

Leading Ladies

Portraits of Principals

The leadership styles and practices of women secondary school principals reflected within a principal professional learning community.

By

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Abstract

Recent New Zealand Ministry of Education documents highlight the challenge to provide professional learning opportunities for principals and the current initiative to support and strengthen school leadership through the *Professional Leadership Strategy*. There is a need for professional development strategies and opportunities that help principals more effectively understand their school contexts, responsibilities and their own competencies, leadership styles and practice. To transfer and be sustainable, effective leadership practice requires the building of principal leadership learning communities within individual New Zealand school contexts.

This thesis builds on previous studies of New Zealand women principals' experiences of leadership, contributing to a greater insight into the identities, role and practice of women principals while modelling a framework for reflective practice as a tool for professional and educational leadership development. As an iconographic study of three New Zealand women secondary school principals this thesis exhibits the life stories and experiences which have impacted upon their personal theories about leadership styles and practice. Composed through a métissage (merging) of image and dialogue to create portraits of the principal's leadership identities it is set in situ within a principal professional learning community.

A qualitative, multiple-case studies methodology was employed. The design was informed by a reflective practitioner approach and action learning orientation underpinned by arts-based inquiry, a methodological and theoretical genre that proposes a reinterpretation of the methods and ethics of human social research.

The findings indicate that the personal development, self-awareness and growth of a leader are a catalyst to stimulate collective development and accomplishment.

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Glossary of terms

A/r/tographer

- The role of being an artist, researcher and teacher.

Artefact

- A product of artwork which presents concrete visual evidence of the research process.

Assemblage

- The transformation of non-art objects and materials into sculpture through combining or constructing techniques.

Conversation piece

- The painting of an informal group portrait, seeking out collective emergent themes.

Dos-à-dos

- In bookbinding, a dos-à-dos (from the French meaning 'back-to-back') is a binding structure in which two separate books are bound together such that the fore edge of one is adjacent to the spine of the other, with a shared lower board between them serving as the back cover to both.

Genre

- A kind or style of art or literature.

Iconographic study

- Identification, description and interpretation of the symbolic representations of each principal's portrait. The word iconography literally means 'image writing' and can be interpreted as a book whose essence is pictures.

Métissage

- Mixing or merging of image and dialogue to create portraits of the principals' leadership identities.

Ready-mades or found objects

- A found object is an existing object – often a mundane manufactured product – given a new identity as an artwork or part of an artwork.

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Abbreviations

ABER	Arts-based educational research
AP	Assistant Principal
BES	Best Evidence Synthesis
BOT	Board of Trustees
CAP	Creative Analytical Practice
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CLS	Critical Leadership Studies
DP	Deputy Principal
EIT	Eastern Institute of Technology
EMS	Education Management Studies
ERO	Education Review Office
IEL	Institute for Educational Leadership
HOD	Head of Department
PAL	Peer-Assisted Leadership program
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PD	Professional Development
PDPL	Principals' Development Planning Centre
PLC	Professional Learning Community
PPLC	Principals Professional Learning Community
PRT	Provisionally Registered Teachers
SALTAL	Self-Assessment of Leadership of Teaching and Learning
SCT	Specialist classroom teacher

Chapter 1

Contextualising the research

1.1 Introduction

The management of self is the ability to know who you are, what you believe, and why you do the things you do (Sergiovanni, 2009, p. 11).

This thesis on the life stories and experiences of three New Zealand women secondary school principals has stemmed from my own aspiration to be a principal. Reflecting on my past experiences in New Zealand and overseas as a Secondary Art, Art History teacher and Head of Department and subsequent study has motivated me to look at the wider leadership culture necessary to support student centred learning.

My teaching experience in a 'sports college' ¹ on the city fringes of London in 2001, in a school facing challenging circumstances, made me realise the extent of the struggle to engage students in learning. Furthermore I became more fully convinced of the need for effective principalship in promoting school development and change and the importance of leadership in securing school improvement.

As a foreigner to the cultural and organisational contexts of the school I may well have been unaware of the history and politics, but I distinctly had the impression of feeling isolated as a teacher and being uncertain of any leadership vision or direction. Having an acting principal and new Head of Department at the same time as my appointment may have been an indicator of the general undercurrent of low staff morale and lack of cohesion or community.

¹ England transformed its secondary school system to specialist schools (first 50 were opened in 1994) – a partnership between schools and business and industry. Each offers at least one of eleven specialisms while still addressing the broad national curriculum. They receive targeted government funding through the local council. This was my experience at Whitefield School, London in 2001.

The literature widely recognises that the role and influence of the principal can have a significant impact on student achievement, well-being and school effectiveness (Bush, 1998; Ministry of Education, 2008, 2009; Mulford & Silins, 2003; Robinson, 2007; Sergiovanni, 2009; Stewart, 2000; Thew, 2002).

Laurie Thew's research in New Zealand schools attempts to define the concept of leadership by examining the practice of principals and isolating the factors that determine effective leadership (2002). He argues that education is a major influence and determinant of the life chances for individuals, as well as communities and nations, which consequently requires careful and considered leadership.

1.1.1 Purpose and significance of the research

There is a need for effective professional development strategies and opportunities that help principals to reflect thoughtfully and systematically upon the work they do. This will enable them to more effectively understand their school contexts, responsibilities and their own competencies, leadership styles and practice.

This study established a collaborative partnership of three women secondary school principals (a principal professional learning community – PPLC) who were interested in exploring how their life stories and experiences have impacted upon their personal theories about leadership styles and practice.

The aim was to explore what types of professional development strategies and opportunities enable women secondary school principals to critically reflect on their own leadership styles and practice. This thesis builds on previous studies of New Zealand women principals' experiences of leadership, becoming a conversation piece (informal group portrait). It has the potential to contribute to a greater insight into the role and practice of women principals, providing empirical evidence which complements existing philosophical discourse. The research models a framework for reflective practice as a tool for professional and educational leadership development.

This is germane to New Zealand education as recent Ministry of Education documents highlight the challenge to provide professional learning opportunities for principals (Ministry of Education, 2008, 2009; Robinson, 2007(April), 2008, 2009; Timperley, Wilson, Barrar & Fung, 2007). There is a current initiative to support and strengthen school leadership through the *Professional Leadership Strategy*. In particular the *Kiwi Leadership for Principals* position paper draws attention to the need to support principals to focus on pedagogical leadership capacity (Ministry of Education, 2008, 2009).

The following programme initiatives support the development of principals within the New Zealand context: The First Time Principals Programme, Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) and the Principals' Development Planning Centre (PDPL). The year 2001 saw the inception of the First Time Principals Programme, an eighteen-month national principal induction programme for first-time principals (Martin & Robertson, 2003). The induction programme uses a self-assessment SALTAL (Self-Assessment of Teaching and Learning) of each principal's capability in the leadership of teaching and learning as one of its main sources of information about their diverse learning needs (Robinson, Eddy & Irving, 2006). Its purpose is to provide clear benchmarks for effective practice, encourage self-reflection and develop learning goals.

Yet for experienced principals in New Zealand there continues to be the need for continual professional development to sustain effective leadership practice (Cardno & Fitzgerald, 2005; Stroud, 2006). Cardno & Fitzgerald, (2005) contend that if government and Board of Trustees are committed to effective leadership development, principal professional development should be sustainable beyond participation in programmes such as the annual IEL and the PDPL for experienced principals.

The PDPL was established in 2005 to support and challenge experienced principals to reflect on their current practice. The main aim of the centre is to maximise principals' effectiveness as leaders of learning through a five-day developmental programme with authentic activities that they may face in their

work. Its intended focus is to be developmental and involves aspects of mentoring and coaching, professional networks, action learning, problem-based learning, reflection, needs analysis and future development planning (Ministry of Education, 2006; Patuawa, 2006).

However, the literature suggests that for professional development to transfer and sustain effective leadership practice beyond these participation programmes there, is a need for the building of continuous principal and leadership learning communities within New Zealand school contexts (Cardno & Fitzgerald, 2005).

Effective professional development programmes for principals must not only acknowledge the reality and context of their daily practice but assist and challenge them to be critically reflective through on-going mentoring and professional partnerships (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000; Robertson, 2005).

Turning reflection into action has its inherent challenges. There is often a gap between a principal's espoused theories and those theories in action, which must be closed in order to become a transformative leader (Burns, 1978). Therefore the rationale for instigating a principal professional learning community, is that the assistance of others is needed to bring principals to critical reflection.

What gives particular significance to this research is the unique portrayal of the historical process of personal leader development through a practical process of reflective arts-based inquiry. Arts-based inquiry is a form of reflexive learning and alternative representational form of inquiry (Davis & Butler-Kisber, 1999).

There is potential with this research to enhance current thinking and professional practice. As a research and professional development tool, arts-based inquiry holds possibilities for examining the relationship of pedagogy to practice (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008; Diamond & Mullen, 1999; O'Toole & Beckett, 2010; Piper & Frankham, 2007). Arts-based educational research (ABER) aims to suggest new ways of viewing educational phenomena through the enhancement of perspectives (Barone & Eisner, 2006). Perspectives can be

transformed when using arts-based strategies to reflect on experience and invite others to respond to these inquiries.

The target audience for the research will include principals, aspiring principals, educational leaders and professional development educators. There is also an expectation that the findings from the research will inform critical debate and initiate discourse about artistic research (Sullivan, 2010). Therefore there is the potential to consider a wider audience with an alternative representation of my research findings in the form of an exhibition. This audience could include educational researchers at tertiary or other educational institutions.

1.1.2 The setting and the participants

Establishing a Principal Professional Learning Community (PPLC)

This study was a collaborative partnership between the researcher and the three women secondary school principals, both individually and collectively. The rationale for a principal professional learning community was to create a culture of support for professional and educational leadership development. Utilising a critical approach to their own leadership development, the PPLC enabled principals to reflect on their leadership style towards informing and improving their practice. It was envisioned that the PPLC would also provide an opportunity for the principals to move from action learning to an action research orientation.

Utilising a critical approach to their own leadership development within a principal professional learning community, the three principals in this study created shared histories of learning to explore how their life stories and experiences have impacted upon their personal theories about leadership styles and effective leadership practice. This new knowledge has been utilised to achieve praxis (transformative capacity of action) and a sense of agency (empowerment).

1.1.3 Research Questions

This thesis was led by one primary question:

- ***How do the life stories/experiences of women secondary school principals impact upon their leadership style, effective practice and leadership development?***

Three secondary questions guided the research:

1. *How do different leadership theories contribute towards understanding women principals' leadership styles and practice?*
2. *What constitutes effective leadership and how does effective practice link to school improvement?*
3. *What professional development strategies are most effective for leadership development?*

1.2 Design of the research

Methodology and methods

A qualitative, multiple-case studies methodology situated within a constructivist interpretive paradigm was employed. The design was informed by a reflective practitioner approach and action learning orientation, utilising arts-based inquiry. This thesis is underpinned by arts-based inquiry, a methodological and theoretical genre which proposes a reinterpretation of the methods and ethics of human social research.

Over a period of three months the methods of data collection included a pre-study questionnaire, a preliminary focus group, two individual interviews, journal/ diary scrap-booking reflection and two practical focus group workshops incorporating art-based strategies. The principals on their own initiative also requested another focus group meeting to discuss further readings on leadership styles and professional learning communities.

1.3 Overview of the chapters

This thesis is composed of seven chapters. Chapter 1 contextualises the purpose and significance for the research. The setting and participants, research questions and design of the research are overviewed with a summary of the methodology and methods employed.

Chapter 2 outlines the literature relevant to the key themes which emerge through the research study. It contributes to a clearer understanding of effective professional development strategies and opportunities that help principals to reflect thoughtfully and systematically upon their practice. The literature highlights the relevant key educational leadership theories and styles which are germane to the study of women principals. This provides a useful basis for an analysis of women principals' conceptions of leadership.

The theoretical framework for the research is presented in Chapter 3. Methodology, creative practice as a research construct and the role of A/r/tographer are explained. Two conceptual framework/designs that underpin the methods of this research study are presented alongside an account of the methods of data collection and analysis. From this account a framework model for reflective practice as a tool for personal and professional educational leadership development has been pictured. A synopsis outlines the criteria for assessing research quality and issues of authenticity and trustworthiness are analysed. The chapter concludes with a summary of ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 exhibits the individual iconographic case studies which identify and describe the symbolic representations of the principals' leadership philosophy and styles and their conceptions of leadership development and practice. The portraits of the principals are presented in a dual dialogue of genres which documents the reflective practitioner process. This process of capturing their leadership identity based on their life stories and experiences has been achieved through three interrelating arts-based methods designed uniquely for this research study: creating the 'Frame Your Self' activities, Self-portrait 'mirror box' (assemblage artworks) and journal/diary scrap-booking. The principals' conceptions of

leadership can literally and figuratively be seen through the reading (a métissage of image and text) of these self-portraits.

Chapter 5 outlines the individual case study findings and establishes them within the literature on educational leadership. The identification of common patterns in leadership style and the content and themes of their approaches to leadership have been discussed under the following four categories: life stories and experiences, leadership styles, effective practice and leadership development.

Chapter 6 identifies my-self as the researcher, A/r/tographer and an aspiring principal. My life story and leadership experiences are presented 'back-to-back' with the principal participants in a binding together of narratives. This chapter includes an exhibition of my own artworks which draw upon the principals' stories utilising the methodology of arts-based inquiry to 'reflect relationships', between participants, findings and themes.

Chapter 7 presents a concluding discussion. The major findings from the research are presented in relation to the purpose and significance of the research study, research questions and design. A discussion of the relevance of the findings for principals and professional development educators is developed. Recommendations for future research, limitations of the research and concluding comments are followed by an epilogue.

1.4 Summary of the thesis

This thesis represents a unique insight into the personal and professional lives of the women principal participants and their practice. It builds on previous studies of New Zealand women principal's experiences of leadership contributing to a greater understanding of their role and practice. The thesis presents the literature which contributes to a clearer understanding of effective professional development strategies and opportunities that help principals to reflect thoughtfully and systematically upon the work they do. It highlights the relevant key educational leadership theories and styles which are germane to the study of women principals

and provides a useful basis for an analysis of women principals' conceptions of leadership.

The conceptual framework/designs that underpin the methods of this research study include creative practice as a research construct. Unique within this thesis is the portrayal of the life story process of personal leader development through a practical process of reflective arts-based inquiry. This thesis exhibits individual iconographic case studies which identify and describe the symbolic representations of each principal's leadership philosophy and style and their conceptions of leadership development and practice providing empirical evidence which complements existing philosophical discourse.

As an A/r/tographer, my life story and leadership experiences are narrated back-to-back with the principal participants. I draw upon their stories utilising the methodology of arts-based inquiry to 'reflect relationships', between participants, findings and themes. There is an expectation that this thesis will inform critical debate and initiate discourse about creative practice as a research construct. It offers principals, school leadership and professional development educators a framework model for reflective practice as a tool for personal and professional and educational leadership development.

Finally the thesis offers, through its conclusions, a picture of the relevance of the research findings for principals and professional development educators and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The literature review offers an overview of educational leadership theory, leadership styles and effective leadership development. Firstly a précis of educational leadership styles sets the scene for examining the beliefs and practices of women principals as educational leaders. Secondly an analysis of effective schools and leadership examines the links with school improvement. A discussion of women's leadership literature and the New Zealand context highlights empowering and transforming others as central themes alongside the central theme in women's historical experience – the role of caregiver.

Recognition of effective professional development strategies reveals the importance of the professional learning community (PLC) as a model for professional development. A greater insight into the role of the principal in professional learning communities may be achieved by examining the professional development strategies (based on self-development and work-based learning theories) that assist principals to develop leadership capacity in individuals and in institutions through enhanced professional relationships.

This literature review is structured into sections around the following six questions:

- 1. How do different leadership theories contribute towards understanding women principals' leadership styles and practice?***
- 2. What constitutes effective leadership and how does effective leadership link to school improvement?***
- 3. How does gender leadership theory impact upon women educational leaders in the New Zealand context?***

- 4. What professional development tools and strategies are most effective for leadership development?***
- 5. What characterises the professional learning community as a model of effective professional development?***
- 6. What professional development strategies and opportunities will assist New Zealand principals?***

In the conclusion a summary is given of the directions for future research. This is supported by a provisional conceptual framework for personal and professional leadership development. A model that encourages reflective practice and situated - experiential learning that is needs-based, participatory and collaborative.

In the following sections I will examine and reflect on the following educational leadership theories and styles: Leadership as a moral and ethical responsibility, the relationship – people-centred approach, the leadership versus managerial approach, pedagogical or instructional leadership, transactional – transformational, servant leadership and distributed leadership. Finally trait, situational and contingency theories are analysed to provide a context for understanding leadership effectiveness.

Section 2.2 reflects upon the following question:

How do different leadership theories contribute towards understanding women principals' leadership styles and practice?

2.2 Educational leadership theories – styles and practice

Approaches to conceptualising school leadership and the principalship contend that there are overlaps between different models or approaches to leadership styles (Day & Leithwood, 2007; De Bevoise, 1984; Doherty, 2002; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002; Sergiovanni, 2009).

Day and Leithwood (2007) argue that this entails that no one theory or approach can subsume the complexities of leadership. Nor can one model be learned or applied without taking into account the diversity inherent in culture, gender, context or situational factors. However, to enable a greater understanding of the beliefs and practices of women principals as educational leaders, distinctions need to be made between different leadership theories and styles. The concepts within them also need to be analysed and discussed. I consider the work of Doherty (2002) pertinent to the development of this discussion.

Doherty (2002) researched the sources of influences on professional practice, of five New Zealand women principals. Her synthesis of the themes and approaches to conceptualising school leadership highlight the personal theories which underpin principals' professional knowledge bases. She located three arguably distinct theoretical positions or paradigms which are relevant for exploring women's leadership:

- 1) moral/critical approach
- 2) people-centred approach
- 3) corporate managerial approach

Whilst these three approaches reflect different theoretical perspectives, the literature indicates that effective school leadership is people-centred but values-led (Day, Harris, Hadfield, Tolley & Beresford, 2000; Day & Leithwood, 2007; Doherty, 2002; Goldman, 1998; Goleman, Boyatzis, & Mckee, 2002; Sergiovanni, 2009). Goldman (1998) considers that the leader's educational beliefs are mirrored in the culture of the school. She states that "sensitivity to the role of leader means both examining practice and examining the values that determine practice" (p. 22).

This implies that to be effective in leadership there is a need for principals and school leaders to establish guiding principles for their professional practice. The evidence suggests it is critical for principals to examine their own individual beliefs and practices in relation to the wider school purpose, values and vision. This

would enable them to be aware of their own personal and collective influence towards effective school leadership.

Further to this Begley, author of *Values and Educational Leadership* (1999), and others (Day, Harris, Hadfield, Tolley & Beresford, 2000) contend that there has been an overemphasis on administrative theory, research, and training and a neglect of the moral aspects of educational leadership. Therefore an examination of school leaders' perceptions of investing in education as a moral enterprise provides a useful basis from which to study women principals' professional knowledge bases and conceptions of leadership.

The following section 2.2.1 examines the principles or beliefs which underpin school leadership professional knowledge bases as outlined by a moral/critical approach.

2.2.1 Leadership as a moral and ethical responsibility

Ethics is the study of what constitutes a moral life and morality is the living, the acting out of ethical beliefs and commitments (Frick, 2009). The term ethics refers to those values that are foundational to what is right, just and virtuous within any society. Moral leadership is based on a social covenant of shared values which, due to the diversity between individuals and cultures, have to be examined, and negotiated (Robertson, 1995; Sergiovanni, 2009).

In *Ethics, the Heart of Leadership*, Ciulla (2004) states that ethics is about the assessment and evaluation of values emphasising that all leadership is value laden and moral. Research suggests that leaders who cannot personally adhere to a firm set of values cannot convince others of the worthiness of those values (Duignan, 2006; Kouzes & Posner, 1987). The leader's values serve as guidelines for others about what is important in the organisation. It is a leader's ethical responsibility to develop and sustain a healthy environment for authentic learning and teaching (Duignan, 2006). Therefore I would argue that it is imperative for principals and other school leaders to establish guiding principles and values for their professional practice. A lack of guiding principles and values to inform

decision making has the potential to lead to moral uncertainty. This could result in an inability to honour and attend to truth in the veracity of what is taught.

Sanga and Walker (2005) emphasise that ethical principles influence leaders to be consistent in the way they deal with diverse peoples, interests, dilemmas and conflicting values. Furthermore I consider that by basing leadership on principles, leaders can clarify their motives for ideas, behaviour and action, reminding them to stand for and enhance what is right, just and virtuous.

In a broader sense Strike (2007) argues that ethics play an important role in creating and sustaining good educational communities. He speaks about the goals of education and how moral rules and principles contribute to the realisation of these goals. A reflective 'ethic of critique' engaging in continuous critical reflection and review both individually and collectively, would assist principals to gain consensus and identify values, principles and guidelines for leadership as a moral responsibility. A moral/critical approach emphasises the importance of the values and ethics of leadership. By contrast, in a relationship/people-centred approach to leadership, how people are treated and valued is paramount. The literature suggests that women are likely to exercise a people-centred, approach to leadership.

Section 2.2.2 examines the principles which underpin school leadership professional knowledge bases as outlined by a people-centred approach.

2.2.2 Relationship – people-centred approach

In the literature it is suggested that women are likely to exercise a people-centred, approach to leadership (Coleman, 2000; Dillard, 1995; Doherty, 2002; Mertz & McNeely, 1998; Riehl & Lee, 1996). Riehl and Lee (1996) suggest that women place a high priority on maintaining positive relationships among workers, sharing information internally and externally. Women leaders have complex and multifaceted identities and work hard to integrate work and family roles rather than compartmentalising them as separate responsibilities. Riehl and Lee promote

interconnections in organisational structure and relied on networks of relationships developed through listening to and empowering others.

People-centred leadership approaches are less inclined to be driven by absolute principles in the way that moral leadership approaches are. How people are treated and valued outweighs ideological perspectives (Doherty, 2002). Doherty's (2002) research on New Zealand women in educational leadership draws on the work of Gilligan (1982). Gilligan, author of *In a Different Voice* (1982), proposes that leadership and morality is based on the *ethic of care* which is a gendered construct. This construct is based on the premise that women see and experience the world differently from men and "their life experiences are understood within a web of relationships" (Doherty, 2002, p. 20). In section 2.4 I present a critique of the literature around this leadership gender debate. The concept of building caring communities is an essential part of a woman administrator's style. However there is a need to examine the principles and beliefs which underpin school leadership professional knowledge bases as outlined by a corporate managerial approach.

2.2.3 Leadership versus managerial approach

The conceptualisation of leadership and management theory may be considered contentious and therefore has implications for school leadership theory and the practice of leadership styles (Fullan, 2007; Grace, 1995, 2000; Southworth, 2002, 2011; Thrupp & Wilmott, 2003).

Thrupp and Wilmott's (2003) synthesis of the literature highlights the work of Grace (1995; 2000). Grace seeks to reconstruct educational leadership as a phenomenon distinct from management and overviews two conceptions of professional education and professional development at the level of principals: Education Management Studies (EMS) and Critical Leadership Studies (CLS)². I

² Grace (1995) considers the effects of the dominance of a management and market culture in education. He discusses the subsequent growth of Education Management Studies within the wider field of Educational Studies and its effect on professional development courses for principals. Furthermore Grace outlines the themes of Critical Leadership Studies which is a scholarly critical response against the perceived dominance of EMS and an alternative agenda for leadership study, as a framework for understanding educational leadership and the implications for theory and practice.

believe Grace's argument for a balanced perspective on the distinctions between educational leadership and management is clearly summarised within the following statement:

The discourse and understanding of management must be matched by a discourse and understanding of ethics, morality and spirituality, of humane educative principles, of the praxis of democratic education, of the power relations of class, race and gender in education and some historical sense of the place of schooling in the wider formation of society. In these ways, a critical scholarship of leadership will be meeting real needs for school leaders in the twenty-first century (2000, p. 244).

Considering this social process, Robertson's (1995) action research study on the professional development of New Zealand school leaders posits that leaders are primarily committed to people and relationships within the school. The leader's central focus is on the quality of education whereas managers are primarily committed to institutional effectiveness and carrying out policy within budgeted guidelines. Robertson claims that both management and leadership are necessary but a principal's primary role is that of educational leadership (Robertson, 1997).

One of Southworth's (2002) key findings is that the main tension in the leadership role is that between chief executive and lead professional. His reflections on leadership research conclude that the 'leading professional' role has again been placed at the heart of school leadership. Furthermore he finds a correlation between instructional leadership and 'learning communities'.

Further to this Martin and Robertson (2003) examine the principles and elements of designing an induction programme for first time principals in New Zealand. The programme design was founded on the premise that professional development should be a lifelong process and that educators should focus on educational leadership that improves learning. They emphasise the need for transformative leaders who see their primary role and purpose as leading the learning in their schools. The authors issue a challenge for educational leaders to facilitate principal development programmes which focus around the needs of school principals and assist them to be critically reflective of their practice.

Educational leaders must be cognisant of the significance of their personal and collective leadership role and purpose within the wider contexts of a school. Reflecting on these issues highlights the importance of critical reflection to enable principals to be aware of their own personal leadership styles and practice.

It is beyond the scope of this study to offer a full précis of leadership styles, therefore section 2.2.4 – 2.2.7 outline the key features of the leadership styles which are pertinent to this study having been informed not only by the literature on women's leadership but also because of my research findings: pedagogical/instructional leadership, transactional-transformational leadership, distributed leadership and servant leadership. The tensions of relationship and administrative responsibilities impacting on management and leadership roles are highlighted. Concurrently a discussion on the relevance of these leadership paradigms for understanding women's leadership styles is explored.

2.2.4 Pedagogical or instructional leadership

Coleman's (2000) survey on female principals in England and Wales endorses the tendency for women to be pedagogical leaders who placed stress on the learning of their students rather than on the importance of administrative tasks. Similarly, Gunter (2001) argues that leadership is synonymous with headship and contingent upon pedagogic outcomes. "Effective leaders are firm and purposeful in leading improvement, participative by sharing leadership and delegating and the leading professional through their pedagogic and curriculum knowledge" (p. 33). Considering this presents a strong case for the proclivity of women towards being effective in leadership. I explore this further in the section 2.3 on linking effective leadership and school improvement.

Pedagogical leadership has a strong focus on leader involvement in establishing an academic mission, monitoring and providing feedback on teaching and learning and promoting professional development (Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009). Pedagogical leaders focus on priorities for improving student achievement and well-being by the alignment of activities and resources to those priorities. They

also participate actively in teacher learning and development (as leader and/or learner leaders) and as sources of instructional advice and expertise.

Robinson (2009) and colleagues (Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe, 2008) contend that unlike pedagogical/instructional leadership (which was designed to identify those leadership practices that make a difference to students' learning), theories of transformational leadership do not capture the education-specific knowledge and skills that are required to establish the conditions that make it possible for teachers to have a bigger positive impact on students. This is because transformational leadership theory has its origins in non-educational contexts and its original purpose was to explain how leaders make an impact on adults. (Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009)

Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe (2008) conducted a study to examine the relative impact of different types of leadership on student educational achievement outcomes. Their meta-analysis involved a comparison of the effects of transformational and instructional leadership on student educational achievement outcomes and showed that the impact of instructional leadership is three to four times that of transformational leadership. They posit that transformational leadership is more focused on the relationship between leaders and followers than on the educational work involved in school leadership.

I consider that a pedagogical approach to leadership is relevant to the analysis of women principals' leadership practice as this approach reflects principals' interest and knowledge about teaching and learning and a commitment to lifelong learning including their own, that of their staff and their students.

Section 2.2.5 considers these relationships between people and practice and contrasts the key features of transactional and transformational leadership and the implications for effective leadership.

2.2.5 Transactional – transformational leadership

Research has determined that effective leadership requires both transactional and transformational elements (Bass, 1997, Bass & Riggio, 2006; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Bycio, Hackett & Allen, 1995; Howell & Avolio, 1993; Leithwood, 2007).

Johnson (2007) refers to James Burn's groundwork for the transactional – transformational approach to leadership. Burns (1978) describes transactional leadership as based on leader-member exchange. Leaders trade money, benefits and recognition for the labour and obedience of followers. They emphasise values that make routine transactions go smoothly such as responsibility, fairness, and honesty. The underlying system remains unchanged. In contrast transformational leadership is about building a unified common interest. It targets values that are more likely to mobilise and energise followers such as equality, liberty, justice and freedom. A transformative³ ethic envisions transforming teaching and learning in self-governing communities towards "the communal pursuit of higher, altruistic⁴ ideals" (Davies, 2005, p. 68). The transactional approach is motivated by intrinsic incentives whereas transformational approaches offer intrinsic rewards (Leithwood, 2007). Leithwood and his associates (Day & Leithwood, 2007; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999) adapt Burn's ideas for the transactional – transformational approach to leadership and to education. They argue that transformational leadership moves schools beyond first-order, surface changes to second-order, deeper transformations that alter the 'core technologies' of schooling, such as pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment. Transformational leaders change the very nature of the group, the organisation or the society (Dimmock & O' Donoghue, 1997; Bass, 1997; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Burns, 1978). Furthermore Bass and Riggio (2006) state that "...anecdotal,

³ Transformational leadership contains four components according to Bass & Steidlmeier (1999): Charisma or idealised influence (attributed or behavioural), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration. Followers identify with the charismatic leaders' aspirations and want to emulate the leaders (p. 184).

⁴ For further discussion on egoism versus altruism see Bass & Steidlmeier (1999, p.183). Or whether leaders should be selfish or altruistic see Ciulla (2004).

research, and meta-analytic evidence all point to the greater tendency for women in leadership positions to be somewhat more transformational” (2006, p. 115).

Transformational leadership is considered a type of shared or distributed leadership (Hallinger, 2003, Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). The findings of Hargreaves and Fink (2006) indicate that distributing a larger portion of leadership activity to teachers has a positive influence on teacher effectiveness and student engagement. Furthermore the effects of a principal’s leadership are largely indirect.

It is this collective involvement and responsibility in shaping the processes and practices of learning that typifies both the transformational and distributed leadership paradigms. Exploring this further, the following discussion of distributed leadership highlights the importance of participative decision making throughout the school’s professional community, not just for those in formal leadership roles.

2.2.6 Distributed leadership – participative

A distributed perspective frames leadership practice as a product of the interactions of school leaders, followers and their situational context rather than a product of a leader’s knowledge and skill (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Southworth, 2011; Spillane, 2005; Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2001).

It is argued that focusing on positional leaders such as principals, (individual agency) is inadequate when intervening to improve school leadership (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2001). A distributed perspective suggests that leadership activity at the level of the school, rather than at the level of an individual leader is more appropriate for studying leadership practice. Distributed leadership is not just a matter of devolving initiative and responsibility. It involves the participative decision making of all school members, not just those in formal leadership roles (Hulpia & Devos, 2010; Leithwood et al., 2007; Robinson, 2009; Spillane 2006; Timperley, 2005).

Research by Harris (2003) highlights the importance of the principal activating the leadership potential of others and also the value obtained from adopting distributed forms of leadership especially in disadvantaged school contexts. The principals in his study built the community of the school by distributing leadership and giving professional autonomy. At the core of their leadership practice was a belief in allowing and empowering others who are not in positions of responsibilities or authority to lead.

Following these assertions, Gronn (2008) debates the concept of whether distributed leadership is democratic. He considers that even if it may not be synonymous with democratic leadership, at least distributed leadership lays the groundwork for it, and could be viewed as a distributed perspective demopolising leadership and potentially increasing the sources, voices of influence and participation.

These core beliefs are shared by Sanga and Chu (2009) and Sanga and Walker (2005) who perceive leaders as ordinary people first, before their role as public position-holders. Furthermore they see ordinary people as having a role to play, even if they hold no formal position. Harris (2003) would call it capacity building (both personal and organisational). Robertson (2005) concurs with Harris (2003) considering that professional development is about growth of the individual and the institution. Furthermore Robertson (2005) agrees with Joyce and Showers (1996) that coaching is the pathway towards distributed capacity-building leadership, to innovation, to learning, to leadership sustainability and to continual renewal. Similarly, Southworth (2011) advocates the need for senior leaders to strategically organise the distribution of leadership to middle leaders who “lead by example, monitor pedagogy, learning and the development of colleagues, through coaching, mentoring and focused dialogue...” (p.83). He stresses the need for a systematic approach by school management to leadership development.

The sharing of power in decision-making and the growth and professional development of the individual before the organisation are also central tenets of servant leadership.

2.2.7 Servant leadership

Robert K. Greenleaf coined the term servant leadership in the 1970s. Since then servant leadership has been subjected to empirical investigation and has become an increasingly popular approach for the management of a wide range of organisations (Autry, 2001; Block, 1993; Greenleaf, 1977, 1998; Spears, 1996, 1998). Combining a concern for getting things done with attention to the needs of those who are doing it, Greenleaf (1998) advocated that true leadership emerges from those whose primary motivation is a deep desire to help others.

Larry Spears, former president and CEO of the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership (1990-2007), considers servant leadership to be a long term transformational approach to life and work, enhancing the personal growth of workers while improving the quality of organisational life by being strongly based in ethical and caring behaviour (Spears, 1996, 1998).

Greenleaf placed considerable emphasis on the sharing of power in decision-making and the promotion of a sense of community within an organisation. He outlines two organisation traditions. The first of these organisational traditions, and the most widely accepted is the hierarchical principle that places one person in charge as the lone chief atop a pyramidal structure. The second tradition from Roman times is the “form where the principal leader is *primus inter pares* – first among equals. There is still a ‘first’, a leader, but that leader is not the chief” (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 74). He advocates that leadership teams in large institutions need to shift from the hierarchical principle, with one chief, to a team of equals with a *primus*. Greenleaf's leadership ideas are very compatible with the emphasis on personal development as a key to organisational effectiveness found in Steven Covey's *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (1989) and Goleman's (1994) emotional intelligence concepts.

Stone, Russell and Patterson in their paper *Transformational versus servant leadership: A difference in leader focus* (2004) conclude that both transformational leaders and servant leaders are visionaries, generate high levels of trust, serve as role models, show consideration for others, delegate responsibilities, empower

followers, teach, communicate, listen and influence followers. Furthermore they argue that transformative leadership and servant leadership are not antithetical theories but rather they are complementary ideologies.

Examining the similarities and differences between servant leadership and other contemporary leadership models was the focus of a paper by Sendjaya, Sarros and Santora (2008). They defined and measured servant leadership behaviour in organisations stating that similar to transforming leadership, servant leadership requires that leaders lead followers for the followers' own ultimate good. However, servant leaders are more likely than transformational leaders to set the following priorities in their leadership focus: "followers first, organisations second, their own needs last...Hence, the focus of servant leadership, first and foremost, is on individual followers, and takes precedence over organisational objectives" (2008, p. 403).

According to Wallace (2007) the need to define an identification of a philosophical base for servant leadership has been absent from the literature. Wallace (2007) introduces and explores a worldview perspective on servant leadership. He concludes that "research in culturally implicit leadership theory has shown that worldview has an impact on whether or not the theories are transferable between cultures" (p. 128). Considering this raises the issue of whether leadership theories such as servant leadership would be compatible with specific worldviews.

The following section 2.2.8 provides an overview of trait, situational and contingency theories and considers their place in the leadership effectiveness debate.

2.2.8 Trait, situational and contingency theories

The 'trait theory of leadership' arose as a way of identifying the key characteristics of successful leaders. It was believed that through this approach critical leadership traits could be isolated. The trait theory was explored at length in a number of works in the 19th century. In the late 1940s and early 1950s however, leadership was no longer characterised as an enduring individual trait, as situational

approaches posited that individuals can be effective in certain situations, but not others. There is debate in the literature over the significance of trait and situational theory for leadership effectiveness (Blackmore, 1989; De Bevoise, 1984; Dimmock & O'Donoghue, 1997; Fiedler, 1971; Robertson, 1995).

Critiques of trait and situational theories concluded that personality (individual traits) and situational factors were both important to leadership effectiveness which led to the contingency approach (Dimmock & O'Donoghue, 1997; Fiedler, 1971, Robertson, 1995). Robertson's (1995) summary of these theories draws our attention to the argument that there were certain attributes or skills that could be learned and used according to different contexts. The implication being that these theories were gender and race neutral. However, Blackmore (1989) argues that this did not take into consideration that men and women were judged and viewed differently by those working with them.

Contingency theories were built on the premise that there needed to be a match between individual traits and particular situations (Bolden, Gosling, Marturano & Dennison, 2003; Robertson, 1995; Dimmock & O'Donoghue, 1997). Bolden, Gosling, Marturano and Dennison (2003) state that contingency-situational theories were developed to indicate that "the style to be used is contingent upon such factors as the situation, the people, the task, the organisation and other environmental variables" (p.8). Implications of these findings led to theories on the importance of school culture and theories of leaders as builders of school culture. The focus moved away from descriptions of schools as organisations (Handy & Aitken, 1986)⁵ to schools as communities (Barth, 1990, 2002; Fullan, 2003; Robertson, 1995; Sergiovanni, 1998, 2009).

⁵ Charles Handy author of *Understanding Organisations* (1976) conceptualised a framework for theories and practices of business organisations. His subsequent work *Understanding Schools as Organizations* (Handy & Aitken, 1986), attempts to *translate* these theories into different practical school applications.

Reflecting on this leads me to believe that women in leadership should be mindful when exploring their personal theories of leadership of the potential impact and influence others may have upon their own leadership style and contexts.

In the following section 2.3, the discussion of leadership effectiveness continues. Over viewing the fundamental tenets of effective leadership a challenge to consider a (re)interpretation of leadership is signposted. This section reflects upon the following question:

What constitutes effective leadership and how does effective leadership link to school improvement?

2.3 Linking effective leadership and school improvement

The literature widely states that effective leadership is central to school improvement (Bolam et al., 2005; Bredeson & Johansson, 2000; Bush, 1998; Davies, 2009; Dillard, 1995; Dimmock & Walker, 2005; Dwyer, 1984; Fullan, 2006, 2007; Fullan & Mascal, 2000; Gunter, 2001; Hall, Rutherford, Hord & Huling, 1984; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Martin & Robertson, 2003; Marzano, 2003; Robertson, 2005; Sergiovanni, 2009; Sparks, 2002). Extensive research in this area has revealed the significance of the school principal's influence, roles and responsibilities in teacher professional development and how this impacts on the principalship, the growth and development of teachers and the wider school community.

Dillard (1995) provides a critique of effective schools and leadership literature outlining what effective schools purportedly focus on: school-site management; strong pedagogical/instructional leadership; staff stability; curriculum articulation and organisation; school-wide staff development; parental involvement and support; school-wide recognition of academic success; maximised learning time; district support for school and positive school climate and/or culture. Dillard argues that this assumes that effective leadership can be achieved through subscribing to a set of activities. Instead Dillard stresses that the role of social, cultural, political and the organisational contexts of schools have been ignored in the school

effectiveness discussion. Dillard has given substantive empirical insight into the fundamental tenets of effective leadership. We are challenged to consider a (re)interpretation of leadership where leadership is seen not as an activity but as a responsibility.

Commenting on the literature on the development of leaders for school improvement Bush (1998) contends that there is no conclusive evidence as to how to best develop the skills of leadership that leads to school improvement. Yet, Bredeson and Johansson (2000) highlight the importance of the principal as a pedagogical leader and the need for the creation of sustainable professional learning communities. The authors examine the principal's role as an advocate for life-long learning and the traditional school structures which may hinder the development of learning communities. They draw attention to the ways in which principals can promote organisational development and develop leadership capacity within schools to support teacher learning. An important message highlighted by Bredeson and Johansson (2000) is that teachers are autonomous professionals responsible for their own learning and the role of the school principal is to encourage, nurture and support teacher learning which creates productive and sustainable learning cultures. Furthermore Bredeson and Johansson (2000) reflect on the role of principals as communicators (transformational leadership) who inspire interpersonal communication that helps create a collective view of professional self-efficacy and healthy professional learning communities (PLC).

Following this assertion, Sparks (2002) envisions principals, "not only as leaders of learning communities and models of career-long learning, but as system [and] school designers..." (p. 4). He believes that principals who are designers understand that school structures and culture powerfully influence learning. Further to this, Marzano (2003) considers that leadership for change is most effective when carried out by a small group of educators with the principal functioning as a strong cohesive force. Dimmock and Walker (2005) claim it is not only a case of the skill development of individual leaders but the development of collective leadership potential within school communities which leads to reform.

Fullan (2007) considers that “the ‘leader of leaders’ and servant leadership styles bring stewardship responsibilities to the heart of the administrator’s role” (p. 91). Within this what seems crucial to school improvement is the role of the principal as leader of leaders (Sergiovanni, 2009).

Therefore I consider the professional learning community to be a key contributor towards establishing effective practice in schools. I find the authors and others such as Fullan (2006, 2007) and Hargreaves and Fink (2006) have a great deal to offer me personally as an aspiring secondary school principal and for this research set in situ within a principals professional learning community (PPLC). This is because they acknowledge that effective PLCs require a collective social process of developing knowledge, sharing expertise, activity, discourse (learning conversations) and partnerships to improve teaching and learning. I discuss PLCs and communities of practice further in section 2.6.

Section 2.4 examines and critiques the leadership literature on women and educational theory, research and practice. A summary of feminist themes and theory is explored with the intent that feminist values can inform leadership practice with specific perspectives and purposes. Concurrently a review of theory and research in the New Zealand context is highlighted. This section reflects upon the following question:

How does gender leadership theory impact upon women educational leaders in the New Zealand context?

2.4 Women as educational leaders and the New Zealand context

The literature suggests that women are likely to exercise a people-centred approach to leadership (Coleman, 2000; Dillard, 1995; Doherty, 2002; Mertz & McNeely, 1998; Riehl & Lee, 1996). Women’s leadership literature identifies empowering and transforming others and the role of caregiver as central themes in women’s historical and educational leadership experience. Women’s educational leadership has social justice, equity, the empowerment of others, and the ethic of

care as central foci (Court, 1992, 1994; Dillard, 1995; Fitzgerald & Moore, 2005; Mertz & McNeely, 1998; Neville, 1988; Riehl and Lee, 1996; Strachan, 1999).

Reflecting on the under-representation of women in school leadership in New Zealand, Court (1992, 1994) argues for change in educational structures and institutions. She advocates for transformation that will make them more caring of people and that will effectively build foundations for a democratic and just society.

Dillard (1995) and Mertz and McNeely (1998) highlight situations where a women principal is appointed with the mandate to transform the school, implying that attributes of the women's role of caring and nurturing are an effective intervention. Due to the social patterns of power and domination associated with gender, Riehl and Lee (1996) consider gender to be fundamentally political in character. They state that the androcentric nature of much of the research in educational administration illustrates how historically gender has not been seen as salient in these studies (Bem, 1974; Coleman, 1996; Doherty, 2002; Mertz & McNeely, 1998; Shakeshaft, 1987; Strachan, 1999). Both Strachan's (1993, 1997; 1999) and Doherty's (2002) research on New Zealand women in educational leadership specifically address this issue. Mertz and McNeely (1998) state that from its inception school administration has been male dominated and consequently theories of school administration have tended to be male defined. Mertz and McNeely draw our attention to the leadership gender debate over whether women and men lead, see and think differently (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

The literature and research supports both sides of this debate: from those that believe that women and men lead differently and that the way women lead is more nurturing, democratic and empowering⁶ (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Fitzgerald & Moore, 2005; Riehl & Lee, 1996; Shakeshaft, 1987) and those that argue that there are few, if any, differences (Astin & Leland, 1991; Jones, 1990; Riehl & Lee, 1996). Shakeshaft (1987) observes that "a number of researchers have found that

⁶ Being empowered or emancipated (Carr & Kemmis, 1986), to take action, or gaining agency through praxis (action with and for the critical development of understanding and commitment), conceptualises agency theories of leadership.

women are perceived as being more democratic and participatory than are men” (p. 187). In support of this, a meta-analysis by Eagly, Karau & Johnson (1992), found that female principals adopted a more democratic style and a less autocratic style than male principals.

Feminist values can inform leadership practice with specific perspectives and purposes (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Eagly, Karau & Johnson, 1992; Grundy, 1993; Shakeshaft, 1987). Feminist leadership advocates a responsibility and empowering of others and is transformative and emancipatory (reflective, democratic and interactive), furthermore an emancipatory leader engages in continual evaluation and provides others with the tools needed to share in critical reflection (Grundy, 1993).

Reflecting on the literature I am cognisant of the need to address socio-cultural and contextual factors as well as gender when attempting to meaningfully define and give voice to women principals’ experiences, thoughts and actions in this research.

The following section 2.5 overviews successful tools and strategies for principal professional development. These strategies are based on self-development and work-based learning theories, experiential learning and reflective practice. Tools and strategies for implementing these theories, including journals/diaries as visualised autobiographical discourse, coaching, mentoring and peer-assisted learning, action learning and action research, are analysed. This section reflects upon the following question:

What professional development tools and strategies are most effective for leadership development?

2.5 Professional development strategies

Successful strategies for principal development, regardless of career stage, include the opportunity to reflect on current practice, intense involvement of other colleagues and learning in situational context using a range of tools and strategies.

Professional learning is widely believed to be more effective when it is based on self-development and work-based learning. This idea is supported by specific theories such as experiential learning⁷ (Barnett, 1990; Kolb, 1984) and reflective practice (Schön, 1983; 1987) amongst others.

Tools and strategies for implementing these theories include journals/diaries as visualised autobiographical discourse. Further to this coaching, mentoring and peer-assisted learning; action learning and action research are operational strategies within a PLC (Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace & Thomas, 2006). These are now described in more depth.

2.5.1 Journals/diaries as visualised autobiographical discourse

Journaling is a popular data collection process in case studies and narrative research (Creswell, 2007, 2008). There is a rich literature theorising the journal/diary as a woman's genre (Buss, 1993; Buss & Kadar, 2001; Mellor, 1995; Smith & Watson, 2005).

In *Interfaces*, which explores twentieth-century women artists' self-representation at the interface of visual image, written text and performance, Smith and Watson argue that compared with the written diary, visual diaries (which fuse words and images) more powerfully engage the viewer with the embodied selves in their physical materiality. As a slice-of-life it embodies life as a process rather than as a finished product. The journal or diary can be considered "the emblematic genre for recording daily experience" (Smith & Watson, 2005, p. 291). It is seen as a rich and evocative teaching and learning tool and source of information for self-reflection (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004).

2.5.2 Coaching – mentoring and peer-assisted leadership

Peer-coaching relationships promote reflection of practice, record and provide evidence of development over time and contribute to improved self-confidence and

⁷ Experiential learning theory provides a useful working model for determining how reflection can bind past events to future actions. This theory contends that people learn from their experiences through four interrelated phases: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation. (Barnett, 1990, p. 68)

the ability to assess influence (Barnett 1985, 1990; Hargreaves and Fullan, 2000; Robertson, 2005).

Wadsworth's (1990) project to explore the professional development needs of New Zealand secondary school leaders explores a professional development model which used principals as consultants to each other by peer-assisted leadership. A recommendation was made and supported in particular by the women principals and those in senior management, that an action research approach to leadership development should be adopted. The women stipulated that it should be concerns based, collegial, developmental and collaborative. This call for an action research approach by the women in leadership is reflective of the transformative and emancipatory practice which is central to feminist leadership theory.

Barnett (1985, 1990) created a peer-assisted leadership program (PAL) for principals which allowed principals to use shadowing and reflective interviewing to build case studies of one another. The principals gained insight into their own styles and practice resulting in many of the participants wanting to continue the experience-based, collegial process. Barnett is convinced that peer-assisted learning is a unique and stimulating way for school leaders to integrate case study methods into their own professional growth and development.

Hargreaves and Fullan (2000) challenge educators to consider mentoring as an integrated part of broader improvement efforts to reculture our schools and school systems. In *Coaching Leadership* (2005), Robertson concurs with this claiming that coaching is a powerful learning methodology and a pathway to building leadership capacity in individuals and in institutions through enhanced professional relationships. Professional development should be a lifelong process and that educators should focus on educational leadership that improves learning which requires the critique of the role and practice of leadership.

It is with this in mind that I have adopted an action learning and action research framework to underpin the methods of this research study.

2.5.3 Action learning and action research

Action learning and research are terms often used synonymously. Action learning refers to research into one's practice with the goal to improving it. This process of learning and reflection can either take place individually and be supported by a coach or mentor or be looked at with the support of a group. Action learning contributes to individual learning whereas action research contributes towards facilitating organisational change and is a collective research activity (Bunning, 1997; Robertson, 2005; Stevens, 1986). Stevens (1986) posits that "collaborative action research can be a powerful tool to assist school principals and others in gaining insights into their on-the-job behaviour, how their schools function, and ultimately, the ways these two characteristics interact" (p. 203).

An underlying principle of action research is that it is emancipatory (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). That is, the process of being involved will lead people to a sense of enlightenment and agency and the desire to improve the conditions in which they are working. This involvement in the research and action results in the findings of the research being utilised by those very people that the research is about (Robertson, 1995, p. 62).

The collective partnership of women secondary school principals established in this research study is an action learning process of critical reflection. Principals in this research study utilised a critical approach to their own leadership development. Using the tools and strategies of reflection outlined in section 2.5.1 – 2.5.2 they created knowledge about effective leadership practice and used it to achieve praxis (transformative capacity of action) and a sense of agency (empowerment). This resulted in their wanting to continue the collegial process and they requested an additional focus group workshop.

The following section explores the two central tenets (principles) of the community of practice – professional learning community framework and the two theoretical frameworks that have informed these tenets: situated learning and reflective practice. This section reflects upon the following question:

What characterises the professional learning community as a model of effective professional development?

2.6 Professional learning communities

A review of the literature on professional learning communities (PLC) by Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace and Thomas (2006) indicates that there is no universal definition of a PLC. However they state that “there appears to be broad international consensus that it suggests a group of people sharing and critically interrogating their practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth-promoting way” (p. 223). I adopt this operational definition for the purposes of this study.

The use of the PLC and communities of practice as models of professional development is well established (Du Four, 2004; Englert & Tarrant, 1995; Fullan, 2006; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Palincsar et al., 1998; Stamps, 1997; Stoll & Louis, 2007). The PLC model profoundly affects the practices of schooling. It requires the school staff to focus on learning rather than teaching, work collaboratively on matters related to learning, and hold itself accountable for the kind of results that generate continual improvement.

Professional learning communities have their foundation in the communities of practice as a theory of learning.

Communities of practice

The community of practice framework recognises that knowledge is generated and shared within a social, cultural and historical context (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Wenger presents communities of practice as a theory of shared histories of learning. Ongoing reflection with others is one of the cornerstones of the community of practice approach. There are two central tenets of the community of practice framework: knowledge is situated in experience and experience is understood through critical reflection with others who share this experience. The two theoretical frameworks that have informed these tenets are situated learning and reflective practice (Buysse, Sparkman & Wesley, 2003).

2.6.1 Situated learning – experiential learning

Situated learning is considered a socio cultural phenomenon, rather than an isolated activity in which an individual acquires knowledge from a de-contextualised body of knowledge. Knowledge is acquired through experience and transfers only to similar situations (Buysse, Sparkman & Wesley, 2003; Vygotsky, 1987). Building upon Vygotsky's thesis that learning from experience is the process whereby human development occurs, Kolb's (1984), Experiential learning theory offers a holistic integrative perspective on learning that combines experience, perception, cognition and behaviour. Understanding the central role that experience plays in the learning process. Kolb (1984) provides a useful working model for determining how reflection can bind past events to future actions. This theory contends that people learn from their experiences through four interrelated phases: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation. The perceived benefits of site or work-based learning through experience are extensive, with the most important being the immediate relevance of the learning (Kolb, 1984).

The limitations are that for experiential learning to be of real value it must be supported by others, such as by a mentor, coach, critical friend or peer support (Barnett & Mahony, 2006; Bolam, McMahon, Pocklington & Weindling, 1995; Bush & Coleman, 1995; Costa & Kallick, 1993; Earley & Weindling, 2006; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000). Considering this informed the research methods adopted in this study.

Situated learning activity has as its central characteristic a process called legitimate peripheral participation (Wenger, 1998) which provides a way to speak about the relationships, activities, identities, artefacts and communities of knowledge and practice. Claxton, Atkinson, Osborn and Wallace (1996) and Fuller, Hodgkinson, Hodgkinson and Unwin (2005), argue that legitimate peripheral participation and communities of practice provide important insights into understanding site or work-based learning.

It is my opinion that one outcome of educators determining to build a PLC should be to underline the importance of the situational context and reflective practice.

2.6.2 Reflective practice and effective professional development

Many theorists contend that reflection or critical inquiry must underpin all professional development strategies (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Day, Harris, Hadfield, Tolley & Beresford, 2000; Martin & Robertson, 2003; Robertson, 1995; Schön, 1983, 1987). The research in this area further suggests that central to effective professional leadership is the capacity for reflection [simultaneously] in, on and about a broad range of contexts. Reflective practice leads to the identification of personal improvement goals, informing and improving practice (Barnett & Mahony, 2006; Robertson, 2005; Sergiovanni, 2009).

Based on the work of Schön (1983, 1987), a framework for types of reflection as a basis for further research development, is proposed by Hatton and Smith (1995). The following describes the five distinct forms of reflection (Hatton and Smith, 1995, p. 45) and possible implications I perceive are relevant to effective professional development.

Technical rationality:

1. *Technical* – Beginning to examine one's use of essential skills or generic competencies, usually with peers.

Reflection-on-action:

2. *Descriptive* – Analysing one's performance in the professional role individually.
3. *Dialogic* – hearing one's own voice and exploring alternative ways to solve problems, individually or with another.
4. *Critical* – thinking about the effects upon others of one's actions, taking account of social, political and cultural context. This can be shared.

Underpinning a post-transformational leadership model of values-led contingency leadership is a principal's capacity to be reflective (Day, Harris, Hadfield, Tolley & Beresford, 2000). To be reflective in different ways about their own, values, beliefs, practices and those of their staff; and to be reflective also of the position and progress of their schools in relation to others in local and national contexts (Duignan & MacPherson, 1992).

Reflection-in-action:

5. *Contextualization of multiple viewpoints* – Dealing with on-the-spot professional problems, thinking can be recalled and then shared with others later.

Doherty states that 'effective leaders are able to constantly and consistently manage competing tensions and dilemmas because of their capacity to be reflective about their values, beliefs and practices' (cited in Day, Harris, Hadfield, Tolley & Beresford, 2000). Hatton and Smith's (1995) framework offers a balanced conceptual model for understanding intra and inter-personal competencies, teaching and learning practices and the sociology and politics of educative reflective practice.

Reflective practice can lead to the identification of personal improvement goals, informing and improving practice. Section 2.7 investigates the need for principals to be involved in and be the instigators of professional development programmes which help them to become critically reflective of their practice. This section reflects upon the following question:

What professional development strategies and opportunities will assist New Zealand principals?

2.7 Significance of professional development strategies for New Zealand principals

Day, Harris, Hadfield, Tolley & Beresford (2000) outline what professional development programmes must focus on for aspiring, new and experienced

principals in the United Kingdom who wish to become and remain successful in the changing times of the twenty-first century. There are three main points relevant to the New Zealand context:

- Analysis of personal and professional values, central to successful leadership
- Critical, reflective thinking
- Promotion of people-centred continuing professional development as a means of maintaining and raising levels of commitment and morale (echoing Barth's (1986) dictum that heads must be the 'leading learners' in their schools)

An analysis of needs is contended to be a critical aspect of professional learning, as it assists to understand the strengths and development needs of the principal. It is a means of assuring that the learning will be appropriate, valid and relevant in the context of their schools (Patuawa, 2006; Robinson, Eddy & Irving, 2006, Stewart, 2000).

Professional development programmes require not only an analysis of needs but an understanding of each individual principal's life experiences, values, their leadership styles and practice. Furthermore obtaining the perspectives of others in leadership and the wider school and community context would be beneficial (Neville, 1988). Consideration of situational factors and the sustainability of a continuous professional development process would be instrumental to building a culture of reflective practice.

Research on principals' partnerships, an action research study on the professional development of New Zealand school leaders by Robertson (1995), concludes that principals need to be politicised. Principals need to do this by being involved in professional development programmes which help them to become critically reflective of their practice within the wider socio-political context (Robertson, 1995).

Conceptualising an effective and sustainable principal's professional development programme, I envision that a provisional theoretical framework would be a model that encouraged reflective practice, situated and experiential learning. It would therefore be needs-based, participatory and collaborative to better enable principals to be aware of their own personal leadership influence and responsibilities. This would in effect build a repertoire of professional development strategies or modalities which support and build up principal agency.

The professional development initiatives to support the development of principals reflect most of the critical strategies suggested in the review of the literature. However, there continues to be the need for continual professional development to sustain effective leadership practice for New Zealand principals.

2.8 Summary

This chapter has outlined literature relevant to the key themes which emerge through the research study. It has contributed to a clearer understanding of effective professional development strategies and opportunities that help principals to reflect on their personal and professional practice.

The literature highlights the following relevant key educational leadership theories and styles which are germane to the study of women principals: Leadership as a moral and ethical responsibility, the relationship people-centred approach, the leadership versus managerial approach, pedagogical or instructional leadership, transactional – transformational, servant leadership and distributed leadership. Trait, situational and contingency theories were analysed to provide a context for understanding leadership effectiveness and provide a useful basis for an analysis of women principals' conceptions of leadership.

Leadership is to be seen by educators not solely as an activity but as a responsibility. The central task of educational leadership is fostering, and then sustaining, effective learning for both students (pedagogical leadership) and adults (professional development). It is suggested that pedagogical leadership is more effective than other styles of leadership in improving schools.

Effective leadership capacity is central to school effectiveness and improvement. Examining the professional development strategies that assist principals to develop sustainable leadership capacity reveals the importance of the PLC as a model for professional development. A principal's unique position of influence is instrumental in building a shared vision and encouraging schools to become caring, focused and inquiring communities. There is a call for principals to be instigators of professional development programmes which help them to become critically reflective of their practice within the wider socio-political context.

Successful strategies for principal development include the opportunity to reflect on current practice, collaborate with colleagues and learn in situational context using a range of tools. These strategies are based on self-development and work-based learning theories, experiential learning and reflective practice. Tools and strategies for implementing these theories include: journals/diaries as visualised autobiographical discourse, coaching, mentoring and peer-assisted learning, action learning and action research. The development of these leadership strategies would require principals to be actively involved in the designing and building of their own individual professional development programmes and those of the wider school community. Principals must function as staff developers and recognise that a symbiotic relationship exists between their professional development needs and those of their school.

The national principal induction programme for first-time principals and the PDPC are the main initiatives that support the development of principals. However, to transfer and sustain effective leadership practice for New Zealand principals beyond these participation programmes, requires the building of principal leadership learning communities within individual New Zealand school contexts. Having summarised the key themes in the literature which are pertinent to this research of women principals, the following chapter examines the methodology which underpins this thesis.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology and Design

3.1 Introduction

A good framework is the basis for a good artwork

The decision to position the research methodology within the qualitative paradigm was founded on the nature of the aim of the research. It was based on the need to explore what types of professional development strategies and opportunities enable women secondary school principals to critically reflect on their own leadership styles and practice. The choice of particular methods for this study employed a range of interconnected interpretive practices which were selected to facilitate critical inquiry.

3.2 Theoretical framework

This research study is based on the anti-positivist assumption that there are multiple socially-constructed realities (relativist ontology) and that people construe the world in very different ways (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Walliman, 2005). Situations are seen as fluid and changing rather than fixed and static; events and behaviour evolve over time and are richly affected by context – they are ‘situated activities.’ Events and individuals are unique and largely non-generalisable (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Due to the exploratory and descriptive nature of this study, a constructivist interpretive paradigm (epistemology) was applied within a qualitative framework (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Further to this, critical educational research (Habermas, 1974 & 1984) regards positivism and the interpretive paradigms as presenting incomplete accounts of social behaviour by their neglect of the political and ideological contexts of much educational research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Not only does critical

educational research theory have its own research agenda, but it also has its own research methodologies, in particular 'ideology critique' and 'action research.'

Research for the improvement of reflection should engage specific individuals and groups in ideology-critique and participatory, collaborative and emancipatory action research (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). Action research expresses a commitment to bring together broad social analysis through the self-reflective collective self-study of practice (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Through establishing a collaborative partnership of women secondary school principals (PPLC) interested in exploring their personal theories about leadership styles and practice, this study has created a framework for reflective practice as a tool for professional and educational leadership development. Therefore this study is also informed by the paradigm of critical educational research which sees human beings as co-creating their reality through participation, experience, and action.

3.3 Methodology

Action learning and action research

An action learning and research approach has the potential to bring about change on a wider scale, if it leads to an increase in participant awareness and influence over school-wide policy (Burns, 2000). The action researcher sets out to improve particular practices, understandings and situations by acting in a deliberate and considered way in which understandings and values are consciously expressed in praxis (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

These are important principles upon which this research study was founded. The PPLC established in this study is an action learning process of critical reflection. Utilising a critical approach to their own leadership development the principals in this study created knowledge about effective leadership practice and used it to achieve praxis and a sense of agency. The actions of these principals may be instrumental in altering those wider factors which frame their work. This inherent

potential for instigating collaboration and reflection may result in principal participants initiating action research within their own school contexts.

Reflective practitioner

Theorists contend that reflection or critical inquiry must underpin all professional development strategies (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Martin & Robertson, 2003; Robertson, 1995; Schön, 1983, 1987). The research further suggests that central to effective professional leadership is the capacity for reflection in, on and about a broad range of contexts. Furthermore reflective practice leads to the identification of personal improvement goals, informing and improving practice (Barnett & Mahony, 2006; Robertson, 2005; Sergiovanni, 2009).

Based on the work of Schön (1983, 1987), a framework for types of reflection is proposed by Hatton and Smith (1995) and addresses the need to draw upon the critical perspectives of others. This framework of reflective inquiry (from technical rationality to reflection on action and reflection in action) offers a balanced conceptual model for understanding intra and inter-personal competencies, teaching and learning practices and the sociology and politics of educative reflective practice.

Arts-based inquiry as a methodological and theoretical genre is situated within the participatory critical action research paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, Lincoln, 1995). Arts-based inquiry is a form of reflexive learning which draws together artist-educators looking for ways to document and research their work and qualitative researchers experimenting with alternative representational forms of inquiry (Davis & Butler-Kisber, 1999).

3.4 Creative practice as a research construct

Arts-based inquiry – Arts-based educational research (ABER)

Arts-based research begins with the recognition that the arts as well as the sciences can help us understand the world in which we live. One cognitive function the arts perform is to help us to provide a way of knowing. The arts provide permission to engage the imagination as a means of exploring new possibilities.

Another cognitive function of the arts is that in the process of creation, ideas and images are given support and permanence (Eisner, 1998, 2002). Theorising about art practices, Sullivan (2010) concurs, considering that, as a form of human expression, an artwork is an individually and culturally constructed form and can be examined as a source of knowledge. Furthermore, he states that research about works of art communicate new insights into how objects carry meaning about ideas themes and issues.

...any art form can be regarded as a kind of text, and texts need to be both read and interpreted, for the messages they send are often 'below the surface' or 'between the lines' (Eisner, 2002, p. 28).

Practitioners of arts-based inquiry propose a reinterpretation of the methods and ethics of human social research and “seek to construct action-orientated processes for inquiry that are useful within the local community where the research originates” (Finley, 2005, p. 682).

Arts-based educational research (ABER) aims to suggest new ways of viewing educational phenomena through the enhancement of perspectives (Barone & Eisner, 2006). As a research and professional development tool it holds possibilities for examining the relationship of pedagogy to practice (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008; Diamond & Mullen, 1999; O'Toole & Beckett, 2010; Piper & Frankham, 2007).

Perspectives can be transformed when using arts-based strategies (design elements that infuse the inquiry process and the research 'text') to reflect on experience and invite others to respond to these inquiries. Arts-based inquiry started mainly with narrative inquiry and has now extended to...

...using poetry, painting, sculpture, readers' theatre and other mixed media to theorise researchers' personal and professional lives, to interpret educational experiences, to better understand selves and improve professional practice in education (O'Toole & Beckett, 2010, p. 75).

Arts-based inquiry and research is about the practical methods and strategies employed, whereas A/r/tography (acronym a/r/t/) considers the role of artist, researcher and teacher within the research inquiry.

3.5 A/r/tography as living inquiry

Theory as a/r/tography explains phenomena through aesthetic experiences that integrate knowing, doing and making. It recognises that art, research, and teaching are not done but lived. A/r/tography is a living practice where through attention to memory, identity, reflection, meditation, storytelling, interpretation and representation, a/r/tographers search for new ways to understand their practices (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004).

Aristotle articulated 'three kinds of thought': knowing (theoria), doing (praxis), and making (poesis). As a means to enhance arts educators own ideas and practices, it has always been of interest to understand these three forms of thought (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004).

A/r/tography goes beyond the double visioning of art and a/r/t to include a further doubling of a/r/t and writing or 'graphy'. Art and writing unite the visual and textual by complementing, refuting, or enhancing one another. Image and text do not duplicate one another but rather teach something different yet similar, allowing us to inquire more deeply into our practices (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004, p. 31).

A/r/t as Métissage (mixed research practice)

Métissage is an act of interdisciplinarity and is a metaphor for artist-researcher-teachers who integrate these roles in their personal and professional lives. It is also a metaphor for the very processes and products that are created. As research praxis, métissage seeks cross-cultural, egalitarian relations of knowing and being (Chambers et al., 2008).

The following conceptual framework/designs (Figure 1 & 2) depict the métissage of interconnected interpretive practices selected to facilitate critical inquiry and which underpin the methods of this research study.

3.6 Conceptual framework – design

This research study adopted a qualitative, multiple-case studies methodology situated within constructivist interpretive and educational research paradigms. The design was informed by an action learning orientation and reflective practitioner approach, utilising arts-based inquiry where art is seen as another form of ethnographic performance. In the wake of postmodernism, the ethnographic genre has been blurred, enlarged and altered. Richardson and Adams St. Pierre (2005) discuss the creative analytical practice (CAP) ethnography genre stating that researchers draw from and break the boundaries of literary, artistic, and scientific genres.

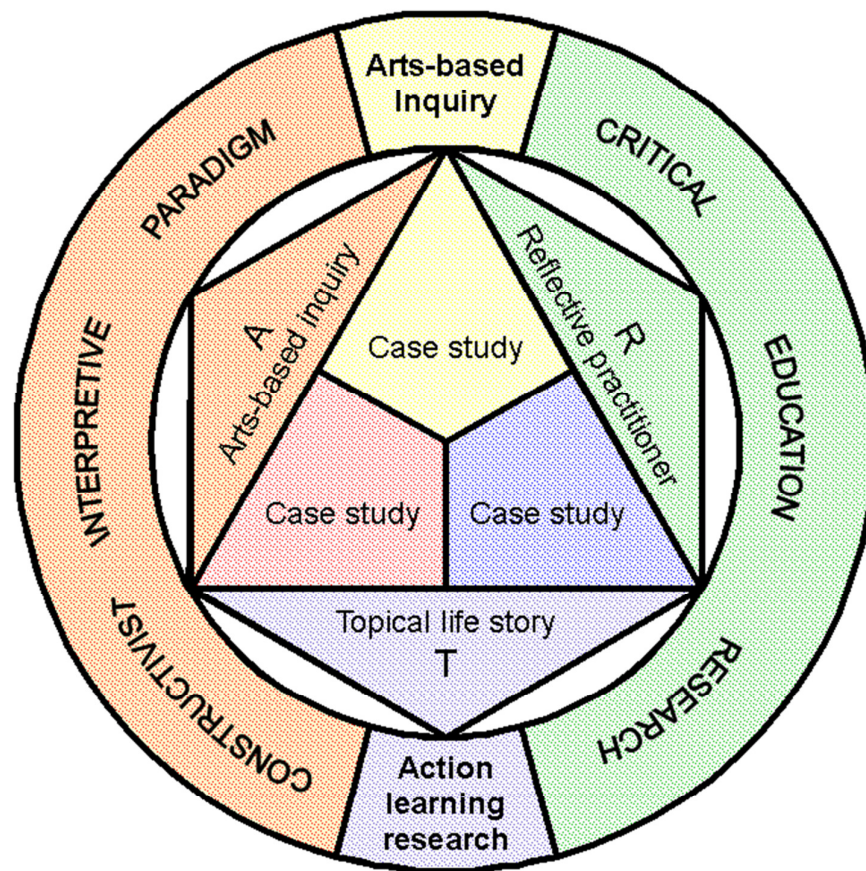


Figure 1 Conceptual framework for the study of three women secondary school principals' leadership theory and styles, integrating learning theory and reflective practice theory

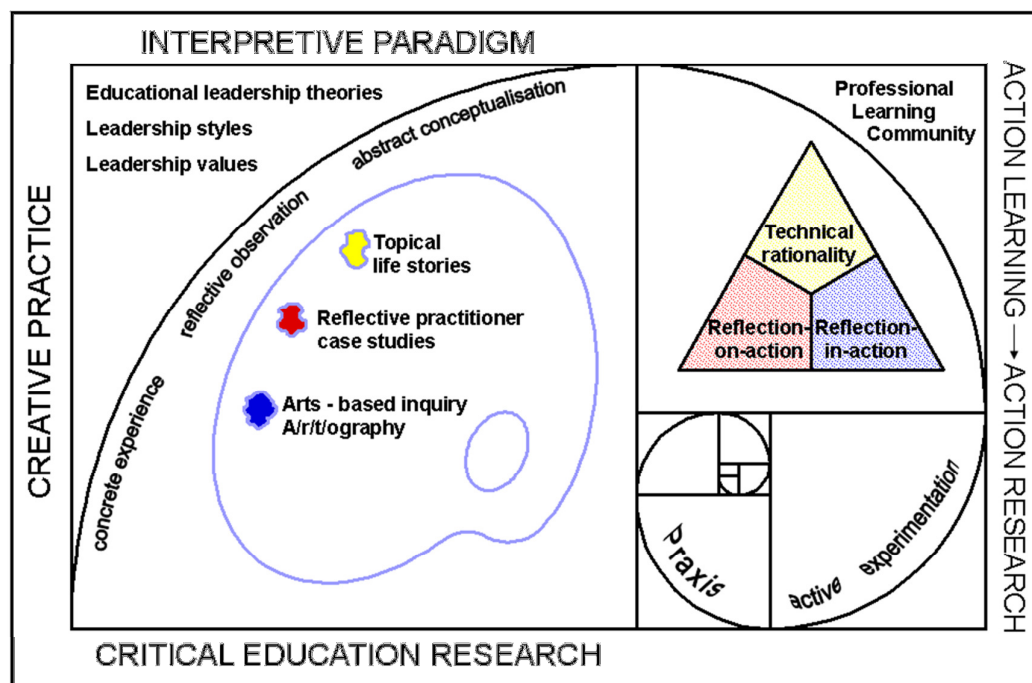


Figure 2 Conceptual framework for an iconographic study of women secondary school principals' leadership theory and styles within a professional learning community

3.6.1 Topical life stories – Multiple case-studies

Dimmock and O' Donoghue (1997) consider topical life history research to be a pioneering exercise of situating personal and career developments within relevant frameworks, such as social class, ethnicity, gender or generation within the prevailing socioeconomic circumstances. It was beyond the scope of this study to draw more fully upon a broader historical context and include a wider commentary on community and local history, social histories and geographies in which these life stories were embedded.

The life story individualises and personalises whereas the life history contextualises and politicises, moving from a life story to account for historical context (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). Life stories represent a partial, selective commentary on lived experience. This study applied a topical life story approach which enabled a reconstruction of the ways that leadership was influenced and shaped by personal and social identity perceptions.

The case study method allows researchers to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events, such as individual life cycles and organisational and managerial processes (Yin, 2003). A multiple-case studies approach was chosen as the most appropriate for this study to provide a depth of information about the principal's different learning contexts, their individual backgrounds, practices, beliefs and their particular hopes and goals for themselves and their schools.

3.6.2 Role of the participants and selection process

This study established a collaborative partnership of women secondary school principals (PPLC) who were interested in exploring their personal theories about leadership styles and practices. I sent out seventeen letters to principals to ascertain their expression of interest (Appendix J) along with the Information for principals (Appendix K) handout. After further contact by phone and email, three principals were available and willing to participate. The majority of those asked were just too busy to find the time, which further confirmed to me the need for this study! A further letter formally inviting the principals to participate in this research study (Appendix L) was sent to them along with a consent form (Appendix M) which was completed and returned before the first preliminary focus group meeting.

3.6.3 Role of the researcher

A unique feature of qualitative research and especially a study framed by a constructivist interpretive paradigm is the acknowledgment of the researcher's role (Creswell, 2007 & 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). According to Walliman, (2005), the implication of the interpretivist approach to research is that the observers or 'interpreters' bring their own meaning and understanding to the investigation, and must recognize and acknowledge the perspective from which they make their observations.

My experience as a secondary school art and art history teacher, H.O.D. and aspiring principal assisted me in understanding the context and fundamental beliefs, goals and constraints that underpin secondary school practice. I entered

the research context as a learner in regards to encouraging principals to reflect on their practice from a variety of perspectives. As a specialist art teacher adopting an ABER paradigm I needed to be mindful of the balance between providing expert knowledge and allowing creative agency in the participants (Finley, 2003).

Burns (2000) cautions outsider researchers against overly influencing their research projects, suggesting that the cycles of planning, action and review are tasks primarily for the participants to assist in the transformation of their own practices. As an outside researcher I did not cause or experience any undue influence upon the research project.

3.7 Methods – Data collection strategies, analysis and interpretation

3.7.1 Data collection and processes

Rationale and format for learning and action in the PPLC – Focus groups

This study is a collaborative partnership between the women secondary school principals, both individually and collectively and myself (the researcher). The rationale for a PPLC is to create a culture of support for professional and educational leadership development. Utilising a critical approach to their own leadership development the PPLC, through a series of focus groups, enabled the principals to reflect on their leadership style and identify, inform and improve their practice.

Focus groups have been used to elicit and validate collective testimonies, to give voice to the previously silenced by creating a safe place for sharing one's life experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 648).

Focus groups are a form of group interview yielding a collective rather than an individual view. It is from the interaction of the group that the data emerges (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Punch 1998). The focus group elicits a unique type of in-depth qualitative data which could not be obtained as efficiently any other way. The group setting attempts to create a synergistic environment resulting in deeper, more insightful discussion and interpretive insights (Creswell,

2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Focus groups create a chain reaction of informative dialogue and draw out a wide range of information that paints a portrait of combined local perspectives (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998; Grudens-Schuck, Lundy Allen & Larson, 2004). It was also envisioned that the PPLC would provide an opportunity for the principals to move from action learning to an action research orientation. With this focus group approach, however, care must be taken to monitor individuals who may dominate the conversation and also encourage all individuals to talk (Creswell, 2007). Though focus group settings may be contrived they are very focused on a particular issue, yielding insights that might not otherwise have been available from an interview (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

The methods of data collection, roles and responsibilities and involvement of the researcher and principals is summarised as follows:

Researcher and principal action

The first meeting I had with the principals was in a preliminary focus group. The purpose of this was not only to establish relationships but also a baseline understanding, guiding principles and function of a principal professional learning community to foster strategies for effective individual and collaborative reflective practice.

A chronological outline of principal involvement/action (Appendix A) was given out in the preliminary focus group. A pre-study questionnaire (Appendix B) had been sent by mail for the principals to bring completed to the preliminary focus group. A practical focus group activity outline 'Know Your Self' and 'Frame Your Self' (Appendix C) was given in preparation for the 1st practical focus group workshop. Arts-based inquiry as a form of reflexive learning was overviewed and the worksheet handout for creating a Self-portrait 'mirror box' (Appendix D) was given out. Principals were to create their own self-portrait 'mirror box' and bring them to the 1st practical focus group workshop. The worksheet hand-out for journaling/diary scrap-book guidelines (Appendix E) was explained. The journals/diary scrap-books were to be used to record experiences throughout the

study with the potential to include visual methodologies in this process of reflection (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008; Collier & Collier, 1986; Diamond & Mullen, 1999; O'Toole & Beckett, 2010; Piper & Frankham, 2007).

There were two collective practical focus group workshops (video and audio taped) and two audio-taped individual semi-structured individual principal interviews conducted with each principal separately (Appendix F & G). The focus group workshops and interviews were alternated chronologically (see Appendix A). The 2nd practical focus group workshop – question handout 'The Mirror' (Appendix H) utilised hand mirrors as an analogy for change motivating us to action and transformation. The 2nd practical focus group workshop – *D.R.A.W.* daily reflective analysis workout was to be completed in the journal/diary scrap-book (Appendix I).

Appendix H and Appendix I were not included in the initial outline of principal involvement/action (Appendix A) as their conception was a result of the analysis of data prior to the 2nd practical focus group. I designed the *D.R.A.W.* daily reflective analysis workout exercise to be used daily for 1-2 weeks between the 2nd focus group workshop and 2nd individual interviews.

In conclusion a post study 'Frame Your Self' (Appendix C) activity was carried for a comparison. The principals on their own initiative also requested a subsequent focus group meeting to discuss further readings. Written reflections and feedback on the data between the principals and me were also undertaken by post and email.

Further researcher action

A pre-testing pilot of the pre-study questionnaire and interview questions was trialled with principals not participating in this study. This was to ensure that they captured the information I was seeking in relation to the research questions and that they were clear, relevant and valid. A pilot of my own 'mirror box' and journal/diary scrap-book was undertaken and also a pilot of the Self-portrait 'mirror box' and trial interviews was conducted with two women not participating in this study.

Demands on the participant principals' time and availability, was more of a constraint for the principal's individually rather than when meeting collectively. They expressed the desire to have more time to do justice to each step and activity undertaken. This was taken into consideration at all phases of the project and a reflective stance taken throughout. It was imperative to set realistic time-frames for the focus groups and ensure a collaborative approach to obtaining resources, implementing strategies and practices and evaluating outcomes.

Interviews

The use of the interview in research acknowledges the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production. Regarding knowledge as generated between humans often through conversations, it is an interchange of views. Interviews also emphasise that research data is socially situated (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The interview enables participants to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own perspectives. The purpose is to obtain a rich, in-depth experiential account of an event or episode in the life of the participant (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Kvale, 1996; Yin, 2003). Yin (2003) regards interviews as an essential source of evidence in a case study, enabling the complex social situations investigated, to be interpreted, and reported through the words of the participants. They may also help the researcher identify other relevant sources of evidence by providing prior history of the situation. However, verbal accounts may be subject to bias, poor recall, and inaccurate articulation, which highlights the need to confirm and triangulate the data with information from other sources (Punch, 1998; Creswell, 2008).

The process of collecting further data on the principals' leadership identities has been achieved through three interrelating arts-based methods I designed uniquely for this research study: creating the 'Frame Your Self' activities (see Appendix C), Self-portrait 'mirror box' (assemblage artworks – see Appendix D) and journal/diary scrap-booking (see Appendix E & I). Incorporating these interdisciplinary modalities, the following framework (Figure 2) is a model for reflective practice as a tool for personal and professional educational leadership development.

Figure 3 shows the reflective arts-based methods implemented and outworked by the principals and myself, (in the role of an A/r/tographer – Artist, researcher and teacher) for our personal and professional development within a PPLC.

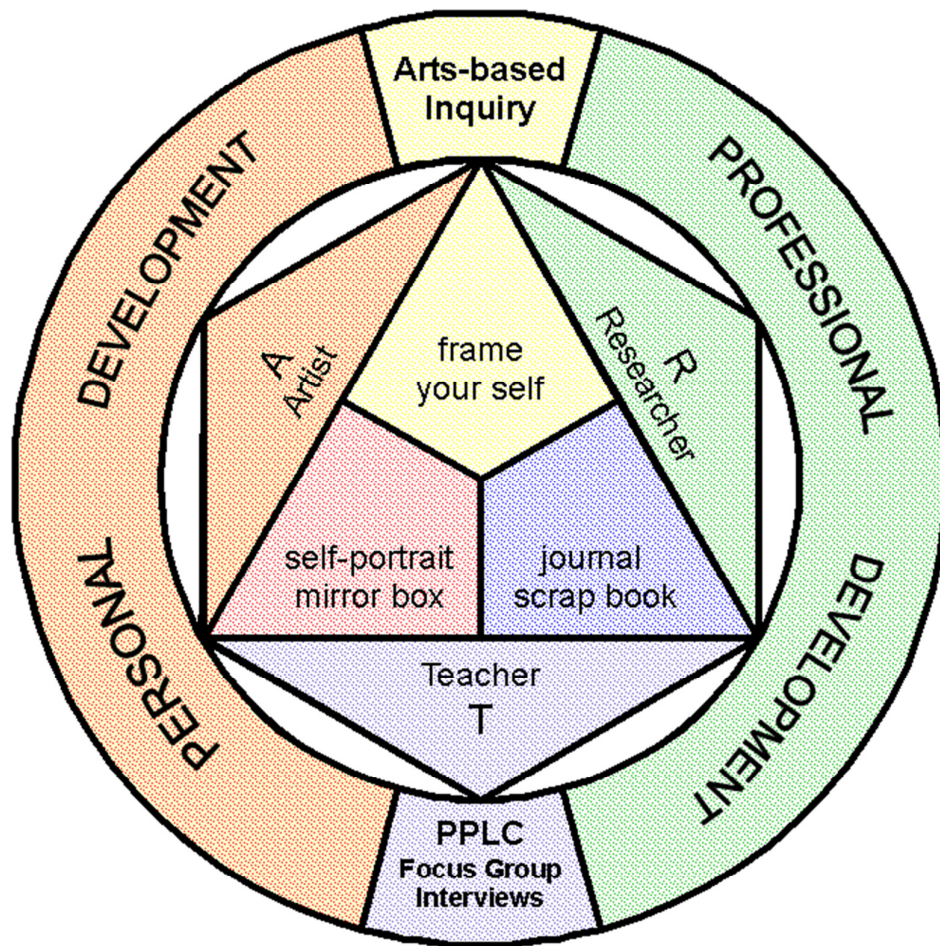


Figure 3 Framework model for reflective practice as a tool for personal and professional educational leadership development

Artworks/Artefacts - Photographic documentation

The documentation of the principals' arts-based methods (artworks/artefacts) presents concrete visual evidence of the research process in the context of the research question. The artefacts resulting as an outcome of this research study can be regarded as cultural texts and representations of the principals' life stories, leadership styles and practice.

Grierson and Brierley (2009) argue that for researchers undertaking research through the production of creative artefacts or works, the work or artefact can

become more than merely a record of the research. “In creative research, a position is put forward empirically through the creation of some kind of empirical artefact which itself embodies and could be said to perform the research” (Grierson & Brierley, 2009, p. 67).

These artefacts and artworks offer alternative insights into the principals’ social experience and enriched the focus group and individual interview processes. Furthermore this process of materialisation provides other forms of legitimate knowledge production (Grierson & Brearley, 2009). Concurring with this Yin (2003) considers that physical artefacts, as a further source of evidence, can be an important component in the overall case.

A major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence (Yin, 2003). This allows the researcher to address a broader range of historical, attitudinal and behavioural issues. The most important advantage presented by using multiple sources of evidence is the development of converging lines of inquiry, a process of triangulation.

3.7.2 Data analysis and interpretation

Qualitative data analysis involves organising, accounting for and explaining the data in terms of the participants’ definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Richardson and Adams St. Pierre, 2005; Yin, 2003).

A postmodernist deconstruction of triangulation by Richardson and Adams St. Pierre (2005), who discuss crystallisation in the creative analytical practice (CAP) ethnography genre, recognises that “there are far more than ‘three sides’ by which to approach the world. We do not triangulate; we crystallise” (Richardson & Adams St. Pierre, 2005, p. 963).

Triangulation, or indeed crystallisation, occurred between questionnaires, focus groups, interviews and the use of arts-based inquiry strategies.

The data analysis computer programme NVivo was utilised due to the large quantities of qualitative data. Techniques of inductive coding were used with the transcript data from the questionnaires, focus groups and interviews. Links between categories were identified then grouped thematically and sorted according to a hierarchy of emergent main and sub-themes into nodes. Once the codes and categories had been decided, the analysis was undertaken. Using descriptive narrative and arts-based enquiry methods designed uniquely for this research study: the 'Frame Your Self' activities (see Appendix C), Self-portrait 'mirror box' (assemblage artworks – see Appendix D)) and journal/diary scrap-booking (see Appendix E & I), the participants' responses and interview transcripts were analysed individually to preserve coherence and integrity and enable a portrait of each principal to emerge. This within-case analysis is exhibited in Chapter 4 Portraits of Principals – Individual Iconographic Identities.

Chapter 5 Portraits of Principals – Creating Conversations acts as a cross-case analysis and presents a second level of analysis and synthesis. This addressed issues arising across the individuals (within-case analysis), looked for theme comparisons, shared responses, patterns of response, agreement or disagreement and compared individuals and issues that each of them had raised (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Creswell, 2008).

The information obtained through both the within-case and cross-case analysis was then compared with the literature on educational leadership theory, leadership styles and effective leadership development. In this way, I was able to ascertain which parts of the literature were or were not supported by the findings. Finally a further analysis of the findings are exhibited as artworks and documented as photographic artefacts.

3.8 Authenticity and trustworthiness

Guba (1981) in discussing the criteria for validity of qualitative research argues that the 'trustworthiness' of qualitative inquiry could be established by addressing the following characteristics of a study: credibility, transferability, dependability and

confirmability. The strategies for assessing the accuracy of the findings within these characteristics are outlined below:

Credibility – strategies include prolonged field work and persistent observation. It is noted that opportunities for prolonged field work are limited by the time frame of a master's thesis. Three months (within two school terms) were allocated for data collection.

Triangulation – triangulation of data occurred with the use of multiple participants and data collection processes. Member checking – the collaborative and open-ended nature of this research project required principals to be involved at every phase and it provided regular opportunities for discussion, reflection and feedback. Participating principals were given the opportunity to read and comment on their individual interview notes and case studies and the researcher's interpretation of those case studies.

Transferability and Dependability – I have endeavoured to provide a clear, detailed and in-depth description so that others can decide the extent to which findings from this research study are dependable and generalisable (Cohen et al., 2007).

Confirmability – reflexivity suggests that researchers should acknowledge and disclose their own selves in the research, seeking to understand their part in, or influence on, the research. As a reflexive researcher I was aware of the ways in which my selectivity, perceptions, background and inductive processes and paradigms shaped this study. Furthermore I monitored closely and continually my own interactions with participants, reactions, roles, biases and any other matters that might have affected the research.

Maxwell (1992) argues for the need to replace positivist notions of validity in qualitative research with the notion of authenticity. He suggests that 'understanding' is a more suitable term than 'validity' in qualitative research. Criteria for assessing research quality must come from the paradigm that underpins the research (Mills, 2007). Positivist criteria, which are based on

principles of controllability, replicability, predictability and context-freedom, are inappropriate for assessing the quality of interpretive research.

3.9 Ethical considerations

Ethics are a critical issue in all research. Protecting human subjects in qualitative research, Flinders (1992) outlines and critiques the standards of informed consent, avoidance of harm, and confidentiality: “Caring in research honours the trust on which the researcher’s access to information is predicated and out of which develops a sense of collaborative labour” (1992, p. 107).

Consistent with its commitment to individual autonomy, social science insists that research participants have the right to be informed about the nature and consequences of research in which they are involved. Proper respect for human freedom generally includes two necessary conditions. First, subjects must agree voluntarily to participate and second, their agreement must be based on full and open information (Christians, 2005; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

Before the research commenced ethics approval for research with human subjects was granted from the Victoria University of Wellington Faculty of Education Ethics Committee. Firstly expression of interest letters and a document outlining information on the details of the study were sent out to secondary women principals. Following responses and after contacting principals by phone, the three principals who indicated their willingness to participate were sent letters formally inviting them to participate in the research study along with consent forms for signing. Upon obtaining the written consent forms, the date for the preliminary focus group was then set. The purpose of the preliminary focus group was to explain fully the research process and establish a baseline understanding, guiding principles and function of a PPLC to foster strategies for effective individual and collaborative reflective practice. It also introduced arts-based strategies as a form of reflexive learning and as a method of engaging the participants in the coding process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

In planning, implementing and reporting this research study, full consideration was be given to protecting the rights of participating principals. Full information in regards to the role and expectations of the participants, including an indication of how long the research process was expected to take, was provided in written format as well as orally in the preliminary focus group meeting, prior to obtaining their informed consent. Principals were informed of their right to withdraw from the project. An indication of the form in which data was to be reported, stored and disseminated was also included. At the first preliminary focus group, a confidentiality agreement was also signed and copies given to each principal (Appendix N).

The preservation of confidentiality is essential and therefore one obvious ethical concern is safeguarding the identity of participants and those of the research locations (Christians, 2005; Davidson & Tolich, 2003). Considering the small scale of New Zealand communities, Davidson and Tolich draw our attention to the need for researchers to be aware of protecting and preserving confidentiality (pre and post research) within small town settings. The identities of the schools and research participants are protected. Pseudonyms were used for the participating schools and principals in any written and visual material resulting from this study.

The collaborative and open-ended nature of this research project required principals to be involved at every phase and it provided regular opportunities for discussion, reflection and feedback. Participating principals were given the opportunity to read and comment on their individual interview notes and case studies and the researcher's interpretation of those case studies. All research data in the form of notes, audio-tapes and video-tapes or other media were stored securely throughout the study at the researcher's home. All data will be destroyed two years after the end of the project. Principals may retain ownership of any audio-tapes/video recordings, journals/diary scrap-books and arts-based materials produced in the practical focus-group workshops.

At all times the researcher aimed to ensure that the principals felt in control of the research processes they were undertaking.

3.10 Summary

This chapter has outlined the theoretical framework upon which this research is based. A constructivist interpretive paradigm was applied within a qualitative framework. Further to this, critical theory's own action learning and action research methodology underpins the reflective practice processes upon which the research is framed. A discussion of creative practice as a research construct identifies arts-based inquiry as a methodological and theoretical genre, which is also situated within the critical action research paradigm.

The PPLC established in this study created an action learning process of critical reflection. Utilising this critical approach to their own leadership development, the principals in this study created knowledge about effective leadership practice and used it to achieve praxis and a sense of agency. Incorporating arts-based inquiry, as a research construct and as a form of reflexive learning, further strengthened the principal's ability to examine the relationship of pedagogy to practice.

Two conceptual frameworks for the iconographic studies of the three women principals' leadership theory and styles, which integrates Kolb's model of learning theory and reflective practice theory (Hatton & Smith, 1995; Schön, 1983, 1987), are presented. Further to this, a framework model for reflective practice as a tool for personal and professional educational leadership development is outlined.

Justification is given for the adoption of multiple case studies and topical life stories as the most appropriate methodologies for this study. The roles of the participants and researcher are identified and the methods of data collection strategies, processes, analysis and interpretation are detailed.

Issues of authenticity and trustworthiness, along with ethical considerations outline the founding principles for this research.

The following Chapter 4 Portraits of Principals – Individual Iconographic Identities exhibits a within-case analysis.

Chapter 4

Portraits of Principals – Individual Iconographic Identities

4.1 A Métissage of Image and Dialogue – exhibiting the findings

This chapter presents the case study findings in a dual dialogue of genres. It is a métissage or merging of image and dialogue (text), to create individual portraits of the principal's leadership identities (Chambers et al., 2008). Each principal has composed a portrait of who she is as a leader based on her life story and experiences. This has been achieved through three interrelating arts-based processes designed uniquely for this research study: creating the 'Frame Your Self' activities, Self-portrait 'mirror box' (assemblage artworks) and journaling/scrap-booking.

As individual iconographic case studies, this chapter acts to identify, describe and interpret the symbolic representations of the principals' leadership philosophy and styles. Their conceptions of leadership development and practice are also revealed. This within-case analysis of each principal is presented without the need for an individual summary as chapter 5 presents a cross-case analysis.

Iconography is a method of visual analysis developed by the art historian Erwin Panofsky (Iconography, n.d.). Iconography refers to the discovery and identification of the deeper meaning in a work of art or image by distinguishing three layers of pictorial meaning: representational meaning – the recognition of what is presented taking into account the stylistic conventions and the technical transformations involved in the representation; iconographical symbolism – the person, things, or places represented in an image are not only analysed at the descriptive level but also for ideas or concepts attached to them; iconological symbolism – isolating the ideological meaning (underlying principles) of the image (Klenke, 2008).

In chapter 5 I discuss and establish these findings and those from the individual interviews and focus group workshops within the literature on educational

leadership utilising arts-based inquiry as a form of subject analysis to 'create conversations'.

The research question required the principals to reflect on the impact their life stories and experiences have had on their leadership style, leadership development and effective practice.

Creating a framework of principalship

The framework for arranging these portraits is based upon an artwork's two-dimensional compositional structure (background, middle ground and foreground).

I firstly present some background information, including some personal details about the women principals, their leadership development history and a brief description of their school context. Secondly (middle ground) their leadership styles are revealed in the 'Frame Your Self 'pre-study activity. The influence of their life stories and experiences are portrayed through the Self-portrait 'mirror box' and journaling/scrap-booking step 1-2 activities, which literally act to ground their personal theories of leadership development understanding.

Thirdly the journal/scrap-books at steps 3-4 give a close-up (foreground) and current look at the principals' reactions to their Self-portrait 'mirror box' and reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action as a daily reflective practice. This is evidenced in the ***D.R.A.W.*** (daily reflective analyse workout) exercise. This routine and discipline of reflection has developed a true picture or image of who these women are as leaders and how this might impact upon effective practice. The 'Frame Your Self 'post-study activity allows us to witness any changes to how the principals perceive their leadership philosophy and style.

4.2 Principal 1 – Rebecca Louise

Background – personal details

An educator for the past twenty years, Rebecca Louise is the principal of Opportunity for Life Area School, a co-educational, integrated special character school offering a holistic approach to education as an alternative philosophy to the traditional mainstream schools.

Born in Timaru, Rebecca attended teachers college in Dunedin whilst raising a young family. Rebecca held a Management teacher role prior to her first principal position at Opportunity for Life Area School where she has remained for the past eight and a half years.

Middle ground – leadership styles and life story

Initially when asked in the pre-study questionnaire to describe her leadership philosophy and style, Rebecca made the following comment:

Leadership style is something I am interested in and have read a lot on. I started out pretty much as a 'white knight' style leader who thought if you wanted something done properly, do it yourself. In appraisals staff fed back to me that this meant I had great vision, passion and ability to inspire and motivate, but that they didn't feel valued, or able to contribute effectively (among other things). This caused a re-evaluation of the way I thought about leadership and what I wanted people to get out of working with me... Since then, through reading, a multitude of short courses and a few longer term ones, I have looked into what is most effective and have tried to incorporate more of that into what I do – making it part of my 'automatic repertoire' is taking time though.

Leadership philosophy and styles revealed – 'Frame Your Self' – pre-study

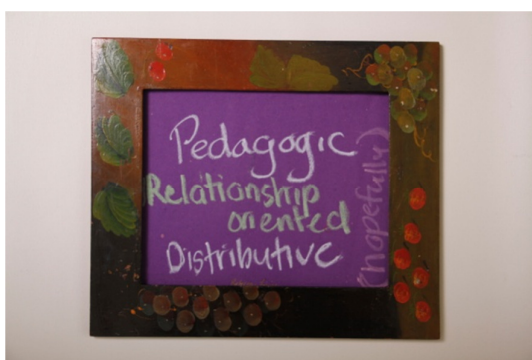


Image 1

Frame Your Self – pre-study

Rebecca commented in the 1st practical focus group "...without the relationships nothing else can work...pedagogic leadership is really important...you've got to be really strong in the philosophy and the science [due to her school's special educational philosophy]...and the distributive, I would like to say that I am collaborative, but I don't think I am enough. That's my goal".

Life story and experiences – Self-portrait ‘mirror box’

Perceptions of yourself as a leader

Step 1 – Design

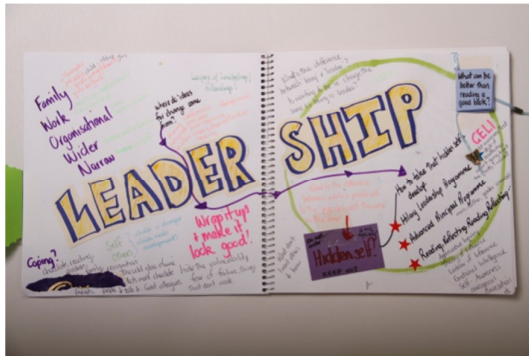


Image 2

Self-Portrait ‘mirror box’ – Step 1
design brainstorming



Image 3

Self-Portrait ‘mirror box’ – Step 1
design brainstorming

Step 2 – Analyse

The outside of the box (external-professional) represents the outward self (public or visible).

The inside of the box (internal-personal) represents the inner self (private or unseen)



Image 4

Self-Portrait ‘mirror box’ – *outside*



Image 5

Self-Portrait ‘mirror box’ – *inside*

Thinking ‘inside and outside’ the box’

Three-dimensional symbol of the public and private self

My outside of the box I guess is about my approach to leadership, finding out more about myself and the more you understand about where you come from the easier it is to set that to the side at times and listen, be open and be strong, you know sometimes not to set it aside. And you can't change anybody else you can only change yourself... (Rebecca).

Rebecca chose a large boot shoe box. Collaged on the outside are titles and paragraph descriptors from the Hilary Leadership Programme (an eighteen-month professional development initiative) through Auckland University Business School

to which Rebecca obtained a scholarship in 2007-2008. This experience was the turning point for Rebecca in regards to how she was going to be as a leader as “it was the first time I really held a mirror up to myself and asked for feedback that was more than just the superficial stuff you often get...”

The following titles are taken from Rebecca’s collaged shoe box lid:

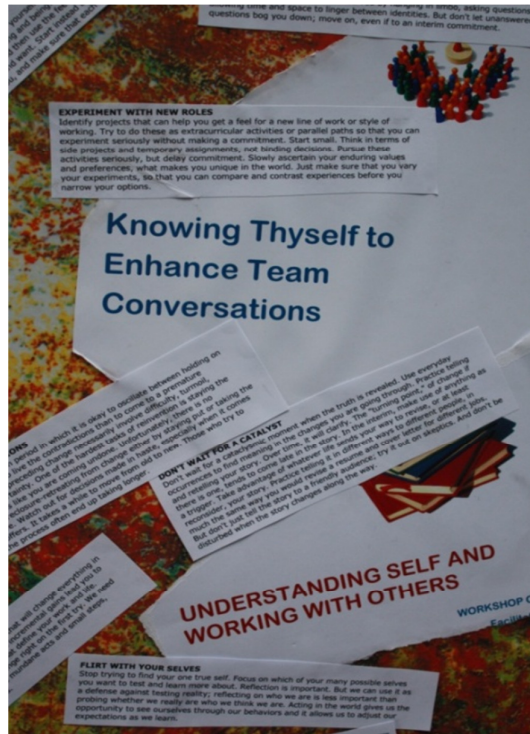


Image 6
Self-Portrait ‘mirror box’ — outside lid detail

Knowing myself to enhance team conversation
Understanding self and working with others
Strengthening the core of yourself
Act then reflect
Seize windows of opportunities
Experiment with new roles
Live the contradictions
Make big changes in small steps
Don't wait for a catalyst
Flirt with your selves
Step back but not for too long
Find people who are what you want to be

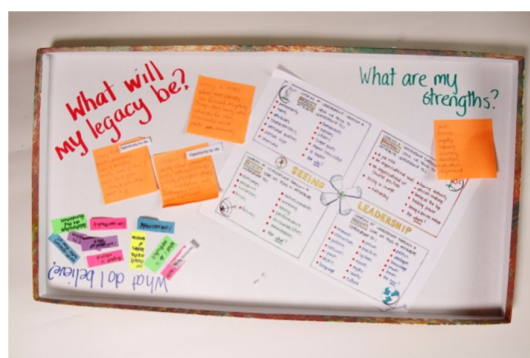


Image 7
Self-Portrait ‘mirror box’ — inside lid detail
 leadership lenses



Image 8
Self-Portrait ‘mirror box’ — inside lid detail
 What do I believe?

What do I believe? Heading with captions/statements – *belief notes*

Some of the belief captions (post-it notes) are permanently stuck down, others are not as firmly fixed. Rebecca's statements offer insights and validity to her values and principles. It is noted that the three concerning her personal self (I am successful, I am good at this, I am worthwhile), are the only ones that are not as firmly fixed.

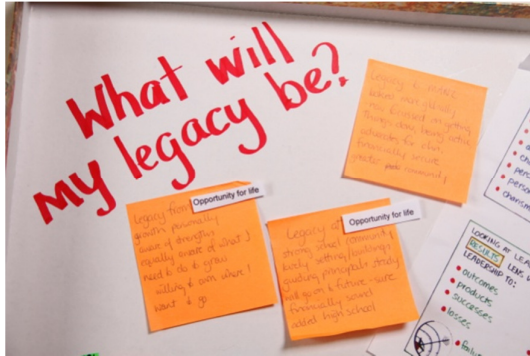


Image 9
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' –
What will my legacy be?

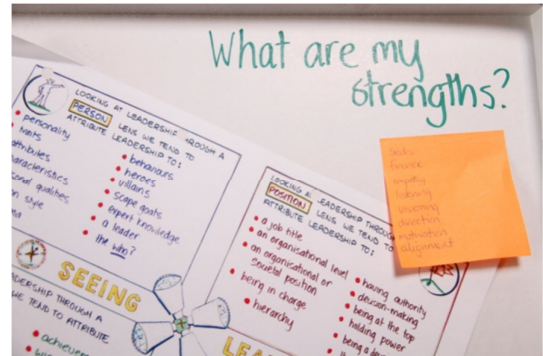


Image 10
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' –
What are my strengths?

Boxes wrapped as gifts/presents within presents – *uncovering of leadership self-reflection issues...mistakes*



Image 11
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' –
Admire the packaging and go no further



Image 12
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' –
To whom it may concern

Asked in the first interview to discuss the significance of the gift-wrapped box, Rebecca said:

I guess it's about the idea you have when becoming a leader, or even as growing up to be the one in charge, you don't want to have any faults and that you have to appear in control all of the time. The packaging has to be good...It's a pretty box, it's black, with a little bit of a silver thing and it's tied up in a lovely gold bow, with a beautiful little gift tag, made you know (hand-made) and it's all very neat and tidy. The tag says: *Admire the package and go no further, you don't have to look underneath, really it's fine.* And part of that is the Hilary programme, which is actually you do need to look underneath. You have to look at your motivations and in my box I've got the GELI.

Rebecca explained at this point what the GELI was and commented upon the feedback she received before continuing to describe and un-wrap further gift-wrapped boxes within the initial one.

GELI and time to reflect bell – the wake-up call

Hidden inside this metal box is a 360 review (assessment tool called GELI – a Global Executive Leadership Inventory) from the Hilary Leadership Programme. It's all the feedback from a full staff, board and personal appraisal (the truths revealed in reflecting on and revealing the maybe not so pleasant aspects of self). Rebecca calls it "The wake-up-call (things to work on!)".

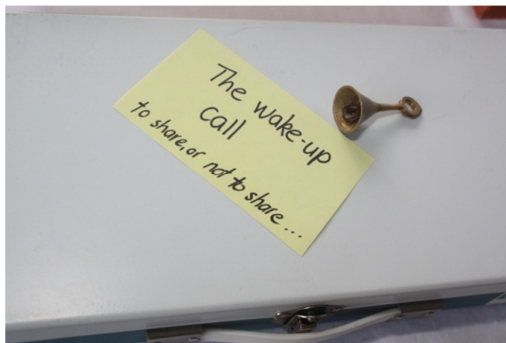


Image 13
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – GELI –
the wake-up call

She expands on this:

"I got that feedback and went oh I do have to look, below the packaging. I had been here...five years and I still didn't introduce myself as the principal, I didn't think of myself as the principal I said, I'm the janitor, I'm the dogs body, I'm the person who does, works at... I didn't think I had the skills...for a long time I thought I was a fraud".

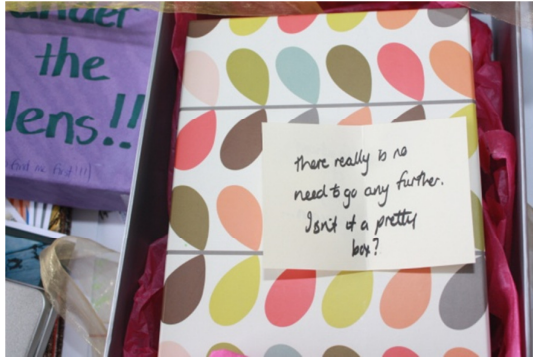


Image 14
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' —
Isn't it a pretty box?

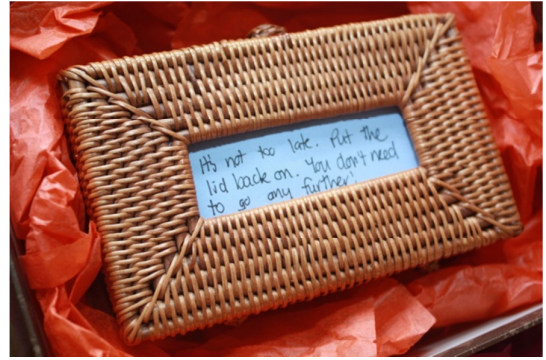


Image 15
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' —
It's not too late. Put the lid back on

Rebecca spoke about the trust required in forming closer relationships with people who she can be accountable to. In the following statement she talks about the protective layer she has put up, yet in further conversation Rebecca made mention of getting to the time when she gave people permission to speak into her life.

So it's easier said than done to look at yourself. I've put a lot of, well I guess self-protection stuff, you only go so far until you get the next affirmation you're ok. It's alright you're not that bad you don't have to do that much... so this is another lovely box, it had chocolate in it...it's all just about the packaging still [self-contained] And a little note in it: '*To whom it may concern: there really is no need to go any further. Isn't it a pretty box?*' So it's all about diversion, you can just sit there and admire this package has got it together. All is good as long as you don't prod too much. So we've got a nice wee basket, holes leaking in, some air coming through...you don't want to get too far in yet. There is a window in. '*It's not too late, put the lid back on you don't have to go any further*'. A message to myself but also to people looking...



Image 16
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' —
star stickers



Image 17
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' —
How long can I cover it up?

The last box is very much like an 'honesty box'. It is a see-through box (transparent) this time. It contains words or concepts which are wrapped up prettily with stars (teacher award star stickers to keep the wrapped notes closed). Written on quality paper, they speak for themselves, getting right down to the basics, the core of Rebecca's feelings and beliefs...

Shame

Fake

Failure

Mistakes-there's so many of them

Vulnerability

Fear

Won't be long till they find out I don't know what I'm doing

How can I cover it up?

Whose lives will I adversely affect by doing this?

Rebecca commented in her first interview:

you have to appear that you have it together because you have all these people looking at you and depending on you... looking like you've got it all under control, especially with principals, none of the principals I know admit to not being able to cope.



Image 18
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' — *shame*



Image 19
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' — *fake*



Image 20
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' — failure



Image 21
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' — vulnerability

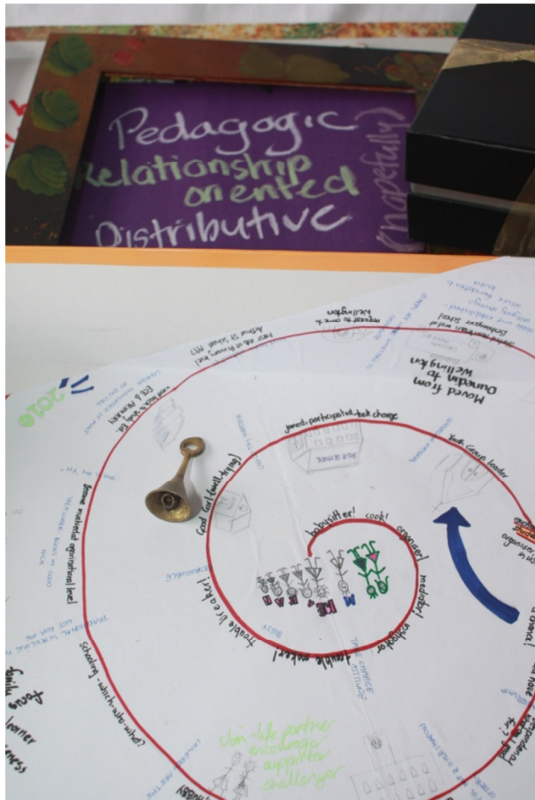


Image 22
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' — time-line life spiral



Image 23
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' — time-line life spiral detail

Time-line life spiral – words and pictures – experiences and influences

Collaged onto the bottom of Rebecca's box is a spiral time-line of her life and family from birth to the year 2010. It specifically records the main events and experiences that shaped her growth as a leader, within the family in which she grew up, at school, church and university. These are linked to descriptions of her abilities, actions and character and intersected with perceptions of her behaviour and attitude. The major life change of marriage and raising a family is marked by a

shift in reflection within the spiral time-line. From this point, as Rebecca identifies further influences and focus areas in her leadership development, there is a move from the focus on personal development and self-reflection towards more philosophical revelations and a professional development orientation. With further training, study and work experience the time-line reads as a summary of school achievements, goal setting and strategic planning aspirations.



Image 24
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' — Russian doll

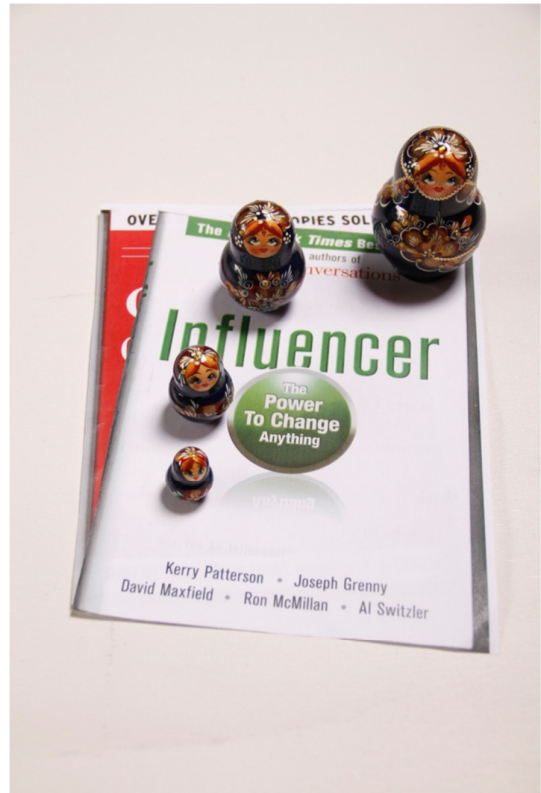


Image 25
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' — Russian doll set of 4

Russian doll - Matryoshka doll (set of 4) - layers of self (opening up)

Matryoshkas are used metaphorically, as a design paradigm, known as the 'matryoshka principle' or 'nested doll principle'. It denotes a recognisable relationship of 'object-within-similar-object'.

This Matryoshka (little matron – matriarch) from Russia is hand painted and was given to Rebecca as a gift. Placed one inside the other, Rebecca explained that the smallest, innermost doll represents *herself personally*, the second largest doll represents herself within her *family*; the third doll herself with her *friends* and the

largest herself within the *professional work* environment. For Rebecca this is not only an analogy of who she is within each part of her personal and wider public life but it also symbolises the process of opening up the layers of her personal and professional life to self-reflection and development.

There is a parallel here with Bronfenbrenner's⁸ (1979) ecological paradigm of human development which links the progression of interpersonal relationships to the extending levels of physical learning environments. In the context of The Ministry of Education's, early Childhood Curriculum, Te Whāriki (1996), Bronfenbrenner's model of the nested doll is used to illustrate the four levels of learning. Firstly the learner engages with the immediate learning environment, the relationships between wider learning settings; the interpersonal influences on the learner, and the wider cultural beliefs and values.



Image 26
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – *dust-jackets*



Image 27
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – fuel pump

Books – dust jackets – the influence of authors

When interviewing Rebecca she commented upon the fact that she has read widely on leadership and is in the habit of keeping a book journal of written notes which document her reflections and reactions to the book's content. Her admiration of those authors who have been influential in her leadership development and understanding is evident. Rebecca thrives on intellectual challenge, having completed her masters a few years ago she made a

⁸ When Urie Bronfenbrenner explicated his ecological paradigm [theoretical perspective for human development] in 1979 in *The Ecology of Human Development*, he envisioned it as a way to explain human development as a function of nested systems of interpersonal relationships that occur within physical settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

commitment to herself, to set aside time to read. Jim Collin's book, *Good to Great* and *Influencer* by Patterson, Grenny, Maxfield, Millan and Switzler, have been significant shapers in Rebecca's leadership thinking. When interviewing Rebecca I asked her to reflect on what she had received from reading *Influencer*. Rebecca made the following comment:

...this whole thing about you can't change anybody else but you can change yourself, but actually you can change things in people through influencing, not coercion. No a big difference, not forcing, not anything else but by influencing and looking at that...It's my word for this year.

In Rebecca's first interview she pointed out a big colour poster...large block word: INFLUENCER written on an A4 white page and tacked to her notice board by her school office desk.

Plastic toy petrol station fuel pump – needing time to refuel through reading

The fuel pump is seen here as a metaphor for learning. Rebecca considers reading as a way to refuel and as enforced personal development. She refers to this in her journal, within which she has made a miniature book titled: *What can be better than a good book?* Inside the book the following phrases are written:

Read for discovery
Read for knowledge
Read for pleasure
Read for ideas
Read for growth
Read for relaxation
Reading to keep up



Image 28
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – journal
reading for growth



Image 29
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – journal
reading for knowledge

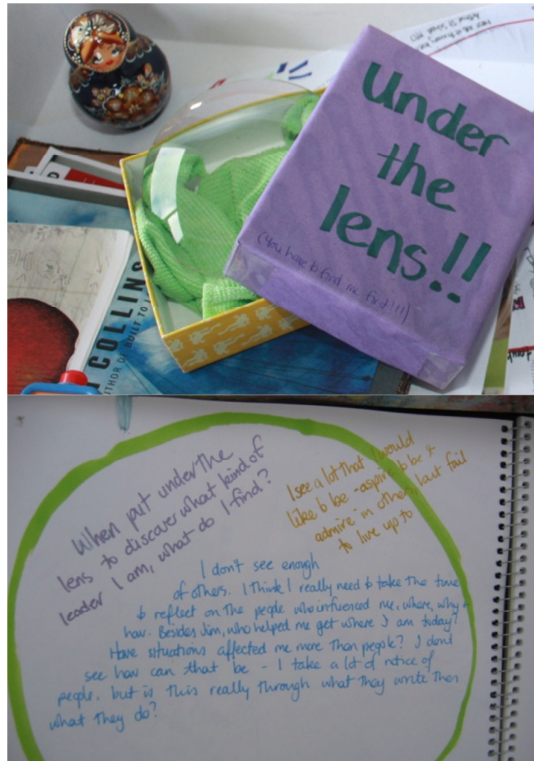


Image 30
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' — *under the lens*



Image 31
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' — *magnifying lens — spy glass*

Magnifying glass — spy glass (photo of self) — private personality yet public face

Rebecca explained that the old spy glass was from her grandmother and is used to magnify photos. Rebecca mentioned in the 1st practical focus group of the tension between her natural tendency to be a private person yet having to exhibit the public role and face of leadership as a principal.

...you have to find me first when I'm kind of hidden, you know, in the picture fading into the background...but there are times when you can't...[as a leader]. Knowing that and going ok....there are probably people who think that I like being in the limelight, but actually I don't. I'd rather be in the background...

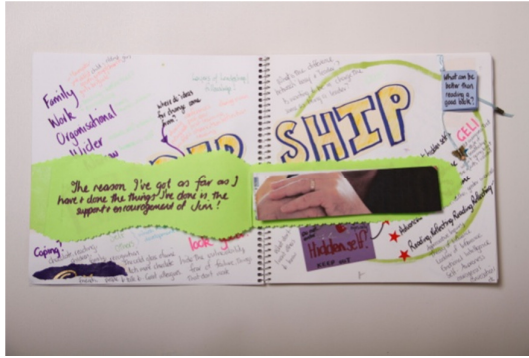


Image 32
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – Step 1
design brainstorming



Image 33
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – *a lovely love story*
toy dinosaurs

A lovely love story – Toy dinosaurs – husband, friend and influencer

This represents Rebecca and her husband, her “lovely love story...”

Rebecca’s admiration for her husband is obvious and he has been a pivotal influence on her life. As her best friend he has been her greatest source of encouragement and support throughout her leadership journey.

Red ladder of inference – from experience to action

In the 1st practical focus group Rebecca describes the ladder of inference which provides a description of the stages that our inference processes go through from what we observe and experience to deciding on a course of action. The ladder of inference has been a significant tool for her to use when reflecting on practice and she explained it in this manner:

...the ladder of inference is where you observe something and you go straight to the top (ACTION) without thinking how you got there, so you observe something and you act on it, according to a belief or whatever but you haven’t analysed how you got there and thought about is that reasonable or logical and so it’s about slowing that whole thing down and time to climb the ladder and come to a conclusion...

The following captions depict the words Rebecca tagged to the ladder to illustrate the stages of inference.

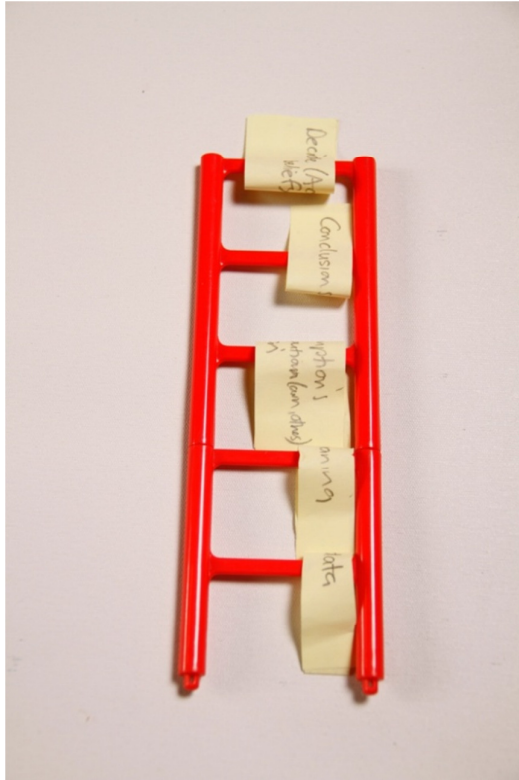


Image 34
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' — ladder of inference

top of ladder

I take ACTION based on my beliefs

I adopt BELIEFS about the world

I draw CONCLUSIONS

I make ASSUMPTIONS based on the meanings I add

I add MEANING (cultural and personal)

I select DATA from what I observe

observable 'data' and EXPERIENCES

bottom of ladder

Foreground – journal/scrap-book reflections

Step 3 – Critique – Reactions to Self-portrait 'mirror box'

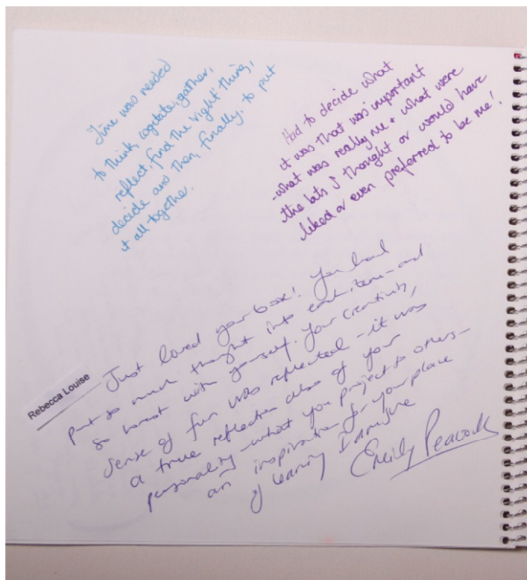


Image 35
Journal/scrap-book reflections — Step 3
critique — reactions

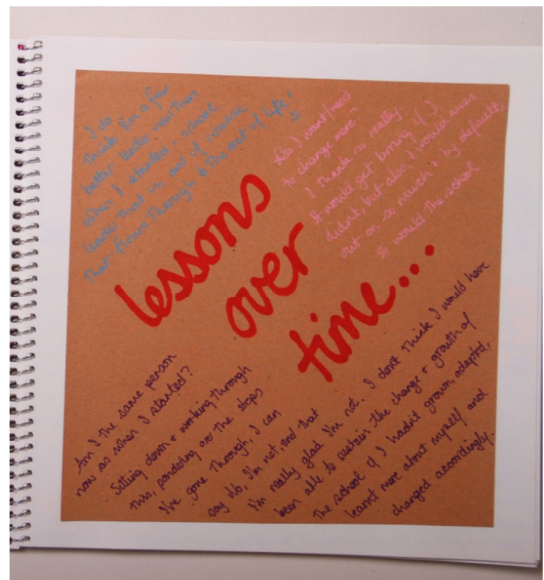


Image 36
Journal/scrap-book reflections — Step 3
critique — reactions — lessons over time

Step 4 – **D.R.A.W.** (daily reflective analyse workout)

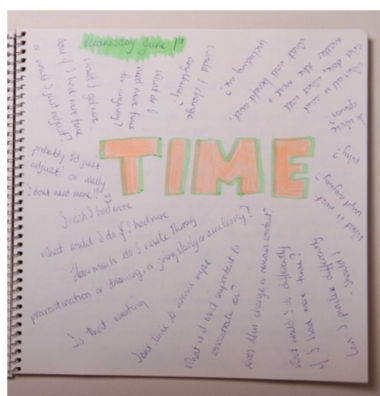


Image 37

Journal/scrap-book reflections – **D.R.A.W.**
TIME

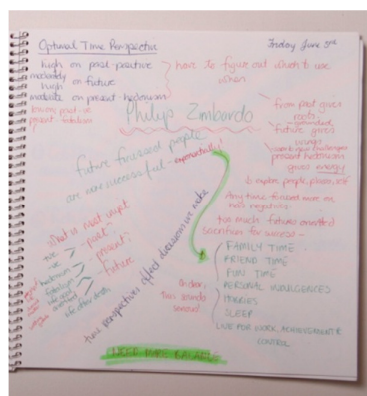


Image 38

Journal/scrap-book reflections – **D.R.A.W.**
TIME perspectives – a need for balance

What do teachers want? Expectations of the principal

During the **D.R.A.W.** exercise Rebecca attended a principals' leadership conference (specific to the educational philosophy of her school) in Australia. In her journal as an entry for the **D.R.A.W.** exercise she shares her response to a research summary given by one of the presenters, Peter Davidson on teachers' expectations of the principal and how it would impact her practice. Here I list three of them with her comments alongside:

- *Recognition from the principal* – “need to consciously do a lot more of this”.
- *Stability in leadership and ideas they are putting forward* – “think this is usually ok”.
- *The friendly feel of being family* – “would like to more than we have without major factions...next big goal I think”.

Leadership philosophy and styles revealed – ‘Frame Your Self’ – post-study



Image 39

Frame Your Self – post-study

Rebecca summarised in the second interview what her leadership philosophy and style was founded upon. “I guess if I could reduce it down to one word if I tried to, I guess if I put VALUES down then that would cover everything. Because it would cover the pedagogy, it would cover the relationships, it would cover distributed leadership”.

4.3 Principal 2 – Emily Peacock

Background – personal details

Emily Peacock is the principal of Bowburn High School, an integrated college for girls. The college philosophy is based on a strong foundation of Christian values.

Born in England, her family immigrated to New Zealand when she was seven years old. Raised, educated and trained as a teacher in Wellington Emily has been an educator for the better part of fifteen years. Emily also taught in the Taranaki and Hawkes Bay regions where she held positions as Assistant Principal and Deputy Principal before taking up her first principal position at Bowburn High School. She has been principal there for the past seven years.

Middle ground – leadership styles and life story

When asked in the pre-study questionnaire to describe her leadership philosophy and style, Emily outlined the following points:

- Transformational, reflective, consultative – depending on situation. Can be directive, coaching and autocratic.
- Important to be positive – see the good in people/situations.
- Have a clear vision.
- About hearts and minds of people. Relationship is the key.
- Important to empower staff – give them opportunities.
- Important to have respect re: the moral compass.
- Work on a High Trust Model.
- Need to be fair and consistent.

Leadership philosophy and styles revealed – ‘Frame Your Self’ – pre-study



Image 40

Frame Your Self – pre-study

Emily stated in the 1st practical focus group: “Authentic and servant leadership...working... towards that vision or the common good and being a servant leader is that analogy like you’re the conductor of a jazz band and all your staff are jazz players. You want them to be the best that they can be to play their part to make it really good for the organisation to reach that goal... I’ve written... collaborative because I’m very much about working alongside, that coaching that mentoring...and in the centre the key for me is relationships. Relationships with people, getting to know your staff, your parents, your students, building up trust, because unless you have that...you can’t inspire you can’t lead, they won’t follow”.

Life story and experiences – Self-portrait ‘mirror box’

Perceptions of yourself as a leader

Step 1 – Design

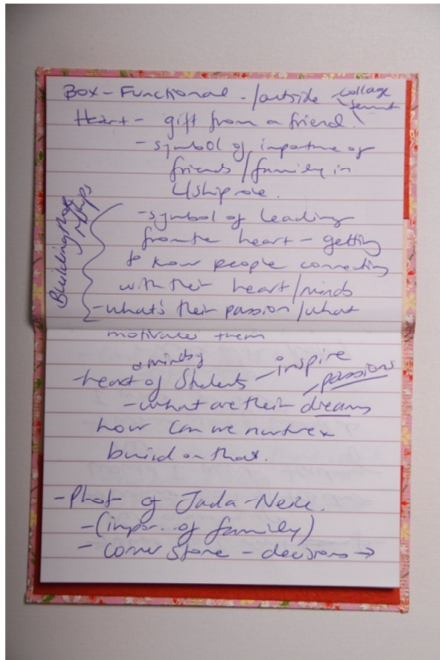


Image 41

Self-Portrait ‘mirror box’ – Step 1 and 2 design brainstorming and analysis

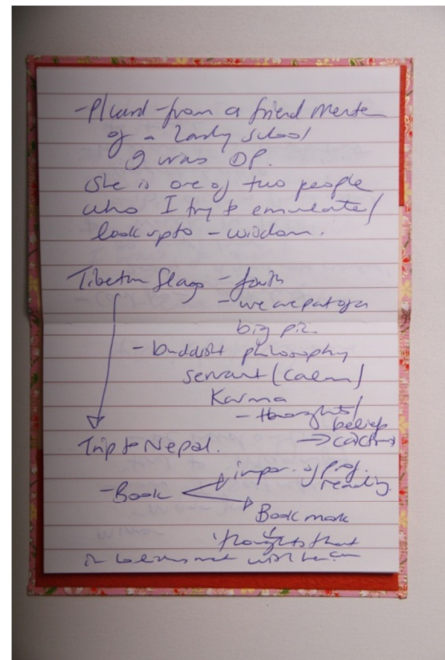


Image 42

Self-Portrait ‘mirror box’ – Step 1 and 2 design brainstorming and analysis

Emily has also written the following questions in her journal brainstorming:

What is important to me?

What do I value?

Who would be the most influential people?

What/who have shaped me?

What do I stand for? (principles)

Step 2 – Analyse

The outside of the box (external-professional) represents the outward self (public or visible).

The inside of the box (internal-personal) represents the inner self (private or unseen)



Image 43
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – *outside*



Image 44
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – *inside*

Thinking 'inside and outside' the box'

Three-dimensional symbol of the public and private self

The box that I chose... black metal slide case...it's very functional, very practical, no frills and that's what I am... part of me as a leader! And what I put on here (collage on outside of box), I actually found a c.v. when I applied for the job at Bowburn High School and I had to talk about my philosophies or ideas about leadership...so it was good to go back after seven years and look at that and see if that still held true and yes because I talked about authentic leadership, servant leadership, collaborative, I talked about setting the tone, direction, defining that vision based on sound values and principles, so that still holds true (Emily).



Image 45
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' — heart



Image 46
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' — heart and Celtic stones

Ceramic heart ornament – representing relationships and the importance of friendships

Emily has chosen a ceramic heart ornament as the very symbol and centre of her leadership understanding. “It’s the core of leadership and I believe being a person”. She considers leadership to be about the heart and the mind. “Getting into the hearts of the people, finding out what fires them, what are they passionate about; how you can motivate and inspire them? She believes building those relationships comes from the heart and to be an authentic leader you have to be who you are being your true self, you can’t pretend to be someone that you are not”.

The heart ornament was a gift from a friend. Throughout the research Emily stressed how important the support of family and friends were for her as a leader, especially since leadership was a lonely job.

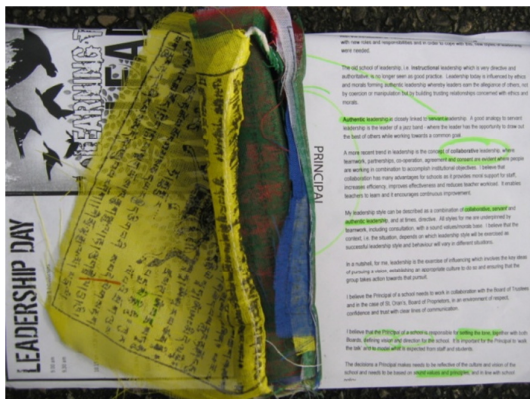


Image 47
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' — Tibetan Flags



Image 48
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' — bookmark

Celtic stones – *origin of school's Celtic namesake*

In her first interview Emily added to her 'mirror box' two Celtic stones from Scotland to represent the school's historical namesake and Celtic roots. Emily visited Scotland whilst on sabbatical in 2010.

Photo of niece at school – *parental perspective*

When analysing this photo Emily considered that her role as a principal was like parenting a rather large family! Even though Emily does not have any children of her own, her experience of acting as parent help when her niece was leader for the day of her year 1 class caused Emily to see her niece as a cornerstone – a personal perspective from which to base and influence the decisions she makes at school.



Image 49
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – niece



Image 50
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – heart

Tibetan Flags – *philosophical reflection*

Book – *Leadership Wisdom from the Monk who Sold his Ferrari*

Representing her faith (spirituality), Emily grew up as Church of England, yet visiting Nepal last year has drawn her towards the philosophy of the Buddhists and Tibetan people. Emily shared in the 1st practical focus group that the concept of karma and taking time out to reflect inspired her to read the book *Leadership Wisdom from the Monk who Sold his Ferrari*.

Bookmark – It's your thoughts that count – *leaders are readers*

In the 1st practical focus group Emily stressed that a love of reading is fundamental for a leader's own personal and professional development.

Round magnifying mirror – *reminder to keep things in perspective*

Invited to explain why she had chosen a magnifying mirror Emily said:

I like to self-reflect and I have a tendency to magnify and make things bigger than what they are... I've got to learn to keep things in context [perspective] you know sometimes you think all the walls are coming down.



Image 51

Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – card and postcard



Image 52

Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – journal reflection on card from a student

Postcard of the Milford Sound – *impact of having a role model*

Emily received this postcard in the holidays from Clare a principal who was a role model for her when she was a DP in the Hawkes Bay. Emily describes the leadership style and practice of the woman she sort to emulate:

She had the 'X' factor... I observed very good people skills. Fabulous relationship with the Board, with the students, with parents and the students had immense respect...she was herself and yet she was able to influence people and I believe that was because of the relationship she developed which came from the heart and she made those connections with people...She [cared] for her staff and for students and that was evident, so evident and she'd always be praising staff and you'd find a voucher for a facial if you'd had a hard week. Lots of little things like that, they all added up [with] lots of positive affirmation of staff and students...very aware of the workload of teachers and staff and a lot of fun...good sense of humour.

Card from past student – *impact of being a role model*

This card received from a student when Emily left her DP position acts as a reminder and speaks of the impact that Emily had as a good role model. It made Emily realise leadership is your actions, it's what you do on a daily basis, not necessarily what you say, that is how you are perceived.

Foreground – journal/scrap-book reflections

Step 3 – Critique – Reactions to Self-portrait 'mirror box'

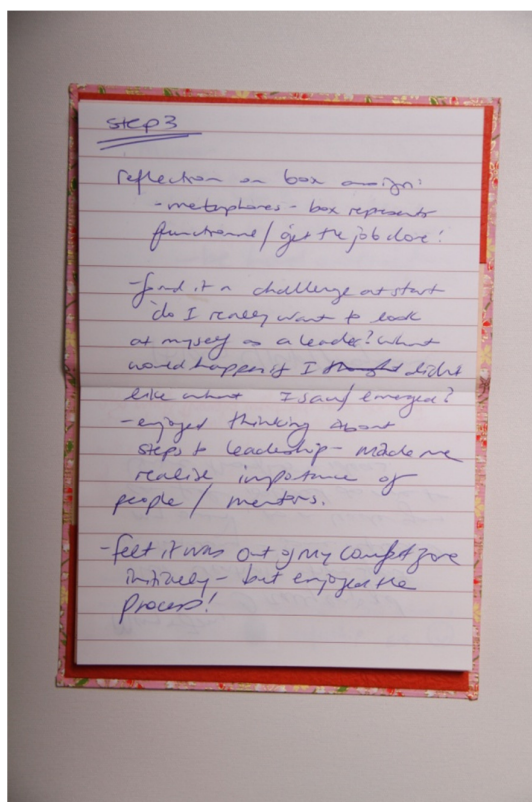


Image 53
Journal/scrap-book reflections – Step 3
critique – reactions

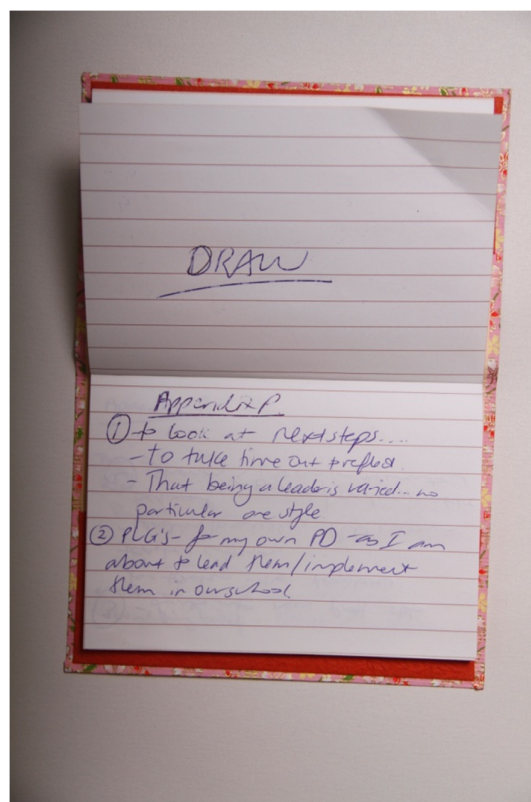


Image 54
Journal/scrap-book reflections – **D.R.A.W.**

Step 4 – **D.R.A.W.** (daily reflective analyse workout)

Memorable reflections – Communication with students and parents

In choosing two memorable reflections for the **D.R.A.W.** exercise, I noted that Emily chose to mention her positive communications with students and parents. She found interviewing prospective students was uplifting because it reinforced

and affirmed for her how much she enjoys connecting with people and the sense of community in being a big school family. In the second interview Emily revealed that she derives a great sense of satisfaction and demonstrates an ethic of care by personally following up on students in crises or trauma.

Reflecting on her actions Emily made the following comment on the value of this reflective exercise:

Well the biggest thing, not so much new but confirmed for me was having belief in myself. And when I look back on the reflections, things that have happened... I wrote down what I had done and it may have been something I was concerned about and the way I had dealt with it and it turned out it was right. So it's like I was on the right track so have belief in what I'm doing. Stop that self-doubt. Yeah that was the biggest thing really because I do feel I am like that and that confirmed for me that was the case.

Leadership philosophy and styles revealed – ‘Frame Your Self’ – post study



Image 55
Frame Your Self - *post-study*

Reflecting on the outcome of this study Emily said that “It’s just affirmed for me what’s important to me as a leader...That’s who I am and...I wouldn’t necessarily change and so I’ve got here celebration of styles, yes I’m quite happy to be singing about it, it’s more colourful but it’s essentially still relationships from the heart, incorporating aspects of the servant, authentic and collaborative leadership”.

4.4 Principal 3 – Elisabeth Hebden

Background – personal details

Principal of St. Teresa's Academy for the past fifteen years is Elisabeth Hebden. As with Rebecca and Emily this is Elisabeth's first principalship role. St. Teresa's Academy is an integrated Catholic girls' secondary school.

Raised in the Northeast of England, Elisabeth was teaching in a secondary modern school when she and her husband decided to immigrate to New Zealand. Elisabeth has been an educator for thirty-seven years, with a short period as a Director of Religious Studies prior to her position as principal of St. Teresa's Academy.

Middle ground - leadership styles and life story

In listing the leadership styles that she considered to be the most effective (pre-study questionnaire) Elisabeth made the following comment:

Combination of participative, [being a] delegator and authoritarian depending on the situation. Delegator when I know that the staff member knows more about the task in hand than I do and is competent and able to carry out the task (responsibility for it). Participative when we need to have collaborative style input with people able to express their views and contribute to the decision. Authoritative when the buck stops with me and I have to make the final decision, it can come about via participative or delegated information or may be instead based on situation. My leadership style is a combination of the three above, but mainly I would see myself as participative leadership style.

Leadership philosophy and styles revealed – ‘Frame Your Self’ – pre-study



Image 56
Frame Your Self – pre-study

Elisabeth analysed in the 2nd focus group what her leadership philosophy and style was founded upon. “Real... genuine in what I want to achieve... I think I’m just in that I’m honest in what I do and try to be fair. Service is really important because as a leader if you can’t serve your community then you’re not achieving anything. Democratic because I try to involve other people in decision making and not be autocratic. Pastoral...to me encompasses a lot of this because you are looking at the needs of the staff... forward thinking...you’ve always got to look to the future to where you are leading the school. Overall leadership is underpinned by stewardship...I’ve got this really strong heritage of all these people who went before me and it’s my responsibility, I believe to build upon what they’ve left behind, so I look forward to the future for the next person coming in afterwards”.

Life histories and experiences – Self-portrait ‘mirror box’

Perceptions of yourself as a leader

Step 1 – Design

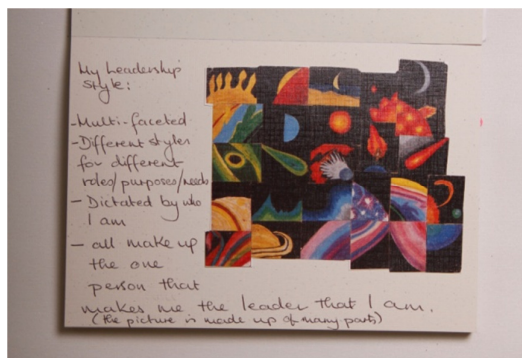


Image 57
Journal/scrap-book –
leadership style pre-study brainstorming

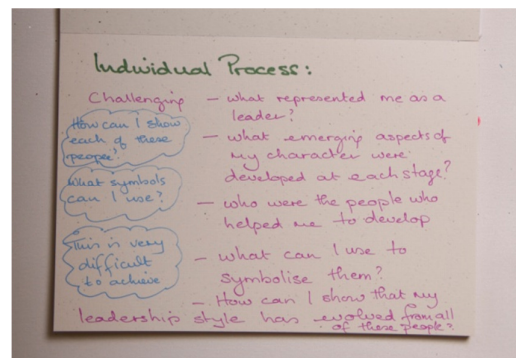


Image 58
Self-Portrait ‘mirror box’ – Step 1
design brainstorming

Step 2 – Analyse

The outside of the box (external-professional) represents the outward self (public or visible).

The inside of the box (internal-personal) represents the inner self (private or unseen)

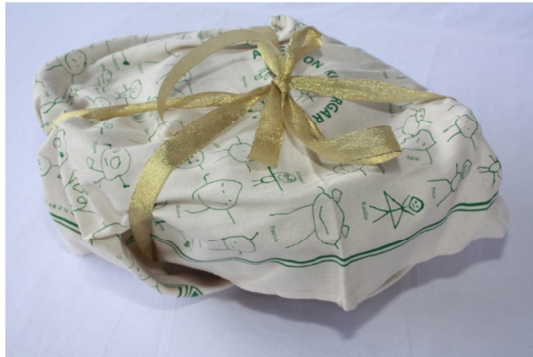


Image 59
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – *outside wrapped*



Image 60
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – *inside unwrapped*

Thinking 'inside and outside' the box'

Three-dimensional symbol of the public and private self

My box is actually not a box but a child-size willow clothes basket (little basket of treasures) wrapped in a tea-towel and tied up as a picnic hamper. I have had it since I was three years old and it is a miniature version of the regular sized one that my mother (and everyone else in our area) used to put washing in to hang out on the line. They were made by a local man who was blind and made his living from weaving willow baskets. The symbolism for me was that it is interwoven with many facets, made with pride, often scrubbed clean and rinsed, is totally reliable in its function and is extremely strong having been well used, well-travelled and in use today - so reflected somewhat my role as a leader having developed wisdom from experiences, ability to re-invent oneself, strength of character, values [and as the] baskets of knowledge – [Te Kete-o-te-Wananga⁹] from a Maori perspective.

This is a very special luxury picnic hamper as you get in a gift, “because all these (contents of the basket) are my gifts, that have been given to me or that express me”. Tied together with a length of gold ribbon in a nice big bow, is the tea towel cover for the basket from the kindergarten that one of Elisabeth’s grandson’s attended. Each child has drawn a stick figure of themselves and their name next to the figure. The tea towel represents the care and support of family and the care and support Elisabeth considers foundational in her role as principal.

⁹ Based on a mythological story which seeks to explain how humankind gained its knowledge of things both earthly and spiritual from the gods. The three baskets of knowledge and two sacred stones are metaphors for the ideal life, a journey of striving for knowledge and education and enlightenment, to become better people.

The basket and tea-towel as a hamper represent the support and nourishment that I have received on my journey as a leader and what I offer as a leader.



Image 61

Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – *basket within basket*



Image 62

Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – *clapper hands*

Basket within basket

Inside the hamper is a *second woven basket*. Also a basket of knowledge as it represents who Elisabeth is as a leader and her leadership style. This second basket sits in the middle of the other one and it has been put in the centre deliberately. It is surrounded by objects which represent the past influences and experiences that have contributed towards Elisabeth being the leader she is today. The openness of the basket was also intentional and represents to Elisabeth the multicultural environment of St. Teresa's Academy and the need to be open to change both for Elisabeth personally, professionally and within the collective school community. This round woven basket contains a green, (symbolic for growth) foam cut-out figure which represents Elisabeth and six other items/objects:

Closed padlocks with a key attached – *autocratic leadership style*

Three hand shaped clappers – *participative (collaborative) leadership style*

Key – *distributed (delegated) leadership style*

Elisabeth gives a clear description of the objects leadership significance:

The first item is a closed padlock attached to a second closed padlock with a key attached. This represents me as the autocratic leader when decisions or directions have to be made... The three sets of hand shaped clappers in different colours represent collaborative leadership when decision making is shared... The third item is a key which represents freedom for others to make decisions when I know that the person concerned is capable of getting on with the [task] and leave them to see it through.



Image

63

Self-Portrait 'mirror box' — *round woven basket contents*



Image 64

Self-Portrait 'mirror box' — *closed padlocks with key attached*

Elisabeth revealed when interviewed that she uses a mixture of all three leadership styles dependent upon the situation, which I believe clearly reflects the contingency-situational theory approach. She said:

Initially I attempted to be totally collaborative but found that decisions were not made and needed to be. There are some staff who would prefer a totally autocratic style and others who would prefer a free reign. I think that it is important as a leader, to recognise what style is needed at what time and to give staff the opportunity to contribute and to be given the opportunity to take initiatives when they are going to benefit the students learning.

4th object: Ball – busy bee



Image 65

Self-Portrait 'mirror box' — *busy bee*

Elisabeth commented in her first interview upon the symbolism of the busy bee ball. "The ball that you constantly as the leader have in the air (at any one time)... [also] because you've got to be able to pass the ball to various people at various times to have some sort of distributed leadership, but ultimately it comes back to you, because as the leader you're the one who has to wear it and make the final decision".

5th object: Three mirrors – *symbolising reflection on leadership*

Elisabeth has incorporated a Chinese heart-shaped magnifying mirror and a Japanese flip-mirror (both gifts from students and representing for Elisabeth the school's international students) as well as a British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC)¹⁰ mirror. Elisabeth and family immigrated to New Zealand. The mirrors were given as a travel handout on the planes, though this one was from a friend who also immigrated to NZ. The mirror is clear on the back and on the other side has a graphic picture of Victoria Falls.

You have to reflect and I thought that was where the mirrors come in and sometimes you get a really clear reflection and other times it's sort of foggy. And you're not quite sure and you sit and reflect on it long enough and suddenly it clears and you can see where you want to be going and where the correct pathway is...It's got Victoria Falls on it. And I thought looking at it I actually picked for this side with the picture on it, because it's sort of...sometimes we hide ourselves and I thought that was significant.

6th object: School pen – *identified by name*

Representative of where Elisabeth is now in her current principalship at St. Teresa's Academy, this pen identifies the school by name. (Therefore no image is included).



Image 66
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – scroll

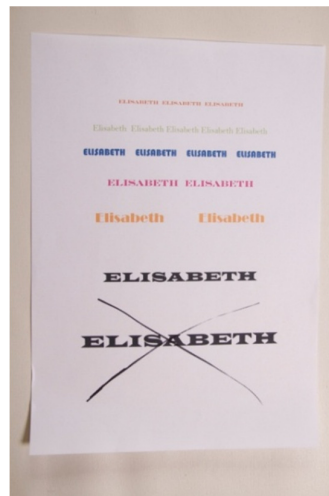


Image 67
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – scroll – *what's in a name?*

¹⁰ The British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) was the British state airline from 1939 until 1946 and the long-haul British state airline from 1946 to 1974.

The following are the surrounding objects which represent past influences and life experiences which have shaped Elisabeth to be the leader she is today.

Scroll – what's in a name?

Significant for Elisabeth, is the inclusion in the Self-portrait 'mirror box' of a scroll. Tied with a piece of black tie she has printed her name on it: **ELISABETH**. Elisabeth, **Elisabeth** **ELISABETH**. Lots of sizes, colours, fonts and the biggest one is crossed out. This is because she grew up being named after various family members and "it felt like it was never, ever just my name". Elisabeth was an only child, which was very unusual in a Catholic school in those days. Her parents were the eldest children of large families and they were determined that Elisabeth was going to be able to stick up for herself. Elisabeth explained further:

So the significance of me crossing out Elisabeth was because I was always, in my mind going to be different, I was not going to be one of the pack. I wasn't going to be seen as a spoilt only child and I had to stand on my own two feet...that was the expectation. But I was always a sort of treasured member of the family and the wider family.



Image 68
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – *name scroll*



Image 69
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – *name scroll detail*



Image 70
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – *influential figures*

5 figures in total – foam cut out figure shapes all with jewellery around necks in transparent coloured gift bags, as representative symbols of each person:

- 1 **green** – father
- 2 **yellow** – mother
- 3 **orange** – husband
- 4 **pink** – grandmother (maternal)
- 5 **yellow** – first teacher

This **green** figure represents Elisabeth's father who had a very strong role in Elisabeth's life. Elisabeth explained in her first interview how he was the eldest of his family, disadvantaged educationally and worked in the steelworks. As a result of this he made sure that all of his brothers and sisters had the opportunity to take up some sort of trade and he was greatly respected among his family and the community. Around the neck is a green bag to match the green person and in it is the watch that he gave Elisabeth for her 21st birthday. Asked to describe the significance of the watch Elisabeth said:

...it has always meant a lot to me because it was from him and he was always a very punctual person... The watch is to do with the strength and the efficiency in the way in which he did things... He had very clear values, very clear rules and he really went out of his way to ensure that I had a good education in spite of many adverse comments from his workmates about educating girls being a waste of time... And he always used to say that you never know what's round the corner and today a woman needs to stand on her own two feet and be responsible for her-self.



Image 71
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' — *father figure*



Image 72
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' — *mother figure*

Elisabeth's mother's figure is **yellow** as she was always cheerful, bright and positive. Her mother's bag contains a single pearl and crystal necklace. Elisabeth's mother was given two necklaces for her 21st which later broke and Elisabeth joined them together when she was about thirteen years old into one necklace. It represents the on-going support that Elisabeth's mother always gave her. Family came first for her and she would do anything to help. Elisabeth explained in the first interview that her mother was a frustrated career woman who was determined that she would do her utmost to support Elisabeth.

My mother came out to New Zealand with us because my father had died...she did everything she could to support me in my career when we came out here to make sure that I continued...helped me to get my Masters, so really important to her.

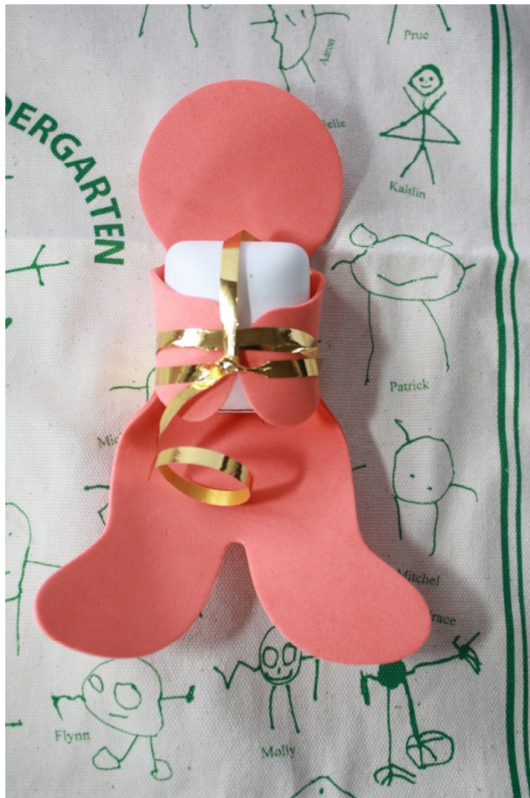


Image 73
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – husband figure



Image 74
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – Claddagh ring box



Image 75
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – Claddagh ring

This orange figure represents Elisabeth's husband. He presented her with this Claddagh wedding ring¹¹ (made in New Zealand and taken with them) on their 30th wedding anniversary which they celebrated in Ireland by renewing their wedding vows in the church they were married in. The Claddagh's design features two hands clasping a heart, and surmounted by a crown. The elements of this symbol are often said to correspond to the qualities of love (the heart), friendship (the hands) and loyalty (the crown). Elisabeth emphasised the importance of the hands:

The hands on the ring symbolise our partnership and the ongoing support that he has given me throughout our marriage, in so many ways, and with my career.

Of Welsh ancestry Elisabeth's maternal grandmother is the next figure. Her bag contains a vibrantly coloured crystal bangle which she gave Elisabeth for Christmas when she was ten years old. Having five children to bring up and no welfare system Elisabeth's grandmother succeeded in bringing them up with the help of Elisabeth's mother who was sent away from home to work in service when she was fourteen years old. As the eldest granddaughter Elisabeth remembers her as a warm and caring person, generous in gift giving. She taught Elisabeth the importance of family and was a stable influence in her life from an early age as she started living with Elisabeth's family when Elisabeth was eight years old.

¹¹ The Claddagh ring is a traditional Irish ring given as a token of love or worn as a wedding ring (when engaged the crown faces up/away from you, when married the crown faces down/inward, towards you). The design and customs associated with it originated in the Irish fishing village of Claddagh, located just outside the city of Galway. The Claddagh ring is closely related to a group of European finger rings called Fede rings, 'hands joined in faith or loyalty (Claddagh ring, n.d.).



Image 76

Self-Portrait 'mirror box' — *maternal grandmother figure*

Elisabeth remembers and describes her grandmother: “She’s **pink** because she was widowed when she was in her early 40’s and in the 1930’s it was tradition that you wore black when you were widowed and my grandmother hated black. So she always... wore bright coloured clothes and she loved lilacs and she loved her jewellery. And she loved anything that was glittery and sparkly...

To me it symbolises her love, as a circlet surrounding me, her love of life and it also overlaps with my Catholic primary school education when we used to be told that every good deed we did would grant us another jewel in our crown in Heaven!! The colours on this bracelet to me were like that crown”.



Image 77

Self-Portrait 'mirror box' — *teacher figure*

Elisabeth fondly recalls her first teacher as a **yellow** figure: “My new entrant teacher Miss Latham who I adored. She never got cross, and this was a class of forty, was always smiling...had lovely curly red hair (Image 77 is not an actual representation of her, only a likeness), was quite young and from her I developed my desire to be a teacher...

She made school fun. We had this enormous classroom it was in an old Victorian building with scrubbed wooden floors...It was a very stable classroom. In that everybody got on, no-body picked on anybody... and she was just lovely and I’ve never ever forgotten her, lovely, lovely lady. She really was”.

Coloured transparent gift bags-pouches – badges as symbols of experiences in learning and celebrating achievement



Image 78
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – coloured transparent gift bags – *badges as symbols*



Image 79
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' –
Middlesborough Pilgrimage to Lourdes – *badge*



Image 80
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' –
First Holy Communion – *medal*

There are a number of coloured transparent bags in the basket which hold a range of badges. These represent further experiences that have shaped her identity and contributed to the development of Elisabeth's leadership skills.

Middlesborough Pilgrimage to Lourdes – badge – purple pouch

Elisabeth's first overseas trip was on a pilgrimage to Lourdes, France, with her Catholic secondary school. This school increased her passion for learning and as a result of seeing all the crowds from all over the world in Lourdes Elisabeth came to the realisation that as a Catholic she was part of a huge world-wide group.

First Holy Communion – medal – purple pouch

This First Holy Communion medal has a picture on the back of *Our Lady of Lourdes*.

Brownies, Guide Leader, Jubilee and Yorkshire Rose – badges – purple bag

This bag contains Elisabeth's Brownie badge, a Guide Leaders badge, Diamond Jubilee 1910-1970 for the Girl Guides and a Yorkshire Rose badge as the symbol of the county, Yorkshire, where Elisabeth lived. These opportunities and experiences signify her first pathways to leadership and the investment of voluntary time to extend her own leadership development and also act as a mentor by training others.

After completing her teaching qualification and returning home, Elisabeth started a Catholic Girl Guide unit. "My father would not let me join a non-Catholic one. It was very, thou shalt not cross the barriers at that stage". She went on to become a leader. "I learnt a lot about leadership through that Guiding movement. Training girls and working with groups. So that was invaluable".



Image 81
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' –
Brownies, Guide Leader, Jubilee and Yorkshire
Rose – badges



Image 82
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' –
Greenside youth hostel – badge

Greenside youth hostel – badge – green bag

This badge is from a Youth Hostel in the Lake District UK, where Elisabeth went on several hiking trips firstly with a group of friends when she was fourteen years

old, then organising trips for friends and finally organising school hiking trips when she started teaching. For Elisabeth it represents her parents letting go, and her first and subsequent steps of independence. It also represents her first leadership role in a school when she was appointed Teacher in Charge of Biology in her third year of teaching followed by the appointment of Year Tutor. Asked to comment upon the impact of this role Elisabeth described how it motivated her to aspire to further leadership positions:

This appointment made me want to move up the ladder as I firmly believed that I could do a better job than the person who was the Senior Mistress at the time and I began to apply for positions. Then we emigrated.

Paua shell necklace – *New Zealand adventure*

Another bag contains a paua shell which represents Elisabeth's mother's sister, Peggy, who came to New Zealand as a GI bride. All the schools that Elisabeth has worked with here in New Zealand have had great significance for her. A change of country, culture and also schools (Maori, special character – religious, single sex boys/girls schools and multicultural) has given Elisabeth a wide range of educational experiences.

Manaia necklace – *senior management opportunity*

Elisabeth reflects upon the significance of the manaia:

A manaia that I was given when I leftThis was the school that gave me my first chance as a relieving member of the senior management. Also direction as to how I could achieve it...

School badge – *mentored for principalship*

The next bag contains the badge from Elisabeth's next school where the principal, recognised her leadership potential and encouraged Elisabeth to advance her qualifications. It was this principal who told her to apply for a principal position and his total support and belief in her resulted in Elisabeth applying for her current position.



Image 83
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' –
paua shell necklace – *NZ adventure*
manaia necklace – *senior management*
opportunity



Image 84
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' –
School badge – *mentored for principalship*

O'Shea Shield badges – red pouch

These represent St. Teresa's Academy and the hosting of the O'Shea Shield jubilee. They signify for Elisabeth her current leadership position.

ICP (International Conference of Principals) – Helsinki – badge – red pouch

The first international principals' conference that Elisabeth went to was in Helsinki in 1998. Here Elisabeth gained an appreciation for wider leadership connections and global leadership networking. It was like a watershed event for her in regards to targeting future focuses in education. Predictions over global change, special needs requirements for children becoming more prevalent and technology advancements and their impact on teaching and curriculum, which were projected at the conference have since become a reality.

Historical women of influence

Elisabeth has admiration for two women who held historically significant political leadership roles, Queen Elizabeth I and Margaret Thatcher. She considers them to have been strong women, retaining their individuality and femininity in an inherently male world.

Queen Elizabeth I, Margaret Thatcher and grandchildren – *laminated portraits*



Image 85
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' –
Queen Elizabeth I, Margaret Thatcher and
grandchildren – *laminated portraits*



Image 86
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' –
Queen Elizabeth I, Margaret Thatcher and
grandchildren – *laminated portraits – reflected*

Three portraits: The first is a painted portrait of Queen Elizabeth I who Elisabeth has always admired as a woman who was determined to do her own thing. The second portrait is a photo is of Margaret Thatcher. When asked to comment upon the significance of her influence Elisabeth expressed the following:

If I had been living in England I would not have voted for her. But I really admire her as a woman in a man's world what she achieved was amazing and she always retained her femininity of appearance. We were in the UK at the time that her husband died. It was reported in one of the papers that every day of their married life while she was at home she had cooked his breakfast for him. That was something that she wanted to do for him and it was their time together. So this showed me that there was a very caring and human side to this person.

The third photo is of her grandchildren. They represent to Elisabeth the future of New Zealand and the reality of the need to ensure that our education system provides the best for them. Furthermore for Elisabeth personally as a principal it reminds her of her responsibility to lead well.

Foreground – journal/scrap-book reflections

Step 3 – Critique – Reactions to Self-portrait ‘mirror box’

Step 4 – **D.R.A.W.** (daily reflective analyse workout)

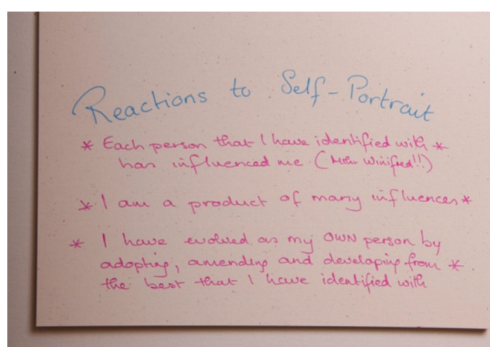


Image 87

Journal/scrap-book reflections – Step 3
critique – reactions

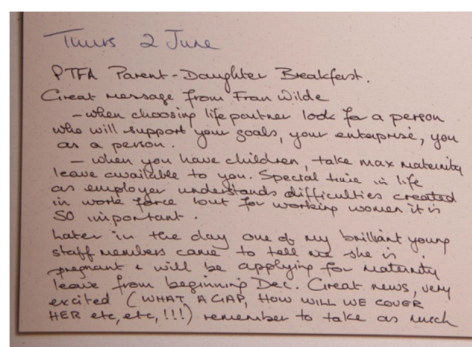


Image 88

Journal/scrap-book reflections – **D.R.A.W.**
PTFA – parent – daughter breakfast

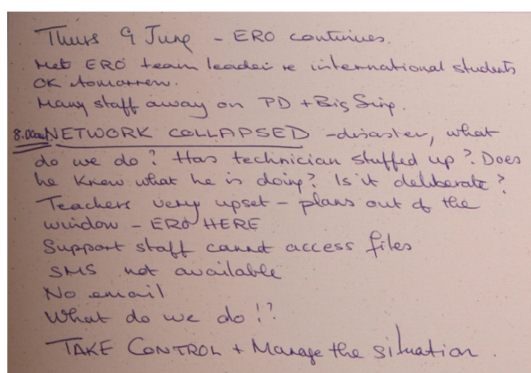


Image 89

Journal/scrap-book reflections – **D.R.A.W.**
ERO visit – network collapse!

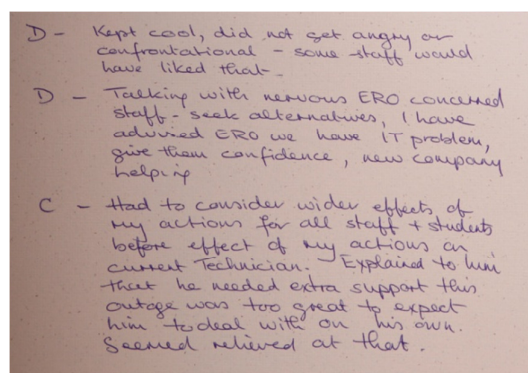


Image 90

Journal/scrap-book reflections – **D.R.A.W.**

A memorable journal reflection centred on the computer network collapsing whilst ERO (Educational Review Office) was visiting. Elisabeth outlined the steps she took to control and to manage the situation, then directly used the following process from our **D.R.A.W.** exercise to reflect on her actions (Image 90).

Descriptive – Analysing one's performance in the professional role.

Dialogic – hearing one's own voice and exploring alternative ways to solve problems.

Critical – thinking about the effects upon others of one's actions, taking account of social, political and cultural forces/context.

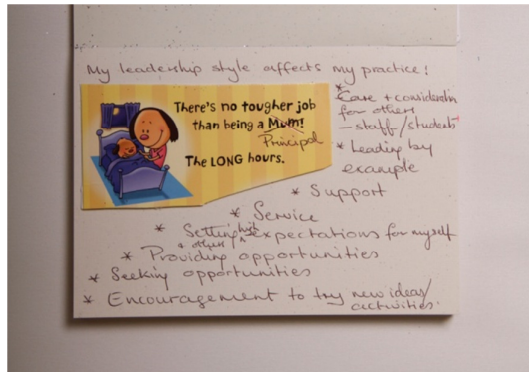


Image 91
Journal/scrap-book reflection
*leadership style affects my practice –
the long hours*

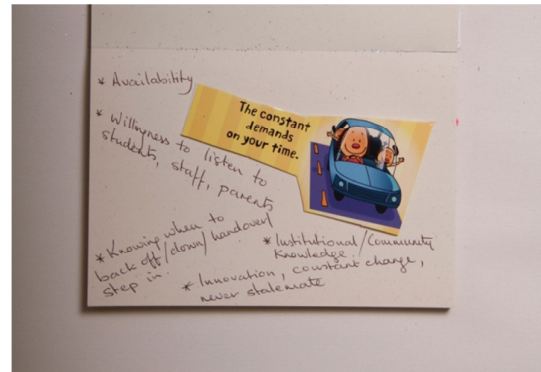


Image 92
Journal/scrap-book reflection
*leadership style affects my practice –
the constant demands*

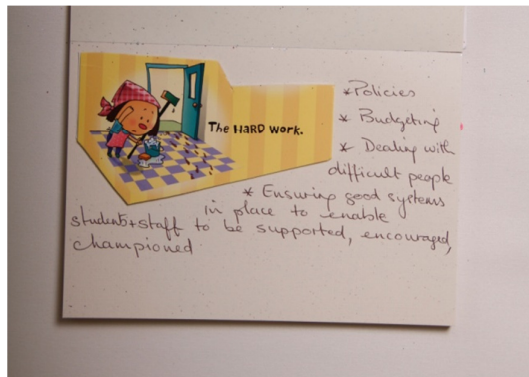


Image 93
Journal/scrap-book reflection
*leadership style affects my practice -
the hard work*



Image 94
Journal/scrap-book reflection
*leadership style affects my practice -
the benefits*

Leadership philosophy and styles revealed – ‘Frame Your Self’ – post study



Elisabeth reflects on her leadership philosophy and style in the second interview: “Positive – central word, so that’s why it’s got a cloud around it. Forward thinking – it’s got an arrow...The tea cup is servant leadership. It’s the Mercy symbol...when Catherine McCauley (founder of sisters of Mercy) was dying she asked to have a ‘comfortable cup of tea’ prepared for the Sisters watching at her deathbed. [Illustrating a generous and hospitable manner (Burns & Carney, 1996)]. A shining light – picture of lantern – to the staff and hopefully to the students and parents. They are all interrelated and interact, with arrows going...in both directions to reflect on each other and work together as a whole and I think those four aspects are really how I see my leadership style at this moment and time”.

Image 95

Frame Your Self – *post-study*

4.5 Summary

This chapter of individual iconographic case studies (within-case analysis) has identified and described the symbolic representations of the principals’ leadership philosophy and styles and their conceptions of leadership development and practice. These self-portraits literally and figuratively document the reflective practitioner process. This process of capturing their leadership identity based on their life stories and experiences has been achieved through three interrelating arts-based methods designed uniquely for this research study. The influences, main themes and findings from the principals’ individual life stories and experiences are now discussed and established collectively in Chapter 5. They are interpreted (cross-case analysis) utilising arts-based inquiry, as a form of subject analysis, to ‘create conversations’ between myself and the principals reflecting within this principal professional learning community.

Chapter 5

Portraits of Principals – ‘Creating Conversations’

5.1 A subject analysis – establishing the findings

The works we create speak back to us, and we become in their presence a part of a conversation that enables us to see what we have said (Eisner, 2002, p. 11).

In this chapter the individual case study findings from Chapter 4 are discussed alongside those findings from the individual interviews and collective focus group workshops. Established within the literature on educational leadership, I have utilised the methodology of arts-based inquiry as a form of subject analysis to ‘create conversations’. It is a conversation piece (informal group portrait) seeking out the collective emergent themes.

The research question required the principals to reflect on the impact their life stories and experiences have had on their leadership style, effective practice and leadership development. Therefore the themes from the findings have been identified and synthesised under the following four categories: life stories and experiences, leadership styles, effective practice and leadership development.

5.2 Life stories and experiences

As the principals have reflected on their life stories and experiences, the following key elements emerged as having the strongest impact. The greatest of these was the influence of relationships. Both personal, including family and friends, and professionally, through work colleagues, the indirect influence of authors and the role modelling and mentoring received from principals. The principals’ formative years also held a range of leadership opportunities and experiences which revealed and activated their leadership skills and potential.

5.2.1 Relationships – sources of influence

Personal – family and friends

For all three principals the support of family and friends and in particular their husbands' was significant in their leadership development.

For Rebecca the experience of a work colleague being accidentally killed last year has reinforced for her "...you are not expendable to your family. Family and friends are really important". Rebecca's husband has been instrumental in challenging her to aspire to continual levels of personal growth, through further training as an educator, subsequent post-graduate studies, and professional leadership responsibilities.

The support of family and friends was at the heart of Emily's reflections within her Self-portrait 'mirror box'. The influence of relationships have been the key factor in shaping who she is as a leader, her leadership development and future aspirations.

Elisabeth, when reflecting on her Self-portrait 'mirror box', was surprised by the number of people who had influenced her and that there was a definite chronological pattern of influence.

...at different stages of your life different people influenced you...it was quite an eye-opener. Because I was aware of that but I hadn't really taken enough cognisance of this is who I am because of all of these people (Elisabeth).

For Elisabeth, her grandmother taught her the importance of family and the stability it can provide. Her husband has always been extremely supportive of her career and without that "I wouldn't have been able to do what I do".

Professional – colleagues and authors

Rebecca made mention of two work colleagues at Opportunity for Life School whom she particularly respects. She has great admiration for one of the pre-school teachers for her organisational ability, attention to detail and capacity to stay on top of things. Rebecca considers her Deputy Principal to possess incredible

pedagogical ability and demonstrates exceptional relationship connections with her students.

She also does not underestimate the indirect influence authors have had in her life. Being an avid reader and academic, Rebecca has an appreciation for the value of knowledge gained from readings, research and keeping up to date with the literature.

Professional – principals

Hargreaves and Fullan (2000) consider coaching and mentoring as a pathway to building leadership capacity for individuals. As a Deputy Principal, Emily was significantly influenced by the leadership style of her principal. Through observing the principal's attitudes and actions Emily 'caught' the heart of an ethic of care.

In her role as acting Assistant Principal, Elisabeth received a lot of leadership encouragement and opportunities from principals to go on and train as a future principal. One principal was a great believer in encouraging people to move on and take up positions of leadership, "he was the one that really got me on the path to principalship".

The impact and influence of having role models, mentors and coaches became one of the most dominant themes in the findings. I discuss the significance of this in section 5.3.2.

5.2.2 Leadership opportunities and experiences

Both Rebecca and Elisabeth had a range of formative leadership opportunities and experiences as teenagers and young adults. Rebecca was a youth group leader in her church and as an exchange student to America in her 7th form year and Elisabeth was a Brownie and Catholic Girl Guide Leader.

Emily recalls that she was asked to teach a Sunday school class at her church when she was thirteen years old which ignited her passion for teaching. She did Duke of Edinburgh and remembers doing a session on leadership as part of the

gold award. But other than those opportunities she does not recall any other significant opportunities.

I never really aspired to be a leader it sort of came second after my teaching. My real inspiration was from the two principals I have talked about, the opportunities they gave me revealed my interest [and] potential. So it wasn't until I was in a leadership position that I wanted to learn more to become better and more effective (Emily).

Reflecting on this reminds me of Dillard's (1995) challenge to consider a (re)interpretation of leadership where leadership is seen not as an activity but as a responsibility. This research clearly supports the moral/critical approach as a distinct theoretical position relevant for exploring women's leadership (Doherty, 2002) in which leadership is considered to be a moral and ethical responsibility.

All three principals had aspects of servant leadership modelled to them in their youth through active involvement in church leadership opportunities. For Elisabeth and Emily this has overtly manifested in their leadership practice and shapes their leadership styles. When discussing servant leadership with Rebecca, she aligned her leadership style with the fundamental core values of servant leadership. The extent of this influence is revealed further in section 5.3.

5.3 Leadership styles

Within this section the leadership philosophy and styles of the principals are presented alongside their perceptions of effective leadership. Their understandings of leadership and management roles and responsibilities are discussed alongside the literature. Furthermore the impact and influence of having role models, mentors and coaches and conversely the impact and influence of being a role model, mentor and coach are presented as dominant themes in the research findings.

There is evidence that effective school leaders utilise a range of approaches or leadership styles, depending on the external environment and the local context of a school (Day & Leithwood, 2007; De Bevoise, 1984; Dimmock & Walker, 2005; Hallinger, 2003; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986). De Bevoise (1984) constructs a

compelling argument that the uniqueness of each principal's situation makes generalisations about leadership styles difficult. Further to this, case studies findings by Day and Leithwood (2007) highlight that successful leadership exercises a combination of personal styles and strategies which relate to context, culture and beliefs.

Rebecca's opinions on the leadership styles she considers to be most effective have changed over the time she has been a principal. The following outlines Rebecca's understanding of those leadership styles and their key features:

- *Distributed Leadership* – where people take on leadership roles according to their abilities/inclination/passion, as they arise. Where everything doesn't come down to one person and where people can take initiative...where the success of the school does not depend on the presence of one person.
- *Growth/transformational leadership* – is about transforming a culture rather than incremental changes (though that works too).
- *Culturally Responsive leadership* – so that all cultures, especially Maori are achieving to potential, feel welcome and safe at our school.
- *Pedagogical Leadership* – focused on the science of teaching – by looking at student achievement and what we can do to raise that.

Rebecca considers that “without the relationships nothing else can work”. Pedagogic leadership is really important to her as is distributive leadership. Her goal is to become more collaborative in her leadership style. Rebecca believes in letting people rise to the challenge of taking on roles and making those roles work.. Earlier in Rebecca's principalship she tended to micro-manage but now not so much.

Sergiovanni's article *Leadership as Pedagogy, Capital development and School Effectiveness* (1998) proposes pedagogical leadership as a more effective alternative to bureaucratic, visionary and entrepreneurial leadership in improving schools. He states that pedagogical leadership invests in capacity building by developing social and academic capital for students and intellectual and professional capital (development) for teachers.

The following outlines the leadership styles that Emily considers to be the most effective and their key features:

- *Autocratic* – when you want something done/short time frame.
- *Democratic* – when consulting with stakeholders before making decisions – leaders don't necessarily know everything so need to consult.
- *Servant* leadership – achieve 'power' on values and ideals.
- *Transformational* leadership – encourages supports, expects the best, clear goals, vision, inspires – assist in helping staff fulfil their potential.

Of these Emily considers transformational leadership to be the most effective. When Emily was asked what she was hoping to achieve by participating in this research study, one of her expectations was to have a chance to reflect and think about leadership style. In the first interview Emily made the following comment:

Until this (study) I don't think I've ever stopped to think well what is my leadership style? Why? I'd never stop and think well is that really what I am? Or why am I that? What's lead to that? Whereas doing this has made me think, well, what did make me want to be a principal? What has influenced? It just happens along the way (Emily).

As with Rebecca relationships are the key foundation for Emily. Collaborative leadership, being authentic as a leader and servant leadership typify her leadership practice. Furthermore having this opportunity to reflect upon her life history and experiences has clarified for Emily the need to reflect upon what values underpin her leadership style. She considers that there is a need to be authentic in your leadership style, that each person's leadership style is unique. Emily made a point of this in the 1st practical focus group:

A big thing for me, I always thought that to be a leader you had to be a certain type of person, but you can't, you are who you are and you've got to work with that and yes you will have your areas that you need to work on and build up but you can't change who you are there's no point pretending. ...you have to be yourself. It's being authentic (Emily).

The works of Fullan (2003), Starratt (2004), Strike (2007) and Sergiovanni (2009) consider school leadership as a moral imperative. Starratt (2004) claims that

educational leadership requires a moral commitment to high quality learning for all students based on three foundational virtues: proactive responsibility; personal and professional authenticity; and an affirming, critical, and enabling presence to all stakeholders and the work involved in teaching and learning. In light of this he considers that the cultivation of these virtues would energise and sustain the transformative ethics of an educational leader.

Reflecting on this perspective I consider that educational leaders must be cognisant of the significance of their personal and collective leadership authenticity and accountability.

Both Emily and Elisabeth have emphasised the need to be democratic rather than autocratic in their leadership practice. A look at democratic education reveals that the values and principles of student learners working collaboratively can be applied directly to leaders working collaboratively with staff in communities of learning (Apple & Beane, 2007). The use of critical reflection and analysis to evaluate ideas, problems and policies, is amongst the values and principles central to democratic schooling. These are central tenets of educative leadership¹² which is based on the premise that democratic education is a social process¹³ (Dewey, 1916).

Elisabeth practices a combination of authoritarian, distributed/participative and democratic leadership styles depending on the situation. She defines them as follows:

- *Authoritative* – when the buck stops with her to make the final decision. It can come about via participative discussion, delegated information or may instead be based on the situation.

¹² An essential feature of educative leadership is the responsible use of social power in education. Educative leadership implies a responsible involvement in the politics of organisational culture and management practice (Duignan & MacPherson, 1992).

¹³ Dewey (1916) viewed schools as miniature democratic communities, where learners work collaboratively in order to solve real-life problems and that through active participation students would develop the skills required to become well-functioning members of society.

- *Distributed/participative* – part of this process is delegating responsibility when she knows that the staff member knows more about the task in hand than she does and is competent and able to carry it out.
- *Democratic* – when there is a need for collaborative style input with people able to express their views and contribute to the decision.

Elisabeth believes that it is important to be able to operate within all three areas, though she sees herself mainly as distributed/participative in her leadership style.

Her philosophy for education is that all young people should enjoy their education, be stimulated and excited by it so that they are equipped with a wide range of skills to draw on in the future. Furthermore she states:

My personal leadership philosophy is that people should be able to feel that they are supported in what they do, encouraged to try new avenues. I consider it to be a personal triumph when I see staff being promoted or having the confidence to try new ideas (Elisabeth).

These findings concur with the literature that in conceptualising school leadership and the principalship there are overlaps between different approaches to leadership styles (Day & Leithwood, 2007; De Bevoise, 1984; Doherty, 2002; Goleman, Boyatzis, & Mckee, 2002; Sergiovanni, 2009). Furthermore the diversity inherent in culture, gender, context or situational factors must be taken into account when exploring how leadership experiences and styles affect practice.

The following sections present some of the direct findings from interview and focus group questions which reveal further key influences and experiences that have had an impact on the principals' leadership development and practice.

5.3.1 Leadership and management balance

What is the difference between LEADING and MANAGING and how do you see these roles and responsibilities?

Rebecca believes they are integrated, not to be separated and that both are needed, yet there must be a balance. She considers that principals probably get weighed down in the management tasks more than they should and that even

though schools have a lot of support there is the tendency to find yourself being more of a manager rather than a leader who reads, challenges and reflects.

Sergiovanni (2009) advocates the need for leaders to bring together the heart of leadership – the person's beliefs, values, dreams and vision; the head of leadership – theories of practice and process of reflecting and the hand of leadership – actions, decisions and behaviours.

Emily, like Levy, (1999) sees leadership as being the heart and the mind and management being the hands and the feet. Considering the differentiation between the two, Emily comments upon finding it hard to differentiate because she believes a large percentage of a principal's job is management.

You need to step back. I've got to be conscious, no I shouldn't be doing that, I should be delegating that and I should be leading. But it takes a while to get that balance and I don't know if you ever get it right (Emily).

In her second interview Elisabeth describes the difference between leading and managing:

Well managing you're doing all the admin stuff. You're in your office, everything's ticking over, you just keep it going. Leading is actually taking the initiative in something, learning how to do it, sharing it with your people and encouraging them to come on board, giving them the opportunities to do that and I think that's really important (Elisabeth).

The findings presented here are less conclusive in support of the corporate/managerial approach as a distinct theoretical position relevant for exploring women's leadership (Doherty, 2002). Rather the principals acknowledged the need for a balance between the roles as evidenced in the literature (Fullan, 2007). The following section 5.3.2 looks at the impact and influence of having role models, mentors and coaches and conversely the impact and influence of being a role model, mentor and coach.

5.3.2 Impact and influence of having role models, mentors and coaches

Ethic of care and the empowerment of others

Strachan (1999) presents research on feminist educational leadership in a New Zealand neo-liberal context. She states that women's educational leadership has the ethic of care and the empowerment of others as central foci. This research provides empirical evidence to support this claim. Furthermore in the literature there is a significant link made between the ethic of care and people-centred leadership (Doherty, 2002; Gilligan, 1982). The following findings clearly exhibit the people-centred leadership approach adopted most explicitly by Emily. Sections 5.4.1 - 5.4.2 findings also clearly support the people-centred approach as a distinct theoretical position relevant for exploring women's leadership (Doherty, 2002).

When commenting on role models, Emily reflects on the significant influence Clare (who was the principal when she was a DP) had on her understanding of leadership, leadership styles and practices. Emily describes Clare as being a person with a good sense of humour, lots of fun, always praising, giving gifts and constantly affirming others. Emily expressed her admiration for Clare stating:

When I grow up I want to be like her! ...I liked her leadership style, she was herself and yet she was able to influence people and I believe that was because of the relationship she developed which came from the heart and she made those connections with people (Emily).

Looking at leadership from women's perspectives enables the identification of common patterns in leadership style and the content and themes of their approaches to leadership (Helgesen, 1990; Riehl & Lee, 1996). The research work of Riehl and Lee (1996) highlights how women leaders develop power with others through five dimensions of leadership. Key to this is the concept of fostering a constant connectedness with others. Dillard (1995) refers to this using and sharing of power as leadership as authentication.

It was evident that Clare modelled an ethic of care¹⁴ for her staff and student, one of the strengths of her leadership style which Emily has purposefully endeavoured to emulate within the culture of her school. In her professional practice, Clare was cognisant of the workload of teachers and staff and demonstrated a distributed leadership style. Emily also believes in empowering staff initiatives and working collaboratively. Throughout this study she stressed the value of relationships to empower others.

I'm very much about working alongside, that coaching that mentoring working towards that goal and in the centre the key for me is relationships. Relationships with people, getting to know your staff, your parents, your students, building up trust, because unless you have that, if you don't have that you can't inspire you can't lead, they won't follow (Emily).

Both Emily and Rebecca were assigned mentors in the First Time Principals Programme. For Emily this mentor is still someone she confides in on occasion. For Rebecca that relationship did not continue further beyond that time. As a more experienced principal Elisabeth never had the benefit of the First Time Principals Programme as there was no formal induction programme when she became a principal fifteen years ago. Having also to move cities to begin her first principal position, it took time for Elisabeth to establish a network of other principals to meet with. This however did not last, people moved on and personality differences were a factor in its demise. For a time Elisabeth did manage to be part of a good mentoring team with two other women principals. Each was chair of a Principals Association over a period of years and helped each other with the planning and organisation for the association.

Mentoring and coaching is well established as an important feature of leadership development (Bolam, McMahon, Pocklington & Weindling, 1995; Bush & Coleman, 1995; Bush & Jackson, 2002; Earley & Weindling, 2006; Hargreaves & Fullan,

¹⁴ Fitzgerald and Moore's (2005) study of women school principals in New Zealand, offers some particularly perceptive observations. They claim that teaching is viewed as a caring and nurturing profession as the tasks that women undertake at home are translated to the profession of teaching. Furthermore the argument that educational leadership as a caring profession (transformative in nature) is grounded more firmly in philosophical ethics, irrespective of gender, supports the justification for pursuing caring as a core value in teaching and leadership.

2000; Holloway, 2004; Robertson, 2005; Wadsworth, 1990). By engaging in peer coaching relationships, educators are better able to examine their own practices, monitor and modify their actions, and assess their influence (Joyce & Showers, 1996). Joyce and Showers (1996, 1982) work outlines the process of coaching teams working together in a mutually reflective and beneficial relationship. Their research posits that coaching provides companionship, reduces isolation and increases support.

The significance of mentoring and coaching is pertinent to this research as a key concern for the principals was the lack of professional companionship and support in their leadership role.

Loneliness inherent in the role of principal

All the principals agreed that it was important to have someone outside of the school context to act as mentor or coach/confidant. Furthermore the coaching model is enhanced by the input of an outside facilitator who can challenge, give feedback and extend the skills of critical reflection (Robertson, 2005). They also expressed very strongly the loneliness they believed to be inherent in the role of the principal.

Rebecca has been pro-active in participating in leadership courses which have had a mentorship component. The most influential of which was the Hilary Leadership Programme. Yet outside of these enforced times of mentoring there is still the challenge to instigate more permanent long-term mentoring relationships. The following comment is evidence of Rebecca's recognition of the need to build these relationships:

One of the things that it has brought home to me is that I really need to make sure that I've got somebody that I talk to. Because I never have, I don't even talk (to my husband) about it...I need to make a commitment I think (Rebecca).

Emily struggles with the loneliness that she believes is inherent in the role of the principalship. "Even though there are lots of people, parents and students the actual role is very lonely... so, having your friends and a family and your husband

is very important". She has an appraiser who is an ex-principal and is a great sounding board to sit and chat with and who has empathy for the role, yet is a neutral person.

When Elisabeth was asked what she hoped to achieve by participating in this research study, she commented upon the benefit of having the opportunity to meet with other people to discuss their leadership practice and receive support "because it's a very isolating job... without that confident mentor person working with you, you are actually on your own".

How common is it within the New Zealand educational context for leaders to use coaches/confidants? And are they easy to find?

All of the participants believed that within the New Zealand educational context it was not common for leaders to use coaches/confidant, apart from the First Time Principals Programme where they connect you with a mentor for eighteen months. The possible reasons the principals considered were lack of time, motivation and that those relationships were hard to find.

How receptive is New Zealand leadership society to the use of coaches/confidants?

Rebecca considers that New Zealand society is generally unfamiliar with the process of coaching and mentoring. Rebecca attended the eighteen-month Hilary Leadership Programme in 2007-2008 through the business school at Auckland University lead by Lester Levy¹⁵. Apart from three educators everybody else on the course was from the business sector. A key component of the programme was the mentoring opportunities with a cohort of three others, visiting each other's work environments, shadowing for a day and providing immediate observational feedback. When Rebecca did this programme the mentoring and coaching role was new for them all, yet they enjoyed the process.

¹⁵ Dr Lester Levy is the Chief Executive of the New Zealand Leadership Institute and author of the book *Leadership and the Whirlpool Effect* (1999). He leads the Hilary Leadership programme through the Business School at Auckland University.

Mentors from the business sector - beyond the school gate

Emily has been fostering external mentoring relationships both for herself personally and for the wider school community within the business sector. She sees her school as being part of a much wider community and actively seeks opportunities for building reciprocated understanding. Not only by reaching outside the four walls and beyond the gate, but by inviting members of the community into the school.

One exchange Emily initiated was with the CEO of a local hospital. He came to the school for a day and visited classes and then Emily spent the day with the CEO to watch him in action. He had initially visited Bowburn High School to talk about a scholarship scheme and as a result they set up a mentoring programme. Any students keen on careers in the health industry went down to the hospital for the day and were linked with mentors. Emily opened the initiative up to staff also.

Emily has recognised that she personally learns from watching others. Her leadership style has been greatly influenced by observing good leadership in practice. She now wants to identify and learn from effective leaders within a range of sectors and have someone like a CEO to be a coach and meet on a regular basis and talk about leadership. This is the type of personal and professional development that she considers will be the most effective for her.

Personal (balance to professional) development needed

In general Elisabeth believes that New Zealand leadership society is becoming more receptive to the use of coaches. She considers the business sector to be ahead of the education sector in seeing the need for personal leadership support. Elisabeth states that there's never been funding for mentoring programmes in education as it's never been identified as a priority:

...for a long time all the money went into the school it didn't go into the principal's PD and development. I think it's more inclined to now but there are still some schools that wouldn't consider that a priority...we're getting more on to the need for staff learning now, but I still think it's more of an academic learning and more to what's happening in the classroom rather than that personal development that people actually need (Elisabeth).

After listening to Emily and Rebecca's experiences with influential mentors at the second practical focus group workshop, Elisabeth took the initiative to approach her school to employ an appraiser/mentor through an individual consultancy as she has not had anyone in the mentoring role for about five years. She describes the process of initiating this next step in her personal leadership development:

I need somebody that can mentor me...I'd said to him I would like you to be a mentor if the board don't agree to you being an appraiser. So we are actually in the process of employing him and I think that that will actually be really good because while he is the appraiser he's also a person I can talk to because he's got nothing to do with the school, has got no history with the school and I think that is valuable for me....we discussed various issues and how we're dealing with that and then he's looking at the goals that I've put in place this year and he's given me some ideas about how we could put them together in a better format and how it would work in with a performance appraisal form/document. He's working on that and getting back to me and the board chair....so it's been a good outcome of this [research study] (Elisabeth).

Encouraging leadership in others

For Elisabeth it has highlighted the importance of role models, having supportive people who believe in you, and the need to develop your self-esteem. She considers there is a need to develop these with staff and students to give them confidence and authority to lead. The building of confidence in her leadership practice that Elisabeth experienced as a result of doing this reflection has reinforced for her the need to help encourage leadership in both her staff and students.

5.3.3 Impact and Influence of being a role model, mentor and coach

The process of creating the Self-portrait 'mirror box' helped Elisabeth identify those people that had influenced her and in turn made her reflect further on her role as principal. The following comment clearly shows how Elisabeth considers her role is to train her staff to move forward in regards to their future aspirations.

I have been operating like that but it didn't really hit me how much I have been doing the same thing as what has happened to me, trying to encourage people to better themselves. I think it's particularly important to

have someone in your professional life at some time or other who gives you a tap on the shoulder and says have you tried this? So you give them a little push towards the edge of the cliff and they jump off with a net underneath (Elisabeth).

Investigating the experience of women educational leaders in the New Zealand school context, Neville (1988) gives an insightful profile of the successful woman administrator. “She is a genuinely collaborative leader, sharing her power... because she is confident she is able to delegate effectively and believes that training and empowering others is one of her most important tasks” (p. 150).

This certainly describes Elisabeth and her desire to empower her staff and assist them to be effective in their teaching and leadership practice.

5.4 Effective practice

This section considers how effective leadership leads to school improvement. It reveals a lack of leadership confidence perceived by all three principals especially in their first few years of the principalship. This is taken into consideration as the effectiveness of professional learning communities is examined and the role and responsibility of the principal for staff PD. Particular attention is drawn to the use of journals as an effective practice for personal and professional development and how reflection has impacted on the principals’ practices. These are the elements that have built confidence in the principals’ own leadership practice.

The following sections 5.4.1 - 5.4.2 findings clearly support the people-centred approach as a distinct theoretical position relevant for exploring women’s leadership (Doherty, 2002) in which the concept of building caring communities is an essential part of a woman’s leadership style.

5.4.1 Effective leadership leads to school improvement

How does effective leadership link to school improvement?

For Rebecca, effective leadership is a combination of vision and goals and interpersonal skills. It is about preparing the environment for staff so they can do

the job they want to do, feel valued, be empowered and make a difference for their students.

Emily stresses the need to have expectations and 'walk the talk', as leadership is action, inspiring, motivating and empowering staff to be the "best that they can be". Elisabeth concurred with this emphasising that offering encouragement, support and praise provides opportunities for staff and students to lead and develop. She believes providing an expectation of success in a safe yet challenging environment, where you can attempt new things without being condemned if you fail, is paramount.

Sergiovanni (1998) points out that within schools "professional capital is created as a fabric of reciprocal responsibilities and [mutual] support" (p. 40). Principals are instrumental in encouraging schools to become caring, focused and inquiring communities within which teachers work together as members of a community of practice.

Silins and Mulford (2002) concur, outlining three major factors in successful secondary school reform. The first factor relates to how people are treated. Success is more likely when people are empowered and involved in decision-making. The second factor is the presence of a PLC. The third factor relates to the presence of a capacity for learning in an ongoing, optimistic, caring, nurturing professional development programme.

Professional capital (development) is a responsibility for both principals and teachers collaboratively which should enhance not only individual capability but also a school's collective capacity. Furthermore, for professional development to be effective focus must be given to building pedagogical leaders whose primary role and purpose is leading the learning in their schools. This impact on learning is best achieved by building leadership capacity among staff within sustainable professional learning communities. Therefore the PLC is a key contributor towards establishing effective practice in schools.

5.4.2 Professional Learning Community – (PLC)

Each of the principal's schools had developed within their professional development programmes or organisational structures forms of professional learning communities. At the last practical focus workshop, the principals indicated the desire to do a further workshop to discuss readings towards becoming more fully cognisant of the central tenets, its characteristics and leading a PLC. A further workshop was undertaken six weeks after the second and last individual interviews to look at this topic in more depth.

What learning communities have you established as a leader in your school and how effective have they been?

For the past six years Opportunity for Life school has had a Matariki¹⁶ celebration. In the past the PTA organised a dinner or hangi (earth oven in which food is cooked) and they had a concert afterwards. This year it was a whole day celebration ending with the hākari (entertainment) and the hangi. Those involved in the organisation have had to reach out to people outside of the school community and invite them in to take workshops.

Staff initiated literature reading and philosophical discussions

On their own initiative, Opportunity for Life staff are getting together on a Tuesday afternoon to discuss articles that they have read based on the school's philosophy. These discussions are an opportunity for staff to participate in a supportive collaborate dialogue with peers, critically reflect on readings, and consider evaluation of actions, particularly the impact on teaching and learning practice.

St Teresa's Academy also has a teacher group (run by the specialist classroom teacher) who meet voluntarily. Elisabeth considers the voluntary aspect to be integral to a PLC.

¹⁶ Matariki is the Maori (the indigenous Polynesian people of Aotearoa New Zealand) name for the group of stars also known as the Pleiades star cluster or The Seven Sisters and what is referred to as the traditional Maori New Year.

‘Café style’ professional development

Emily considers her school to be a learning institution for both students and staff. In regards to her staff professional development she has taken an active role in facilitating professional development sessions along with her senior management team. Emily described how In the school's previous PD delivery, teachers selected a course related to their subject area, went off for a day and came back inspired, but then return to normal classroom practice. There was very little evidence of change, so the school decided to trail a ‘café’ style PD in 2006. Teachers were brought together in groups of similar interests to research, action and report back. They found that some groups were more effective than others. This year, they have put more structure around it. Their specialist classroom teacher supports teachers with their teaching pedagogy and runs the PD groups established on a needs basis. Facilitators are having training on how to facilitate the group and they are making everyone in the group more accountable. They are following an action research inquiry model.

Interdisciplinary practice

One of the most effective practices at St Teresa’s Academy over the last three years has been a browse week. There is no professional development that week but everybody is committed to visiting two classes in their non-contact time. One class can be with someone in their department but the second class has to be within another department.

5.4.3 Role of principal - responsible for staff PD

The *School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES* (Best Evidence Synthesis) (2009) states that “leaders’ promotion of and participation in professional learning and development is a key function of effective leadership” (p. 26). This results in well-informed professional discussions based on shared understandings about new practice and new knowledge.

For the past five years, St Teresa’s Academy has allocated a Thursday afternoon for professional development (PD). Discussions were held with HOD’s and staff as to how they would like it to operate. Once a fortnight they have a whole staff PD

and the alternative week is run by HOD's for departments so they can look at moderation and work with the NZ curriculum. A committee meet once a month and review what they have done and where they are going. The PD focus this year has been led by the committee with input from others and both the senior management team and staff taking the sessions. Elisabeth explains:

...we share the sessions. ...I've led a number of them because I thought I've got to lead by example...I've got to be responsible for their professional development and I think that's part of my role as a school principal. I can't do all of it but I do think it's an important area that I have to lead. ...And I think that's really good because it's distributing our skills. We've got a lot of skilled people on our staff who can really contribute (Elisabeth).

Elisabeth also personally creates a one page flyer called 'Friday Focus'. Elisabeth sees this as a vehicle for focusing staff on key issues and helping them keep up to date with current practice.

5.4.4 Journal usage in professional development

In order to encourage staff to become reflective practitioners, St Teresa's Academy implemented the use of the journal as a tool for reflection, at the beginning of the year. As a result of Elisabeth sharing about their use of journals for PD, Emily and her Deputy Principal have introduced the use of the reflective journal for the teaching staff at Bowburn High School. It will not only record their PD work but be used more extensively than they had otherwise planned to include reflection on meetings, courses, classroom practices and initiatives.

All three principals have used a journal at some stage in their principalship. Rebecca keeps a book journal within which she summarises and records what she has gleaned from each book she reads, using it as a reference source.

When Emily first became a principal she was influenced by a fellow principal, who espoused the need for and benefits of reflective journaling, to begin one. Due to the time and energy needed to commit to the practice of reflecting in this manner, she has not sustained it on a regular basis.

Initiated at the beginning of the year, Elisabeth has found hers invaluable, especially when ERO visited, as she could refer backward and forward to it as a cross check. She states that she has not used it as she would have liked, but that she is going to continue now that she has seen the value obtained through doing the **D.R.A.W.** exercise. She has also kept all her annual school diaries which are a semi-reflective journal record.

The benefit of taking the time to reflect on a daily basis through the **D.R.A.W.** exercise has helped the principals to reflect more deeply and analyse thoughts, learning opportunities, situations and events in a more systematic way. This has allowed for ideas to be consolidated and related back to their daily practice. Otherwise, the principals informed me, they may have made a note to themselves to pick up on a certain issue at a later date, or have lost the opportunity to reflect altogether.

5.4.5 Perceptions of leadership confidence

Rebecca has had many opportunities since first becoming a principal, from PD workshops and training, to reflect over her personal self and leadership capabilities. Her confidence as a leader has grown, yet her initial lack of confidence is vividly expressed in this statement made by Rebecca at the beginning of the study.

In the first five years I worked here I completely didn't believe I should be doing the job, I never introduced myself as the principal ever, I didn't write it down anywhere, I didn't put myself forward... I didn't think I had the skills...for a long time I thought I was a fraud...got there because I was the only person applied (Rebecca).

When asked about any personal revelations she had not anticipated emerging from reflecting on the Self-portrait 'mirror box', Rebecca made the following comment:

...the nice thing I've found, I think, is that while I'm still full of doubt, you know, am I ever going to do a good job am I ever going to get it right?' I don't think I'm as bad anymore. I do think I've moved on somewhat in that I

even have moments when I think I'm capable. Instead of it's all fluke (Rebecca).

For Emily explaining her inner thoughts and doubts was the most challenging part in the process of doing Step 2 – analysing her Self-portrait 'mirror box'. She referred to the impostor theory in her first interview:

...a feeling you get especially when you are appointed to a new role you feel like you are an impostor who doesn't know what to do and that you will be found out! I thought it was only me who felt like this but soon discovered that many principals felt the same (Emily).

Emily believes she has a tendency to doubt her decision making. But looking back at her reactions and events that happened, which she had recorded in her journaling, she was able to see that the situations that she was concerned about and the way she had dealt with them, had turned out to be the right decisions. She was on the right track and the journaling process confirmed that was the case.

Elisabeth made mention also that the journaling process has helped her to see her leadership practice from a more confident perspective.

I think I always underestimate my influence and...leadership ability...I was really worried about the ERO review as you always are ...But from what I'd done on this [research study], it sort of gave me a different perspective of my leadership here as principal ...I think doing this gave me more confidence in what I was doing, just the reflection (Elisabeth).

Since participating in this research study Elisabeth's perception of herself as a leader has changed. It has been an opportunity to confirm who she is as a leader and realise that she has a lot to offer.

5.4.6 How reflection impacts on practice

Having reflected upon who you are as a leader (how your life histories/experiences have shaped your understanding of leadership styles), what impact might this have upon your practice in the future?

In the 2nd practical focus group the following points were made by the principals and they expanded upon them in their second interviews (which followed after the 2nd practical focus group):

- *Stop and reflect, next steps*
- *Leadership is a journey, evolving, always developing – doesn't always get easier*
- *Make time*
- *Pass on what we learn to staff.*
- *The small moments are what are appreciated*
- *People aren't static, nor should they be expected to be*
- *What time? When could we devote ourselves to this as a priority?*
- *Do we deserve this?*
- *Reflect on leadership*
- *Keep setting goals on leadership*

Evaluation – a stepping stone to growth, development and re-framing

This research process has encouraged participants to keep reflecting, set goals and take steps to evaluate their progress as shown by Rebecca's comment:

...it's to keep going, this is not something you can ever stop. It's not something you can say yeah I'm there now, and then, you know I think when I eventually move from here I will be able to step into a new school at a much higher level than I stepped into here because of all the learning that I've done about myself. And I guess all the work and all the workshops and mentoring and stuff like that on leadership will mean that I go out at a much higher level and I would expect that to keep going. It would be a sad thing if I just stopped (Rebecca).

Being yourself

For Emily in particular it has reinforced for her the need to stop and reflect and to set goals and look at next steps. She said:

It's affirmed that being a leader is varied there's no particular one style and that's why I keep coming back to you just be yourself anyway, because there's no point in trying to be a particular style (Emily).

Having a better understanding of herself and reflecting on her leadership style has made Elisabeth look at how she handles things emotionally. “Because I think sometimes I have an instant reaction as females do and what I do is I take a step back and I think right I’m not responding to that today I’ll deal with it tomorrow”. She has valued the process of reflecting-on-action analysing her performance in the professional role and exploring alternative ways to solve problems in consultation with other colleagues.

5.5 Leadership development

This section outlines the principals’ perceptions of the relationship between their personal professional development and the school-wide professional development and highlights how academic study has had a significant effect upon the future aspirations of the principals and their leadership development.

5.5.1 Importance of professional development

Barth (1986) believes that the critical element in learning is ownership and that “learning must be something principals do, not something others do to or for them” (p. 157). This statement is of significance for school leaders and educators of professional development programmes. It advocates the need to support principals to be instigators of their own professional development learning.

Do you see a link between your personal professional development and the school-wide professional development?

Rebecca believes that her personal development and growth as a leader and her self-awareness will stimulate collective accomplishment. Yet there is a subtle process within this and it is more about how she goes about doing things and getting people on board rather than about action, strategic planning or implementation.

Emily considers that if she is continually active in PD, then that sends a message to staff that it’s important and that that they should all be actively involved.

Elisabeth believes that developing as a person and also in your role as principal makes you stronger. You can then put yourself in a position where you understand better what your teachers, staff and students need.

David Stewart, consultant on New Zealand school management and author of *Tomorrow's Principal's Today* (2000), considers that principal development and school development are linked through a set of complex relationships. He posits that school development should focus “firstly on the learning of individual principals, their ability to construct new meaning based on their past experience and their developing reflective capacity” (p. 21). From this the values that underpin individual actions become important to share as school development activities extend and develop collectively.

5.5.2 Influence of academic study and future aspirations

Right from the first preliminary focus group meeting and throughout the individual interviews and focus group workshops, there was a clear indication of the importance of academic study for all three principals. It has been a motivator in their desire to lead, actively pursue further leadership positions and a goal for general professional leadership development. Rebecca in particular, mentioned at the beginning of this research, her intention to explore further study by doing a PhD. She considers study to be a way of enforcing personal development. Rebecca consolidated her PhD research questions whilst attending a principal's conference just prior to her second principal interview. Her focus area is to examine the leadership gap (lack of principals) within the alternative school system, of which she is an experienced practitioner.

Having just finished her Masters, part-time over eight years, Emily reflects on her professional development goals:

I see this as valuable (this research study). So this can be my thing for this year. Just reading, lots of reading... I try to have a book on leadership on the go. So that was my big focus I was chipping away at it doing one paper a year, so this year I'll have a breather and I don't really know what's next. But I did my Diploma in Educational Management and that was when I was Assistant Principal and that was valuable and that led me to wanting to do

more.... It's a passion, I enjoy it. And hearing people like Lester Levy¹⁷ it's like wow, I want to be like you. I just find people like that inspiring (Emily).

When appointed as head of science, Elisabeth decided she needed to improve her qualifications and went on a leadership course. She also completed a Masters in Religious Education prior to becoming a principal. Elisabeth hadn't intended to be a principal, but with the encouragement of others applied for her current principal's position. She took the opportunity on sabbatical to do a study on the role of the lay principal in a special character school and found that she really wanted to go on and do a Doctorate in that field. This has yet to be realised.

5.5.3 The process of reflecting within a PPLC

What have been some of the benefits of working within a principal professional learning community through these practical focus group workshops?

Rebecca has appreciated the opportunity to work with other principals from special character schools where community and pastoral leadership is understood and valued.

Emily sums up the benefits accordingly:

FORCED TO STOP AND THINK

RE-ENERGISING

RE-FOCUSING

RE-ENFORCING

Lots of benefits, one has just been the networking, just being yourself, with [the other principals] and just sharing... the importance of the journal in reflective practice. It's forced me to have that time to reflect, I wouldn't have done so much reflection about where I'm at as a leader, where I've come from, where I'm going, if it wasn't for this, so it's given me that opportunity. It's forced me to stop and think. That would definitely be a benefit. I suppose re-energising, re-focusing, thinking ok it is about leadership, because you get bogged down with the day-to-day nuts and bolts [management]. So I found it inspirational, thinking I want to know more about this, I want to know more about that and just re-enforcing the importance of that leadership role (Emily).

¹⁷ Dr Lester Levy is the Chief Executive of the New Zealand Leadership Institute and author of the book *Leadership and the Whirlpool Effect*. Emily has studied his work and attended his professional development training sessions.

Elisabeth has found that working with other principals means everybody understands immediately the nature of the job, role and what the issues are that you are dealing with "...you feel you are in a safe environment". There is a common understanding where everyone is eager to listen and to find out how other people have developed. "It's that willing[ness] and I've always found that when I've been with principal professional learning groups...it's always been totally open [trust factor] and honest and I think that's really important". Elisabeth stressed the benefits gained from having the time to learn from each other and the "permission to do something that's for you". Elisabeth has also found the readings have been useful and has used a couple of them for the 'Friday Focus' flyer she produces.

What have been some of the challenges of working within a principal professional learning community through these practical focus group workshops?

For both Rebecca and Elisabeth having the time to commit and do justice to the processes was the biggest challenge. For Emily the thought of reflection through arts-based methods were initially out of her 'comfort zone' but she came to enjoy the process.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the individual case study findings and established them within the literature on educational leadership. The identification of common patterns in leadership style and the content and themes of the principals' approaches to leadership have been discussed under the following four categories: life histories and experiences, leadership styles, effective practice and leadership development.

Reflecting on their life histories and experiences, the influence of relationships, both personal and professional has emerged as having the strongest impact on the principals' leadership development. The principals' formative years also held a range of leadership opportunities and experiences which revealed and activated their leadership skills and potential.

The leadership styles and philosophies of the principals and their perceptions of effective leadership have revealed the uniqueness of each principal's leadership identity. These findings highlight that effective leadership utilises a combination of personal styles which relate to context, culture, beliefs and values. The principals' understandings of leadership and management roles and responsibilities have been grounded within the literature on educational leadership. The impact and influence of having role models, mentors and coaches and conversely the impact and influence of being a role model, mentor and coach have emerged as dominant themes in the research findings. The importance of mentoring and coaching as a feature of leadership development and as a means of reducing the isolation and loneliness inherent in the role of a principal has been discussed. In light of this the findings indicate the need for a balance between personal leadership development and professional leadership development.

The importance of professional development and the link between a principals' personal professional development and that of their school indicates the need to support principals to be instigators of their own professional development learning.

The influence of academic study and future aspirations has been a motivator in the principals' desire to lead and actively pursue further leadership positions and a goal for general professional leadership development.

The process of reflecting within a principals' professional learning community has shown the benefits gained from having time to learn from other principals who have a common understanding of the role, yet a diversity of life experiences.

Having summarised the key themes in the findings which are pertinent to this research of women principals, the following chapter identifies my-self as the researcher, A/r/tographer and an aspiring principal – Researcher Reflections. My life story and leadership experiences are presented back-to-back with the principal participants. I draw upon their stories utilising the methodology of arts-based inquiry to 'reflect relationships', between participants, findings and themes. It is a binding together of narratives.

Chapter 6

A/r/tographer and Aspiring Principal

‘Researcher Reflections’

6.1 ‘Back-to-back’ (dos-à-dos) binding together of narratives

Presented ‘back-to-back’ with the principals’ stories, this chapter identifies my-self as the researcher, A/r/tographer and an aspiring principal. In section 6.2 my life story and leadership experiences arise from reflections on my Self-portrait ‘mirror box’ and subsequent journal entries. Section 6.3 includes an exhibition of my own artworks which draw upon the principals’ stories utilising the methodology of arts-based inquiry to ‘reflect relationships’, between participants, findings and themes. Chapter 6 is literally and figuratively a binding together of narratives.

6.2 Erika Snedden

Background – personal details

Within New Zealand and overseas I have had ten years’ experience as a Secondary Art and Art History teacher and Head of Department. In 2004 I took on the position of full-time parenting and in 2008 began my Masters of Education studies part-time. At the completion of my Masters of Education I look to return to teaching and the aspiration of becoming a principal.

Middle ground – leadership styles and life story

The following are the leadership styles I consider to be most effective:

- *Pedagogical or instructional leadership* – Focuses on priorities for improving student achievement and well-being by the alignment of activities and resources to those priorities. Leaders also participate actively in teacher learning and development as sources of instructional advice and expertise.
- *Transformational leadership* – Moves schools beyond first-order, surface changes to second-order, deeper transformations that alter the ‘core technologies’ of schooling, such as pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment.
- *Distributed leadership* – Is not just a matter of devolving initiative and responsibility. This leadership perspective frames leadership practice as a

product of the interactions of school leaders, followers and their situational context rather than a product of a leader's knowledge and skill.

- *Sustainable leadership* – Ensures that changes are not transitory but are embedded within the school organisation. New strategic direction and practices must be adopted by wide groups of leaders and staff within the school and not be dependent on a single leader.
- *Servant leadership* – Emphasises increased service to others and the sharing of power in decision making, a holistic approach to work and promoting a sense of community. Strongly based in ethical and caring behaviour it enhances the personal growth of workers while improving the caring and quality of organizational life.

Leadership philosophy and styles revealed – ‘Frame Your Self’

Pre and post study comparison



Image 96

Frame Your Self – pre-study



Image 97

Frame Your Self – post-study

I made my ‘Frame Your Self’ activities (appendix C), as well as my Self-portrait ‘mirror box’ (Appendix D) and journal/diary scrap-book (Appendix E) as exemplars to be shown to principals (prior to their own conception and making) as a model of process rather than product. It was important to model this process of reflection both verbally and visually, yet be mindful not to exert any undue influence.

I have presented the images here as a direct comparison (unlike the participant ‘Frame Your Self’ images in chapter 4, which were presented separately to emphasise chronology of action).

Thinking 'inside and outside' the box'

Three-dimensional symbol of the public and private self

I chose a suitcase to contain the objects, images and words that represent my leadership style and experiences. The connotation of travel, to make a journey and go from one place to another, is symbolic of my leadership experiences. I had recently found this suitcase in a second-hand shop, already painted and used as a children's toy box. The outside of this box I divided into two areas which literally overlap. This denotes the merging between my dual roles as a full-time parent and that of a part-time student.

The frame - *Parent, Leader, Children*

As a **P**arent and **L**eaders, training my own **C**hildren, home has been my classroom for the past seven years. Working collaboratively with my children, we have represented this in paint with my two daughters helping to write the three words, **P**arent, **L**eaders, **C**hildren and also include their own painted pictures to represent our family.

A frame is defined as a case or border enclosing a picture, window or door. The incorporation of an old picture frame through which to view the words that describe who I am and my dual roles is indicative of the need to see oneself. The frame in this context is a visual external representation of the self-reflection process upon which this study is grounded.



Image 102
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' — *outside*



Image 103
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' — *outside of box*

My studies, which have focused on educational leadership, have become a motivator and time of extended professional development for me as a leader before returning to the teaching profession. To represent my studies I have taken old assignment papers and conceptual framework diagrams and glued them down using the technique of collage.

Marylou doll – balance external commitments

The Marylou doll, a kiwiana toy playing between my role as parent and student, refers to the discipline required to balance external commitments with parenting responsibilities. Parenting has had a significant influence on shaping my philosophy of learning.

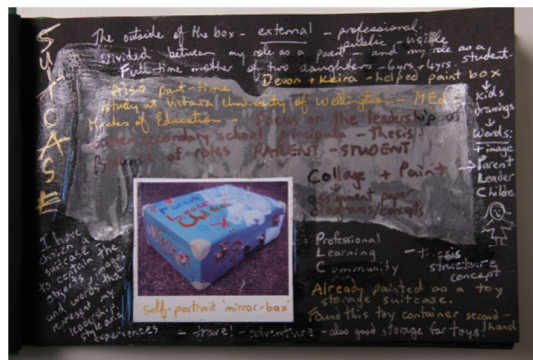


Image 104
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – journal reflection
outside of box

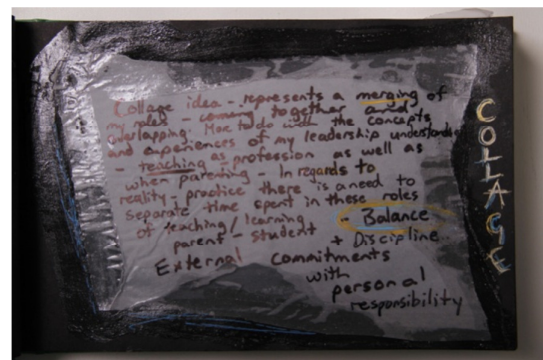


Image 105
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – journal reflection
outside of box

Internally the suitcase holds my 'mirror box' within my 'mirror box'. This opens up to contain a round mirror with the words reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action. This is a framework for types of reflection as a basis for further research development, proposed by Hatton and Smith (1995). This has been utilised by the principals and me in our journaling reflections.



Image 106
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – 'mirror box' within



Image 107
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – 'mirror box' within



Image 108
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – 'mirror box' within



Image 109
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' – 'mirror box' within



Image 110
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' — *mirror box' within*

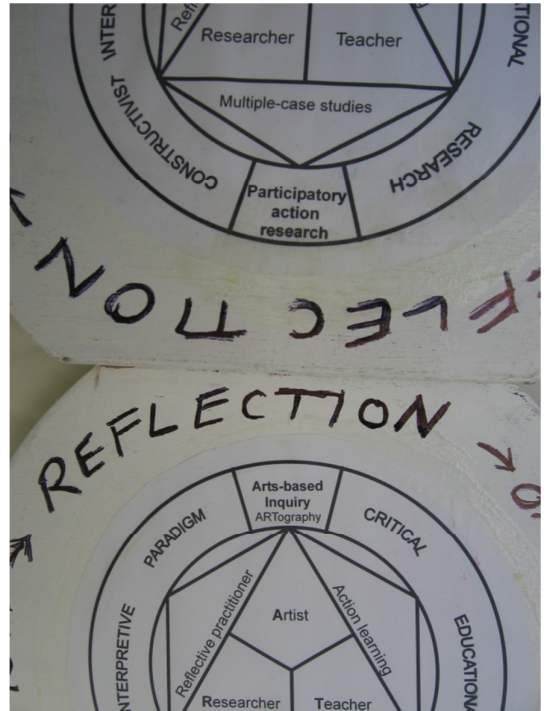


Image 111
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' — *'mirror box' within*



Image 112
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' —
name book and wooden cross



Image 113
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' — *art palette, paints
and brushes*

Name book – *Living up to your name*

One of the meanings of my name 'Erika' is to rule or lead having government or dominion. Since my early years as a teacher I have had an aspiration to be a principal and to be a leader and builder of school culture and educational communities.

Wooden cross – *Servant leadership model*

If you aspire to genuine servant leadership you will seek to emulate Jesus Christ and follow His footsteps. I became a Christian when I was twenty seven years old. Christianity as a world-view, centred on relationships, became the greatest influence on my leadership philosophy and style.

Art palette, knives, paints and brushes – *tools of the trade*

These tools of the art teaching trade represent my experiences as a secondary school art and art history teacher. As a teacher I explicitly took on the role of mentoring not only my class students but student trainee teachers. I enjoy teaching my subject specialty, creating new knowledge alongside my students. Yet fundamental to this is the impartation of life and leadership skills, principles and the motivation and encouragement of others.



Image 114
Self-Portrait 'mirror box' - paua necklace

Paua necklace - *mentor influence*

This necklace represents my teacher trainer and mentor, Jill Smith (when I was training to become a secondary school art and art history teacher at Auckland College of Education). Jill is a collector of contemporary New Zealand jewellery and so this necklace which I made at an art conference workshop has always

reminded me of her significant influence. Her approach to teaching and learning are transformational and she is an inspiring teacher who leads by example. She invested time, care and commitment to each individual student and instilled in me a joy for teaching and learning.

Foreground – journal/scrap-book reflections

Step 3 – Critique – Reactions to Self-portrait ‘mirror box’

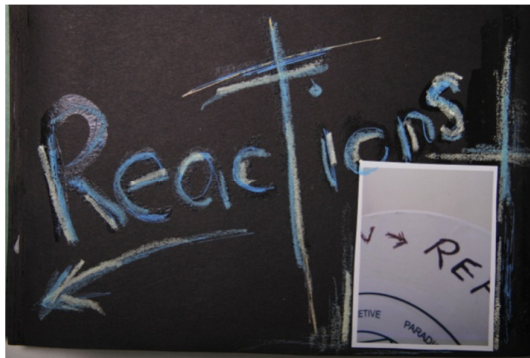


Image 115
Journal/scrap-book reflections – Step 3
critique – reactions

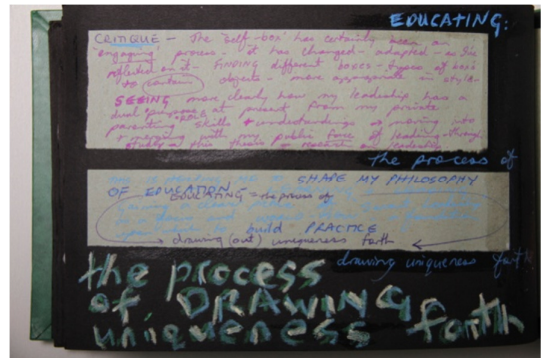


Image 116
Journal/scrap-book reflections – Step 3
critique – reactions

Step 4 – **D.R.A.W.** (daily reflective analyse workout)



Image 117
Journal/scrap-book reflections – **D.R.A.W.**

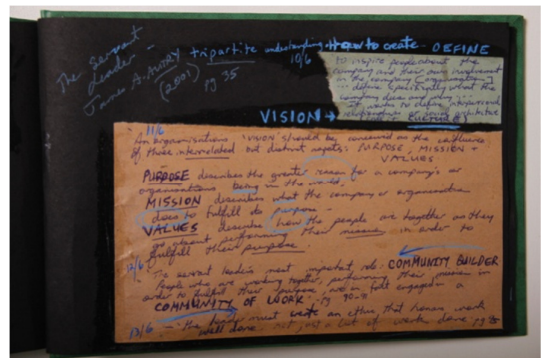


Image 118
Journal/scrap-book reflections – **D.R.A.W.**

The opportunity to reflect on a daily basis has been a catalyst for the consolidation of ideas. I found that it helped me to reflect on past experiences and attitudes and enable me to see how they have influenced my thinking now.



Image 119
Exhibition — *portraits of principals*



Image 120
Exhibition — *leading ladies*

Through this journaling process I had been contemplating the value of presenting my research findings in the form of an exhibition. Art as research requires a viewer, (Grierson & Brearley, 2009) therefore I was mindful of considering the audience for the alternative representation of my research findings. Furthermore there is potential in the exhibition or presentation process to provide a setting for initiating discourse about artistic research (Sullivan, 2010).

...the need to exhibit works of a/r/t as theory as métissage, the relationship between author/artist and audience takes on a pedagogical turn. A/r/tography as métissage involves teaching and learning: it accepts responsibility for oneself as a learner and for establishing meaningful relationships with others who are also learners...it is a powerful pedagogical source for relationship sharing, dialogue and understanding (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004, p. 33).

I presented a paper focused on the methodology and methods of arts-based inquiry adopted in this study at The Pacific Regional Leadership Symposium, A Decade of Re-thinking Pacific Education 2001-2011, 7-8 December 2011, USP Laucala Campus, Suva, Fiji. This conference gave me the opportunity to exhibit, by slide image, some of the artworks which resulted as an outcome of exploring arts-based strategies within this study. Furthermore my intent was to initiate reflection for the viewers' personally.

...reflection is not only the domain of the artist. In an encounter with an artwork the viewer is invited to engage in their own reflections and recall their own experiences to evaluate and interpret the work that in itself may be a process of reflective thinking; to engage with private reverie to make sense of a public reality (Duxbury, in Grierson & Brearley, 2009, p. 63).

The processes and products of the arts-based inquiry methods the principals and I have been working with have resulted in a range of photography and assemblage works documenting our life stories and experiences.

In the following section I draw upon the principals' stories utilising the methodology of arts-based inquiry to 'reflect relationships', between participants, findings and themes. It is literally a binding together of narratives exhibiting their Individual Iconographic Identities.

6.3 Exhibition – Individual Iconographic Identities – Creating Conversations

This series of artworks that I have created is a response to the practical focus group work, the principals' own 'mirror boxes'– Individual Iconographic Identities and the findings.

The look, remain, act photographic artworks are an outcome from the 2nd practical focus group (see Appendix H). In this activity, I have literally used the analogy of looking in the mirror as a process of change motivating us to action and transformation. The principals were each given a hand mirror with the three important aspects that contribute to self-reflection and change (look, remain, act), written on them:

1. **Look** – means we look intently with purpose
2. **Remain** – means we continue to look with persistence as one look will not bring about transformation
3. **Act** – means we do not just talk or think, but we must also act on what we have seen



Image 121
Reflection – *look*
Elisabeth



Image 122
Reflection – *remain*
Rebecca



Image 123
Reflection – *act*
Emily

We then discussed how to change and transform a distorted image of ourselves by looking into an accurate mirror that reflects our true image. The following question guided the discussion:

What is an accurate mirror for reflective practice?

Elisabeth and Rebecca both considered that dialogue with others/experts alongside a willingness to listen to other points of view would provide an accurate mirror and environment in which to reflect. Rebecca and Emily believed that a knowledge and belief in yourself were paramount. Further to this Emily stressed that a wide lens based on values should underpin true reflective practice.

The principal's wrote their answers on their own mirrors which they had included in their Self-portrait 'mirror box':



Image 124
Accurate mirror reflections
Elisabeth



Image 125
Accurate mirror reflections
Rebecca



Image 126
Accurate mirror reflections
Emily



Image 127
Reflection – *look*
Elisabeth



Image 128
Reflection – *remain*
Rebecca



Image 129
Reflection – *act*
Emily



Image 130
Reflection – *look*
Elisabeth



Image 131
Reflection – *remain*
Rebecca



Image 132
Reflection – *act*
Emily

I took these photos (Images 127-132) with the principals in the 2nd practical focus group workshop directly after carrying out this activity (Appendix H). I intentionally made reference to the photographic studio that I had set up within the workshop space as a further analogy of the need to create the right conditions, equipment and resources to direct and shed light and create the atmosphere required for purposeful and in depth reflection.

The following section on artist models introduces the art historical sources of influence for the final exhibition of my artworks. Further to the methodology and methods within chapter 3 this section is presented here as a direct reference and link to the assemblage methods appropriated.

Artist models

The conception of the 'mirror box' idea and these subsequent works, have been influenced by American artist Joseph Cornell (1903-1972) and New Zealand artist Dale Copeland (1943-).

There is a sense of narrative in Cornell's work. Cornell collected objects he bought, found and liked as source material for his works, which became artistic creations of his inner thoughts, desires and imagination. In the 1930's he began making assemblages in boxes. He was an avid collector of ready-mades or found objects (a found object is an existing object – often a mundane manufactured product – given a new identity as an artwork or part of an artwork). These objects he would assemble within box frames, to create three-dimensional artefacts. Cornell's boxes, like cabinets of curiosities were meant to be inhabited and experienced, not understood. They are not just 'memory boxes' but a kind of museum of his unconscious mind. They create a sense of longing and nostalgia for part of a vivid and longed-for past and act to preserve these found objects and Cornell's dreams (Ashton, 1974; Hartigan, 2007; Waldman, 2002).

Surrealist (1924-1945) art in the 1930s was a source of inspiration for Cornell's dreamlike diaries and scrap-books. Surrealism explored and expressed the subconscious and moved beyond the accepted conventions of reality by representing in poetry and art the irrational imagery of dreams. Surrealism's nineteenth-century forebear was Symbolism¹⁸ (1890's) and its immediate antecedent was Dada (1915-1923) not a style of art but a world view. The Dada contributions to Surrealism included experimentation with chance and accident as well as a keen interest in found objects.

¹⁸ Symbolism is more of a subjective approach or attitude than a recognisable style. Symbolist art and theory, with an emphasis on depicting difficult-to-visualise emotions and sensations, were vital for the development of abstraction. The role of dreams was central to Symbolism.



Image 133
Joseph Cornell
Untitled (Soap Bubble Set)
1936



Image 134
Joseph Cornell
Untitled (Cockatoo & corks)
1948



Image 135
Joseph Cornell
Crystal cage
(portrait of Berenice)
c.1934-67



Image 136
Dale Copeland
Tribute 2001



Image 137
Dale Copeland
Kindheit (childhood) 2009



Image 138
Dale Copeland
Conclusions 2010

Dale Copeland is a New Zealand collage and assemblage artist. She was born in Taranaki in 1943. Dale has worked in collage, jewellery, book-making, photography and sculpture, but her favoured medium is assemblage or box-art – careful constructions of treasured objects. Dale's assemblage artwork has been described as 'joy in jetsam, philosophy in flotsam'. She finds discarded objects and puts them together not as narratives but as encapsulations of the human condition. Her work is considered Bricolage¹⁹ – philosophy in the found (Copeland, 2003).

¹⁹ Bricolage is the construction or creation from what is immediately available to use. An assemblage of haphazard or incongruous elements.

From these artists I have taken the box concept to literally contain and give value to the objects which represent and symbolise the principals' leadership identities. This has created a context in which to preserve their identity.

Throughout the data collection phase of the research study, I found and collected objects, various types of jewelry boxes and shelves from budget and charity shops that would represent the findings. This became a serendipitous exercise of unexpected discoveries each time. Throughout the process I would often find the appropriate objects needed for my responding artworks directly after having analysed and clarified the individual findings of each principal's own 'mirror boxes'. I have appropriated the concepts, type of objects (obtaining my own or similar objects) and symbols from the principals' 'mirror boxes' and incorporated headings, quotes, text and themes from the research findings.

The final exhibition of my artworks to follow were inspired by the three principals' Self-portrait 'mirror boxes' from chapter 4.

Principal 1 – Rebecca Louise



Image 139
Researcher Reflection – *Rebecca*



Image 140
Researcher Reflection – *Rebecca*
The wake-up call – shelf detail



Image 141
Researcher Reflection – *Rebecca*
Russian doll reflections



Image 142
Researcher Reflection – *Rebecca*
box outside lid

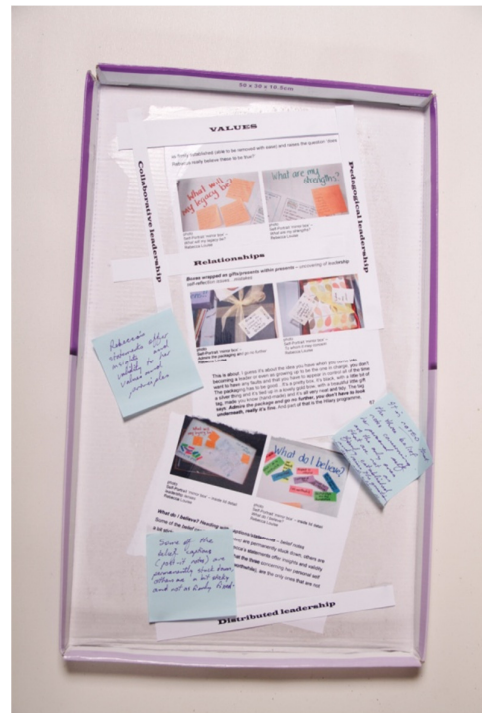


Image 143
Researcher Reflection – *Rebecca*
box inside lid



Image 144
Researcher Reflection – Rebecca
inside box – detail



Image 145
Researcher Reflection – Rebecca
Russian doll – learning environments box

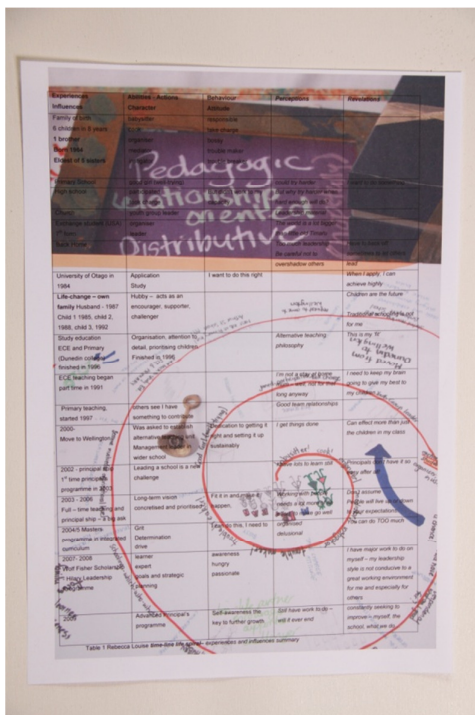


Image 146
Researcher Reflection – Rebecca
time-line life spiral

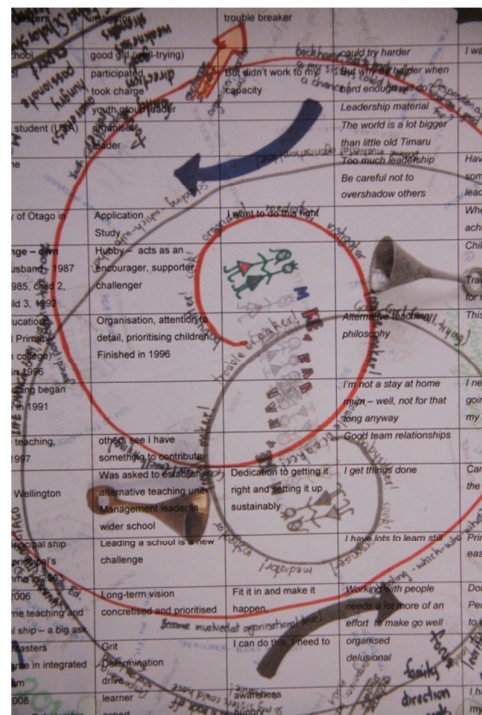


Image 147
Researcher Reflection – Rebecca
time-line life spiral – detail



Image 148
 Researcher Reflection – *Rebecca*
lessons over time



Image 149
 Researcher Reflection – *Rebecca*
influence of authors



Image 150
 Researcher Reflection – *Rebecca*
under the lens



Image 151
 Researcher Reflection – *Rebecca*
under the lens – detail

Principal 2 – Emily Peacock



Image 152
Researcher Reflection – Emily



Image 153
 Researcher Reflection – Emily
authentic leadership – shelf detail



Image 154
 Researcher Reflection – Emily
impact of having a role model – shelf detail



Image 155
 Researcher Reflection – Emily
collaborative leadership – shelf detail



Image 156
 Researcher Reflection – Emily
tin box inside



Image 157
 Researcher Reflection – Emily
keep things in perspex/perspective



Image 158
 Researcher Reflection – Emily
impact of being a role model



Image 159
Reflection – *Emily*
box outside



Image 160
Researcher Reflection – *Emily*
box inside



Image 161
Researcher Reflection – *Emily*
friendships and relationships
authentic and servant leadership



Image 162
Researcher Reflection – *Emily*
collaborative leadership

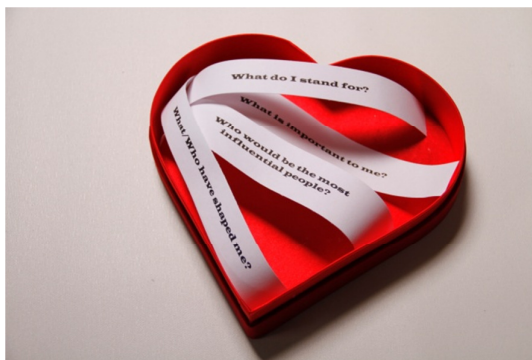


Image 163
Researcher Reflection – *Emily*
what do I stand for?

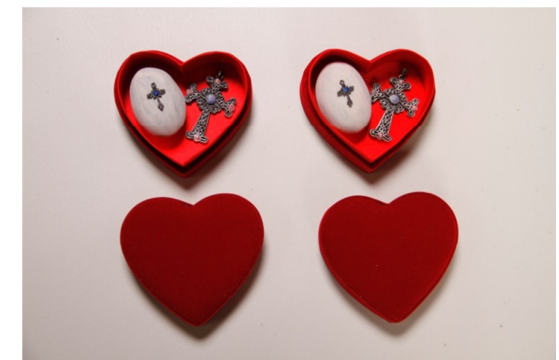


Image 164
Researcher Reflection – *Emily*
hearts, stones and crosses - detail

Principal 3 – Elisabeth Hebden



Image 165
Researcher Reflection – *Elisabeth*



Image 166
Researcher Reflection – *Elisabeth
unwrapped*



Image 167
Researcher Reflection – *Elisabeth
clapper hands*



Image 168
Researcher Reflection – *Elisabeth
crown – shelf detail*



Image 169
Researcher Reflection – *Elisabeth
shelf detail*



Image 170
Researcher Reflection – *Elisabeth*
baskets – te-kete-o-te-wananga



Image 171
Researcher Reflection – *Elisabeth*
shelf detail



Image 172
Reflection – *Elisabeth*
baskets and busy bee



Image 173
Researcher Reflection – *Elisabeth*
servant leadership cup



Image 174
Researcher Reflection – *Elisabeth*
women of influence



Image 175
Researcher Reflection – *Elisabeth*
women of influence – detail



Image 176
Researcher Reflection – *Elisabeth*
crown, hands, heart



Image 177
Researcher Reflection – *Elisabeth*
loyalty, friendship, love



Image 178
Researcher Reflection – *Elisabeth*
democratic leadership key – what's in a name?



Image 179
Researcher Reflection – *Elisabeth*
democratic leadership key – what's in a name?



Image 180
Researcher Reflection – *Elisabeth*
steps to independence



Image 181
Researcher Reflection – *Elisabeth*
mentored to principalship



Image 182
 Researcher Reflection – *Elisabeth*
clapper hands and culture



Image 183
 Researcher Reflection – *Elisabeth*
cultural reflections



Image 184
 Researcher Reflection – *Elisabeth*
clapper hands and culture – detail



Image 185
 Researcher Reflection – *Elisabeth*
cultural reflections – detail



Image 186
 Researcher Reflection – *Elisabeth*
autocratic, distributed, democratic leadership



Image 187
 Researcher Reflection – *Elisabeth*
autocratic, distributed, democratic leadership

Chapter 7

Concluding Discussion

...we seek not a mirror but a tale, a revelation, or a portrayal of what we think is important to say about what we have come to know (Eisner, 1998, p. 190).

7.1 Introduction

This thesis sought to explore effective professional development strategies and opportunities that would help secondary school principals to reflect thoughtfully and systematically upon the work they do. The intention was to help the principals to more effectively understand their school contexts, responsibilities and their own competencies, leadership styles and practice.

Within a PPLC the three women secondary school principals explored how their life stories and experiences have impacted upon their personal theories about leadership styles and practice, representing a unique insight into their personal and professional lives. This thesis builds on previous studies of New Zealand women principals' experiences of leadership and has contributed to a greater insight into their role and practice providing empirical evidence which complements existing philosophical discourse.

Chapter 1 contextualised the purpose and significance for the research. The setting and participants, research questions and design of the research were overviewed with a summary of the methodology and methods employed.

Chapter 2 outlined the literature relevant to the key themes which emerged through the research study. It contributes to a clearer understanding of effective professional development strategies and opportunities that help principals to be reflective practitioners. The literature highlights the relevant key educational leadership theories and styles: pedagogical/instructional leadership, transactional – transformational leadership, distributed leadership and servant leadership which are germane to the study of women principals and has provided a useful basis for analysing women principals' conceptions of leadership.

The theoretical framework for the research was presented in Chapter 3. Methodology, creative practice as a research construct and the role of A/r/tographer were explained. Two conceptual frameworks that underpin the methods of this research study were presented alongside an account of the methods of data collection and analysis. They are: Figure 1. Conceptual framework for the study of three women secondary school principals' leadership theory and styles, integrating learning theory and reflective practice theory. Figure 2 Conceptual framework for an iconographic study of women secondary school principals' leadership theory and styles within a professional learning community. From this account a framework model for reflective practice as a tool for personal and professional educational leadership development was also pictured: Figure 3 Framework model for reflective practice as a tool for personal and professional educational leadership development.

A synopsis outlined the criteria for assessing research quality and issues of authenticity and trustworthiness were analysed and the chapter concluded with a summary of ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 exhibited the individual iconographic case studies which identify and described the symbolic representations of the principals' leadership philosophy and styles and their conceptions of leadership development and practice. The portraits of the principals were presented in a dual dialogue of genres which documented the reflective practitioner process. This process of capturing their leadership identity based on their life stories and experiences was achieved through three interrelating arts-based methods designed uniquely for this research study: creating the 'Frame Your Self' activities (Appendix C), Self-portrait 'mirror box' (assemblage artworks – Appendix D) and journal/diary scrap-booking (Appendix E). The 2nd practical focus group workshop – question handout 'The Mirror' (Appendix H) utilised hand mirrors as an analogy for change motivating us to action and transformation. The 2nd practical focus group workshop – *D.R.A.W.* daily reflective analysis workout was completed in the journal/diary scrap-book (Appendix I). The principal's conceptions of leadership can literally and figuratively

be seen through the reading (a métissage of image and text) of these self-portraits.

Chapter 5 outlined the individual case study findings and established them within the literature on educational leadership. The identification of common patterns in leadership style and the content and themes of their approaches to leadership were discussed under the following four categories: life histories and experiences, leadership styles, effective practice and leadership development.

Chapter 6 identified my-self as the researcher, A/r/tographer and an aspiring principal. My life story and leadership experiences were presented 'back-to-back' as I drew upon the principals' stories utilising the methodology of arts-based inquiry to 'reflect relationships', between the participants, findings and themes.

Chapter 7 presents a concluding discussion. The major findings from the research are presented in relation to the purpose and significance of the research study, research questions and design. A discussion of the relevance of the research findings for principals and professional development educators is developed. Limitations of the research, recommendations for future research and concluding comments are followed by an epilogue.

The conclusions drawn are founded on the underlying assumption that inviting people to participate in dialogue and share stories about their past can inform their present and future understanding. Envisioning your future through an analysis of the past encapsulates the philosophy of transformational change that is espoused in Appreciative Inquiry (AI). AI assumes that people have more confidence and comfort to journey to the future when they carry forward the best about the past (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros, 2005).

7.2 Relevance of findings for principals and professional development educators

The research question required the principals to reflect on the impact their life stories and experiences had on their leadership style, effective practice and leadership development. Therefore the themes from the findings were identified and synthesised under the following four categories: life stories and experiences, leadership styles, effective practice and leadership development.

As the principals have reflected on their life stories and experiences, the following key elements emerged as having the strongest impact. The greatest of these was the influence of relationships. Both personal including family and friends and professionally through work colleagues, the indirect influence of authors and the role modelling and mentoring received from principals.

The impact and influence of having role models, mentors and coaches and conversely the impact and influence of being a role model, mentor and coach have emerged as dominant influences on the principals' leadership development. Furthermore this research has reaffirmed the importance of mentoring and coaching as a means to reduce the isolation and loneliness inherent in the role of a principal (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000; Robertson, 2005). The principals' formative years also held a range of leadership opportunities and experiences which modelled moral and ethical responsibility and activated the principals' leadership skills and potential. These findings therefore support the moral/critical approach as a distinct theoretical position relevant for exploring women's leadership (Doherty, 2002).

This research provides empirical evidence to support the claim that women's educational leadership has the ethic of care and the empowerment of others, as central foci. Furthermore the link is made between the ethic of care and people-centred leadership (Coleman, 2000; Doherty, 2002; Gilligan, 1982). Under the umbrella of being democratic and authentic as a leader each principal has purposefully sought to foster empowering relationships and a culture where community and pastoral leadership is understood and valued within their schools.

This study further confirms that a principal has a unique position of influence in being instrumental in building a shared vision and encouraging schools to become caring, focused and inquiring professional learning communities (Fullan 2006, 2007, Sergiovanni, 2009).

The leadership styles and philosophies of the principals and their perceptions of effective leadership have revealed the uniqueness of each principal's leadership identity. These findings highlighted women's perceptions of effective leadership utilising a combination of personal styles which relate to context, culture, beliefs and values. Furthermore the findings concur with the literature that effective leadership capacity is central to school effectiveness and improvement (Sergiovanni, 2009, Stewart, 2000). Examining the professional development strategies that assist principals to develop leadership capacity has shown the importance of the PLC as a model for professional development (Du Four, 2004, Stoll & Louis, 2007).

The influence of academic study and future aspirations was a motivator in the principals' desire to lead and actively pursue further leadership positions and a goal for general professional leadership development.

The process of reflecting within a PPLC has shown the benefits gained from having time to learn from other principals who have a common understanding of the role, yet a diversity of life experiences. This research study has given each of the principals the opportunity to consolidate and celebrate who they are as leaders. It has been an opportunity to re-affirm what is important to them and to have belief in themselves and what they are doing.

Right at the beginning of the research I was surprised by the confession from the principals of their initial lack of confidence and competence as leaders when they first became principals. Towards the end of the research (in the second interviews) having reflected on their leadership stories and experiences, each principal was able to acknowledge that they had made progress in their leadership understanding and is now more confident of her practice.

As a result of this study process Rebecca has instigated her own PLC with two other principals in her area and they have met to discuss their practice, particular readings and general leadership matters. They intend to do this on a regular basis.

As a direct outcome of this research study, Emily is trialling the use of journals for professional development reflection for her staff and is keen to learn more about PLC's as a way of delivering professional learning development in her school. Emily has recognised that her leadership style has been greatly influenced by observing good leadership in practice. She now wants to identify and learn from effective leaders within a range of sectors and have someone like a CEO to be a coach and meet on a regular basis and talk about leadership. This is the type of personal and professional development that she considers will be the most effective for her.

During this study Elisabeth put a case to her Board of Trustees to employ a mentor appraiser for her own personal and professional development needs. It has since been approved and one of the outcomes will be to look further into working with this person as an external facilitator on performance review and possible restructuring.

An outcome for me personally is that I now have a more confident picture of myself as a leader and it has also lead to the discovery that I am an A/r/tographer. I can utilise my artistic abilities, love of research and teaching in a combined role (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004).

These findings indicate that the personal development, self-awareness and growth of a leader are a catalyst to stimulate collective development and accomplishment.

In light of this, I believe there is a need for a balance between personal leadership development and professional leadership development. The importance of professional development and the link between a principal's personal professional development and that of their school indicates the need to support principals to be instigators of their own professional development learning and help them become critically reflective of their practice within the wider socio-political context.

Successful strategies for principal development include the opportunity to reflect on current practice, collaborate with colleagues and learn in situational context, utilising a range of tools (Barnett & Mahony, 2006; Robertson, 2005). These strategies are based on self-development and work-based learning theories – experiential learning and reflective practice. Tools and strategies for implementing these theories include: journals/diaries as visualised autobiographical discourse, coaching, mentoring and peer-assisted learning, action learning and action research. Further to this the tools, methods and strategies of Arts-based inquiry – Arts-based educational research (ABER) may be adopted to examine the relationship of pedagogy to practice and suggest new ways of viewing educational leadership development through the enhancement of perspectives (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008; O'Toole & Beckett, 2010; Piper & Frankham, 2007).

With this in mind, I consider that the development of these leadership strategies would require principals to be actively involved in the designing and building of their own individual professional development programmes and those of the wider school community.

7.3 Limitations of the findings and recommendations for future research

While qualitative methodology such as case studies and personal life stories are by their nature subjective and cannot be statistically generalised to a whole population, they do generate valuable primary data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). They can provide a deeper level of insight into the identities, role and practice of the participants.

Case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to the theoretical propositions which underpin the research process and not to populations (Yin, 2003). The goal is to expand and generalise theories (analytic generalisation) and not enumerate frequencies (statistical generalisation).

This study applied topical life stories – multiple-case studies approach, informed by a reflective practitioner approach and action learning orientation, utilising arts-

based inquiry. This enabled a reconstruction of the ways that leadership is influenced and shaped by personal and social identity perceptions. The analysis of these women principals' subjective perceptions of their life stories and experiences could be considered incomplete without an analysis of the historical context which have shaped these women's leadership styles, practice and leadership development (Dimmock & Donoghue, 1996). However it was beyond the scope of this study to draw more fully upon a broader historical context and include a wider commentary on community and local history, social histories and geographies in which these life stories were embedded.

Bearing this in mind, further research could focus on investigating the wider cultural, social and historical contexts and histories within which leadership identity is formed.

The rationale for this collaborative partnership between the researcher and the women secondary school principals was to create a culture of support for professional and educational leadership development. Utilising a critical approach to their own leadership development, the PPLC, through a series of focus groups, enabled the principals to reflect on their leadership style and identify, inform and improve their practice. This resulting new knowledge has been utilised to create a sense of personal agency for each principal and achieve praxis within their professional school contexts. However, while individual leaders and their attributes do matter in constituting leadership practice, other school leaders, followers and situational contexts also help define leading practice. Therefore there is a call for research which not only investigates the perceived style of women in leadership but also triangulates this against the contextualised perceptions of their colleagues by the inclusion of the voice of critical others (Neville, 1988).

This would lead to a study of leadership practice from a distributed perspective aimed at the level of the school rather than at the level of an individual leader (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2001). Conventional belief is that individual transformation leads to communal transformation, yet Block (2008) exploring the nature of community and the dynamics of transformation, would argue that

leadership is not a matter of style or vision but about getting the right people together in the right way.

These recommendations for future research would take a study of this nature from a two-dimensional or first person awareness of our leadership selves to a three-dimensional or third person portrayal.

This thesis models and presents a framework of reflective practice as a tool for professional and educational leadership development. This could provide a model for researchers investigating the same or similar research questions, or provide a model for commensurate studies within different levels of the education sector. It could also be utilised by professional development educators, for individuals or groups, in a range of personal or professional settings.

7.4 Concluding voice – Know and frame your self

Leadership begins on the inside, with self-awareness and self-esteem, and the process of leadership involves regular and intense reflection and introspection (Autry, 2001).

This thesis frames valuable insights into how the life stories and experiences of three New Zealand women secondary school principals have impacted upon their personal theories about leadership styles and practice. It has been composed through a *métissage* (merging) of image and dialogue to create portraits of the principal's leadership identities. It was set in situ within a principal professional learning community as reflective practice, behaviour change, individual and collective transformation cannot occur in a vacuum. A support system to critique and enact our realities through discourse and action is needed, whether with one other person (coach, mentor), a group, or a community. To be able to tell our stories, freely and truthfully requires an environment of trust within an intentional community.

The findings indicate that knowing yourself as a leader requires putting your person before your practice. Investing time to reflect on who you are in person

(internal/private), your experiences, beliefs, principles and values are preliminary to exploring who you are in practice (external/public). Principals must seek a forum which places their personal development before professional development. They must also function as staff developers, recognising that a symbiotic relationship exists between their own individual personal and professional development needs as well as those of their school.

Conversely this research has shown that there is a process of observing and being influenced by exterior leadership practice, in the form of role models and mentors who initially inform and shape our own internal leadership understandings.

Just as an artist does not create work in a vacuum but is influenced by others, so too are we as we aspire to leadership.

Within the field of art teaching, the use of artist models to inform student work is widely practised. Initially the influence may be quite explicit, even appropriating directly from the artist model or source. As an art teacher I would encourage my students to not only build knowledge and understanding towards mastering the fundamental tools and techniques, but alongside this an awareness of the voice (message being communicated) of the artists studied. The fundamental technical knowledge provides a practical vocabulary from which a student can then explore a more internal dialogue of their own, developing their own self-expression, individual style and voice.

To frame an awareness of yourself as a leader and declare your voice is a process which requires time, an appreciation of your past background and a revelation of the immediate present towards developing a foresight for the future within community.

Who are you as a leader?

How does your life story reveal who you are as a leader?

What does your life story declare about your leadership practice?

Epilogue...

Three months after completing the research study I invited the principals to comment on the value of taking part in this research study and the direct outcomes for themselves personally and professionally. Here we have the final say:

Rebecca

This research project has been a reaffirmation for me. The exploration of self and the affect self has on the role of principal has been an on-going process for some years. Being involved in this study has allowed me to do a 'stocktake' of where I am in my personal and professional development. I hadn't really done this for some time - yes you do appraisals and as part of this there is a self-appraisal element, but the time to really analyse self is a luxury I find it difficult to make time for. And yet the experience is so valuable I should not have to feel guilty for making that time.

This 'stocktake' allowed me to evaluate and integrate much of the learning I have done over the past few years. I have been able to look at what has been effective, cast off some lingering doubts and old habits and gain a certain, dare I say it 'serenity' in my role and the contribution I have made to the school I work in.

As a result of this self-evaluation I feel more grounded in the person I am and the bearing that brings to the role of principal. I feel more certain that my contribution is important, and I have (almost) stopped undervaluing that input as has been my habit for the past several years.

The time to talk to other principals has also been valuable [with] people going through the same experiences, viewing principalship the same way. Hearing these experienced, passionate and utterly competent women express the same doubts, fears and worries that I have was such a relief. The importance of regular get-togethers with like-minded people filling the same role has been highlighted, and this is something that must be prioritised. The hardest thing is to not get sucked back into the morass that is running a school, and to continue to set this time aside. That is the commitment I want to make for my on-going personal and professional growth.

Emily

It has been extremely valuable to take part in this research study. It was good professional learning development for me both personally and professionally. The networking, sharing of stories provided valuable support. It gave me time which is precious to reflect on myself in particular my journey as a leader which is evolving all the time. It was good to be exposed to ideas, theories and different readings on leadership.

The direct outcome has been personally – to appreciate my husband and family more, they are your backbone and I simply could not do what I do without their support. Professionally – to take time to reflect via a journal. To keep up with readings on leadership. To develop further the concept of professional learning groups as a way of delivering professional learning development in our school.

Elisabeth

Personally: it has made me look, in depth, at myself as a person. To recognise what my strengths are and what it is about me that has enabled me to take on this role and continue with it. I have had time to reflect on my pathway to principalship and the people and events which moulded me and led me to becoming a principal.

Professionally: the opportunity to take part in facilitated discussion and activities with two other female principals and for the group to develop as a professional learning community.

It has given me renewed confidence in my role as a school leader. I perceive that I have a new sense of direction and that my strong belief in servant leadership is what underpins my principalship.

I was given the name of a person working with one of the other principals on principal appraisal. Through discussions in our group, I contacted this person and initially looked at using his services as a Mentor for myself. In discussion with the BOT Chairperson the BOT agreed to employ this person to appraise me this year. This has taken place and one of the outcomes will be to look further into working with this person as an external facilitator on performance review and possible re-structuring.

Erika

This research has helped me personally to identify and understand more clearly the distinctions within different leadership styles and how they relate to my own leadership philosophy. I now have a revelation of who I am as a leader and A/r/tographer. This will be invaluable for me as I action this understanding on my return to the education profession.

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Appendices

Appendix A	Outline of principal involvement/action
Appendix B	Pre study principal questionnaire
Appendix C	1 st practical focus group activities outline
Appendix D	Arts-based strategies
Appendix E	Journaling / scrap-booking guidelines
Appendix F	1 st principal interview
Appendix G	2 nd principal interview
Appendix H	2 nd practical focus group workshop – question
Appendix I	2 nd practical focus group workshop – <i>D.R.A.W.</i>
Appendix J	Letter to principals – expression of interest
Appendix K	Information for principals
Appendix L	Principal invitation to participate in research study
Appendix M	Principal consent to participation in research
Appendix N	Focus group confidentiality agreement
Appendix O	List of figures and images

Appendix A – Outline of principal involvement/action

11hrs in total –
5hrs own time

March 2011

Appendix M – Sign and return research consent form.

12th April 1 hr

Preliminary focus group: All appendices given.

Participate in preliminary focus group to establish a baseline understanding, guiding principles and function of a principal professional learning community and to foster strategies for effective individual and collaborative reflective practice.

Appendix N – Focus group confidentiality agreement.
 To be signed.

1 hr of your
 own time

Appendix B – Pre study principal questionnaire **returned**.

Appendix C – Group activity 1 and 2 explained. Activity one will take **10-15 minutes to complete prior to 1st practical focus group workshop**).

2 hrs of your
 own time

Appendix D – Arts-based strategies discussed (alongside Appendix E – journaling/scrap-booking).
 Self-portrait ‘mirror boxes’ concept introduced and Step 1 explained.

(Step 1 to be completed prior to 1st practical focus group workshop and length of time to complete will be dependent on individual).

2 hrs of your
 own time

Appendix E – Journaling/scrap-booking (4 in total) guidelines discussed (**1st journal used for designing and planning your ‘mirror boxes’ prior to making them**).

Journal 2, 3 and 4 will be collected as outlined in Appendix E.

..... 1 1/2 hrs	1st practical focus group workshop: Appendix D – Arts-based strategies Self-portrait ‘mirror boxes’ Step 2 actioned. 2 nd journal/scrap-book used to analyse ‘mirror-boxes’
..... Approx 1 hr	Appendix F – 1st principal interview
..... 1 1/2 hrs	2nd practical focus group workshop: Appendix D – Arts-based strategies. Self-portrait ‘mirror boxes’ Step 3 actioned. 3rd journal/scrap-book used to critique ‘mirror-boxes.’
..... Approx 1 hr	Appendix G – 2nd principal interview

Appendix B – Pre study principal questionnaire

Research Topic

Portraits of the leadership styles and practices of women secondary school principals reflected within a principal professional learning community.

Portraits of Principals

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information about your life experiences, school context, professional leadership development history and understanding of leadership styles and practices.

The information gathered in this questionnaire will be used as part of a research project for a Masters by Thesis being undertaken by Erika Snedden through Victoria University of Wellington.

Full information about this research has been provided.

Name

Life Experiences

1. Were there any significant events or experiences that led to you considering becoming a principal? If so, what were they?

[illegible]

School context

School Name:.....

School type:[Co-ed, single sex, independent, integrated, other (please state)]:

.....

Year levels within school:.....

Decile rating:.....

2. How long have you been a secondary school principal?

Please outline your career as a principal, from your current position to the position immediately prior to obtaining your first principalship role: (Either fill in the table below or attach relevant curriculum vitae section outlining positions held).

Role as principal	Location	Year(s)
School:		
School:		
School:		
Position and school prior to 1st principalship role	Location	Year(s)
Position held: School :		

3. Why did you apply for the principalship in your current school? (Type of school, location, previous association, other.....)

[illegible]

4. Did you undertake any relevant professional development prior to your appointment as a principal? If so, what form did this take?

[illegible]

5. How prepared were you for your first principalship role?

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6. Comment on the transition into your first principalship role from your previous position.

(e.g. Were there any difficulties? Did you receive the support you needed? What factors would have made the transition more manageable?)

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Professional leadership development

What professional leadership development opportunities have you received as a principal?

Please list recent and/or significant programmes, courses or training that you have attended. (Either fill in the table below or attach relevant curriculum vitae section outlining professional leadership development experience).

Programmes, courses and training	Organisation	Duration and frequency

7. Have you been involved in any mentoring/coaching partnerships? (Please specify)

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8. Have you undertaken any professional development learning of your own initiative? (Please specify)

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Leadership styles and effective practice

9. Please list the leadership styles you consider to be the most effective and describe their key features.

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This image shows a full page of a document template. It consists of multiple horizontal rows, each containing a series of small black dots spaced evenly apart. These rows are designed for handwriting practice or as a guide for text alignment. The entire page is otherwise blank and white.

[illegible]

12. Please add anything else you would like to comment on in regards to your school context, professional leadership development history and understanding of leadership styles and practices.

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Appendix C – 1st practical focus group activities outline

Research Topic

Portraits of the leadership styles and practices of women secondary school principals reflected within a principal professional learning community.

Preparation for 1st practical focus group workshop

Portraits of Principals

Activity 1– Know Your Self

Purpose/Aim:

The purpose of this activity is to enable you to reflect on your own leadership style. The aim is to gauge your prior knowledge and understanding of the attributes of effective leadership.

Method:

Please answer the following questions **prior to attending** the 1st focus group **(Bring this group activity outline with you)**.

What words (or phrases) would you use to describe the attributes of effective school leadership?

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What words (or phrases) would you use to describe your own leadership style?

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Appendix C – 1st practical focus group activities outline Research Topic

Portraits of the leadership styles and practices of women secondary school principals reflected within a principal professional learning community.

Preparation for 1st practical focus group workshop

Portraits of Principals

Activity 2 – Frame Your Self

Purpose/Aim:

To apply reflection on your own leadership style and identify attributes of effective leadership.

Method:

This activity will be undertaken in the 1st practical focus group workshop. You will be asked to choose a **photo frame** within which you will write **words to describe** your leadership style.

This '**frame of your leadership self**' will be retained by you to reflect upon during the study and we will refer back to it at the completion of our study.



Appendix D – Arts-based strategies

Preliminary focus group = step 1, 1st p. f. group = step 2, 2nd practical focus group = step 3

Portraits of the leadership styles and practices of women secondary school principals reflected within a principal professional learning community.

Portraits of Principals Self-portrait ‘mirror boxes’

The making of this **Self-box** will **create a visible graphic record of your perception of yourself as a leader** and will be used in your interviews to enrich the process of self-reflection (Frings Keyes, 1983; Leitch, 2008). As it is about a ‘process’ (identifying/**finding objects** that represent you as a leader) not a finished ‘product, it is not necessary to have artistic ability.

The box: it is a holder or **container** of objects (to enclose, retain, keep comprehend, embrace and embody), a protector and a preserver. Placing something in a box can not only signify the inherent value of that the object/s, but can actually imbue something mundane with newfound importance.



The box

Three-dimensional symbol of the public and private self:

The outside of the box (external-professional) represents the outward self (public or visible).



The inside of the box (internal-personal) represents a person's innermost self (private or unseen)



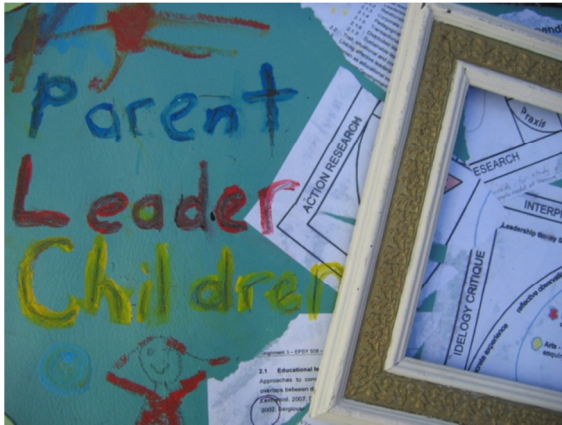
Leadership Reflection

Step 1 will be **explained and example shown** in the preliminary focus group and you will **complete the requirements prior to the 1st practical focus group workshop** (Step 2). Step 1 is discussed alongside **Appendix E** – journaling/scrap-booking guidelines because you **will design your ideas** for the self-box in the 1st journal/scrap-book **before making it**.

Step 1: **Design – Image making** – (preliminary focus group = 2 hours)

- **Choose** a box/container – 1 or many! (Boxes within boxes...layers to self). Large enough to contain your finished journals (see **Appendix E**).
- **Include** a mirror of some description.
- **Design** and plan: think, draw and write ideas, **in your 1st journal/scrap-book**.
- **Collect** images, objects, words, anything that represents your leadership style and experiences both public and private.
- **Decorate** box/s and place objects within.





Portraits of Principals

Self-portrait 'mirror boxes'

Upon completion of the self-box, Step 2 is the reflective stage of the art inquiry in which I will facilitate your **discussing your work with each other**. This stage represents a process of analysing what you have done (the 'mirror box' is a three-dimensional symbol or representation of **your** external-professional and internal-personal **self**).

Step 2: Frame - Reflection -
(1st practical focus group workshop = 2 hrs)

- **Analyse** your own self-portrait 'mirror boxes' **within your 2nd journal/scrap-book**. What is contained internally and exposed externally? What have you documented in terms of description and interpretation?
- **Discuss** with the group, examining and analysing each other's Self-boxes. What kinds of stories or metaphors emerge?





Step 3 explores your **reactions** to your self-box and also to the **process of making it and sharing your reflections** with the group. It may reveal the possibility that you undergo change in your perception of yourself as a leader and highlight any issues or questions pertaining to leadership styles and practices. Step 3 will be an **individual and collective process**.

Step 3: Critique – Reactions (2nd practical focus group workshop = 2 hrs)

- **Critique** your Self-box (individual process). Record your reactions to your self-portrait 'mirror boxes' (**using your 3rd journal/scrap-book**) and the stories and metaphors that have emerged. Include a reflection on the process of making the self-box. What emotions, perspectives, issues and questions of leadership styles and practices have you experienced?
- Gain **reactions** from the group (collective process). Share your individual critique process and personal revelations. From this process of critical reflection discuss within the group the potential for further inquiry and action.

Frings Keyes, M. (1983). *Inward journey: Art as therapy*. Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company.
 Leitch, R. (2008). Reinvigorating conceptions of teacher identity: Creating self-boxes as arts-based self-study. *Learning Landscapes*, 2(1), 145-162.

Appendix E – Journaling / scrap-booking guidelines Research Topic

Portraits of the leadership styles and practices of women secondary school principals reflected within a principal professional learning community.

These journals/scrap-books will literally become part of your Self-portrait ‘mirror box’. I will collect them in stages throughout the research study (four separate journals/scrap-books in total). They will then be placed within your ‘mirror boxes’.

- **1st journal/scrap-book** will be used to design and plan your self-portrait ‘mirror box’ **prior** to making and will be **handed in at the 1st practical focus group workshop**.
- **2nd journal/scrap-book** will be used (in the 1st practical focus group workshop) to analyse your self-portrait ‘mirror box’ and generally to record any reflections on leadership prior to **handing in at the 1st principal interview**.
- **3rd journal/scrap-book** will be used in the 2nd practical focus group workshop to critique your self-box and generally to record any reflections on leadership prior to **handing in at the 2nd principal interview**.
- **4th journal/scrap-book** is a personal and/or collective focus on leadership. Will be **handed in at the end of the research study** (date to be advised).

You may select the style, sizes and cover decorations of your journals to reflect your ‘self’ and your chosen box perimeters. Reflect in your journal/scrap-book after any leadership event, action, challenge or inspiration that you feel is worthy of mention (either in a private or professional context).

For example it could be:

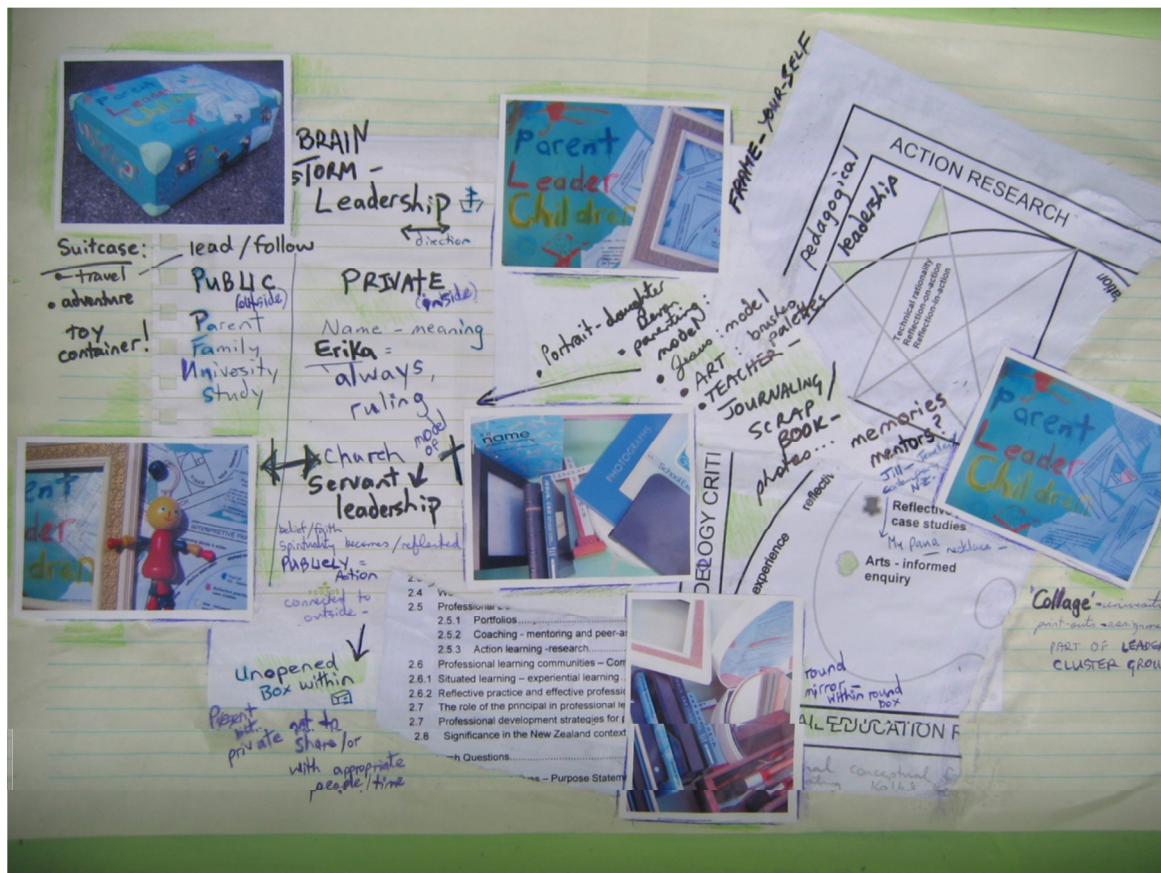
- after a reflective interview
- after a practical focus group workshop
- after a mentoring/partner conversation or visit
- after reading a piece of literature, seeing a movie/theatre or inspired conversation or talk
- on arrival at or leaving school

Talk/write about or capture your reflections in any visual form or mixed-media.

- What did you do?
- How did you feel?
- What did you decide?
- What or who influenced your decisions?

I recommend you **set aside a time each week or day** to 'journal/scrap-book'.

This is in effect a journal/scrap-book divided into 4 parts. Each one may literally be just one page. See the photo example below of my 1st journal brainstorm for the design:



Any information, written and visual materials or opinions you provide within these journals/scrap-books will be kept confidential. No other person besides my supervisor, Dr. Kabini Sanga, and I will see the data collected.

Upon completion of my thesis you may retain ownership of any journals/scrap-books and arts-based materials produced in the practical focus group workshops. Any data/images from your journal/scrap book included in this study will have any identifying material removed, and pseudonyms will be used for the participating school, principal and any other persons identified.

Appendix F – 1st principal interview Research Topic

Portraits of the leadership styles and practices of women secondary school principals reflected within a principal professional learning community.

The final design of these questions will be subject to outcome of 1st practical focus group workshop. **The Self-portrait ‘mirror box’ will be brought to each interview.**

1. How did you find the process of Step 1 – Designing and making the Self-portrait ‘mirror-boxes’?
2. What was the most interesting part of Step 2 – Frame-Reflection = analysing?
3. What was challenging in these processes?
4. Choose one of the objects from within your self-portrait ‘mirror box’ and explain its significance in regards to you as a leader. Is there a story, person event, feeling or question associated with this object? If so please comment on the value this object holds for you.
5. As a follow on from the specific experience/event, (mentioned in your pre-study questionnaire) that led you to becoming a principal. Please discuss a specific experience (past or present) that has influenced your understanding of leadership, leadership styles and practices? (Either in your personal and/or professional life)
6. Comment on any role models (past or present) that have influenced your understanding of leadership, leadership styles and practices. (Either in your personal and/or professional life)
7. In what ways have these role models influenced and shaped your thoughts and attitudes towards leadership?
8. Expanding on your pre-study questionnaire how would you describe your leadership philosophy and style?

9. Please give an example of your leadership practice that resulted in improvement or change within your school.
10. What learning communities have you established as a leader in your school and how effective have they been?
11. How would you describe a professional learning community (PLC)?
12. Have you been involved in any principal professional learning communities? If so please give details.
13. Is professional development important to you? If so why?
14. What professional development goals do you have?
15. What are you hoping to achieve by participating in this research study?

Appendix G – 2nd principal interview

Research Topic

Portraits of the leadership styles and practices of women secondary school principals reflected within a principal professional learning community.

Life Experiences

1. When doing Step 3 – Critique-reactions = personal revelations of your Self-portrait ‘mirror-box’ did anything surprise you, that you hadn’t anticipated emerging? (For example: an emotion, perspective, issue or question related to who you are as a leader or your leadership styles/practice).
2. Having reflected upon who you are as a leader (how your life histories/experiences have shaped your understanding of leadership styles), what impact might this have upon your practice in the future?

Comment further on this question from the 2nd practical focus group workshop.

Professional leadership development

3. What have been some of the benefits of working within a principal professional learning community through these practical focus group workshops?

4. What have been some of the challenges of working within a principal professional learning community through these practical focus group workshops?

5. *'Every person who carries a difficult or sensitive role needs a confidant or coach...this should be someone who is completely uninvolved in the [institution (school)]...the one who occupies [a leadership position] must be the first to become a learner...evolve the strategy for giving new leadership out of one's own experience through interaction with a coach'*

~ **Robert Greenleaf** in *The Power of Servant Leadership* (1998, p. 189).

Comment on this in regards to whether you have had the support of a coach/confidant – either in the past and/or currently.

6. How common is it within the New Zealand educational context for leaders to use coaches/confidants? And are they easy to find?

7. How receptive is New Zealand leadership society to the use of coaches/confidants?

Leadership styles and effective practice

8. Comment on two reflections you have had within your journals/scrap-books that have been particularly memorable.

1.

2.

9. Please comment on the value and use of the journal/scrap-books. What have been some of the benefits and challenges of using this process to reflect on leadership?

Benefits:

Challenges:

10. Has your perspective of yourself as a leader changed?

Since participating in this research study have there been any changes to how you perceive your leadership philosophy and style? If so what are they?

11.

Activity 1 –
Know Your Self

**What words would
you use to describe
your own leadership
style?**



Activity 2 –
Frame Your Self

Choose a frame

Consider one word

Compose Your Self



12. Please reflect on this prior to our last workshop and bring with you:

Discuss the extent to which the features expressed in these quotes might help or enrich your school if taken to heart and action.

'Leaders we admire do not place themselves at the centre; they place others there. They do not seek the attention of people; they give it to others. They do not focus on satisfying their own aims and desires; they look for ways to respond to the needs and interests of their constituents. They are not self-centred; they concentrate on the constituent. . . Leaders serve a purpose and the people who have made it possible for them to lead In serving a purpose, leaders strengthen credibility by demonstrating that they are not in it for themselves; instead, they have the interests of the institution, department, or team and its constituents at heart. Being a servant may not be what many leaders had in mind when they choose to take responsibility for the vision and direction of their organization or team, but serving others is the most glorious and rewarding of all leadership tasks.'

~ **James Kouzes and Barry Posner** in *Credibility: How Leaders Gain and Lose It, Why People Demand It*.

'No leader can possibly have all the answers ...The actual solutions about how best to meet the challenges of the moment have to be made by the people closest to the action. . . .The leader has to find the way to empower those frontline people, to challenge them, to provide them with the resources they need, and then to hold them accountable. As they struggle with . . . this challenge, the leader becomes their coach, teacher, and facilitator. Change how you define leadership, and you change how you run a company.'

~ **Steve Miller**, Group Managing Director, Royal Dutch/Shell.

Appendix H – 2nd practical focus group workshop – question Research Topic

Portraits of the leadership styles and practices of women secondary school principals reflected within a principal professional learning community.

The Mirror

SELF-IMAGE

(CHANGE/TRANSFORMATION

Reflection-on-action

Reflection-in-action

**When we look into a mirror, the many things we see that need
change motivate us into action!**

We fix our hair, put on make-up, change our clothes and do whatever's necessary until the image in the mirror is transformed.

Three important aspects that ***contribute to our change:***

1. **Look intently** – means we look with purpose
2. **Remain** – means we continue to look with persistence as one look will not bring about transformation
3. **Act** – means we do not just talk or think, but we must also act on what we have seen

We can change distorted images by simply looking into an ***accurate mirror*** that reflects our true image.

What is an *accurate mirror* for reflective practice?

Appendix I – 2nd practical focus group workshop – *D.R.A.W.*

Research Topic

Portraits of the leadership styles and practices of women secondary school principals reflected within a principal professional learning community.

D.R.A.W.

Daily Reflective Analysis Workout

Your 3rd journal/scrap-book will be used in the 2nd practical focus group workshop to critique your Self-box and **generally to record any reflections on leadership** prior to handing in at the 2nd principal interview.

Daily reflection is like daily exercise, it keeps the reflective muscles fit. The routine and discipline of daily reflection done with persistence will develop a true picture or image of who we are as leaders and how this impacts upon our practice.

The focus of your 3rd journal/scrap-book is to **D.R.A.W. – Daily reflect**

Look for those **daily** situations, **ordinary** (but may become extra-ordinary) experiences, events, encounters and opportunities to develop your leadership understanding. **As outlined in Appendix E** – journaling / scrap-booking guidelines.

Reflection-on-action:

Descriptive – **Analysing one's performance** in the professional role (individually).

Dialogic – hearing one's own voice and **exploring alternative ways to solve problems** (individually or with another).

Critical – **thinking about the effects upon others of one's actions**, taking account of social, political and cultural forces/context (can be shared).

Reflection-in-action:

Contextualization of *multiple viewpoints* – **Dealing with on-the-spot professional problems** (thinking can be recalled and then shared with others later).

Appendix J – Letter to principals – expression of interest Research Topic

Portraits of the leadership styles and practices of women secondary school principals reflected within a principal professional learning community.

Address:

Date:

Dear

My name is Erika Snedden and I am currently studying towards a Master of Education degree at the Victoria University of Wellington, with a focus on the leadership of women secondary school principals. From 1994 until 2004 I taught secondary school Art and Art History in South Auckland, London and as H.O.D. Art and Art History at Queen Margaret's Wellington, prior to starting a family.

This letter is an invitation to you and a group of three other secondary school principals to participate in establishing a collaborative partnership of women secondary school principals (a principal professional learning community - PPLC) who are interested in exploring their personal theories about leadership, styles and practices. The outcomes of this research study will form the basis of my Masters thesis.

Expression of interest

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and the attached information sheets and to consider this proposal. Should you decide to participate in this study, I believe it will be of great personal and professional benefit to you while the outcomes experienced will also be of value to your wider school community.

I will phone you within the week to discuss any questions you may have. If you would like me to consider your possible involvement in this study please contact me at sneddeerik@myvuw.ac.nz. by.....2011 to express your interest. Principals

selected to participate in this study will be sent a letter of acceptance and consent form outlining the research ethics and guidelines.

If you have any queries, or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me by email at sneddeerik@myvuw.ac.nz, or my research supervisor Dr. Kabini Sanga, at Te Kura Māori, Faculty of Education, Victoria University of Wellington, PO Box 17 310, Karori, Wellington. Phone: 04 463 6894, Kabini.sanga@vuw.ac.nz .

Yours sincerely

Erika Snedden
B.F.A.. Dip Tchg.

Appendix K – Information for principals Research Topic

Portraits of the leadership styles and practices of women secondary school principals reflected within a principal professional learning community.

Background context:

This study will be led by one primary question:

- ***How do the life stories/experiences of women secondary school principals impact upon their leadership style, effective practice and leadership development?***

The aim of this study is to determine in what ways the life stories and experiences (both personal and professional) of women secondary school principals have impacted them as leaders. This study has the potential to contribute to a greater insight into the role and practice of women principals.

This is germane for New Zealand education as recent Ministry of Education documents highlight the challenge to provide professional learning opportunities for principals (Ministry of Education, 2008, 2009; Robinson, 2007(April), 2007, 2008; Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007). There is a current initiative to support and strengthen school leadership through the *Professional Leadership Strategy* (Ministry of Education, 2008, 2009).

Research suggests that effective professional development for principals must not only acknowledge the reality and context of their daily practice but assist and challenge them to be critically reflective through on-going mentoring and professional partnerships. Turning reflection into action has its inherent challenges. Therefore the assistance of others is needed to bring principals to critical reflection.

A multiple-case studies approach has been chosen as the most appropriate for this study, to provide a depth of information about principals' different learning contexts, their individual backgrounds, practices, beliefs and their particular hopes and goals for themselves and their schools.

Your participation in this 3-4 month study would require the following commitments: (Approx **11 hours** in total – **5 hours** of your own time)

1. Completion of a pre post study principal questionnaire (**1hr** of your own time).
2. Participation in a preliminary focus group (approx 1hr).
3. Participation in two practical focus group workshops (approx 1 1/2 hrs each) using visual arts-based methodologies to create 'principal portraits' (see Appendix D attached) (approx **2hrs** of your own time).
4. Completing four reflective journals/scrap-books. There will be guidelines and assistance for this (see Appendix E attached) (approx **2hrs** of your own time).
5. Two audio-taped individual semi-structured principal interviews (approx 1 hr each)

Role of the researcher

My role will be chiefly to encourage reflection from a variety of perspectives. I will facilitate and record process; guide, question and provide constructive feedback and provide you with the support and resources you may need as you and the principal professional learning community investigate the potential for further inquiry and action.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your informed consent will be obtained prior to the commencement of the research. Should you feel the need to withdraw from the study, you may do so without question at any time before the final analysis of data. In the event of this all data provided before your withdrawal will be returned to you.

The time and venue for all interviews, meetings and practical focus group workshops will be negotiated with you to minimise any disruption and/ or conflict with other professional obligations.

Ethical approval and confidentiality

The Victoria University of Wellington requires ethical approval to be obtained for all research projects through the Human Ethics Committee and this has been sought and obtained prior to the commencement of the study.

Any information, written and visual materials or opinions you provide will be kept confidential. The identities of the schools and the participants will be protected. Any identifying material will be removed and pseudonyms will be used for the participating school and principals in this study (principals to nominate their own pseudonyms).

Participating principals will be given the opportunity to read and comment on their interview and focus group transcripts and the inclusion of any data/images from their journal/scrap book and arts-based work case studies.

All research data in the form of notes, audiotapes, practical art-based materials and any video-tapes will be stored securely throughout the study at the researcher's home. Electronic information on computer will be by password access only. Videotapes will only be viewed by the researcher and participants with their consent.

All material collected will be kept confidential. No other person besides my supervisor, Dr. Kabini Sanga, and I will see the data collected. Data will be retained for two years after the research. All written and visual material will be kept in a locked file and all electronic information will be kept in a password protected file with access restricted to myself.

All data will be destroyed two years after the end of the project. Principals may retain ownership of any audiotapes/video recordings, journals/scrap-books and arts-based materials produced in the practical focus-group workshops.

The thesis will be submitted for marking to the School of Education and deposited in the University Library. Post-thesis if the research results are to be used for purposes outside of this study, for instance, as part of a professional development presentation or for articles to be submitted for publication in scholarly journals, I will seek further ethical consent.

Appendix L – Principal invitation to participate in research study Research Topic

Portraits of the leadership styles and practices of women secondary school principals reflected within a principal professional learning community.

Address:

Date:

Dear

Thank you for your expression of interest in participating in my Masters research study on the leadership styles and practices of women secondary school principals.

This letter is to formally offer you the opportunity to participate in this study.

I am excited about the prospect of undertaking this research study with you.

Enclosed are two 'Principal consent to participation in research' forms, indicating your understanding of the research ethics and guidelines for this research study. Please detach, sign and return the consent form in the envelope provided by.....2011. You may retain the other copy for your own reference.

I am prepared to provide further documentation for the Board of Trustees should it be required.

If you have any queries, or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me by email sneddeerik@myvuw.ac.nz, or my research supervisor Dr. Kabini Sanga, at Te Kura Māori, Faculty of Education, Victoria University of Wellington, PO Box 17 310, Karori, Wellington. Phone: 04 463 6894, Kabini.sanga@vuw.ac.nz.

I will phone you within the week to discuss any questions you may have and to arrange the date for the preliminary focus group meeting. This meeting will include all participating principals and outline the details of the study.

Looking forward to speaking and meeting with you and the rest of the principal professional learning community (PPLC).

Yours sincerely

Erika Snedden
B.F.A. Dip Tchg.

Appendix M – Principal consent to participation in research Research Topic

Portraits of the leadership styles and practices of women secondary school principals reflected within a principal professional learning community.

Your participation in this 3-4 month study would require the following commitments: (Approx **11 hours** in total – **5 hours** of your own time)

6. Completion of a pre study principal questionnaire (**1hr** of your own time).
 7. Participation in a preliminary focus group (approx 1hr).
 8. Participation in two practical focus group workshops (approx 1 1/2 hrs each) using visual arts-based methodologies to create 'principal portraits' (see Appendix D attached) (approx **2hrs** of your own time).
 9. Completing four reflective journals/scrap-books. There will be guidelines and assistance for this (see Appendix E attached) (approx **2hrs** of your own time)
 10. Two audio-tape individual semi-structured principal interviews (approx 1 hr each).
- ☐ I have been provided with adequate information relating to the nature and purpose of this research study. I understand the nature of the activities I will participate in, and the approximate time commitment that this project will require of me. I have also been given the opportunity to seek further clarification or explanations.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw from this study at any time before the final analysis of data without providing reasons and that if I withdraw from the project, any data I have provided will be returned to me.
- ☐ I understand that any information, written and visual materials or opinions I provide will be kept confidential, any identifying material will be removed and pseudonyms will be used for the participating school and principals in this study (principals to nominate their own pseudonyms).

- ☐ I understand that I will be given the opportunity to read and comment on my interview and focus group transcripts and the inclusion of any data/images from my journal/scrap book and arts-based work case studies.
- ☐ I understand that any information, written or visual materials that I have provided will be used only for this research study and that any further use will require my written consent.
- ☐ I understand that when this research is completed the information obtained will be destroyed two years after the end of the project. Principals may retain ownership of any audiotapes/video recordings, journals/scrap-books and arts-based materials produced in the practical focus-group workshops.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research study.
- ☐ I would like to receive a summary of the outcomes of this study when it is completed.

Signed:.....Date:.....

Name of principal: (please print).....

School: (please print).....

Appendix N – Focus group confidentiality agreement Research Topic

Portraits of the leadership styles and practices of women secondary school principals reflected within a principal professional learning community.

- ☐ I agree that any information, written or visual materials that the participants in the focus groups share will remain confidential and not be disclosed to anyone outside of this principal professional learning community.

Name of researcher: Erika Snedden.....

Signed:.....Date:.....

Name of principal: (please print).....

School: (please print).....

Signed:.....Date:.....

Name of principal: (please print).....

School: (please print).....

Signed:.....Date:.....

Name of principal: (please print).....

School: (please print).....

Signed:.....Date:.....

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