to do things like that.

**Commented [HS105]:** Developing a permanent school vs a demountable – the visual is a very strong message here

That can put people outside their comfort zone, because if we don't make these moves, we are not going to be able to move forward and I think there has been a little bit of a culture here that they have been struggling for money, so now that we are now in position that we are wanting to invest and build buildings we have to be able to sell it to the community. That it is actually a good thing and it's investing in our future and in our student outcomes. It's not a bad thing, from my belief, schools should not hoard money, they need to spend it and invest in the students. Getting that, I find it hard, with getting staff on board that we are in growth period and we actually have to spend money. It may not be on the things that they see as important, some people think we should have a million dollars in the bank account, just for a rainy day but I guess the challenge is getting that happy medium.

**Commented [HS106]:** Creating a sense of balance – staffing needs (historically painful area – the funds of knowledge are rich and complex here.

**Commented [HS107]:** Socio and economic funds of knowledge

**Commented [HS108]:** Administration and personal beliefs, interesting combination of values and tensions operating

**Commented [HS109]:** Knowing that risks will need to be taken – the team will have to research, plan and review the process and clearly identify areas for growth – prioritizing. Knowing that they will have to go back into debt to move forward triggers painful memories some long standing staff.

**Commented [HS110]:** Selling their brand of schooling to the community

**Commented [HS111]:** Schools should not hoard money – cliché reference referencing to traditional independent / private school who are wealthy and cash rich – balancing what is thought is needed to save and become fiscally stable or spend to grow...

##### Faith

It's also about moving forward on the things that don't cost money – relationship building with our kids and that sort of stuff, that's free you just have to invest your time and bring your professionalism to it.

**Commented [HS112]:** Moving forward on qualities and values of the school – building relationships (Senge, socio – cultural capital)

**Commented [HS113]:** Bring a professional status to what is done and how it is done

### Middle

Obviously never having worked here before, the conversations I heard around sporting clubs and parties and things like that over the last of couple of years has been around the improvement of the school, I have never worked here, so obviously what has been happening has been good things happening and clearly you guys **have** seen a lot of growth it's the important thing to harness, keep the good work on the ground.

**Commented [HS114]:** Ecological model – hearing what others say or community capital into the school – is this school worth investing in?

### Principal

You know, I have hung back saying anything, because to me really is what is actually being said kind of sums up my thoughts. It's really is the most exciting times to be at the at this school, since I have been here, its sensational.

We are making inroads in our relationships with our broader community, we are providing quality programs across the board, we are **improving** our assets' and we are doing it all in a very collaborative and colligate way. So, I mean from the perspective of an executive officer it couldn't be better and I can see, well I guess in the first instance one feels that in the school that I arrived in, which was still a very good school I might add, I am casting no dispersions upon what was here before me, because there was a dedicated **staff** and there was certainly a willingness to provide quality education – there is no doubt about that.

**Commented [HS115]:** collaborative and colligate way – building relationships improving assets (financially, economically, socially, culturally relational) -

There was also an economic imperative that was bearing down on the school, really the school was gone for all money, **really**, it, was.

**Commented [HS116]:** Historically a good school !!!! always has had dedicated staff and a willingness not an actuality to provide quality education.

If it wasn't for the Anglican Schools **Commission**, there is doubt that we would not be here today. Having said that, we have worked tirelessly over the last six years to create a better school and people can see that and we have worked tirelessly connecting with the **community**. People can see that; we have connected with the Anglican Church and people can see that. You know we have had to have had tough conversations and we have not won everyone over, but we are winning over the majority.

**Commented [HS117]:** School was threatened with closure

**Commented [HS118]:** The commission saved the school from financial ruin

We are winning people over with our **honesty** and our dedication towards that goal, towards quality education or quality faith-based education and the breadths of programs are growing. VCE is growing and we were just talking the other day that we are looking to get something like 60 students in VCE starting in 2020, which is huge.

**Commented [HS119]:** Creating a new culture of habitus, reoffering the school to the community in new guise, connecting with the church in meaningful way.

You know what it means (name) and (researcher) you know what it means from where we have come from in moving forward. So, it is an extremely exciting place to be and it's extremely exciting be sitting around a table with people who want the best for the school and who **are** prepared to be working inclusively towards that.

**Commented [HS120]:** Spotighting skills and attributes of the team – honesty, dedication, goal orientated the word or here is interesting cant it be both, suggesting a possible tension

**Commented [HS121]:** To sit with those who want this to work suggests anew vision and way of thinking and one of consensus.

### Faith

It's really nice to talk about the challenges of growing quickly. I remember going to (name of college) for meetings and other things and always feeling disheartened because they had all these things and our challenges were just to stay alive which was so different to their challenges. Sometimes we sit here and go here we go again and sometimes **I** feel like, not that we are in that same boat yet, not that we will go back there. Now, we are facing those challenges of growth with enough staff, enough classrooms, as frustrating as those kinds of things are, some staff still feel some things are still up in the air, yet it feels really positive, its positive situation that we need more classrooms to put more kids into and then more staff. I

**Commented [HS122]:** Is the keeper of memory – challenge of just staying operational now the challenge is how to sustain growth, a real fear that the school will go back to what was – suggest a lack of security a lack of full commitment to what is being done for risk of failure.

know it's an expensive one, but it's really nice to be able to flip it around and say at least we got these positive challenges of growth which are positive challenges, well that's how I see it.

These are really being embraced a positive experiences – little steps and often

**Principal\***

*Well I do too (had to leave the room to meet with new parents – school tour)*

*Principal has now left the focus group*

So, what is really strong from everybody there is a positivity there is a buzz, but there is also a mindfulness that as a leadership group there comes a lived tensions. So how do you support these and others? So as a leadership what are the tools or strategies that you might need to put in place to navigate those lived tensions as you move forward into that exciting space?

**Junior**

Maybe organization and honesty and timely organisation. You know we have to be honest at the end of the day – there is probably a level of not dishonesty but perhaps not telling the full story which has probably struck us down quite a few times

**Senior**

I think something too that I am aware of having a bit of public policy back ground, that are some policies and procedures that are lacking and I think in a lot of times if we had processes that everyone was familiar with and comfortable with and used to using then some of those structural inconsistencies would be ironed out

**Junior**

An open mind to change, an open mid to what someone else is doing which may need to be tweaked to suit my area of the school and it then it can look a similar way ... it that

**Faith**

It's that consistency that is important

**Junior**

Yeah, you know (name) recommend a tool and we now use 'classdojo' (app) which is one of the biggest tools that I use, one) to a keep a written track of what parents have said and agreed too, that I can then refer back too and also a really timely way of just communicating with parents without picking up the phone, because you stuck get on the phone for ages with them. So, we can just send that information through and it works really well for prep to year 4 but it has not worked well for the middle school and has not worked at all in the senior school. That's not to say it can't be, (name) has got some fabulous ideas about how it can be transferred, in which I think is a really important thing and I have been inspired by it and I think wow.

This is a guy who is quiet technically savvy other than trying to get his playlist up last night at the trivia night, so because he is tech savvy he probably has lost of Google docs or those sorts of things that we could utilize, so I am saying hang on a minute we need that

**Commented [HS123]:** Note the change in tone between staff when the principal is not there – is it a case what is seen to be share and heard and then the actuality to shared when he leaves the room?

**Commented [HS124]:** How does the group navigate these tensions?

**Commented [HS125]:** Issue of honesty – being dishonest, not sharing the full story – suggestion a level of doxa powerful disconnect to building collaborative working praxis.

**Commented [HS126]:** Noting skills that he brings to the group (level of personal praxis). Needing to build process, protocols and actions to navigate varying situations that the school faces. Placing boundaries

**Commented [HS127]:** Open mindedness

**Commented [HS128]:** Being consistent across the school and with other

**Commented [HS129]:** Noted tension of good ideas bit how can it be transferred across into practice, which is a double edge compliment



cohesiveness within the school. You know we have got that in the junior school I am not going to create something different, I am just going to try and mold what I have got. Something we have already got there, something that the parents are already familiar with – that's something that is really exciting and something I really looking forward to seeing, is how we can work within one another's areas and adapt to suit. Yeah

**Commented [HS130]:** Building on from what I am doing well and is known and can be adapted.

### Finance

Consultation is a big thing

**Commented [HS131]:** Consultation (suggests it not as present as it would be liked)

### Junior

Massive

### Finance

What I see is that if certain organizational skills, like there are certain points in the year – particularly this time of year for admin, we are under the pump. So, you have to work backwards from there. I know that there is a lot of work going on in the moment about how we can do this better next year, looking at our calendars and looking at where we had issues so we can start earlier.

But I find in the day, I find that consultation is always going to take longer but sometimes that will give you the better outcome, and that's what we need to foster, a little bit I think the consultation on key areas...

**Commented [HS132]:** Consultation and focus on key areas, rectifying previous problems which are tending to be repeated time and time again.

### Junior

And a commitment from the school to have that meeting in period 3 or 4. Having sat on the executive for three years, Friday night meetings, you do just want get out and you just tend to speak very emotionally about what's going on around the school as well because you just want to get it out and get out the door. And then there are often things you think once you have walked out, you think really, I should do that, or I need to think about that.

**Commented [HS133]:** Protecting time that suits the emotional and social needs of the group, change of time allows staff to work in a more efficacious manner.

But if it was an hour meetings and then we got another 40 minutes afterwards to go back to our offices and reflect and create a plan from what we are doing from it, because we need to make sure that those executive meetings are moving forward and not just stagnate which we discuss stuff but nothing comes from it ...

**Commented [HS134]:** Apathy / planning for success

**Commented [HS135]:** Time for reflexive practice – actioning and being accountable to the process

### Senior

I think, adding to what you just said one of things that struck me, and I have brought it up a couple of times that consultation and that communication there is a missed opportunity with faculty meetings.

Junior school don't go ... and that's the time when a new math's text book has been brought in and is different from here, whatever it is, all that stuff would be levitated because I don't know why, I don't what the policy is, but there seems to be no mandatory attendance from junior school staff at faculty meetings

**Commented [HS136]:** Compulsory attendance for staff seems to a demarcation of who attends and who is responsible for making decisions.

### Junior

Like resources

### Senior

But there should be, because that is where you get the consistency across the school in all areas of the curriculum and it makes no sense to me that middle and senior school goes and junior school does not go and we wonder why we are acting in silos. I think it is something that needs to be addressed next year.

**Faith**

But as a leadership group we need to ensure that we drive it to get the change

**Senior**

Yeah sure, but as far as consultation goes, when we have a discussion saying we are doing this, then everyone is there, and all come and there is an awareness

**Faith**

We are all part of it

**Senior**

The transparency and then there are consistency

**Junior**

But if we all act as a consultative group with each and support each other and not against each other, we are really helping each other out and brining each other along and whatever you are doing in your schools. We are consulting with each other and I am consulting with you then the school says we are working with cohesiveness. I think if we act like this then it becomes like an infection...

Is there still a silo mentality happening within the school, is it happening less or is it happening around particular issues that you get silos?

**Faith**

(Name) you are probably best to answer that...

**Junior**

It's really hard, it probably is, but it's probably round more of the personalities who are in those positions I think, and I have felt very compromised in being able to share my experiences because of that. So there probably has in the last 12 months has been probably a little bit more of that silo.

**Faith**

Probably from the staff perspective, middle and senior feel a little bit cohesive but junior certainly ...

**Junior**

Well it didn't use to be though...

**Commented [HS137]:** Acting in silos – advancing ones own cause over the good of the school even though all are saying that they are there for the improvement of the school.

**Commented [HS138]:** Needs a change of protocol

**Commented [HS139]:** Voice of reason – leadership needs to be seen to be driving the change and modelling the process for change

**Commented [HS140]:** What consultation looks like within the school last minute not truly consultative as the voices have not be sought out along the way

**Commented [HS141]:** Powerful statement that needs to be drawn out – what is the narrative entrapment here is it one of individualism over a sense of membership?

**Commented [HS142]:** Suggestion that the schools are operating as stand-alone rather than one whole school approach – what are the discursive links here that be drawn out – what can be represented to create a sense of order?

**Commented [HS143]:** Comment directed to one person within the group.

**Commented [HS144]:** Personal powers or lack thereof which has impacted before a sense of respect can be granted and a place of value within the group attributed. (Shotter's work – cultural pollical landscapes)

**Commented [HS145]:** Tension here suggesting that junior school is removed from the other schools which are seen as more cohesive and more unified in approach



**Faith**

Yeah, well no, no... You know each school in some degree has the silo action happening because of the ... I didn't want to say the very different focus, but the different things that are going on each school. But I think we need to work on it, you know you guys have all that artwork up, I can't **even** use the right word because I haven't heard too much about it.

**Commented [HS146]:** Real tensions here – no collective efficacy or collaboration here – how can there be junior school are show and the rest of the school is unsure of the details and or reasoning behind it?

**Junior**

Art Show

**Faith**

So, there is stuff happening **that** probably further up the school that this time of year you know...

**Commented [HS147]:** Seeking information

**Junior**

And that's a great an example. Next Wednesday we have a concert, an art show. I have been really keen to have the year 5 / 6 cook the sausages or be there, keen or have the year 5 / 6 teachers be present for it so then the year 4 parents have an opportunity to meet the year 5 teachers and to meet the 5 parents. But those sorts of things just haven't been, that feedback coming, so **the** offers have been there but haven't been there. That's not to say that I am going to stop giving the offers and that's what I am most excited about is being able to start that collaboration.

**Commented [HS148]:** What offers are being made, do staff know the rationale behind the objectives of the art show

I think it's more about the collaboration and **personalities** rather than a mindset of the school. I think the staff, are genuinely wanting to get involved and share across the schools

**Commented [HS149]:** Again commentary about personalities

**Faith**

And it might be a little bit of a tension but it is hard also and I am talking about the kids now, yeah our middle school is 5 – 8 we have had lots of conversations recently about how our 5 - 6 cohort feels about, **they** are in limbo in no man's land there.

**Commented [HS150]:** Disconnect felt by students in transition from junior to middle school

If they were logistically in the middle school area, if you like, it's what is there doing in moving towards middle school, in terms of curriculum and things like that, well that's it, not much. It certainly not the fault of the 5 – 6 **teachers** it's just been, I don't know, we have just got to a stage where we have embedded these schools and I guess I am very much an advocate for that, I don't know why, wonder why... um I feel that we do need to take the next step.

**Commented [HS151]:** Clarity around the roles of the sub schools how can they relate and interconnect better seeking a more effective outcome for the students – giving students a sense of belonging

Its, you know, we have talked about lots ideas about the ways and means to make this happen, you know through curriculum like through **electives**...

**Commented [HS152]:** Bridging through cross curricular approaches

**Senior**

Well 5 – 6 has gone backwards if anything with the regard to that distinction between junior, because obviously we had the **multiple** teachers through the rooms. We had the specialist, PE, RE, two literacy teachers, math's and what am I missing (Chinese) in that regard it was very much **(is that in grade 5 – middle)** yes, so it was a distinct

**Commented [HS153]:** Students going backwards.

**Middle**

So, it's a really big jump from 4- 5 rather than 6 - 7, you normally you go from primary to high school.

**Commented [HS154]:** Transitioning at the right time

#### Junior

4 -5 is the big jump

#### Faith

That's our sales pitch, our smooth transition, you know traumatic time from 6 - 7 won't be traumatic.

**Commented [HS155]:** Have they skewed their sale pitch and shifted the trauma to lower years?

#### Senior

Next year we are going back to classroom teacher predominantly - so it will be even less of a distinction than it was.

**Commented [HS156]:** Removing specialists teachers going back to classroom based teaching

#### Junior.

But we have picked a program - so we teach English and math's in our primary, but in the integrated subject, like your health and sciences we have picked up in a program called get 'Mappin' which in the junior school which has freed up more teaching time for teaching time for math's and English and then on Friday we can also do a whole school peer support program where they do mixed group activities. There is no reason why that can't be adapted in the 5 - 6 areas, to be able to have two periods per week, which we have already been able to secure down here ....

**Commented [HS157]:** Needing review outcomes of programs to given empirical data on what is working well and why and wasn't working well - where is the student voice here.

#### Faith

So that's I an idea we came up with to help those guys feel like part of the middle school, you know where they leave their classroom for a double and go to a big room. Or go a science lab or whatever. It doesn't happen in P - 4 but when you get to 5 and to middle school, that's when the spread of things starts to happen.

#### Junior

It's not changing a huge amount

#### Faith

Yeah, its simple stuff, in terms of what our sub school offers, our structures are working and evolving, so I think the next step for us is make the 5 - 6 feel for may like... 5, 6, 7,8

**Commented [HS158]:** What are the offerings being made and why where is consultation and planning

#### Senior

I thinks that true, it's the science thing in particular, it's something that has bothered me about the get 'Mappin' I had to teach that.

As a parent, I would certainly like to see a more obvious study of science, particularly science, particularly given we have a cohort of students who are quiet sciencey - I feel that if you aligned the electives to the curriculum that would be wise.

**Commented [HS159]:** Are the program son offer really meeting the curriculum needs of the children ?

#### Faith

So it is that transition, into the traditional type secondary environment but it just starts to happen...

So, there are lots of things that you have been thinking about with a student lens, how do you get the staff to have that buy in, as the executive leadership group. What was very conscious from all of you, was that ensuring that, that buy-in was evident from everybody - how do you get that cultural shift, that mindset shift happening?

#### Faith

I think most staff are already agreed of which is said about five about the middle school cohort changes there. We started those conversations kind of frantically as those conversations came up in a get together once. So, I think that's a really good start even without too much work or discussion with them but there has been a seed planted with them and they agreed with that.

**Commented [HS160]:** Conversations and sense of urgency was offered through accidental conversations rather than planned and agenda itemized conversations seeking data and planning and placing required outcomes – adhoc and non-sequential planning

So, does the sense of urgency come from them?

#### Senior

I get the sense like a sense of new direction and structure; I get a sense that there would not be a lot of push back for whatever way we go. This is the new way we are doing things, if its planned and organised I feel like, then we would get a fairly strong buy in, and level of enthusiasm.

**Commented [HS161]:** The key if it is planned and organised then areas of growth can be established and shared with the wider teaching and parental communities

#### Junior

You know we do have that staff, with that mentality and even staff that have been here a long time and I refer to (name) she particularly. So, like (name) she had been here since the start and she been teaching from prep right through to year 12 and seems to adapt very well to change. But the middle and senior and school staff are very good at hearing from their leaders that we think that, this would be really good and going with it.

Whereas junior school staff, are far more set in their ways, however, next year, I will be moving half the staff out of the classrooms as potentially some of them have taught in those year levels for a very, very, very long time. And the others who have not moved will move the following year and that may end up in resignations but trying just to create that culture for change in the junior school is probably more rigid than it is in the middle school.

**Commented [HS162]:** Huge statement of power to shift the collective memory and shift the power bases that seem to be blocking growth

#### Senior

I imagine that it is part logistics; middle school people are used to having to wear different hats, roles are changing all the time, whereas in the junior school you have a program for four or five years in a row, so you just keep doing it. I imagine its reluctance to all of that.

**Commented [HS163]:** Reluctance a fear of change for changes sake

So how do you navigate those conversations for them to have the confidence to move classes?

### Junior

It's more about dangling the carrot in a lot of respects, so working out, who, will work well with who, and offering change. So, for those who are moving next year, needed to change they had all been to me, to say that I can no longer work with this person, they are stifling my energy in a couple of situations. So, offering them someone fresh to work with has probably been the way I have gone. There are still teething issues, but I create conversations with them as much as I can and if I hear, they all know that if I hear things around the traps, they know I will step in. So, I just try to keep in touch, and say let me know how you are feeling, what we need to do.

So the following year, we have this year's group of teachers moving they are probably the easiest group of teachers to move, the following year will be the ones, and that's why they are moving the following year because I opened it up to all the staff so they can see what change looks like. The ones, who came to me saying they would like to teach, are the ones that are moving. So, the following years, are the ones who did not respond.

So, when you think about those blockers, dare I say, and that all of you are still within a PLC type of approach within committee

PLC's are gone it's just staff meetings now... (faith)

When you think about those opportunities to get together and work as a team, where you are assessing data or planning units of work because some of the language that was coming out then – is when some is stifling me here, and something that is very conscious from this whole group is ensuring transparency, accountably and inclusivity, if there the values that are coming out very strongly from this executive leadership group, how do you then going to model or be tight on with your groups of teams, to ensure that is replicated

### Finance

From an admin point of view, well, one of the issues. I find is that they tend to gossip and speculate, on issues that are going on. I need to look at it, that I need to make my team feel valued, regardless of what they are contributing be good or bad to the group out the front. Everyone then has a position unless we go down a path of performance managing them. We need to let them feel valued, so they really do think they have something to bring to this school. Can make them feel valued and contribute to what we are doing is important and they will be more effective as a team. When they don't feel that, that's when they start to do their own speculating and then they tend to recruit their little groups with them and that's a type of thing I try to work towards, and I have to do it myself. Don't get me wrong; I am all for a Friday afternoon when I have had enough, a good old grump about what's been giving me the shits. But if I don't want my staff to do that, then I can't do it as well and I can't speculate, and I can't gossip and so I have an expectation for my team. I do have to have difficult conversations, which are not always pleasant, I think that's one thing that we have to be able to have, is to getting back to that disagreeing.

You have to be able to have those difficult conversations knowing how that person is feeling because I think one of the biggest undermines to culture and beginning able to implement change and compliment someone or offer positivity, it's finding the white anting, finding those little clusters of groups before they recruit. It's not isolated just to this workplace

**Commented [HS164]:** Noting level of authority and influence I hear things – shifting personalities

**Commented [HS165]:** First mention of emotional wellbeing

**Commented [HS166]:** Hoping for champions within the group – to lead by example of what successful change can look like – but are the staff being supported and offered the tools to navigate organisation and systematic change?

**Commented [HS167]:** Huge blow PLC's gone just staff meetings the language here suggestion default position of just staff meetings thus no students focus, admin and meeting for meeting sakes. Huge amount of time was spent on up skilling staff to operate within a PLC space to lose that directionality of professional discussion is worth noting

**Commented [HS168]:** Staff breach professional codes of conduct.

**Commented [HS169]:** Need a sense of value, belonging to the group, being able to offer / to input – leading to a greater level of collaboration and effective team work

**Commented [HS170]:** No value leads to a culture of mistrust

**Commented [HS171]:** Model how best to vent and voice frustration

**Commented [HS172]:** Difficult conversations – Jim Knights work

**Commented [HS173]:** Massive statement about the sub cultures that are operating within the group

**Faith**

What I was going to say, I think, my take on that, is yes, it happens, yes you have to have difficult conversations, but also, what can we be doing to stop it from happening in the first place? It's the consultation and the transparency and the common good. We know it's happening at the moment, there are lots that is happening at the moment because people are scared, they don't know what they are doing, they feel threatened and some stuff is out in the public area.

Sorry you are hearing all this (directed to middle)

It's what becoming toxic and that can be easily avoided when there is clear, open, and honest communication. And I know that everything that leadership knows that staff don't get to know, and I get that, that's not what I am saying. I think you know (name) said you need to make everyone, I can't remember what you said, but it made sense in my head, now. In that, you need to make sure people have enough information and that they know what is going on...

**Commented [HS174]:** Tensions, fear, feeling threatened – creating gossip creating toxic environments

**Commented [HS175]:** Have enough information to know what is going on.

**Junior**

Well it undermines the leadership when they don't get that information. Speaking feely (name) sent out an email, I spoke to him about this, he said he would. So, he sent out an email about (name) position as head of senior school to staff, that is a position we have appointed but's it's not out in the public arena, but I thought you should know. I thought that was a really, really positive thing. Because I think really hasn't happen before

**Commented [HS176]:** Informing leadership in a timely fashion so the efficacious manner, whilst respecting and honouring the social aesthetics sensibilities sin place and brought to and by the groups funds of knowledge and operating habitus.

**Faith**

Yeah, I agree, it nips the whole thing in the bud, that whole situation

**Junior**

But we know that it is out in the public arena I have heard kids talking about that (name) are going to be head of senior school. So it's like okay its now out in public arena, however that has happened, its happened, but we need as a leadership group, need to say to our parents, this is what the school is going to look like, so it becomes exciting for parents to know that this is the plan forward from this point and announce before...

**Commented [HS177]:** Preventing whispers and disseminating information at the point of need bringing people into a level of trust to ensure that the right decisions are being made.

So, it's about timely communication...

**Faith**

Yes, timely is key, I feel like things get sat on for a very long time and...

**Junior**

It makes us look less organised

**Commented [HS178]:** Control looking less organised

**Senior**

And if it doesn't happen it makes the next two weeks particularly for myself, less effective I could be doing proactive things ...

**Commented [HS179]:** This has crafted a position of mistrust for new role and for being able to transition into the role in a positive fashioned – now staff feel things are being done to them rather than done with them

**Junior**

The kids know ... I feel terrible because I said to you last night that it is out, the kids are talking about it.

**Faith**

Everything is out

**Senior**

Yeah

**Junior**

As a leadership group we control that, we can drive it, you when planning, you know, there is a lot of stuff that I do, that we can be saying when we can communicate this to staff.

**Faith**

If we give them enough now, then they are happy, then they will get more when it's relevant. You know, at the moment its nothing or it's someone who has said something to someone else or forgotten what was said ...

**Junior**

We can schedule

So, it would like scheduling in media release

**Faith**

You know this is why we are going to do this...

**Commented [HS180]:** Children are hearing the gossip and spreading tales this then goes home and is transmitted into the community – there is a real disconnect to what is being espoused as the values of the school to what is carried out in reality.

**Commented [HS181]:** This situation is acting as the catalyst for change and rationale for why things needs to be done differently people and positions have been devalued within this process.

**Transcript of focus group... Session 2**  
**Research School**  
**Researcher: Helen Schiele**  
**Victoria University**

**Date: February 2019**

**Those in attendance**

**Principal, Business Manager, Head of Junior, Middle and Upper Schools and the  
 Director of Anglican Faith...**

**Code:**

**Researcher: text highlighted in blue**

**Where the school's name is cited, text will read (Name of school – NOS)**

Tape recorder was placed in the center of the table and the session was officially recorded.

.....

I will pop this into the middle of the table, so everyone can hear, so just to go over our agreed Norms and Protocols that we established last time we met, which was the end of last year, my goodness.

So, there were four Norms and Protocols that we decided to honor as a working group.

**5. Respect we all wear different Hats**

- i.e. parent and leader
- Observations are about the role and not personal
- Each is availed the experience of feeling comfortable in the professional learning space

**6. Disagreeing well**

- As a staff we are able to disagree well
- We can all voice opinions
- We respect everyone
- We communicate openly

**7. We respect that we are contributing value to the team.**

- We put aside egos
- We know we are all contributing to the good of the school
- We work as a tight collaborative group

**8. What is said within the focus groups is confidential**

So, are we still happy with those Norms and Protocols?

Group all nodded as a sign of consensus.

Brilliant, thank you.

**Commented [HS182]:** Important to revisit and set the tone for the session that all feel trusted and valued in the space.

So, you had some home play from me, in reading the transcript, this was a very interesting transcript to do, only took me some 18 your hours type (all laugh)  
But that's fine that's what a doctorate does for you.

**Commented [HS183]:** Reminded them of the commitment to the task

Yep that's right

I wondered how you felt about categorizing some of the themes, that were coming up for you, when I categorized them within the thinking hats, was there anything that really resonated for you or jumped out for you in those and if there was anything that was absent from that?

**Commented [HS184]:** At the end of the last session it was muted that in grouping the data and ideas shared that the thinking hats may be ways and means of offering a collective overview of the data shared and of a visual means to note the aspirations and tensions felt and owned by the group

**Head of Junior:** I did not see them; I only got a transcript (uhhh)

**Head of Senior:** My copy had the thinking hats on the front of it

**Head of Junior:** I wasn't here

**Principal:** Right okay

I will make sure you get a copy, also thank you very much for your insights in completing the survey, so what I will do

**Commented [HS185]:** Frustration of team members not reading up on data ensuring that they received all the completed data.

**Head of Junior:** So now I know why the survey didn't make any sense, Helen

What I might do today is, if I could a piece of paper with everyone's email address on it and I will send out an email too, so we are all getting that correspondence going.

So thank you very much for capturing your insights, I felt that 250 words were enough, I did not want a thesis from you and I appreciate your time as well and in also completing that survey, so in the interim between the next time we meet I will collect that survey data and feed it back to you so I can get that on-going insights that you have got and so you have the opportunity to get that forward feed.

**Commented [HS186]:** Thanking those that had completed the tasks to ensure that value and importance of the work submitted.

But just to go back to those thinking hats, that some of you have seen was there anything that really resonated for you, in that the language that was identified?

**Head of Faith:** Is it not great that our logical negative list was one of the longest?

If you categorize that way, or perhaps I am just out of the whack in how I am interpreting that?

**Commented [HS187]:** Perceived the black hat the most negative and longest therefore did this cast a negative or issue for the group?

It could be an interpretation that is up to you.

**Head of Faith:** So, I saw it as negative list of things that we noted, our negative logical was the longest list of things?

**Commented [HS188]:** Held fast that the longest list was the most negative

**Principal:** Or are they challenges?

**Commented [HS189]:** Shifting or abstracting language to reframe from negative to a not there yet statement.

Or stretches?

Yeah

Any other wisdom or insights?



Wait time

**Head of Faith:** I liked the language in the creativity part

**Commented [HS190]:** Appreciated the creative language used by the group

Wait time

This is all your language that came out of it as well, the transcript was as is, I did not add or edit anything, every single word was your own, and so it is quiet powerful language that was used by you all.

One of the themes that I noticed as the researcher being involved with the group was the idea of Anglicanism and that sense of community and one of the phrases that you shared (Name of leader) was that lived tension between where you are sharing Anglicanism and the faith with your students but as a staff you still have not had that conversation or is it you don't feel able to have that conversation?

**Commented [HS191]:** Real concern if I as the researcher over stepped the mark by naming a clear tension to the group that may have not been obvious to the group

I was wondering as a leadership team what would you include in those conversations, and what does that idea of Anglicanism and community look like for you as you move forward as a leadership group?

**Commented [HS192]:** How does this ideal of Anglicanism and community align with the school community both staff, students and parent based?

Wait time

**Head of Faith:** I was probably referring to more with regards to staff and their conversations with students, I think when I made that comment, having said that it is linked to the fact that we do have some people on staff that are not comfortable in that space...

**Commented [HS193]:** Shifting the direction of the conversation away from staff but did acknowledge that this was an issue for staff.

**Principal:** But I think a lot more, I think there are very valid conversations that are had by staff, probably that they are not unusual to have those conversations, these are valid and good conversations. I think that, is on the whole, that the sort of whole Anglican identity floats through to the students which is coming through the Brave program, I guess the way the Brave Program is delivered and the fact the that the school is insistent that units 1 & 2 are offered, religion or religious studies in VCE are certainly encouraged to do it as a unit 3 & 4 subject and the way it is being delivered further down the school. I think those conversations are more active there now, than perhaps what they have been in the past and that also stems from the fact that we also have got a Chaplin on site. A Chaplin at the school two days per week and who is engaging students in those conversations. So there has been a significant change over the last couple of years where we are able to discover who we are as Anglicans or the way we approach ourselves as a faith-based education community are significantly more developed than they were in the past. Would you agree with that? (Directed to Head of Faith)

**Commented [HS194]:** A true sense of shift in the educational faith based setting, students are compelled to undertake subjects that are faith based within their VCE loading and generalist school curriculum. The procurement of a chaplain on site now drives the conversations for there is both a visual stimulus and a now a leader of faith within the school building

**Head of Faith:** Yeah, I would

**Commented [HS195]:** The shift is how they see themselves as Anglicans and how they approach themselves within a faith-based setting, what is the level of praxis and funds of knowledge that are in place.

So, what does that idea of a faith-based community look like for you all?

Wait time

**Head of Middle School:** I guess for me, not coming from this type of system, coming from a Government school, it provides a bit more of a purpose. I think some values and some morals, how you conduct yourself as a **human** being, is what stood out to me, as well as the faith component, like Eucharist and stuff like that. It is something that you can always draw back on when the kids aren't quiet towing the line, just respect, it those types of things

**Head of Senior:** It provides an avenue to open up **those** discussions; you can put it into that context

**Head of Middle School:** It's about being a good person **that** is at the core of it

**Head of Senior:** It's an easy and obvious way to frame up those conversations through the context of **faith** based.

**Head of Junior:** And reflect

**Head of Middle School:** I think when you have got that down pat; you can have those conversations that can then stem more into the faith side of it. I was a bit worried about jumping into the faith aspect and I am getting to understand that it's not all just about being a good person, there is a bit to this, I want to find out a bit more, and more about Jesus and that **side** of it.

**Head of Faith:** I like that it gives us a background in going for service and encouraging kids to serve to be involved **in** activities that they are not necessarily of benefit to them but in service to others. So altruistic activities or social justice initiatives, the way we do this gives us a scaffold for that.

Wait time

So, if we were to use a visible thinking routine, it's called the 3Ys. Could I just get you to use pen and paper, note what you think and then we will share with the group.

The 3Ys are

Why is important to me?

Why is it important to my community?

And why is it important on a global perspective?

Just that idea of what is (NOS) look like in those **three** spaces for you?

Why is important to me, to the community, the local and global community?

**Head of Senior School:** So, is this our faith-based view?

Yes, you could encompass what a community is for you?

Because it could be that idea of mind, body, and spirit...

**Commented [HS196]:** Faith base community = provides purpose, values and morals interesting this absent having come from a state-based system. How you are operating with others the notion of praxis is strong within these points and of collective efficacy. Used as a means to modify student behaviours.

**Commented [HS197]:** A tool to navigate towards difficult conversations

**Commented [HS198]:** Being a good person – how is this different from any other school what is making these statements ones of greater ownership and place within the school community?

**Commented [HS199]:** Again using faith as a means to frame up – or is it the notion of seeking ones God given potential and gifts drawing out a strength based approach

**Commented [HS200]:** Needing to become upskilled and aware of the language and principles of the gospel shared

**Commented [HS201]:** A means and ways for encouraging students to embrace the notion of service through supporting others through their acts of kindness and support

**Commented [HS202]:** Offered this routine as a research tool that has been proven to allow the individual to deepen their perspectives to see the in connectivity within themselves and the concept at hand.

Wait time as they collect their thoughts...

The group engaged in conversation at 11.54

Who would like to kick off?

**Head of Senior School:** I had two words for me, I wrote purpose and framework. It gives you a sense of purpose and the framework, I guess in developing that purpose and so to how to interact.

You talk about the word purpose what does that mean for you?

**Head of Senior School:** I think it's trying to do constructive things...

In the sense of being a good global citizen or.

**Head of Senior School:** I think being a good citizen full stop ...

**Head of Middle School:** in terms of me, I wrote down a quote I read the other day, "when no one is watching still do the right thing" ... I think you can get away from that sometimes, but the idea of faith allows you to stick to that a little bit I think, and yeah, it gives you that purpose as (Name) just noted in terms of being a good person, because there is a greater thing out there watching you ...

**Head of Junior:** for me reflection, for faith to me is the opportunity to reflect and I suppose in the Junior School we talked about this week in our PLC the fact that it is really important to have a morning and afternoon prayer in the classrooms and that the afternoon prayers should be a reflection of the day or whatever they are thank full for.

**Principal:** Yeah, well not dissimilar to (name of colleague) with that sense of purpose, it as a guide to live one's life as an exemplar to the community that sort of thing, I think.

**Head of Faith:** Mine was also very similar also, in that it gives purpose, I had that prior to that it is my value and belief system, and I guess then with regards to community in supporting them, I talked about the fact that we can have those shared values and belief systems which can I can facilitate harmony and peace and all those things we say we want for the world, which of course we do, but it also enables you to respect others within your community and support them so that everyone can achieve their potential, everyone can be fulfilled in whatever ways that means for them as community.

**Principal:** A moral compass

**Head of Faith:** And then a global scale I said that if we have those shared values amongst community in the bigger picture, we could even out those inequities that exist. And get back to the idea of just being a humanity of one as opposed to a lot of inequity and angst.

**Commented [HS203]:** Missed the point completely need to think in how best to offer a routine to the group – it was assumed as a group of teachers that three Ys would not need further explanation to what had been given. Did not break it down into three areas...

**Commented [HS204]:** Purpose and framework interact – what are these elements that seem so intrinsic to nay school paramount here?

**Commented [HS205]:** The sense of faith keeping one accountable because someone is watching you...

**Commented [HS206]:** Quiet a novice level of faith almost tokenistic in the sense of prayers as being seen to be done and a sense of giving thanks

**Commented [HS207]:** Purpose is a strong theme a sense of being an exemplar to others

**Commented [HS208]:** that it gives purpose. I had that prior to that it is my value and belief system a ways and means to respect and values others

**Commented [HS209]:** A moral compass – a huge statement and ongoing theme

**Commented [HS210]:** A sense of humanity and humility

**Director of Finance:** I wrote down that for me that it is the beliefs and values that establish expectations and conduct. I just wrote down some expectations such as respect and service.

**Commented [HS211]:** Again, a notion of a framework that offers a set of expectations to conduct and hold one's self by

So given that you are all in leadership roles, how do you use that moral compass to guide your leadership within your different teams of junior, middle and upper senior schools and support your members of staff, your team members, in that I know that the last time we spoke that there was some tension in some of the conversations that you were having to have around codes of conduct and moving within different classroom spaces. So, when you got to have those difficult conversations or there is a tension within your group, how would this moral compass support you and how would you use that to guide you?

**Commented [HS212]:** How does the moral act as a guide or support for the leadership group.

**Head Senior School:** the first thing that occurs to me is about being honest and forthright. Just about being, you know there are some subtleties around how you might phrase things, but if you know there is something that needs to be corrected or repaired or communicated the basis for your communication and the basis for your assumptions are derived in an honest and forthright way.

**Commented [HS213]:** being honest and forthright – this is vocab that is now adopted by the group and repeated

**Commented [HS214]:** a means to communicate with others

**Principal:** I think its honesty without prejudice, so when we come to a topic that needs to be discussed, then there is no prejudice about what is being discussed and what is discussed needs to be resolved to move forward.

**Commented [HS215]:** honesty without prejudice what needs to navigated to be able to move forward

**Head of Faith:** it also about modeling the behavior as well. It gives you the confidence or value and your purpose about modeling what that looks like. Modeling perhaps the expectations of those beliefs and values...

**Commented [HS216]:** Modeling perhaps the expectations of those beliefs and values...powerful statement one that is left without much further discourse

**Head of Senior School:** there is an assurance that goes along with people that are acting, on what they think is a morally and sound basis; you know I agree entirely you model the behavior but there are people that are not doing that, you know acting in a way that they perceive to be honest and forthright, there is an assurance about what they do...

**Commented [HS217]:** Being authentic in what you do and the way you model the behaviour

**Principal:** and in the best interest of all, is what we are talking about in whatever we are discussing is to resolve this in the best interests of all, as best as we can in that point in time.

**Commented [HS218]:** Working towards the notion of the greater good.

**Head of middle school:** I think what is important is that there is a core purpose as well that makes those honest discussions a bit more easier, so our core purpose is around what is best for the student, then everyone can put their opinions on the table, you know it might be a tricky conversation, so you can say, this is what I think, and this is what you think, if we are both being honest then lets meet at our purpose and that sometimes make it easier.

**Commented [HS219]:** Core purpose in what is discussed then makes the exchange authentic and honest. This is the first time the notion of difficult conversations has a raised.

**Principal:** I think too; a shared recognition of shared interests, so we are putting and you are absolutely right (name of colleague) we are putting the student right at the center and we are absolutely looking at our issues in relation to them but then we are also taking into consideration the needs of the teaching staff, the needs of the parents, we are looking at the whole community, so when we make a judgment, when we make decisions as we discuss this as an issue were considering the implications for others as well.

**Commented [HS220]:** A shared recognition the student is at heart of all they do. Considering the impact upon staff parents the whole community is now seen here as vital contributors and benefactors in the ways and means of discussing core issues at the school.

What are you thinking (Head Junior School)?

**Head of Junior School:** Almost exactly what (name of colleague) said you know you have that sense of respect behind you and modeling?

How do you sustain that as a leadership group, that idea of being the exemplar, the model for others, how do you sustain that?

**Head of Senior School:** if it has come from an honest and forthright place it's nothing that needs to be sustained, it just is, it's not an act, and it's who you are...

**Head of faith:** I think that's it, it's not an act, it's what you are

It's lived

**Commented [HS221]:** Trend here that there is a strong sense of compliance – repeating what others have said – the conversation has gone back to modelling

**Commented [HS222]:** Comments tend shut down train of thought – very strong and adamant in what is believed is the truth

**Commented [HS223]:** Notion of real – not an act – interesting when thinks upon Aristotle's words that teaching is acting ...

Principal: and I think what is lived is also a compassion for others within the space in which we are operating and when there is a concern for other people whatever conversations **we** are having, comes from a concern of welfare from those around us and so that drives it.

**Commented [HS224]:** Notion of the common good acting in the best interest of all – comes from a place of welfare

Head of Junior School: it's **probably** a common characteristic of all the people on the leadership team

**Commented [HS225]:** Believes this to be a common trait and skill set possessed by the leadership team.

Head of Senior School: it's the people who are on a walk of life who are disingenuous that can't sustain the model **that** crash and burn

**Commented [HS226]:** Those that are disingenuous are those who cannot sustain the authentic self

When you think about your teams remembering that this is a safe place; are there team members that you feel aren't being as authentic and that you would like to build that capacity to support them to get that authenticity or do you feel your team is there?

Principal: well I think in any team that there are people who are not authentic, it just goes with the territory, when you have people who are who coopted onto a team whether they are a part of junior school, middle school or senior school, whatever it happens to be, and they have reasons for being other than good for the team. So how do you work with them, I think it's that exemplar, the modeling, it's that, that compassion, it's that being honest, it's that whole being driven from a perspective of a, being faced with issues **that** need to be resolved and being authentic in the way you go about it, in solving those issues and those people who are a part of that decision making process and I guess you co-opt them on by encouraging their honest responses to the issues that you are discussing.

**Commented [HS227]:** Interesting commentary on how to work with those that are coopted and therefore may not be there for the greater good but rather have a hidden agenda...

Head of Faith: their authenticity might not be, they might be thinking that they are, they are living their authenticity, but **that** doesn't mean they necessarily are

**Commented [HS228]:** Interesting perception that they could be acting in what is thought to be in the best interests of the group but is not in actuality a mismatch of perceptions and understating's of what is sought

Laughter from the group

Head of faith: I am not sure how I am **phrasing** that but I don't see any issue with whatever they are bringing along.

**Commented [HS229]:** Often HOF attracts laughter from the group -

So, what become the benchmark as a leadership group, what is reference point, your moral compass if you like, what's that benchmark?

Head of Junior School: Well it goes back to faith doesn't it, because if they are being respectful and they are listening to others, they might be lazy but if they are still being respectful then they are still authentic in part of it but your benchmark becomes your **faith**.

**Commented [HS230]:** A real misalignment here being authentic even though you may be lazy

Head of Senior School: it **depends** entirely on the domain

**Commented [HS231]:** Breaking into domains areas – how does that correlate with a whole school approach

Head of Junior School: the context

Head of Senior School: what is the benchmark between the interactions, between the ways they perform, there is you know, you would rate those areas those domains differently. You know if they are a **good** person that's great and that might feel that moral compass section but if they are not doing their job properly than that's an entirely different thing.

**Commented [HS232]:** Tension between being a good person to doing your job (Peter Senge work sits here )

Head of faith: What it comes back too; as (Name of colleague) said, what is at the center, what is at the center, **it** is our kids.

**Commented [HS233]:** Bringing it back to the students

Principal: sometimes the conversations are not about the kids, sometimes the conversations are about the job that someone is actually doing and so then it becomes an assessment of that task and usually there are some indicators, performance indicators about how well they are performing their task and duties that need to be done or if there are things not being done, then it's a different type of conversation. It becomes one of what here is, what I thought you were going to do, here's what you are doing, these two are not matching what are we going to do about it? And that's the whole compassion thing that's the encouraging people towards what they should be doing, not necessarily criticizing what they are **not** doing but encouraging them to do what you want them to do and having honest conversations with them as best as you can and as much as they will allow it.

**Commented [HS234]:** Encouraging others to do what they should be doing – element of compassion and support

#### How do you have those conversations?

Head of Senior School: honest and **forthright** once again till they know what you are talking about.

**Commented [HS235]:** Talking at them till they know what you are on about – the notion of pausing and seeking clarification is not mentioned it is about shifting their thinking to yours.

Head of Middle School: I think that conversation is easier to have if there is a good culture in place and if it is honest and forthright and you exactly know where you stand its purely worked based, student centered and that's just how we do things in this culture, it's a huge thing to be able to do **that** and if something is not right within the system, you know I don't have to walk around all day ticking things off, but it just should be, or can we just have a chat, this is where I am at, where are you at trying to improve ...

**Commented [HS236]:** honest and forthright is being quoted repeatedly a work based culture that is student centered – supporting others to improve

Principal: I think there is probably an underlining issue, I would say that at this school that is a culture of respect for one another, and where there is respect then you can be honest in having those conversations. And where there is a lack of respect then those conversations can become difficult. And by in large I would say here it's a good **culture**. Not saying we can't improve, absolutely it can, it's something that we can all do, to improve culture and we continue to rehearse the mantra of what our faith is and what our spirituality is and our connection to other people to be able to create a better environment.

**Commented [HS237]:** school that is a culture of respect for one another, and where there is respect then you can be honest in having those conversations – rehearse the mantra of what our faith is and what our spirituality is and our connection to other people to be able to create a better environment. Two huge statements to unpacked here

So that idea of good culture, what are the elements that you see that are working right now to give you that confidence to say **that you have a good culture right now?**

Head of Faith: I think our heads of school do that right now, not sucking up, in that if we are looking at it from where we have come from and where we are at, now there is a feeling of trust and you know that there will be action taken, I am listened to by these people, I probably can't speak as much for the junior school, because I am not around junior so much, but certainly the other heads have made a good start this year, there is a feeling of people being listened too, there is a feeling of like there will be action, there are things in place that might have caused angst in the past, there is new ideas, with all that, that's created, is that what you mean we are creating a positive culture? Those things have led to a genuine state of positivity and feeling like yes ... this is good

**Commented [HS238]:** If a HOF for the whole school why the disconnect with junior school – being listened too, where ideas are being accepted and there is no longer a sense of mistrust ...

Principal: there is a genuine respect between the staff and the heads and I happily state that's all of the schools, all of the sub schools, you can, you know there is a very easy way for a principal to know if the sub schools are working or not, it's the number of phone calls that come through from people, from parents within that sub school. Very quickly you find out if the sub school is working or if it is not, and this year there has hardly been a phone call. So that would tell me that just as a finger up in the air that the wind is blowing in the right direction. And we are talking about, you there are students that are struggling and may well not suit our community or might find it difficult to fit into our community and we may have to find other options for them. That is currently on the table and its being undertaken within a very respectful way and a very inclusive way and when parents are part of the conversation and when students are part of the conversation and when the school also has its opinion and where best outcomes for young people are being perused and that sometimes the best outcome is not this school but to be somewhere else we will continue to those conversations, day by day.

**Commented [HS239]:** Speaks upon the element of feedback from parental community suggest all is well then moves into talking about shifting students out of the school to find a better fit.

Head of Faith: I think communication that you mentioned there is probably one of the things that is creating that positively

**Commented [HS240]:** Communication – back to being honest and authentic

Principal: Communication with the students yes, but with our real community, which is the parents.

**Commented [HS241]:** Real community the parents outweighs the student cohort

There is obviously a number of strategies that you are using, have these been formalized in any way through protocols or procedures or processes that you go through or have these been developed in an ad hoc way, how has this culture being developed that you now have this confidence to work in this space?

**Commented [HS242]:** How has the culture been developed?

Head of Senior School: Are you talking about the culture between professionals here, the staff members or are you talking about the general contributions between students in the school?



Firstly about the team members and the general community, it is sounding like there is a ripple effect, in that once there is an aspect has been consolidated as a Professional Learning Team that is has now rippled out through to the community.

Head of Senior School: Well I don't think, well there certainly has been something's' that I have wanted staff members to implement with regards to how they deal with students but myself I haven't formulate a policy per say, but I have spoken to just about everyone in the sub school personally at length.

Head of faith: you discuss those things or we discuss those things as a team first so those dojo's ideas, different bits and pieces that have sort of having that filtering effect, were discussed as a team and then... Head of Senior School: well I had the idea and then I went to every single staff member in the senior school and asked what were their thoughts on this, and what should we put on this and I had a notebook with me and wrote them all down, you know it wasn't just a thought bubble that I acted on, I consulted everyone, here is what I want to do, what's' your feedback and then we did it.

Principal: I think that raising those issues within the context of this group, of which this group has met regularly now since its inception late last year and having a large leadership group has made real difference to us, perhaps being in the very fortunate position of having enough enrollments now that we can have a larger leadership group, that we can meet on a regular basis has made a difference in discussing ideas, resolving them in agreement with each other about the implementation of these ideas in rolling these out, has been a major perhaps nuance this year, perhaps we have tried to achieve this in previous years but were not able to and I think that this year and its defiantly staring to be seen by the whole staff and because you know from my perspective that I meet with these people around the table weekly some fortnightly and we are discussing and resolving issues as we go along but there is no doubt that that there is an honesty and an inclusivity and a desire to make a better school and not just a better school but a more fair and just school that is supportive of our students, that is supportive of our parents but is also very supportive of our staff.

So is that idea now that because you have had protected time to really develop that idea of collectively efficacy and get that sense of greater collaboration that you feel that there has been a greater shift or haste in the shift?

Principal: well we had protected time last year, it was just the three heads of school and we meet on a Friday afternoon after school, this I think, it's the personalities that sit around the table that have made the difference

Head of faith: I think that there is a quiet a fair bit of respect between the executive team and that's quite visible by the other staff members as well. We are seen to be working as a united group.

Consensus by the group in the shaking of heads

**Commented [HS243]:** Nothing is formalised in approaches but conversations have been held

**Commented [HS244]:** Protecting time and coming together to be honest and inclusive and a desire to make a better school and not just a better school but a more fair and just school

**Commented [HS245]:** Shifting the time and widening the groups to bring in others voices has shifted the landscape

**Commented [HS246]:** Mutual respect for and by the group

Head of Middle School: I have no issues at all in asking for help which is a real positive in being new, hopefully one day, not sure what day it is, someone might ask me for help, it's been so beneficial that I can ask for help and actual get help – so I would like to thank pretty much everyone in the room.

Head of senior school: I wasn't on exec last year so I can't comment...

For those of you who were on the exec last year and this year what has been the greatest shift?

Head of Junior School: I think the honesty probably is, I don't feel that there has been a hidden agenda which I felt that there has been, (name... we are a married couple ) so I kind of felt that when an issue **was** being raised that it was seen that (name) and I were normally together, you know obviously, it was a bit more difficult. This year it is very open and everyone you know we are in silos, we are all standing alone in our own little areas, you know we might agree or disagree, but we will be honest about what is best for ourselves or our sub-school.

**Commented [HS247]:** Previous experience – hidden agenda, very personal in attacks, still operating in silos but there is an honesty that wasn't there before.

Principal: And in a sense as much as we want to move between the silos, there are silos they just are, but at least we are starting to communicate across silos and come up with shared opinions. I suppose about how we **want** to find the best way to run the school. You know the perfect example this week was the whole school assembly it was a really beautiful moment. When the whole school came to together and we were able to celebrate students from each sub school and have each sub school recognize these kids. I think that that speaks volumes about how we work together as a team and how we are communicating within our teams within the school. You know it was a great day, we had plenty of parents, I am not sure how many parents were there and really probably the catalyst for the parents to be there was the junior school assemblies, which have become a feature of the school over the last few years, where parents have gathered but now that we have opened up the assemblies and turned this into a whole school thing it means that other parents are feeling like it's okay that I can come along as well, because my child you know now in year 11 or 12 or are not in that prep to year 4 are receiving a reward, I feel like that I can be involved and enjoy that experience. And not feel embarrassed to attend the event with 30 students and a few staff; it's about being seen to be a part of community. You know we have House Presentation that is another example of us as a **community** recognizing those within our community.

**Commented [HS248]:** Communicating across silos

**Commented [HS249]:** Being a part of the whole community

Head of Junior School: you know today (Principal – Clean Up Australia Day) it was beautiful – Principal – House groups going out and cleaning up...

Principal – I did not that there were more in Farrow than in any other House so therefore Farrow will get more points.  
Laughter from the group...

Any other significant shifts for you, that you feel has added to this idea of collective efficacy that you are working towards?

**Commented [HS250]:** Raised the notion of collective efficacy

Head of Senior School: well as I said it's hard to answer that because I wasn't on the leadership group last year.

Maybe then I could get you to shift the lens of the outsider looking in, to now being the insider looking out, what do you note?

Head of Senior School: well it's already been said, that is it appears more united, that's the most obvious thing I would say... there was you know by end's year, last year that there was quiet a swell of people who were just observing the exec and noted the dysfunction.

**Commented [HS251]:** Moving from dysfunctional group to one of collaboration and respect

Principal: well despite best efforts and I think the strategy is still the same, that when you are with a group you can observe, you know you don't have to be Einstein to observe if people are disconnected in that group, but as the person endeavoring to led that, all you can do is try to engage with those people and get them to come on board, as being as fair and reasonable and get them to move forward and help the school move forward in a shared vision and shared goals. And I get from a leadership a principal's perspective, one must appreciate that, and one must believe that people are doing the best that they can. If they are telling you that they are doing the best that they can then, I guess that's what's they are doing, whether; it suits the goals of the school or sits comfortably with the person who sits in the leadership role or not, all you can do is encourage people to be best that they can, as we do with the students, we encourage them to do the best job that they can and if there are issues that can't be resolved and the relationship breaks down, I guess we work it out from there, whatever that looks like and the same of the leadership group and those of the executive team.

**Commented [HS252]:** Believe that are all trying to do their best – if it breaks down then work from there

Head of Faith: I was thinking more about senior school. I guess I am wondering if you are asking what kinds of things have happened to me or is there a tightening up or feeling positive things or whatever it might be... I feel like in the middle school as well and the junior school we did not need this shift but we needed a shift or an understanding of who we are, what are we here for, that whole idea that in the senior school, that we are (NOS) what does that look like for our senior school what do expect of the kids out the senior school, of the kids at (NOS). So we have a lot of discussions around that (name) did and go talk to people about things like uniform expectations, of work and homework all those things that need to come together to make what your school will look like in the end. We talked about as a group and decided what we wanted it to look like and that made that move towards, you know how do we get there in the end, with the initiatives that have been in put place, is one of the things that you could say has meant that tightening in a decisions together, in what we want that it to look like and how do we get about this together, to get this achievement, that we want and it was a sort of group or united decision.

**Commented [HS253]:** Speak here about the collective practices

Head of Junior School: And you know, following up on that decision, because you know that, previously exec have made decisions but possibly have not followed up or implemented or that has kind of meant it got lost, whereas; I now feel that staff now think that things are happening and going to continue, it's not just that flash in the pan, you know if we are going to be strict on uniform we are going to be strict on uniform.

**Commented [HS254]:** Consequences of actions

Head of faith: this is why, because we want this to look like this, for our school. We want this to look like, this and feel like this and this what and why, because at the end of the day it's for the kids.

Head of Junior school: they have a sense of longevity to it

Principal: it's that what and how, this is how we are going to do this and this why we are going to do it and this is how it is going to be rolled out in a way that is fair and reasonable.

Head of Finance: one of things, I have noticed in my brief time at (NOS), is I have seen the direction of the school start to visualize and I assume everyone else does, where the school is going to be and what the school is going to look like and we are moving towards that, I think that **has** been a really positive step forward.

**Commented [HS255]:** Stated that there is now a direction for the school

Head of Senior School: it's the physical manifestation of that growth as well.

Head of Faith: there are things that are happening, there is **direction** and there is security

**Commented [HS256]:** Seeing things getting done gives a sense of security

Head of Junior School: so rather than just talking about what it may look like, there are things that are happening moving towards what it may look like so people can visualize and work towards that – a clean environmentally friendly school within budget.

(Name... Head of Finance) how have you brought your team along because you have a very different team that sits alongside the others, how have you brought them along this journey?

Head of Finance: well it's been, I think it's one of those things that has made me ensure that the discussions are kept around that what we are here for and what we are working towards and trying to redirect some of those conversations to stay on that line. It's little steps that you take to go that way and sometimes those conversations are not particularly easy but going back to that first questions you can have the faith and values there to use them to your advantage in a conversation, in that time in which you have to have those difficult conversations, say things around expectations and **we** interact with people within the school or community, that's how I look at it, little steps at a time..... and just make sure that people stay on the positive ... working towards the positive things in the future.

**Commented [HS257]:** Use faith and values there to use them to your advantage in a conversation, in that time in which you have to have those difficult conversations, say things around expectations and we interact with people within the school or community,

(Name) being the new boy on the team what has been prominent for you coming from a different sector and a different type of school, what has been prominent for you in knowing the success of this team thus far...?

Head Middle school: I think that the clearest thing for me, its if something works here go and do it, there is a little bit more room to move in terms of finding things out in terms of the students and they are some great things in place, whereas in previous system you were probably bound in too much and follow rules that where designed by someone else that might not work in your place so for me here, you know(name) will say if you have an idea then let's go and do it and if you can get the rest of the community together and it works then it's a good thing, whereas at my last school that never happened from where I was from – not sounding to fluffy, it is amazing how much people help out here and it is a good staff and I think it is that idea that you don't make rules for the minority you make rules for the majority so if there is one or two percent of the staff not on board then don't worry about them, we get on with it, but most people have the students at the heart, they want to see the kids succeed here, you must have faith that everyone wants that, then if someone is saying that they are doing the best that they can do, then we believe them, that's what I have noticed. I have tried to set some rules in place for them to follow and allow them to put their own spin on it and then how do you work with your students as how they see fit.

**Commented [HS258]:** Supporting the majority and hope the minority follow on

So, there is a tightness that you are operating in but there is also flexibility and permission around that you have for your team?

Head of middle school: I think it kills spirit if you tell people what to do all the time, you know people have done five years if Uni and have their own personalities and they need to explore that to try and get the best out of their kids.

Principal: I think that is exactly right everyone has a task, whether it is around this table or wither it is around the outer table they have to own that task they have too, you know if they take that task on to teach year 7 music or whether to be head of school or whatever it happens to be they have to take that task on they have to explore what that means and that's though discussions through round table discussions in the group, but at the end of the day they own that task and they have to take responsibility for that, they have to be given permission to that task as they want too, you can't on one hand say here is the job and then on the other hand say this is how you are going to do it, you have to say here is the job talk to me about what you want to do and lets have discussions to resolve issues that we can work things through being able to move forward with you wanting to do that task, within the way you want to do it, I guess that's what underlines how I feel about when giving tasks to people and this is how they are going to do that task and this is how this weaves into the school and the kids. You know it's the same way we deal with teachers, they have trained, they are professionals, we have to trust them that they can do the job and if they prove to us that they can't, then we put measures in place to assist them, so we can assist them. I guess we work on these issues that arise when they arise, but people have to explore the opportunities in how they want to do this and the task themselves.

I am conscious of your time so we will stop here, thank you for your time today.

Recording was stopped here, and the group commenced their executive meeting

**Transcript of focus group... Session 3**  
**Research School**  
**Researcher: Helen Schiele**  
**Victoria University**

**Date: 9<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

**Those in attendance**

**Principal, Head of Junior, Middle and Upper Schools and the Head of Anglican Faith...**

**Absent: Business Manager**

**Code:**

**Researcher: text highlighted in blue**

**Where the school's name is cited, text will read (Name of school – NOS)**

Tape recorder was placed in the center of the table and the session was official recorded.

.....

I will move this into the middle of the table so everyone can hear, so just to go over our agreed Norms and Protocols that we established last time we met. There are four Norms and Protocols that we decided to honor as a working group.

**9. Respect we all wear different Hats**

- i.e. parent and leader
- Observations are about the role and not personal
- Each is availed the experience of feeling comfortable in the professional learning space

**10. Disagreeing well**

- As a staff we are able to disagree well
- We can all voice opinions
- We respect everyone
- We communicate openly

**11. We respect that we are contributing value to the team.**

- We put aside egos
- We know we are all contributing to the good of the school
- We work as a tight collaborative group

**12. What is said within the focus groups is confidential**

So, are we still happy with those Norms and Protocols?

Group all nodded as a sign of consensus.

Principal – had to leave the meeting / room due to an urgent phone call

**Commented [HS259]:** As set in other sessions the norms and protocols are read aloud and agreed upon thus giving all another chance to agree or disagree depending on level of readiness

Today I want to look at two tasks, so one is an activity that is a visible thinking routine a make meaning thinking routine, the task I asked you to complete from the work I sent through. You were to read over the transcript that I sent and to identify any key themes or insights that you had, that resonated for you, but more importantly resonated for the wider community. So, I just wanted to share some of the themes that were coming through for you and then if there maybe one or two generic common themes that resonated for you all, to nominate that core theme as one that we, will commence that deep dive into that theme using the said thinking routine.

**Commented [HS260]:** Had the goal of narrowing down to core issues as time was shortened in this session and I felt that there were burning issues to be agreed and or disagreed upon but at any point needed to be worked through and put on the table.

And the second part of the session is for us to really look at a backwards by design process. This will be data that will enable you to have some more input into your strategic planning day on the 15<sup>th</sup> of June... to do a backwards by design idea, we ask – what does an Anglican community really look like within the classroom, if this what the classroom is looking like, then what does the teacher need to look like, to be in that classroom, if this is our classroom and this is our teacher, what does the exec need to look like, if this is the classroom, the teacher, and the exec, what does the school council need to look like, and then going right back to what does the governing board need to look like.

**Commented [HS261]:** This is a technique that I have used before with teams as a facilitator. It allows team to annotate what should be included in the class, what does the teacher need to have a core skill set and how best can leadership support said outlooks for the group.

So we are giving you the permissions if you like, to document what are some of the core values and common language that is coming out – so does this sound all right for the time we have to work together?

Consensus is given from the group...

So, who would like to share some of their insights and wonderings that you had noted independently and then for the broader group...

I will – Head of Senior School  
Thank you (name)

I just wrote down some words that struck me and themes as they go, I wrote down honesty, openness, action, consultation, direction, professional relationships and connected action and direction, as things that I thought were probably articulated relevant to the individuals in the groups but also to those in the broader community.

Thank you – (Name)

**Commented [HS262]:** Key words listed here:- honesty, openness, action, consultation, direction, professional relationships and connected action and direction – believed these to be evident within the group and within the wider school community

Head of Junior School – well pretty well what (HOS) has just said, respect, integrity, open communication and with that comes transparency

And so that is for you and the broader community?

**Commented [HS263]:** Lack of independent thought and or lack of trust in not wanting to share true agenda – reoccurring themes of repeating other ideas:- respect, integrity, open communication and transparency

HOJ - yes

HOM – I think transparency is a good word and just reading through the notes, I think it is clearly evident that we support each other, at this stage, which is really important. I picked up on the importance of faith, I think we touched on that topic, we noted that everyone is at a different stage of their faith journey, but it is clearly evident that it plays a really important role and part in our school.

Thank you (Name)

HOF: yeah, I don't know that ... I am just reading over the question again in that we were asked to identify any issues as arising. I do agree with the common shared language being used.

I would like to note the idea of consistency; I would put it out there. I think the transcript indicated that as a collaborative group, as the exec, that we are supportive of one another, we are sharing a very similar vision I guess, ideas. I think putting this into practice into the big wide world, is becoming increasingly difficult as a school, as you progress, there are issues that arise that have to be dealt with. So I think, consistency is really important and I guess that supporting each other when we do realise issues are becoming harder to deal with and that we will require more time, even though we are time poor, and that we have good intentions in what we do about things, but that can go by the by, as life gets in the way...

So there were a couple of words that were quiet common for all of you, the words of consistency, faith was one that was quiet important and one that came through the transcripts in a prevalent way, was support and respect, with the idea of openness.

So, what vocab would you like to explore more deeply... what key themes, just hearing each other's comments and language that came out there.

HOF: I think support is a good word, but how it is, what does it look like on the ground... is important

HOM: I think transparency, so the cross over from when students go from one sub school to another sub school, it's important that we need to be more transparent to them, to form more togetherness rather than separately.

HOJ: well that's goes along with consistency

HOM: well I am, not saying we are separate, but we could do more (HOJ) well yes, we could do more...

HOM: well I think that relevant

HOF: I think that's relevant for all staff and students (HOJ- and ourselves) Yes...

What are you thinking?

**Commented [HS264]:** Transparency – first person to mention faith, each comes to the role within differing states of readiness to become faith bound and with that comes a spiritual and religious knowledge and faith centrality in the way one lives ones lives

**Commented [HS265]:** Took a broader approach: importance of the group sharing a common language, names a tension, putting common shared collaborative practices, into a daily practice within the wider school community. Thus a level of transference and a level of operating praxis is at disequilibrium. Issue of being time poor for key and core conversations to be held suggest a lack of time to ensure all are truly informed and share in the decision making process. Critical statement “that we have good intentions in what we do about things, but that can go by the by, as life gets in the way...

**Commented [HS266]:** Drilling down the granular aspects of the conversation :- consistency, faith, support, openness and respect

**Commented [HS267]:** The conversation here suggests a disconnect from each other, the silos of campuses and there is a lack of communication and a lack of togetherness, even though is gesture there is goodwill but in reality, there is disconnect.



HOS: I am thinking that most of the language, all pertains too maybe the catalyst for a lot of it was reflecting on the professional relationships. Which at the core of it, that's probably, that's the starting point in most of the language that came from that perspective that came out of that context. There are some things that we mentioned that were obviously broader, but I think, when it comes to respect, communication, and openness, can be pretty readily encapsulated into all our professional relationships ...

**Commented [HS268]:** Grouped into on key phrase 'professional relationships.

So is that a term we are happy to unpack further ...

The group gives consensus...

So, I have new markers and I have double sheeted the large poster size post its. so, we don't mark the wall... So, what I would like you to do is having agreed on the term professional relationships – so if you could grab one marker each and come around to this side of the table here... thank you

So, if we think about the term professional relationship, I want you to think about one word that comes to mind and write down that one word down – just on that sheet, just one word...

**Commented [HS269]:** Start of thinking routine : each member is write down one key word each.

The group is taking turns to write their individual word down... (wait time)

Looking at these words written, I would now like you to add on to someone else's word –

**Commented [HS270]:** Second part: seeing the words written down add onto someone's lese word i.e. ing, ed, 's

HOS: So, what are we are doing?

So, add on to some else's word, extend their thinking

HOF: can it be more than one word?

No, just one word, just add onto that one word

HOS: Rule breaker...

HOM: I am worried about spelling because (name) is here ...

HOF: So, this is why you should work in the junior school – will show you the way...

**Commented [HS271]:** Interesting commentary to be offered here tone was very sharp.

So as a group I would like you to talk about the connections that you can see there and to connect the ideas that are coming through these connections and to explain the connections that you have made between the languages that is there... This is when you get to chat as a group...

**Commented [HS272]:** Part three of the thinking routine: making connections within the words, can they be grouped or placed under a core descriptive heading.

Group is now standing around poster paper and to reviewing language shared  
See image inserted here...

HOF: Communication should be considered and respectful, (so do you want to make a connection) so I should draw an arrow (yes).

HOF: And good communications, as you need to listen.

So, pick another colour marker, so we can make different connections

HOF: I am doing this and my own or am I scribing?

**Well if you would like to scribe on behalf of the group?**

HOS: you need to put an arrow at both ends as communication is a two-way process.

Laughter by the group...

**What are you thinking?**

HOM: Well, this one here and how it links to communication, it's not a one size fits all, it's a considered approach, being thoughtful, it needs to be individualised, that links with being respectful with the person's situation, umm, rules, it's good to be honest and to follow the same structure and rules but sometimes you need to bend them a little bit for the individual person, so it's a bit more individualised...

HOF: being thoughtful and honest – there is a connection there.

HOF: honesty seems to be a bit separate over there ... (points to word on sheet)

**Why do you think that was not added on to?**

HOF: maybe we are not always honest. HOF: I see respect and honesty as, for me they are the same, they are very much...

HOS: I intentionally wrote considered not with a specific context in mind, I didn't mean considered as in considerate, that's how it's probably being interpreted... HOF: oh, as in thoughtful... HOS: yeah, careful, considered, I meant it to be both of those terms, so not knee jerk reactions to things, taking the time to consider the process and the course of action

**(Name - HOF) you thought... You thought that you were possibly not being honest, (laughter) what does that look like, you made the statement you thought (HOF) yeah I did (laughter) Just remembering our protocols we are okay to share here...**

HOF: yeah I will be honest, only to say that we are being dishonest, sometimes you may hold back, which is perhaps for me that's where I jumped to the considered that was careful, because depending on the situation I might feel, depending on the situation, that in this point of time in this communication, I will need to be more considered, so therefore it's not that I am being honest, sorry I am not being dishonest, I am just withholding...

Yeah / yes/ hum from the group

**So, you are shifting the lens you are looking through?**

**Commented [HS273]:** Two way process suggestion is met with laughter and a level of mockery

**Commented [HS274]:** Interesting commentary articulated here : being thoughtful and individualised can sometimes lead to an untruth to be able to support that one person – therefore is the group saying that the one is more important than the group ( Buber's ideas)

**Commented [HS275]:** Honesty was isolated on the page

**Commented [HS276]:** Here is the gold – maybe we are not always honest – the ideal of being within a faith-based school suggest that to uphold faith ones must be truthful in the eyes of God and do good for their fellow human

**Commented [HS277]:** Group seeking self-correction and definition of the meaning of the word considered

**Commented [HS278]:** The idea that honest suggests that one is heard and shares opinions but when holds back and chooses not to share opinion it is felt that there is a level of dishonesty - professional code of conduct

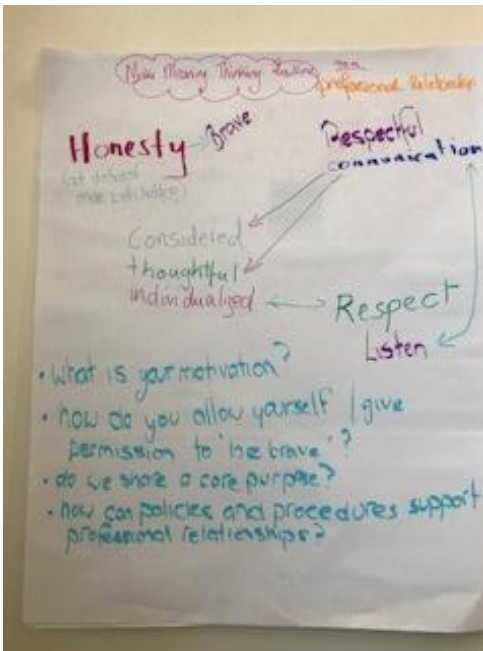
So could we make a few dot points regarding the relationship too HOF: Can I just say, if you are withholding information you are not being dishonest but you are holding a professional HOF: so can I put that it's not dishonesty ...HOS: well it can be though can't it? HOF: well is withholding being dishonest? HOS: well being careful and not sharing everything is different from omitting something that ought to have been shared, HOF: Yes. HOS: and even though the direct definition is the same, they are different

HOF: sometimes professionally you have to omit

HOS: I also wondered if it would show up in the transcripts that we noted that we needed a two-way communication that (name) was the only one that didn't laugh? (laughter from the group)

Any other explanatory notes you want to add to that ... (wait time)

HOS: I think we can add another thing on there, which is, maybe I would like to see the word brave there, because some of the things that you need to communicate, you can be thoughtful, considered in all those things and honest but it takes some bravery to actually proceed and have those difficult conversations



HOF: So, in which case there would be a strong a link between honesty and bravery

HOS: Because I think sometimes not communicating the things that ought to be communicated, particularly between staff members doesn't happen for fear of ... what that may be, so I think you need some courage in order to have those conversations in an honest and forthright way.

HOM: I think brave is a good word because its nearly the hardest things you can do or I think one of the hardest things you can do is to talk to someone about a problem that they have got, it's probably like professional honesty, you need to separate the social side of it, from the professional side of it, purely just in the business of getting the best out of someone and to do that you need to be brave...

It's a good word (Name – HOS)

**Commented [HS279]:** Really interesting exchange of ideas and opinions

**Commented [HS280]:** You have to omit – you have to withhold

**Commented [HS281]:** Notion of bravery is introduced to the group, to have difficult conversations suggests a level of bravery is needed

**Commented [HS282]:** Linking bravery with honesty – interesting that in a school where modeling honesty is sought withholding, needing to be seen to be brave are evidenced suggests a lack of willingness or lack of knowledge or understanding. Or can it be aligned with the work of Buber, second phase (I – you) in reaction to an encounter or object thus the notion of honesty and truth are seen as an encounter and thus are reacted too in differing ways.

**Commented [HS283]:** Not fully transparent and honest with each other

**Commented [HS284]:** Enabling others to grow suggests a level of honesty and bravery is required to ensure that professional dialogue and shit can occur.

So that's a really nice segway, so the next part of this task is to come up with some questions... so then, how do you enable yourself or have that permission to be brave, is that a question

that needs to be raised? So, think about other questions if you could write them up on the poster sticky note...

HOF: So, you want the questions?

Yes, any questions that has just come from your thinking there...

Wait time...

HOF: so, is it as simple, as how to be brave? Is that what we ... HOS: for me I would like to write what is my motivation? Because I think, you can be motivated by what you think ought to be done, you can be motivated by what you perceive your job to be and your level of courage and your level of commitment to what you need to do, will vary depending on your motivation...

Nice teachers writing (Name HOF)

HOF: I think this what you said before (Name of researcher)- how do you relate or give yourself permission (writing on board....)

HOS: because of some of what we have to do, will inherently compromise relationships and in a leadership role obviously the better communicator you are, the less likely those relationships will be compromised. But it's just part of the job description, is that at some point, you may need to ask or say something, or somebody to do something and they are not going to like, so compromise your relationships within it ...

HOM: and if you have a core purpose, I think all this stuff is easier because you can relate it back to that core purpose, like we want our school to be the best place it can be, or we want to grow our school, these things can be linked back to a core purpose...

So, is that another question for you, about core purpose and identifying needs of staff or students, what other questions could you phrase there?

Wait time ...

HOF: is it, do we share a core purpose?

Wait time

Yep, pop it up; it's all there for reflection. Thank you for scribing (Name: HOF)

What was it you were saying before you were having conversations with staff and people about... HOS: about compromising relationships? Yes. HOS: well it's part, at some point, it's what we have to do, you know ask the to do something they don't like or stop doing something they do like, there are going to be times where purely by virtue of your role, you

**Commented [HS285]:** Part four of the routine: write down questions about what has been share and noted

**Commented [HS286]:** What is your intent, your motivation – ere the ideal of professional praxis and semiotic artefacts can be worked through.

**Commented [HS287]:** Compromising relationships , being in leadership one needs to be a better communicator to ensure the sanctity of the relationships are protected.

**Commented [HS288]:** What is the group's core purpose what is at the heart of the school

**Commented [HS289]:** Staff vs students' needs

are in a position that you may compromise your relationship, obviously the better communicator you are and the better you are at those conversations the less compromising will occur, so it's an occupational hazard I suppose, those are the boarders we have to cross.

**Commented [HS290]:** Crossing boarders

So, is it more about how to deal with compromise, or how-to strategies, what is the language that is coming out for you when you are hearing that idea of compromise?

HOS: when I say compromise, I am not talking about when we are seeing something, I am saying that it's when the relationship itself may deteriorate, it a matter of... HOJ: is it planning compromise? Like as leaders, when we know we are going into a situation where we have to be brave or perhaps have that the difficult conversations is it about planning prior to that what compromise you are willing to have ... HOS: I think these things up here are key to it, you know if sit down with someone and say you need to go on camp next week, that's being very respectful or thoughtful or considered but if you sat down with someone and you were thoughtful, considerate and respectful and say we are really stuck can you go on this camp and help us, you know it's success with those, you those communications center around these values that we have written up there, I think...

**Commented [HS291]:** This going around in circles here, there is a permission given to withhold to protect a relationships, but done is a considered way

HOF: I think those conversations though, are easier to have if you have legitimate, I do know polices or procedures of something in place to support you when you all, I know we used that camp one as an example but it is a classic at this school, you know, there are many members of staff, that feel that they are coerced into camp when others don't, there is a very strong felling of that, I know we were just using that as example but I think if we had some clearish guidelines around who attends camp extra, extra, then when you have to that conversation a) that staff members knows that there are guidelines are published and transparent and b) it's your evidence you are not just going in and saying I think you have ought to go to camp, you are saying that this is our ... it takes some of that personal out of it

**Commented [HS292]:** Formalizing procedures to a common understanding and a sense of fairness that all are being treated in the same way.

So, is this an opportunity to phrase a question around how can policies and procedures support professional relationships?

Yep, yes...

HOS: it has certainly been an observation of mine since I started here, being a public policy person full stop, was probably was what I perceived as the lack of policy and procedures generally ...

**Commented [HS293]:** Real tension the lack policy and procedures.

**Commented [HS294R293]:**

HOF: and that's history, because we have been and I know that we are not any more that we have that hangover small, small staff, financially tight all of those things, have meant looseness around policy and procedures but that not us as a school any more, I don't think... HOS: we can't allow it to be, as we grow and we need that to ... HOJ: and we need to be talking about it not just at a senior staffing level to that grass roots of students, parents,

**Commented [HS295]:** Historical and collective way of doing things a convention from the past that has created an accepted looseness around the establishment and tightness around policy (Senge)

HOF: what was it again ... how can policy and procedures support professional relationships?

**Commented [HS296]:** A cultural shift has to occur as the school grows to ensure policy and producers and in place

So, if you were asked now looking at that information and that discussion, we just had what is the group's definition of what is a professional relationship? As the final part of this task...

**Commented [HS297]:** Final part of the task recreate a new definition of what a professional relationship is

HOS: there are two aspects to this professional relationships as in the overall overarching thing as a category and then there are those in a professional relationship in a relationship that is professional in the way you conduct yourself...

**Commented [HS298]:** Two elements here 'type and conduct

HOM: I think a professional relationship is getting the best from someone else, you know what I mean, like... HOJ: being the best you can be... HOM: yeah, making others around you better through the use of all those words ... HOS: modeling values that we agreed were important...

**Commented [HS299]:** Encouraging the best of others – praxis

So have a go writing down a definition down as a group... you may want to take this as two different aspects or two different sides of the coin, or an overall definition of professional relationships. It could be at NOS a professional relationship is ... what ...

HOS: so maybe we could say that a professional relationship looks like and it may be easier to... HOF: or is it where one is or agreed or whatever... HOJ: it almost needs another dot point. HOF: where a shared purpose and work towards that purpose with respectful, honest, considered, thoughtful communication

HOM: you need that sentence in there with those words in there I think, getting the best out of yourself and others by using those techniques or actions

HOS: it's sort of hard to get the best out of yourself; it almost has to be something like ... prompts optimal performance... (Hmmm, silence from the group...)

**Commented [HS300]:** Conversation ranging and scoping ideas

HOS: Because a professional relationship is getting the most out of yourself ... HOJ: and promotes excellence – yeah... HOF: so, a professional relationship is one where, are they called participants or the? Those involved, share a common purpose, because that's what at the center, that's why we you have a relationship in the first place, you... you are here for a common purpose, HOM: you are using... HOF: and yeah ... HOS: you should be able to have a professional relationship within someone that doesn't share your common purpose, though shouldn't you?

**Commented [HS301]:** The idea of the common purpose is raised but is never clearly articulated by the group a real disconnect between working for the common purposed because it is not truly understood and the idea of working in professional relationship with someone who does hold the same purpose. Surely working in a faith-based school the common purpose is set around the students but very rarely are the students voiced here.

HOF: it's that whole idea ... but in our setting, it should be at the core of what we do... that should be our common purpose HOS: there is that level at the top, but there is also the level I see, your core, if you go right down to your role, your core purpose is to promote Anglican identity and to judge that, whereas mine is the senior school, they are aligned but they are not exactly the same either, but then we go those upper levels, it's the promotion of the school, because then it depends how far you go, because eventually you know if you are talking about your RAVE classes versus my legal studies class, we could be opposing things at one time ... HOF: then the phrase at its heart or something like that, at the center, is a shared purpose, where all of those are true but at the end of the day we are both here for the one... HOS: so a professional relationship at (NOS) recognises the core purpose of

**Commented [HS302]:** Role descriptions and a clear line in drawn between faith and secular studies

progressing the school, and fulfilling the potential of the school and we recognise that within the context of our own roles that are not necessarily always aligned ...

HOS: that promotes optimal performance and all those other things, which can be different things for different people tagging with superlatives like excellence and all that other stuff is probably not productive but wherever you are at ... optimal performance and then you have got this, which you could probably look at this as pathways ...

HOF: facilitated by respectful, communication blah, blah...

So, can we capture a statement up there?

### Principal enter the room

Principal: apologies ladies and gentlemen, well there was some good news, someone delivered a cup of coffee to my desk... so I lucked out

So the group shared their insights and issues arising from the transcript and the common theme that was felt that needed or desired to be unpacked further was the term professional relationship, so each of the group nominated a key word and added onto that, they have unpacked and raised a series of questions around that and now we are creating a definition of what that looks like.

HOJ: has at its core, center, recognises ...

HOF: (*Scribing for the group still*) Recognises that... HOS: recognises that the promotion of the school and the school's potential is the overriding...

HOF: are we agreed on the wording of the school's potential?

Principal: which one are we looking at?

HOF: *writing on poster note – wait time* ... the school's potential is at the core, is that where we are going? HOS: well I said, is the overriding shared value, I don't know, I am just throwing out ideas... within which other some... HOF: overriding or underpinning... will we say core value or what do we ... (*writing – wait time*)

HOM: of optimal performance HOJ: of which, we all work for. HOS: what about the core value that governs, don't write this yet, that governs the sometimes-conflicting motivation of, you know competing motivations of different roles, because trying to express that articulately... So we all have roles that sometimes compete or conflict but we recognise the school should come first and on top of that, we govern our relationships with an eye to that overriding principle that the school comes first and what is best for the school comes first but we just need to articulate that better...

HOJ: governs our decisions?

**Commented [HS303]:** Definition being shaped reads" so a professional relationship at (NOS) recognises the core purpose of progressing the school, and fulfilling the potential of the school and we recognise that within the context of our own roles that are not necessarily always aligned ...

**Commented [HS304]:** A phrase that is shared time and again optimal performance

**Commented [HS305]:** I feel the group is traversing away from the topic optimal performance – has thrown them...

**Commented [HS306]:** I am conscious I don't want to interpret here but they are missing the core term...

**Commented [HS307]:** Again the idea that the roles and motivations are disconnected or are seen as competing against one another.



HOM: to achieve optimal performance?

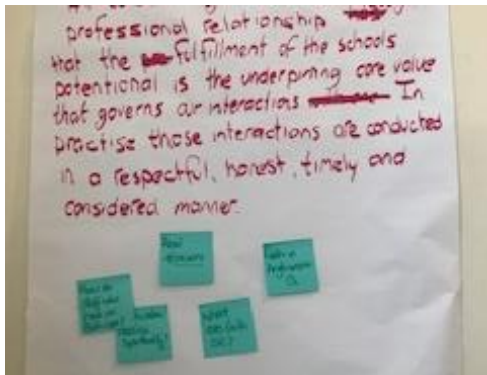
HOS: that governs our interactions with each other ... HOF: with one another

HOF: do we need to say who the interactions are with, are we closing it off by saying with one another HOF: or within the community HOJ: because we are talking about all those different layers of relationship ... HOS: so even when individual interests conflict, you know something like that...

HOF: do we need too... is that not stating the obvious, do we need to state that, if we are saying, if within this statement we are saying at the end of the day, the core purpose is this, then that is our starting point for our relationships and then we are going onto say ... HOJ: so this is what they are, so do we need to have anything after interactions? Is it that, just that, this underpins our core value and governs our interactions and leave it at there...

HOF: (NOS) professional relationships recognises the fulfillment of the school potential is the underpinning core value that governs our interactions...

Are you happy with that? That's something nice to take to the strategic planning day...



HOF: are we finished, are we going on?

HOS: do we need to add the sort of ... HOF: we do need to say, that in practice those interactions are governed by or are considered by blah, blah blah...

HOF: in practice is that the phrase... (Writing on poster notes...)

HOS: those interactions are conducted in a respectful, honest, thoughtful fashion...

HOF: so, we are putting in, in a respectful, honest... HOS: whatever else we put in there, leave considered to last ... HOF: so, we have respectful, honest, thoughtful are they similar?

HOS: timely... HOJ: timely that's good ...

HOF: is that enough

The group step back, and reads over the work...

What are your thoughts?

**Commented [HS308]:** Governs interactions

**Commented [HS309]:** Scoping out who they are working with...

**Commented [HS310]:** They are bringing it back to the term professional relationship

**Commented [HS311]:** Final statement is read

**Commented [HS312]:** In practice naming core ideals and protocols

**Commented [HS313]:** How they are carried out

**Commented [HS314]:** Now they are pushing in as many words as they can, I don't want to direct the group but they are really unclear and the executive groups this a concerning observation to be made,



HOM: yeah, it's good

HOS: I don't know why you would cross that twice ...

So, is that, and thank you (Name) for scribing, so (Name) had the power of the pen, so (Name) can select the next scribe HOF: so, am I being demoted? No, you can keep going if you like... So, if that is your professional relationship, what does the classroom, I am just going to add paper to this, so we don't write on the wall.

So, if this is your professional relationship, what does your classroom need to look like, sound like, and feel like in an Anglican community?

HOS: with regards to teachers and children that definition up there should be applicable to every relationship in the school ... HOF: that's what I was, you know when we were creating it, that's were my head was, can these words we are using be applied throughout the school?

So if you were to add to that, and add dot points and you were thinking about, what does the classroom really need to look like, sound like, how is it going to feel as dot points and then what does the teacher need to do to enable that classroom, it's that backwards by design, this is our classroom, this is our core purpose is our school, therefore it is our classroom, if this is what our classrooms needs to look like, sound like, feel like, what does the teacher need to have to be able to enable that classroom?

HOS: you know people may disagree with me here, I am not sure the core purpose is the classroom, necessarily managing corresponds with the core purpose of the school, the core purpose of the classroom has to be the education of the kids and even though they are obviously aligned they are not the same thing.

So if we are thinking about the term a classroom within an Anglican community building along with this as your core work, within your relational trust that we have got operating, what's that classroom going to be like and what's the teacher going to be like, because I am conscious of time we are not going to be able to get through the others.

HOM: the classroom needs to be safe ...

So, do we want to add dot points to that to highlight your thinking?

HOS: maybe stimulating,

HOF: it needs to be accepting. HOF: is that like inclusion, you know all of those things ...

**Commented [HS315]:** A wondering does this relationships describe all relations operating within the school community and with all key stakeholders.

**Commented [HS316]:** We start to unpack what this will look like in the classroom

HOF: it needs to be respectful ... HOM: something around play... Engaged from the group.



You will need to shift the paper up as I haven't doubled sided that one

HOF: challenging HOM: yeah, good one ...

So how does that classroom fit into the Anglican community?

HOM: well we are inclusive aren't we as an Anglican school ... HOS: I don't know do we add spiritual or something like that...

HOF: well it needs to be encouraging of all

of these things, yes, we set that tone for yes, that's what we want our classroom to be like, but we also need to encourage those students to acknowledge those things for other people, so they are accepting of other people and inclusive of others and learn to be respectful ... you know...

HOS: for the moment, I don't think there is anything up there that is uniquely Anglican, you know if you got a group of teachers together anywhere in any school they would say the same stuff, so what sets us apart, it's got to be something to do with ... the group all say faith at the same time ...

HOM: but are our classes faith based?

HOS: do they acknowledge faith, you know we have got the prayer tables and the cloths and everything else, so even if it is symbolic of faith, someone could argue at worse maybe that it is superficial, but it is there none the less...

Principal: I think there would be some people who would argue that it is superficial, but the fact the we go the trouble of doing it and that we are serious about it and we have committed time and funds towards establishing a senior person in the school, a Chaplin, connection with the church, whatever people would see, we are serious...

How do you then have that authenticity, shown within the classroom, so then you disrupt that possible situation of it being seen as superficial and that it is authentic and lived?

HOF: so, the classroom needs to provide opportunity for spiritual development ...

HOM: spiritually nourishing, yeah, you don't have to take up the opportunity but ... HOF: promotes spirituality ... HOM: are we allowed to have two words? You can have as many words as you like... There are no descriptors now, it's just about scoping out your thinking HOM: do we have to be specific with the word Anglican or faith?

**Commented [HS317]:** Team generates list – fairly generic and non-descript

**Commented [HS318]:** I raise the language of Anglicanism here

**Commented [HS319]:** Spiritual is offered

**Commented [HS320]:** Named as generic and not unique to the school setting

**Commented [HS321]:** Semiotic artefacts are e drawn upon as symbols of faith

**Commented [HS322]:** Argued that the symbols are authentic and valued within the setting and are not tokenistic

Principal: I don't think so

HOF: because faith promotes a faith journey, whatever that looks like for any kid

**Commented [HS323]:** Allowing faith in the classroom – faith journey

HOS: I think a lot of it falls onto the teacher of whatever subject it is, I know when I was teaching in primary I would refer to faith based things all the time, even if I was talking about politics, humanities or whatever it is, you know it falls to the teacher. HOF: we have had those conversations at a staff level around how have you implemented conversations about faith in your classroom, we have done that a couple of times.

**Commented [HS324]:** Done this a couple of times how to teach or weave faith into the classroom this is a real tension

Is there a confidence by staff to do that, I am just wondering as we have that sheet of paper there with teachers as the heading, is there a confidence or a skill set that they need to have?

HOF: I would say ... Or a comfort level... HOF: yeah, I would say a comfort level, some staff are very comfortable and others don't see an opportunity or make a connection... HOM: the ones that are comfortable have had access to tools that they can use through our days at the start of the year and the prayers that you run... HOF: yeah and I think that encouraging staff to have a faith conversation is not necessarily this what the scripture says or the gospel says or we will say a prayer about it, it's not what a faith conversation has to be ... HOJ: it's an open conversation isn't it? HOF: so, we have chosen, certainly with the mindfulness and the labyrinth and those ideas where we are trying to encourage staff to take up those tools...

**Commented [HS325]:** Level of comfort, knowledge ? some make an effort to make a connection

**Commented [HS326]:** Open conversation, faith conversation what is different here ?

HOS: and quiet often it's in the reflection in reality and ... HOJ: you and with students we are encouraging them to be inquiry based, which sort of broadens our faith, which is why I suspect why we attract people of different faiths to our school

**Commented [HS327]:** Attracting differing faiths to the school but yet one faith is only really acknowledged according to the Commissions requirements.

HOM: I think that there is enough professional development that we do along the way that we encourage staff to take up the opportunity ...

Principal: and also we are on purpose, steering away from Anglicanism into faith, so it becomes more inclusive, there is more buy-in, because people of different faiths, peoples indeed of no faith are still included, and we make it clear that you don't have to have a faith to be included because you are included anyway, so whereas you must be Anglican, no, so what we are looking for is spirituality and what we are looking for, is buy-in for what we stand for...

**Commented [HS328]:** Huge statement 'steering away from Anglicanism into faith, so it becomes more inclusive' This is at odds with what the commission is seeking and the notion of faith within an Anglican school

HOF: it's the language that we have been using around what does the classroom look like, so is it we want to encourage spiritual reflection or... HOJ: spiritual journey or HOM: faith-based journeys or opportunities

HOS: I think we have probably encapsulated it with the word spirituality, is that presenting ...

HOM: so, I am writing spirituality?

So, for the teacher is it about having that level of confidence to engage within a faith-based conversations rather than a scripture or dogma of Anglicanism?

HOS: and that is easier to do teaching year 6 English or humanities than it is teaching year 11 biology, you know between home rooms and all that other stuff there is plenty of opportunity, it is harder for some classes than others particularly senior sciences all that sort of stuff

Principal: you know what we are promoting is for staff to feel comfortable with the concept and then you take those opportunities as they come.

HOF: and often there is not, you know it maybe a teaching or learning moment opportunity or it could just be a relationship opportunity where you are having a conversation with a student or a group of students that becomes a conversation about someone's faith or kids might have a question about parent faith, your faith, whatever it might be, so to me that's a really good relationship building opportunity as well.

And that takes confidence and trust and it comes back to that word that (name) raised earlier in the session to be brave, because you are not always knowing where that conversation is going to go, it's not the chalk and talk and suddenly you are not the expert, no longer the sage on the stage ... HOF: and it's the teachers who have been given the permission to, you know it's not like you can say the wrong thing, well I guess you can, but if you are honest in your conversations ... HOM: you are allowed to get it wrong HOF: yep, that's right and you are allowed to say 'I am not sure about that' or let's explore that further or whatever that might be...

So, who gives you that permission does it comes the leadership group, from the exec or from themselves?

HOF: I feel confident when we have had those discussions around those complications, that I tried to say eluding to that, perhaps that's not been done explicit enough, maybe that's something to consider, but certainly I think the teachers within themselves ...

HOF: and the induction process for new staff is very much around that, and that was the message that I took home from those induction sessions I have been part of.

HOF: so all new staff attends the inductions... HOM: yeah that was a good day, the first one we went on... HOF: yeah, and then the Christian purposes day was the follow up which again gave staff the skills to know that they can explore that discussion with students and if they not comfortable, then they know what they can do and where they can go, I think if you said to any staff here they would all know exactly where it sits to have that discussion...

That time has gone so quickly...

HOF: you know when we're looking at professional relationships should we have mentioned spirituality or faith?

**Commented [HS329]:** So for the teacher is it about having that level of confidence to engage within a faith based conversations rather than a scripture or dogma of Anglicanism – risky question to pose but I felt it was necessary one to offer at this point in time

**Commented [HS330]:** Where is the best fit for faith to sit within a subject area?

**Commented [HS331]:** Embrace the teachable moment.

**Commented [HS332]:** To be brave in offering opportunity to discuss faith and what it means to self

**Commented [HS333]:** Induction day / Christian purposes day – having time protected and dedicated to speak upon faith and connection to and with it within the journey of the school

**Commented [HS334]:** Reflective moment back to professional relationships the absence of faith

Okay what would that look like for you (Name)?

Wait time

HOF: I am not sure... HOS: well it would have to go in the top part... HOJ: yeah it would have to go in the top part somewhere...

Wait time ...

Principal: this might be, well if we took this to our strategic planning day and if that is distributed to all of us, I don't think there is an imperative to get it right ...

HOS: does it belong there?

HOF: well I think it does but not quite sure where...

Principal: well I am inclined to think that if you put that in there, are there other things that need to go... but that's okay

**Commented [HS335]:** Are there other elements that need to be addressed here, not unpacked or offered by the principal at this point in time

HOF: you know is it something that we have discussed and it is something that is coming through the transcripts very strongly that faith is pivotal but is that one of those times where... HOS: I just don't know where if we are talking specifically talking about professional relationships, I am not sure, that it has to be mentioned in an explicit manner, it is implied in there because of the fulfillment of the school's potential and Anglicanism is integral to that part but when we are talking about purely definitional terms, I think we are putting something in there that doesn't necessarily fit in that specific context.

**Commented [HS336]:** Pushback

So what was coming through, is that within the faith, your values are there and one of those things that has come through very strongly from this exec group is a mindfulness to model, so how are you modeling that professional relationship based upon faith based values, I guess is my provocation back to you...

Principal: and I think too, that when you read that statement, you have got to be able to say, if someone was to come along to the school and read that statement does that describe (NOS) because they know nothing about the school

**Commented [HS337]:** Lack of the school indent within the statement

HOF: (name of HOS) made a really good point before when you said that without the spirituality part any classroom could look like that ...

HOS: we weren't asked to define what the school looked like we were asked to define what our professional relationships are on a professional level... HOJ: that was the key point

**Commented [HS338]:** Lack of consideration is offered to poor questioning offered by the researcher – I cannot lead the group only set the lines

HOF: you know I am conscious too, about times where we have spoken about where as a professional at (NOS) there is a requirement to subscribe to the ideas presented around faith and spirituality, so we are not suggesting within our statement here, that if it's not eluded

too, but if it's not there then somewhere... HOM: but our professional relationships might look different to another school because of our faith so we need to include that... I see what you mean...

HOS: you could put a full stop at the end of respected, timely and considered in the tradition of the Anglican faith or something along those lines ... Principal maybe that's one we can take away and that we come back with our ideas... HOM: spiritual and considered?

HOS: I prefer spiritual manner rather than an Anglican faith because it gives a sense of being of faith rather than being that closed Anglican mindset.

HOM: because you have already used four of those descriptive words there, it might not take much to put it in spiritual there ...

HOS: I don't think you can have a definition of professional relationship, that if we are going to use that as a definition, that you know put in a job description, that when you have people here by their own omission are spiritual, I just think that as much as it is very closely aligned and as much as would encourage it and do all those sorts of things, I don't think you can be that explicit in the full knowledge that you have members of staff that are not spiritual...

HOM: I think we are adding more to the question now than what the question was posed at the start ...

Power of reflection, good isn't it, thank you so much everyone. Allotted time with staff ended ... next session protected for the 6<sup>th</sup> of June

**Commented [HS339]:** Core observation *but our professional relationships might look different to another school because of our faith so we need to include that...*

**Commented [HS340]:** Massive stamen one that suggests that there is an unease *I prefer spiritual manner rather than an Anglican faith because it gives a sense of being of faith rather than being that closed Anglican mindset*

**Transcript of focus group... Session 4**  
**Research School**  
**Researcher: Helen Schiele**  
**Victoria University**

**Date: 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

**Those in attendance**

**Principal, Head of Junior, Middle and Upper Schools and the Head of Anglican Faith...**

**Absent: Business Manager**

**Code:**

**Researcher: text highlighted in blue**

**Where the school's name is cited, text will read (Name of school – NOS)**

Tape recorder was placed in the center of the table and the session was officially recorded.

Due to time and tasks that had to be addressed by the group and senior leadership, our time was slightly reduced, as such the formality of reading out the protected norms and protocols were waved.

Due to matters within the school the principal was absent from the session...

Welcome, how are we all feeling and doing, surviving? (Wait time ...) We're okay, all surviving?

HOF: We are all under the pump a little

HOJ: Surviving is a good word.

Has everyone got copies of the transcripts I sent through? Yes...

HOS: Not on me HOJ: that's okay you can share mine...

So, you had a little bit of home play from me ... HOF: I couldn't find it... That's strange it was in the bulk of the email... HOF the heading was transcripts and tasks, transcript was attached and nothing else

HOM: we tried, HOS: there was different attachments HOF: yeah but that was images and stuff. HOF: there were no words in the email, just the heading.

That is so frustrating, you can tell it's time to get a new computer. Okay, so what I would like you to do between now and the 15<sup>th</sup> if possible is just to write a minimum, no more than 250 words, we are talking a couple of paragraphs about what you gleamed from the transcript, that we sent through, I am just checking my emails.

**Commented [HS341]:** A code of conduct issue had been raised within the school and immediate action had to be taken by the principal

**Commented [HS342]:** Leadership team has been under the pump which has seen significant delay in the processing of the data needed for this work.

**Commented [HS343]:** ICT issues yet no one on the team let me know that the attachments did not go through even though they did from my end as I checked.

HOF: the 15<sup>th</sup> being... The Saturday. HOF: our strategic planning day? Yes, so that would be really nice to have if possible. The thing I really wanted to talk about today, was what came through very strongly in the transcript. That there is a real sense, of a need or a desire in our conversations when we started to talk about the classroom. (Named staff member) you made those really poignant comments when we were describing the classroom, that is could be any classroom anywhere, so it's really about what defines you and what makes you a different school from the others. So, what I really would like to talk about today is what is it – a culturally and religiously responsive curriculum, what is your 'culture' that you want to define and what is 'religion' looking like for you now, because there was that sort of, not disconnect, but there was a rigorous discussion around Anglicanism and faith.

Having taught at a couple of high Anglican schools, which were almost catholic like in mode, are you there or in the idea of Anglicanism, which is about embracing all faiths. So, if we can just, I am happy to put sticky notes back up, I have got your notes from last time to act as triggers, just the idea of what is a culturally and religious responsive curriculum for (NOS). So we can use this time, really nutting that out, because that's where we have got up too, at that end point, when we last met, we discussed what's our classroom looking like and then making that end point of difference – I think (name of staff member) really summed that well last time.

HOS: We are very much in the mode of embracing all faiths...

HOF: yeah, absolutely, but that's our, I don't want to use the word mandate, that sounds too strong a word, but that's what the Anglican commission direction is, like for me, I would much prefer being that, then the more extreme, elitist kind of ...

HOS: well I think the ASC (Anglican Schools Commission) I think Peter Lawrence would make a very clear distinction between them and even the Sydney, eastern seaboard...

HOF: that was really obvious to me last year at the conference in Sydney, and for someone who did not know all about all the politics that has gone on, that was really, a totally feel, then what we are, and even what they were espousing at the conference wasn't what we would be espousing...

HOF: no

HOF: and that sits well with me ...

HOF: that embracing of faith and that inclusivity ...

So how do you do that, how do you make that difference, from the school up the road. You know, I taught at Ballarat Grammar and at St. Michaels, which are both as you say, very elite high Anglican schools – where there was a lot of pomp and circumstance. How do you make that different and really lived for you in a (name of town) culture, and what is a (name of town) culture?

**Commented [HS344]:** Offered a review of the transcript and a series of wonderings

**Commented [HS345]:** From an insider researcher position there is a perception that there is a disconnect a tension how can one accept all faiths and yet be of one faith?

**Commented [HS346]:** Tension highlighted here what the commission decrees to what is sought by the school

**Commented [HS347]:** Named tension – how can this be lived in a truly authentic way within the school and within the operating level of praxis within the leadership group

**Commented [HS348]:** Seeking to identify the funds of knowledge and the cultural capital evident within the school community



HOS: we actively look for opportunities to **express** their faiths, whatever that may be, embracing, encouraging. We have a Muslim school captain ...

**Commented [HS349]:** Muslim school caption – wondering question which I did not ask but how this boy pray 5 times per day within an Anglican building

**So, if we were to define that culture, would any like to be scribe? Look pretty markers...**  
(Name of staff member)

HOF: you are always going to get (Name – HOF) with pretty markers ...

**So, if we were are looking at a culturally and religiously responsive curriculum what is the culture of (name of school)**

HOS: Sorry can you rephrase the question?

**So, if someone were to ask you what is the lived culture at (NOS) what would you say?**

HOF: inclusive

HOF: **community**

**Commented [HS350]:** Hoped aspiration is for the school to be inclusive and community centric

HOF: well this is what we hope for, this what we strive for, to do ...

HOF: we talk to parents, to see, what they see as community...

**If we put just a couple of key words down, inclusive, community... so everyone keeps saying we hope... so how do we make this a guaranteed outcome, that it is lived...?**

**Commented [HS351]:** Questioned the use of the language of hoped

HOF: I think as (name of HOS) said before it is looking for those opportunity and acting on those opportunities so providing, really **providing** opportunity ...

**Commented [HS352]:** Mindfulness to openness

HOS: 'My Story ...' our school assemblies where the kids share their stories no matter whatever it is, no matter the background... HOF: it's not necessarily a spiritual or faith story, it is important in sharing their **journey** ... HOS: its highlighting community

**Commented [HS353]:** Honouring the individuals funds of knowledge and the journey that they have made to get here

HOM: there are lot of things we do in curriculum which other schools do as well, like reading, I think we are always actively looking for community, for parent helpers, you know every school does cross country, but we have so many parents down there, the school BBQ, we had a huge uptake earlier this year. You know we still do similar things like other schools do, but what I found is that the community here is really sought **out**, how can we include that.

**Commented [HS354]:** Creating input from and gatherings with communities input and participation.

HOS: the fact that it is a P – 12 school, I think that inherently, makes people more invested in the place **for** a longer term...

**Commented [HS355]:** Sense of longevity – the journey of the school seeks a longer commitment from families and parents

**So, does that dictate the sort of culture that exists, because of that difference in being a P – 12?**

HOF: what in comparison to other schools? **Yes, like just like normal stand-alone primary or other like schools, (wait time) because there is a greater longevity here?**

HOM: I think because there is more parental involvement in primary schools, would you agree? Therefore if those students continue onto the high school, they are just use to, you know they are at the same school, perhaps if they were sent away to another high school, it would be the teacher's jobs, because they have already had that parental involvement in the primary years it continues, it flows through to the secondary school...

**Commented [HS356]:** An assumption but not guaranteed that commitment continues into the secondary years.

HOF: there is the natural occurrence of parents, when there are young and they are not in full time work and that sort of thing, that allows them to be more a part of the community, but as their kids get older, you know we recognise that a majority of our cliental has to be two working parent families, there are not too many who have the luxury of not being able not to work... HOJ: and don't necessarily work in (name of town) either ... HOF: so distance and work commitments might mean that they haven't got that time for that drop off and that parental involvement, so we have to look for those opportunities to make sure that we keep them as involved as we can, timing events so our breakfasts, mothers days, fathers days trying to make these community events at times where people can be here...

**Commented [HS357]:** Proactivity seeks out parent input

You make the point, that there is distance to come here, so obviously there has been a choice to come here, what is it that makes parents choose to come here?

HOF: parents feel like their kids are valued and listened too, having their needs met here rather than being lost in a big system.

**Commented [HS358]:** Parents choose this school over others due to size and care

HOJ: that's an interesting question, because I finding that there is more and more and it's probably being reflected more in teaching in general not necessarily in independent schools, the expectation of parents of what teachers can teach, is greater now than what it used to be, but an independent school it takes it one step further. For parents who are paying fees, believe that we should be teaching more, so what they are not doing or teaching at home, it might be just be the day to day, follow the rules, being respectful, they are expecting because they are paying fees that we will go that one step further...

**Commented [HS359]:** Being an independent school suggest that due to fee paying systems that parents are more demanding and expect more for their dollar

So is there almost like three separate cultures or three cultures that intersect with the idea of your community and then you have got your faith based element, but then you have the independent faith based school element, are they distinct from each other or do they intercede or interact with one another?

HOF: I think that, that independent idea, is really interesting because we still have some people within the community and its terminology too, that will go oh CAGS or Name of school that private school and what that conjures up in terms of what that means ...

**Commented [HS360]:** Culture of an independent school what does that translate into within the wider community?  
Independent vs private – suggestion of elitism

HOS: certainly since I have been here it's been my perception in talking to parents that there is certainly a percentage, that come here because it is a private school and that has become an attraction and continues to become an attraction as we establish ourselves as a destination school, we are trying to build on that reputation and I think that is happening ...

**Commented [HS361]:** Rebranding as a destination school – private school building and creating higher expectation and value for money

HOF: but at the same time, we are not 'that private school', I don't feel, because we are a low fee-paying independent school and for **me** that is different from other private schools or is it just terminology?

**Commented [HS362]:** That private school – comparison seeking clarification from peers

HOS: you know we are not a state school and we are not a catholic school because people like to say it's a private **school**.

**Commented [HS363]:** Community like to refer to the school as a private school and as such hold onto that image of the private school system

HOM: you know we pay a bit more money than the high school; nicer uniform than the high school and it has the word Grammar in **the** title.

**Commented [HS364]:** Elephant in the room – Grammar school – suggests private school affiliation and association

HOF: so it's a perception I think, you know, because, particularly when we talk to the kids, it's really interesting talking to the kids in those conversations were they have started to realise as they go through school that yes we pay fees extra, extra, but we are not, even like (named another like school) in terms of fees, because there is quite a distinction fee there and when go further afield to Melbourne to the like schools in Melbourne and discuss what the fess of those schools are ... I am making HOS: we are new money, new money ... HOF: do you think? New money, private really? we are no money private, there are not too many of those families **that**, let's be real that we have too many families that have wealth...

**Commented [HS365]:** Huge statement about new money and perceptions of wealth and what that brings as status symbol to the school in its attempts to rebrand and re situate itself within the school community.

HOS: I think that's what we will change with us, as we become more and more established, once we have the buildings and everything else, the demographic will change, that's what I believe and I have seen it change since I have been back in town, anyway. My perception of this school before I started working here was vastly different to the reality of it **now**.

**Commented [HS366]:** Brought with him a set perception of what the school was and now the change has occurred due to changes in the look and establishment of the buildings and grounds remodeled – suggest that the school is seeking out a different type of parent cohort and thus demographic.

### So, what was significant for you to change that mindset?

HOS: So what was significant for me to change that mindset, other than to experience firsthand, well definitely it use to be the school where you sent kids who didn't fit in anywhere else, if you go back, that was the widely held community view... HOF: how far back do you **think** that is (name of colleague)? HOJ: I don't think it is that far back...

**Commented [HS367]:** A traditional view that the school was a dead zone in the sense is was a place of last resort a place to send your children who did not fit into the other schools situated within the community. The school due to its size was seen as one that could support students with special needs be it social or emotional

HOS: well that perception was certainly lingering around when I came back to town seven years ago, whenever it **was**...

**Commented [HS368]:** Historical semiotic artifact of perception

HOF: that is really interesting, it was almost to the point that we were almost another special school ... HOJ: well, I know I have heard people over the last three or four years refer to **certain** kids as you have taken them on, as they don't fit in anywhere else, but they will be fine at your school.

**Commented [HS369]:** Classified as a special needs school – taking on these kids...

HOM: that's the word I heard when I first moved to the area it was a borderline special school, for those kids who **didn't** fit in.

**Commented [HS370]:** A place where children who didn't fit in were sent – they were not sent here for academic rigor or prestige they were sent here because no one else would take them.

HOJ: socially awkward people... HOM: most recently, the things I have heard in the community are you must have money because that's why you are sending your kids to (NOS), so I think there has a been a shift and I have **not** worked here that long, it's the stuff, the perception again ... HOF: so do you think anywhere, now I am asking the questions,

**Commented [HS371]:** Now the perception is that this is a destination school one where to attend one must have money – not seen as a school of religion or faith

anywhere in the perception in the community, what do people perceive about our faith and our religion? HOJ: I have haven't really... I don't ever hear

Was there significant change, when you changed the name, and you were no longer (previous name of school)?

HOF: I think it was a strategic change and probably ... HOJ: I think the perception around town the Grammar part, that there was a perception of change that the fact the word Grammar was used, but I don't think anyone has picked up on the Anglican side of it...

HOF: you know (previous name) sounded so religious, was that something that turned people away and people off, and in some minds that must have had something to do with it, otherwise why would you change the name. I feel that is was a strategic kind of marketing tool, which I am not saying was right or wrong, but defiantly had to have impact, because we are still not there, because there is still a cohort in the community that will call us (previous name) you know that may take some time and maybe with that attachment to the (previous name of the school) is that borderline, the socially awkward spaced school.

HOS: I think we are also seeing another reason why perceptions are changing as well, I think people driving past see that there is money there, it's now called a Grammar school, there are a couple of nice buses sitting out the front with signage on them, I think people will defiantly notice that is progress and that has been a shift.

HOF: I don't why I am writing that, but I feel I need to write that.... Perceptions are good

So, there are cultural shifts around the environmental aspects of the school.

HOS: a cultural shift around the environmental aspects of the school, I am not sure what you are asking for?

So because you now have got new buildings, a fence line which is actually quite a powerful thing to see now, having come up that road for a long time, to see that fence line, to see that signage, there is a sense of statement ... HOF: or adherence of child safety requirements (laughter from the group) but that sense of this is our space and we are quite strong in this space, whereas before you use to hover in that space, now there is a statement of we are here HOF: in a bold way... Yes, in a bold way, so has that changed, because people can see things now, they are not necessarily experiencing a culture within the classroom, or the school, but is seeing things happening outside?

HOS: perceptions

HOF: I think it comes back to what (name of colleague) said before about moving into that more private school perception space. It looks like money

**Commented [HS372]:** Posed the question regarding name change of the school.

**Commented [HS373]:** The word Grammar has now been  
1755 Samuel Johnson defined a grammar school as a school in which the learned languages are grammatically taught.

Now grammar schools are seen as high cost private school that typically selects their pupils on the basis of academic intelligence, although some admit pupils on the basis of an interviews  
<http://engage-education.com>

**Commented [HS374]:** the previous name of the name was highly religious and such it is suggested that this concerned and distracted parents from entering the school for the names suggested a deep religious affiliation.

**Commented [HS375]:** Has had an impact within the community that the perception of the school has changed and as such seeking out new cliental however, there are still some in the community that still refer to the school by its previous name that not allowing the school to take on a new persona, but pigeon holed and type cast the school as one of catering to those with special needs

**Commented [HS376]:** Seeing physical changes, new building, landscaping and alike – artifacts that suggest wealth and investment – suggests growth, capital,

**Commented [HS377]:** Does the investment t changing the outer appearance of the school does this correlate to change inside the classroom – does this space suggest academic rigor that align with the title of grammar school?

**Commented [HS378]:** It looks like money – but does looking like money suggest academic rigor and a more solidified pathway of success for students who now attend said school?

HOS: for a long time people were wondering if we were going to keep going all that sort of stuff, we fill the classrooms with crackpot kids and now they see a change of name, that is money spent there, there is progress...

HOF: it still doesn't say anything to our faith or spirituality

So how do you think the two then?

HOF: well certainly building that part of Anglian identity, so building that connection with the community you know, the first of call for that was the parish that's certainly is happening and has happened but then I guess the next step is the wider community

So how do you start articulating that new space that you are going into?

HOS: to the community, I am not sure we have too... Or even to yourselves ...

Is there a need too, or are there staff not feeling that change or not understanding of the change?

HOS: Which change?

In sense of, 'we are not that special needs school anymore', that there is a higher level of expectation or accountability that is required now?

HOF: I think most staff, particularly those that have been here for a long time would feel the change or would have felt the change certainly...

Because there is more security now, for staff, where there wasn't for a long time.

HOF: although there would still be staff that would argue that we are still the school that would take anyone ... HOF: yeah, I was just thinking that, I think that with change I think we will be the position to be more selective ... to be at the point to say, we don't need to have that student, whereas at the moment we are still having to take that student because it's about bums on seats...

HOF: then there is the umm, not even sure how to say this with our, that inclusiveness, that we will give all people ago, no matter your situation or background, your academic background... HOS: but that's was the ASC would have us hold ourselves too

HOM: I think that if we are truly inclusive and live to that motto, then we still do take everyone, it's just the fact that we will also have taken in more of the higher socio-economic kids in, I think we have more of them in now, as we didn't have many of them in the past.

HOF: yeah right

**Commented [HS379]:** Historical he school was seen as one in survival more operating purely by taking 'crack pot kids' now with investment there is growth

**Commented [HS380]:** BAM – how does align to the school's spiritual heart – where is the faith base aspect of the school?

**Commented [HS381]:** Building Anglican indent through strengthening ties with the parish and then into the local community.

**Commented [HS382]:** Change – how does staff navigate into this new space and align themselves into the faith based grammar school – staff feel more secure and are no longer operating in a fight, flight or survival mode...

**Commented [HS383]:** Still living in a tension that they have not tipped over into that selective space but are still needing to take kids regardless of academic ability as this a 'bum on a seat...'

**Commented [HS384]:** Value statement that the school is one of all embracing an of being inclusive – how does this align to the ideal of being selective and being able to turn students away who are not as academically strong

**Commented [HS385]:** There is the belief that the school is still upholding this value however being inclusive is now more about being more inclusive within a particular socio-economic band.

HOS: We probably tend to manage people out more expeditiously than we have done previously too, we will probably accept all comers, but if you don't fit, obviously we will work with you, but if you don't fit, **there** will be less tolerance of people putting in irrespective if it is behavior or if they are not trying or misbehaving, then perhaps we show them the door a little more quickly than we did in the past.

HOM: and just coming from that ASC meeting the other day (Name of school and regional area) has about 1000 kids, they were saying they are getting lots of special needs kids in, even more so than in the past, because the school has got a reputation and even doctors are suggesting to these young parents with these special needs kids that they go to (named two schools in the area) because they can accommodate your child.

**Because they have the resourcing now and the expertise of staff?**

HOM: yeah, a little bit of that but also, they were saying they need more, but it's down to the inclusiveness HOJ: and the fact that they are accepting of others, that these doctors are having patients come through and they know that they can be accepted and that this is a school that you can get into ...

HOF: I haven't heard of anything like that here, heard of anyone saying that a doctor has recommended ... HOJ: I would say (named school) enrollments that we have had, and there has probably been 12 – 15 enrollments this year from (named school ) has almost been all related to special **needs** in the junior, which puts an enormous amount of pressure on our resources...

HOF: we don't have these resources, and you know it gets back to the heart of this conversation, that we do accept these kids with varying needs academically, pastorally, socially, whatever; when we don't necessarily have the resources to cope with them, I am thinking about our senior school, you know we have (named teachers ) trying their hardest to support these kids ... HOJ: **and** there are more coming through... HOF: and we have those who don't fit there and don't fit into regular class either and yet are in regular class...

HOJ: and then we are not able to support those who are academically flying, which are really the ones we should be putting a lot of time and energy into for in years 11 and 12 they are our biggest marketing tool and not **able** to give them the time or energy because they are exhausted what we have on those who are behind.

HOJ: there are those who would argue a little bit that we are providing opportunities for those high flying senior kids, but I would add to that, is that is also exhausting some of the resources that we already using, they take the regular budget as well and then we have these kids if that capable...

**So how do you sustain that culture of acceptance of all types of students, without burning out staff, burning out resources until you get to that tipping point – that critical mass...**

**Commented [HS386]:** Justification stamen – we take all in but if you don't fit the mold we will aide you in seeking another educational setting more suited to your needs and style of learning.

Time frames are tighter which suggest there is a process in place that enable recognition of value and worth within the schools community – how does this reconcile with the operating level of praxis within the school and the ideal of freedom of choice – is the school now deny right of choice?

**Commented [HS387]:** Special needs students placing a huge drain upon resourcing (materials, staffing and educational spaces)

**Commented [HS388]:** Ongoing drain through the school as the students move through the sub schools

**Commented [HS389]:** Not being able to support students with high levels of abilities as the resourcing and time allocations and staffing expertise cannot sustain and or meet their needs

**Commented [HS390]:** How to sustain the existing environment with all that it brings till the school moves into the critical mass area?



H0J: I think some of the students we have this year, I know of one in particular, we may be better off, exploring other pathways for that student to get into the special school, so they get to experience the inclusive community we have to offer, but when it comes to their literacy and numeracy where they are functioning at a prep level, then those needs to be housed within the a special school needs environment... H0F: until we have the resources to provide in a better way... H0J: because you know realistically, students like that could take up one of our support staff a good morning session, that is one on one support that could be getting that in a group environment somewhere else...

H0F: sometimes it feels like we are trying to keep everyone above water rather than truly investing in what their real needs are

H0J: well investing in that academic excellence, is what we are always trying to achieve but sometimes we just get caught up in the students treading water and not striving for that academic excellence with each and every student...

So, given that you have got that critical mass of students needing support in primary, what is that going to look like in senior and middle schools as you are future planning?

H0S: well certainly in the senior school we are looking at flexibility to deliver pathways through online, VCAL, flexible for those kids who are the high flyers looking to start VCE units in year 9 and sort of establishing for a better word remedial programs for those kids who are just hanging in there.

H0M: I think in the middle school we need to be mindful of class sizes as well, the ASC has mandated the class size at 32, but if you have some of these kids coming through with needs with some high flyers at one end and a lower academic at the other there is so much differentiation involved in a class of 30 kids it can become very tricky...

H0J: we don't see a lot of this in junior but by middle we see those lower academic achieving students often behave poorly you know by grades 5 and 6.

H0M: well those kids in year 9 who are struggling academically misbehave because that is their social power and that's how they can fit in by mucking up, they are also small rooms and having 30 kids in them in the moment is really hard.

H0F: I think our biggest challenge, is the physicality and the physical spaces that these kids are working in the moment, particularly when you look around and this may be going off track a little bit, but when you look around at what is available at other like schools, you know and often we have that conversation that you know they have us, they have great teachers... who care about them and do what we can for them, with what we have, you know when you go and see what other schools have, it can be disheartening, as a teacher when you see the resources...

H0S: and it actually makes a difference, you know I was talking to (named staff member) those year 9 boys, they are really loud, but they are not bad kids actually, and in a different environment behaving in the same fashion as they do at 90% of the time, would not seem

**Commented [HS391]:** Powerful statement here trying to plicate all rather than being honest and staying this is who we are and this is what we can do. By accepting all there is a pressure on the resourcing of the school and the ability of staff to support students with a well-managed differentiated curriculum because the point of need is still being out weighted by those students with learning delays and or needs.

**Commented [HS392]:** Sizing of classes and learning spectrums within the class

**Commented [HS393]:** Students that are unable to be sustained and or supported academically are becoming frustrated and as such are acting out and or misbehaving as they are disengaged.

**Commented [HS394]:** Default – blame game – because we are not well resourced we can only work with what we have we had more we could do more for these students

nearly as bad. We don't have kids, throwing stuff or being really, really, rude, they are just big boys, loud boys, behaving like teenage boys and when we do **pull** them up they are respectful, it's just the environment exacerbates the behavior seen.

**Commented [HS395]:** The lack of space exacerbates the situation

HOF: and I would agree whole heartedly with the year 11 classroom, same thing, you know it's that space, it has their lockers in there, its where they eat, it's just creating that space where they spray, it's that the physical environment, we talk about how important it is to **learning** ...

**Commented [HS396]:** Space is dictating their behaviours.

HOM: the teacher up the front is the most important thing in education, but you need to be keeping up with the times and you need to have a good classroom facilities and technology and I think if our perception is **change** to that more of a Grammar school, I think we have reached our level of class size at the moment, I don't think we can go much higher than we are, till we get those better facilities, it has grown a lot from that first perception we spoke about, to our new one, so to get to that next level something else has to **change**...

**Commented [HS397]:** 'the teacher up the front is the most important thing in education' powerful statements the teacher is the sage of stage rather than a co-learner and facilitator of learning with students.

HOF: The interesting thing is that it doesn't have to be a big physical change, it can be a subtle physical change. We went into (named school) VCE's Centre last week and they have got the tire seating, it's not a lot of **change**. The floor stays the same it's just the seating, so just a few seats could make all the difference to a feel of a room. It's the thought that has gone into it...

**Commented [HS398]:** Perception of adapting to the language of grammar suggest a level of facility and technology to support the learning – the perception is that they are building towards that but not there yet.

**Commented [HS399]:** Subtle change but change for change sake

HOS: I think the one thing we can do, besides the environment is to take baby steps, to increase our effectiveness as teaching staff and also our aspiration to be an academically successful school, is that online workspaces, things like google drive if everyone embraced that properly, that will make a significant difference and that is something **we** can achieve, that will assist a lot and will actually improve perceptions and improve the efficiency of our teaching in outcomes.

**Commented [HS400]:** Suggestion here that the teachings staff need to have their level of capacity and proficiency increased to be to embrace a learning space that adapts to the student's modality of learning. Suggestion though that there are blockers within the teaching staff who are unwilling or unable to embrace tools such as google docs to be able to share in a more collaborative manner  
Reference Senge

HOF: I think you are right (named colleague) we can whine and moan about our facilities, but I think we need to stop and get on with what we have got, so...

HOS: well the first thing we can do and I have spoken with (named colleague) is get those lockers out, those lockers need to come out and after this term we have had a relatively tame introduction to Google Docs, but I think it is time, to be insistent that **it** be used in the classroom and that it be used properly will make a big difference...

**Commented [HS401]:** Time as a leadership group to be tight on things and ensure what has been spoken about is achieved and done rather than procrastinate

**So, you have got that culture of excellence, where does that ...**HOS: we aspire to have that culture of excellence ... **so you aspire, yes, to have that culture of excellence, how then does faith support, or does faith distract from that culture or can it be a value add?**

**Commented [HS402]:** Where does faith sit within a culture of excellence can both coexist?

HOF: well, it has to be a value add...

**So how do you do that? You have all been saying that perceptions have changed because of the name, and we are now a different type of private school, how do you get that idea of faith to be balanced out?**



HOS: well, it hasn't changed, cause excellence, in our eyes, you know excellence might be you are a 'c' student but if you are trying hard, that is excellence, and the faith thing is a completely separate thing that coexists

**Commented [HS403]:** Definition of excellence is that each students tries their best

HOM: We sort of had that question at the prospective students' night, I could tell some parents were worried about how much religion is involved... HOS: like how evangelical we were going to be ... HOM: yeah, and one family especially was quiet worried and we were going to brain wash their child, the Principal had a bit of a chat and touched on the idea, it's just that value off of that moral compass and how you can touch on morals and, just acting like a good person and it's just another layer...

**Commented [HS404]:** Not evangelical not faith based but leaning more towards instilling a moral compass using the words of the gospel to provide a working framework for the student to live by...

HOF: which I agree with whole heartedly with, but also I don't think we can discount we are a Christian Anglican school and we do have expectations that your child we partake in our liturgies, those sorts of things and sometimes it is tempting to say to a family no, no, it's not like that, it's all about being a good person and it absolutely is, but it's also about what that looks like symbolically, and what we expect of our students in terms of their involvement in those rituals you know, so I think we have to be really careful in how we respond to families...

**Commented [HS405]:** Naming the tension – they cannot deny that they are a faith based schools that is tied to the dogma of religious rituals and symbolic acts – cannot be denied or devalued they are core of the school and how the school identifies itself as such according the working praxis of the school community this cannot be denied it is a matter of religious truth and a question of practice.

HOS: which irrespective of your faith, is a good experience to have, to have your own kids at 30, being able to explain to them what church is and what happens there, is a valuable life experience.

**Commented [HS406]:** The role of church within the life of the individual and that of the family

HOM: yeah, we differently don't want to water down faith aspects, but just that other way, we can phrase that, is just that way as well, but I totally agree we don't want to be watering down Anglican faith side.

**Commented [HS407]:** A fear that the school may be seen to be watering down religious aspects of the faith within the school community

Because, what came out of the transcript from our last conversation was when you were talking about having the cloths and candles in the classroom, was it tokenistic, was it really authentic too, the ritual off and the understanding off what faith was and then how do you bring in the general capabilities within the curriculum, like ethics, meta-cognition and then enable that curriculum to support those pathways of faith that you want to give your students?

HOF: I think you can use examples that are relevant if you were covering those sorts of topics, like ethics and those sorts of things, certainly you can draw on our Christian values, is that what you mean?

Because we talking about a culturally, religious responsive curriculum, how do you enable the curriculum too work for you in the best possible way, to get to that aspiration of excellence, whilst still living within a faith bound environment?

HOM: I think you have to be careful, within each subject you need to teach the relevant content specific to that subject, I think we do faith really well here with the external things we do, outside the classroom... ummm

**Commented [HS408]:** How authentic is the spiritual practice and how do they weave these aspects of faith into the curriculum – not really able to articulate this

HOS: I think those religious symbols and those sorts of things in the room, they are symbols, they are symbolic, that's what they are there for, being in a room that has those religious

symbols, really is the physical manifestation of being in a faith based school and learning the curriculum, they are not intertwined necessarily but they are, we call them tokenistic, but you can look at how much of religion and religious rituals are tokenistic, it is a symbol, it is in the room and it coexists, there are times when we can use our faith in curriculum based activities, like English and religion and in society and there are those times, but they are not always intertwined and nor should they be, or do they need to be in order to be a faith based school

**Commented [HS409]:** Tension within this commentary as the HOS believes that it doesn't mean that the symbols needs to be recognized within the class teachings

HOF: but that's it, it is true, but the ASC have called for, more inclusion of faith and spirituality based conversations across the curriculum, so that it doesn't become such a disjointed, or when you go to RAVE that's what you talk about or when you go to humanities it's not going to come up, it's not like that every conversation you have in humanities has to be about spirituality or Christianity or Anglicanism, I think it's more, as they do want us to look for opportunities where a conversation might head in that direction in all subjects, rather than just keep religion for RAVE and tick that box... I know that is one of their key sort of wishes...

**Commented [HS410]:** Real tension how does the curriculum meet the value of the schools and balance these with the doctrines as set out by the terms and conditions of the commission? That is lived and not just tick a box

HOS: we said that last time, the aim falls every much on the teacher to be able to do it, and it is much easier to do that in the primary classroom than in the secondary, particularly when we are doing the sciences and that sort of things.

**Commented [HS411]:** Push back that there is level of complexity within the curriculum style and delivery mode and content within the senior secondary which is not conducive to the interacting and interweaving of the gospel and faith based elements within the a primary class.

HOM: that's why prayer is so important in homeroom, I would imagine in the high school system, as a constant, as the kids have to do this every day as they move around for every class.

**Commented [HS412]:** Prayers within the home room – one central point of contact – does this avail the group to a sense of coming together to become reflective to enable one to become God Centered and God aware.

HOF: and wasn't that a beautiful example on Tuesday when they did the prayer, and the little ones repeated what Rev said because that's the way we do it, and I know the senior school were like giggling and laughing but they joined in after wards, that's how the little ones do prayer, the teacher will say a prayer and they will repeat it after, I thought that was really telling ...

**Commented [HS413]:** Interesting commentary on how each sector of the school interact with the idea of being God aware and being respectful

So, if we were to bring some of consciousness together because I know that they (Principal) will be across soon what's a couple of sentences that we could pen together ... to give that idea of your culturally and religiously responsive curriculum at (NOS)

Wait time .....

HOF: I have too many words in my head jumping around

That's alright, just write the words down

HOM: what's the question, sorry?

If we were to come up with statement that describe what is the cultural and religious responsive curriculum at (NOS) we would say blahhhhhhhhhh  
So how you are culturally and religiously responsive in your curriculum?

HOF: I would say that it considers all religions and all faiths (we can just dot point it, if it helps)

HOS: it includes rituals

What about that idea you raised about your inclusivity and sense of community, I think that's what (named colleague meant when they wrote ...)

HOF: does that say the same thing as reaches out or endeavors to reach out to a broader ...  
HOM: but if we are talking about curriculum, yeah, it's tricky...

HOF: is it that it's not evangelical, is it that, because it isn't

HOS: we don't have a religious curriculum aside from our RAVE curriculum, what we are really talking about is what we add, in a physical way...

HOM: culturally responsive is about what we are supposed to do and then there is the stuff on top...

So, there is a real consciousness of valuing adding through your cultural of the lived experience of the faith of the school.

HOS: there are rituals which are a part of the institutional framework that exists and there are some opportunities that we look for to incorporate religious and faith-based thinking within the wider curriculum i.e. English, humanities extra...

Are there any other dot points that you would like to add from the primary perspective?

HOF: I don't think so I think its umm... it's our expectation and I think our biggest jobs as leaders is too model it and, in an attempt, to get everyone on board, I don't think it is unreasonable to think that everyone is on board (yet...) yeah, yet

**Commented [HS414]:** Modeling the values of the church and the of the school

Principal: I think that is ongoing, there will always be those who are not there...

HOF: so just that constant modeling of what it is critical, I suppose that stands out more in the junior because the students respond so well to what is taught.

So therefore, through your modeling you are changing the perceptions within the school and within the external community as well ...

Consensus

Thank you all very much...

Time was cut short due to an issue within the school community

