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# Chapter One – Introduction

## Rationale and background for the study

This is a research study that looks at teachers' understandings around the concepts of teacher professionalism and teacher leadership in the context of New Zealand primary schools today. It is recognized internationally that the expectation and requirements of teachers has changed markedly over the past decades (Fullan, 2001). The development of the knowledge society throughout the western world, and the impact this has had on schools and schooling has required a rethink of the strategies that had worked during earlier times (Hargreaves, 2003). The reforms in education in New Zealand that began in 1989 and continued through the nineties has put the professionalism of teachers under attack (Codd, 1998). Sullivan (1999) wrote of the need for teachers in New Zealand to claim back their status as professionals. The changes in education through the reforms has been embraced by parents in New Zealand as they seek to have a better education system for their children, and was identified by Ramsay (1993, p.262) when he stated: "it is indisputable though, that the period post-reform has created more interest amongst parents in the education of their children than probably at anytime of our earlier history." The development of New Zealand as a more multi-cultural society has been accelerated in recent years and as a result school communities in New Zealand have become much more diverse. The inclusion of all and the resulting call for a democratic type of schooling as been the drive for this era in schools (Whyte, 2001). Schools are not seen any longer as the main knowledge providers and due to the pace of change we cannot know what knowledge will be needed in the future (Gilbert, 2003). Children today will have a much wider choice of job selection when they leave school, and will have the opportunity to work in fields that have not even been invented yet, so it has become necessary to develop students' ability on how to learn (Gilbert, 2003). As communities have tried to grapple with the situation, schools have also had to come to terms with further reforms imposed upon them by the governments of the day and there has been an emphasis on teachers upskilling their professional knowledge, and maintaining the habit of life-long learning, as is outlined by Codd (1998, p.127), when he referred to the "professional contextualist concept of teaching." This demand for new types of knowledge for teachers

and new ways of working in schools in order to sustain the professional development, required for teachers to fulfill their role, has also been identified in North America (Fullan, 2001; Hargreaves, 2003). Hargreaves (2003) believes this is a crisis schools and teaching are facing. He stated that it is paradoxical that teachers are required to be “catalysts for a new professionalism” (p.10), “counterpoints” (p.59) for social justice and democratic education, while at the same time, being “casualties of the reforms introduced by successive governments” (p.73). While Hargreaves (2003) work is on the effects of changes impacting on schools in North America it is also applicable in the New Zealand context as outlined by Fiske and Ladd (2000) and the lesson they give us of their research is a negative one where they identify “governance and management changes alone are not going to solve overburdened schools” (p.4).

I have had the privilege of working in many different areas of the primary school system in New Zealand and have experienced the effects of changes on school leadership and professionalism throughout the years. I was a senior teacher in four different schools and part of the senior management team in those schools, before I became principal of Melville Primary School in Hamilton. As a principal, throughout the nineties, I trialled different leadership systems within our school and saw the benefits of including all staff in the decision-making process, and distributing responsibility to staff. After nine years as principal I moved to Hong Kong for two and a half years where I worked in two large local primary schools. My work there involved working directly with the teachers to bring about change which required a focus on their professional and leadership capabilities. Following my return to New Zealand, I have been working for one year as a leadership and management facilitator with Team Solutions, University of Auckland. In this role, I see daily the work of teachers and principals in schools in New Zealand, as they grapple with the complexities of the educational system. The complexities that schools face has seen a changing focus in the work of the teacher. Teacher leadership has been recognised as being a responsibility of the professional role of the teacher (Robertson and Strachan, 2001). Teacher leadership is also an important concept if teachers are able to work with students for the type of learning they want (Gunter, 2005). Daignan (2004a) discusses the need for capable leaders in today’s schools who are able to focus on the future and find new ideas and new ways to complement or assist the work they are doing. These capabilities require leaders to be critically reflective and to be focused on their own learning to improve the learning of others, and therefore the

development of professional and leadership skills are the focus of teacher development (Gunter, 2001; Lambert, 1998).

The reconceptualisation of educational leadership, and the understandings of a capable leader, the development of learning communities which includes the distributing or sharing leadership with teachers in the school environment requires teacher leaders to be aware of, and understand further, the impacts on their professionalism (Murphy, 2005). Much research has been directed towards school improvement and the actions that schools must take to move forward in such challenging times (Fullan, 2003; Gronn, 2003; Hartle & Hobby, 2003; Lingard, Hayes, Mills & Christie, 2003; Murphy, 2005). As a result, school leadership and student achievement are more closely linked and are the main focus for school improvement (Street & Temperley, 2005). But how can we ensure that the improvement is sustainable (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006)? Fullan (2001, p.54) believes that sustainability of school improvement “will depend on the school’s internal capacity to maintain and support the developmental work happening, and therefore many people need to be involved.” Sustaining improvement requires the development of the leadership capability of everyone, and improvements in learning are more likely to be achieved when leadership is focused on the learning of the students and on the classroom. Therefore those within it have a major role to play (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Harris & Muijs, 2003). As a result, it is desirable to have many leaders within the school and at all levels of the school. Consequently, leadership action must be nurtured within schools, so it can be embedded in the day to day work (Fullan, 2001, 2003; Lambert, 1998).

Reading research on school improvement raised many questions for me and led me to my research question: “How do teachers view the concepts of teacher professionalism and teacher leadership in relation to their work in schools?” My interest is in understanding if teachers recognize that the development of their professional role has an effect in developing their leadership capabilities and, if they recognise that their developing leadership skills improve their professional role. If teacher leadership is mediated through heightened professionalism, and there is a sense that teacher leadership promotes and can dramatically reshape the status of the teaching profession through improved outcomes for students (Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson and Hann, 2002), then teaching and learning will take on a new impetus as it continues to improve and educational outcomes for all will be greatly increased.

Using qualitative methodology, I have chosen to investigate this question in two schools. I interviewed teachers so they were able to tell their stories about these concepts.

## Organisation of the Research Report

This report begins with an outline of the purpose and context of the research study, the research question and the report organization.

Chapter Two is a review of the literature around the themes of teacher leadership and teacher professionalism. An argument is built for the need for a new direction in schools in support of these two concepts, and facets of the school culture that assist in the development of these concepts are reviewed.

Chapter Three outlines the research methodology, the methods of data collection and analysis, the research process and details of how the research study was carried out.

Chapter Four outlines the main findings of the research that emerged from the analysis of the collected data.

Chapter Five discusses these findings and considers the implication of them in the context of the literature review outlined in Chapter Two.

## Chapter Two – Literature Review

The main themes of the literature review are those which will inform my study about teacher professionalism and teacher leadership. I have grouped the information gathered through reading of the literature under the following headings:

- Teacher professionalism;
- Teacher leadership;
- School leadership and culture; and
- Distributed leadership and professional learning communities.

### Teacher professionalism

The professionalism of teachers has been under attack. As difficulties within schools surfaced deprofessionalisation has been a reality during recent decades (Hargreaves, 2003; Ozga, 1995). There has been an eroding away of teachers' professionalism in terms of what it means to be a teaching professional (Hargreaves, 2003; Sullivan, 1999). There is a concern with the capacity of the teaching profession to provide the required school revitalization that is needed, and as a result, teachers' ability to provide new forms of leadership in schools and communities (Coles & Southworth, 2005). Many researchers argue that if teaching is to be recognized as a profession and those working within it as professionals, then a new professionalism needs to be defined and strategies developed so teachers themselves can meet the expectations (Bowman, 2003; Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson & Hann, 2002; Hodgkinson, 1995; Robinson, 2004; Storey & Hutchinson, 2001). Hoyle (1995) tells us that teaching as a profession has changed from knowledge to skill and that now it is about being able to put into practice the knowledge and gaining credibility through this. The attributes that have constituted a profession have been the knowledge and skill of the particular profession, authority to make and deal with decisions, a regulation of the profession's own body and a set of professional norms based on a code of ethics (Story & Hutchinson, 2001). Morley (1999) stated that while in the past professionalism referred to a critical understanding of the issues of the profession, it has now shifted from understanding to performance, and therefore teachers will be seen as professionals through their actions. Robinson (2003) also stated that it is effective practice that makes a difference in school improvement, and therefore the new professionalism of teachers must centre on their practice.

I was interested to see if the teachers in this study recognize the role of their classroom or school practice as an indicator of their own professionalism and whether this permeated through a school where there is a strength in this belief.

First, it is important to understand the word professional. Gunter (2001, p.146) outlined the understandings surrounding the derivatives of the word professional and stated that professionalism is the “ideology of the service and specialist expertise.” Do teachers believe there has been a change in this ideology, and as such do teachers recognize there has been a shift in professionalisation which Gunter (2001, p.146) referred to as the “status of the occupation at stake”? Hargreaves (2003, p.2) suggested that the forces of deprofessionalising teaching have been at work and teachers need to reprofessionalise in order to gain back “their place again among society’s most respected intellectuals”, in order to prepare today’s students for tomorrow’s society. The development of professionalism is seen as a way to do this, as professionalism focuses on the “quality of practice in contexts” (Gunter, 2001, p.146). Hoyle (1995, p.60) commented that teachers develop their professionalism and become extended professionals when they have an increased focus towards their students through involving the them in decision-making processes and sharing of the direction of the learning with the students, colleagues and parents. Professionalism therefore refers to the knowledge, skills and procedures teachers use in their work and is different from professionalism, which is more about the status elements of teaching (Gunter, 2001). Today’s reprofessionalised teachers work in a team and have a whole school focus as they are involved in the planning and direction of the school (Busher & Saran, 1995) and their professionalism is questioned in terms of the quality of their practice (Gunter, 2001; Morley, 1999; Robinson, 2003).

How do teachers develop professionalism and what role do schools have to play in this? This study explores this question. Morley (1999) argued that teacher professional performance is now a responsibility of the organization and as a result teachers are more involved in collegial activities and sharing ideas. Collegiality must go further than just working and sharing together and the focus must be on the core business of improving student learning, therefore Caldwell (2002, p.843) said the new approach must challenge the levels of knowledge and skill and provide for a vision driven profession that is “values-centered, outcomes oriented, data- driven and team focused.” The new professionalism, with quality of practice in mind, must provide for extending teachers to focus on student achievement and how to affect improvement (Hargreaves, 2003). Hall (2001, p.6)

commented that extended professionals are those where “the practice is distinguished by a high level of professional collaboration and collegiality.” Therefore, through working in groups, sharing practice, collaborating with parents, and being involved in whole-school development planning, new skills are developed and teachers become reprofessionalised as their levels of professionalism become extended (Hall, 2001). When professionalism is fostered through working in groups, a community of learners develops with many shared meanings (Barth, 2001). The New Zealand Ministry of Education (MOE, 2003) suggested:

A professional learning community is one in which teachers update their professional knowledge and skills within the context of an organised school-wide system for improving teaching practices. In addition, teachers’ efforts, individually and collectively are focused on the goal of improving student learning and achievement and making the school as a whole become a high performing organization. (p. 3)

So, according to the MOE (2003), when the achievement results of students become the focus and thrust of the group, the day-to-day work of teachers is changed and the teachers’ professionalisation is affected positively (Harris & Muijs, 2005). The focus on student achievement is seen by many as the main measure of the effectiveness of professional development (Busher & Saran, 1995; Harris & Muijs, 2005). This development should relate to the work teachers do in the day to day life of the school and is integrated into teachers’ professional practice. Professional development that improves student learning would therefore take place within a strong group of professionals (Timperley & Parr, 2004). When the school is organized into such a group, or groups, with the focus on student achievement the professionalism becomes a focus for all that happens within that group (Harris & Muijs, 2005). In an organization where teachers are sharing and collaborating about the many complex issues they face daily, and where children are at the centre, the professional teacher must ensure that ethical behaviour is uppermost in all they do (Hall, 2001). Hall (2001) discusses the need for professional virtues to be exhibited by the professional teacher. He stated that “integrity, veracity, fidelity, public-spiritedness, humility and honour” (p.8) need to be in place and that the “professional teacher is ethically obliged to practice them towards all their students and their families.” (p.8). The role of ethics reflects the complexity of professionalism. Gunter (2001) terms this radical professionalism and it has ethics as a central theme. J. Robertson (personal communication April, 4, 2004) also stated teachers must be able to connect their practice to the wider picture of social and political issues. Gunter (2001) stated that:

Radical professionalism assumes teachers are critical intellectuals and that they work with learners towards agreed social learning objectives so the integrity, freedom and potentiality of the individual learner can be protected, sustained and realized. (p. 146)

This implies that a teacher's job involves protecting and promoting social justice and democratic freedom. If working for social justice and democratic freedom are part of the teachers' toolkit for the development of their professionalism today (Gunter, 2001; Hargreaves, 2003), what role does a teacher's own values and beliefs play in this? Research by Chincotta (1992) in discussing Burbles and Densmores (1991) view of professionalism as an ideology, suggested that the idea of a profession affects how individuals see themselves and this fact determines their attitudes to the work they do. The idea of a professional attitude or inner drive that affects the actions of the individual is an area that also connects closely to one's values and beliefs. The suggestion of an internal commitment to the work one does, is also discussed in the work of Argyris (1976) when he suggested humans become motivated because the job is intrinsically rewarding. These internal energies need to be activated and in Fullan's words "the job of teaching needs to be intrinsically rewarding so teachers again become passionate for the job and the flow of teachers leaving the profession needs to be stemmed" (2003a, p.23). So it appears that while some organizational issues impact upon one's professionalism, so too do the values and beliefs one holds.

Encouraging and nurturing extended professionalism in order to reprofessionalise teaching requires teachers to take an active part (Busher and Saran,1995). Hargreaves (2003, p.23) believed that as teachers are the "catalysts" for the development of a "new professionalism" that is demanded by the knowledge society, they have an important and identifiable role in their own development. Hargreaves (2003) believes that all teachers must work at the following factors to influence the reprofessionalisation of teaching. He argued that teachers must build a new professionalism where they:

- Promote deep cognitive learning;
- Learn to teach in new ways;
- Commit to continuous professional learning;
- Work and learn in collegial teams;
- Treat parents as partners in learning;
- Develop a collective intelligence and refer to it;
- Build a capacity for change and risk; and
- Foster trust in processes. (Hargreaves, 2003, p. 24)

However, there are some tensions surrounding the development of a new professionalism for teachers as the forces of deprofessionalising and reprofessionalising are powerful and are working alongside each other (Hargreaves, 2003). Teachers have been encouraged to take on the new responsibilities as a means of enhancing their professionalism, but they are at the same time, losing the capacity to exercise professional judgment (Gunter, 2001; Hargreaves, 2003; Murphy, 2005). The claims made that reprofessionalisation is happening because of the new work of the school leaders (those in formal positions of management and leadership), and the whole-school involvement in policy making, is not taking the issue of the new paradigm of teacher professionalism far enough (Smylie, Conley & Marks, 2002). Gunter (2001, p.139) stated that the real work of those involved in the school is one of “negotiation, conflict and compromise, that is ultimately about power and their place within it.” While the focus on the new professionalism is about empowerment, participation and collegiality in order to effect school improvement, Gunter (2001, p.144) believed that in reality teachers have had to continue to do what they have always done, “to be empowered to do what they have been told to do.” Therefore, democratic ways of working need to be developed for teachers to be empowered (J. Robertson, personal communication, April 4, 2004 ). Furman and Starratt (2002) add that it would be virtually impossible for schools to promote democratic ideologies if they were not democratic communities themselves.

According to Gunter (2001), some of the issues faced are due to the role parents play in schools today that are in some instances hindering the reprofessionalising of teaching as teachers are unsure of the expectations of the parent community. However, involving parents more in the education of their children and sharing in the work of schools is allowing the profession an increased orientation towards their students (Hall, 2001). While most teachers would understand the benefits of working in partnership with the parents there is a tension attached to this that is interpreted by some to be a measuring and standards based system, as parents compare between schools, between classes and between students (Gunter, 2001; Hargreaves, 2003). Gunter (2001, p.140) stated that “We need to exercise professional courage to tell parents and community what we do, how we do it and why we do it well, otherwise education will be muted into a transmission and measuring process.” Gunter (2001) suggested the impact of parents as partners in the learning is felt by teachers as both positive and negative forces as they strive to revitalize and reprofessionalise teaching.

This in turn affects the development of a new professionalism that Hargreaves, (2003, p. 10) discussed in his work.

Hoyle (1995) discussed further gains and losses in the process of establishing a new professionalism centred on the issues of competency and standards, in terms of addressing incompetence. Competency as a teaching professional in New Zealand is partially addressed through the “Interim Professional Performance Standards” as set down by the New Zealand Ministry of Education, (MOE, 1998) and schools in New Zealand are expected to measure teachers professionally against these. Goldring & Greenfield (2002) found in their research in the USA that this causes tensions regarding teachers’ professionalism as it is seen as a standardization that works as a deprofessionalising force. There has been a change in focus recently in the use of the “Interim Professional Performance Standards” to enhance teacher development. Instead of just as a measure of performance schools are now encouraged to use them to enhance the professional development of teachers, as professional development and effective appraisal become linked (Piggot- Irvine, 2003). The aim of this is to lift the professional status of teachers. However, the “Interim Professional Performance Standards” alone do not encourage extending professionalism, but rather as Hargreaves (2003, p. 207) suggested “We will need to revive and reinvent teaching as a passionate social mission that is about creating an inclusive, ingenious and cosmopolitan knowledge society, and that is about changing teachers’ world as much as their work.” Hargreaves (2003) believed that in making changes teachers will need to see the big picture of their work and this will therefore have a bearing on changing teachers’ perceptions about their role in the lives of so many and have an effect on the work they do, and move away from “soulless standardization” (Harris & Muijs, 2005, p.ix). The growth of networking and partnerships in schooling means there is a shift underway already where leadership is being taken from the formal leaders of the school to the recognition that teacher leadership is a viable and important focus for the future (Harris & Muijs, 2005). Therefore, I looked at the literature surrounding teacher leadership next.

## Teacher Leadership

A study of the literature on teacher leadership identified the following three themes:

- Leadership;
- Educational leadership; and
- Teacher leadership.

I have included the first two themes as these relate to teacher leadership as they are encompassed within it.

### *Leadership*

The development of leadership responsibility being shared with all in the school helps to bring about a new professionalism and develop extended professionalism (Fullan, 2001; Harris & Muijs, 2005; Hargreaves, 2003). Leadership concerns the exercise of influence, and it involves the key ideas of pursuing a vision, establishing an appropriate culture in support of the task and ensuring that action takes the group towards that pursuit (Davies, 2005). Goldberg (2001, p.757) writing in the corporate arena found five commonalities that effective and successful leaders require:

- A bedrock belief in the potency and usefulness of one's work;
- Courage to swim upstream, no matter how long it takes;
- A social conscience and being determined to exercise one's social conscience;
- Seriousness of purpose which includes perseverance; and
- Situational mastery.

Goldberg (2001) argued that these five commonalities connect to the values and beliefs a person holds. As part of one's values and beliefs system they would impact on one's professionalism (Begley, 1999). One's values and beliefs surrounding the leadership action and the level of professionalism exhibited would be intertwined (Henderson & Thompson (2003). Leaders who hold strong values and belief systems live out their beliefs through the daily actions of what they do (Henderson & Thompson, 2003). Waters, Marzano and McNulty (2004) believe that effective leadership is about not only knowing what to do, but when, how and why to do it as well. Effective leaders are able to understand and carry out the balancing of pushing for change while protecting the positive aspects of culture, values and norms. They also understand and value people in the organization (Gronn, 2003). The values and beliefs in leadership capability link closely with educational leadership and teacher leadership. I explored them further in specific terms under each of those headings.

### *Educational Leadership*

The development of leadership in schools today requires a new focus (Fullan, 2003). With the change to self-managing schools in New Zealand it is evident that a new type of educational leader is required, with the ability to develop skills needed to take the school forward (Robertson, 2005). Gunter (2005) stated:

Educational leadership is a social practice and is less about the ‘must’ of being a leader and more about the meaning and activity of doing leading and experiencing leadership. It is integral to learning processes and outcomes and it is educative. (p. 6)

Many scholars in the field believe that educational leadership is about leading learning (Crowther et al, 2002; Fullan, 2002, 2003; Gunter, 2005; Hargreaves, 2003; Hord, 1997; Murphy, 2005; Robertson, 2005). Educational leadership is very much concerned with relationships and how the learner, be it teacher or student, is connected with others in their own learning and the learning of others (Robertson, 2005). This is what teacher leaders do. The current context of educational leadership demands that people build strong relationships and partnerships in order to support and assist the learning, and that the focus must be on learning (Gunter, 2001; Robertson, 2005). Educational leadership should be inclusive of all. According to Fullan (2003), the main drive of educational leaders today, is to be able to build capacity within the school in order to sustain the direction, and to build commitment to the mission and vision of the school. Also, as the concern for democratic education for social justice is a major part of recent schooling initiatives and catering for diversity has become a priority in education (Murphy, 2002), the role of a teacher’s values and beliefs must be critical in encouraging the new thrusts of inclusiveness, collegiality and working collaboratively that are so important in education today, and therefore there is a link here to professionalism. Educational leadership is therefore also about challenging power structures and cultures that may act as a barrier to democratic development, it should be inclusive of all and therefore it should be integrated into teaching and learning (Gunter, 2001; Murphy, 2002). Educational leadership is also critical and requires that school leaders understand the change process and that they see it as important to find new ways of “doing” and “being” (Robertson, 2005, p.25). While educational leadership has been seen as something connected to those in the role of formal leadership positions in schools these attributes are also part of a teacher’s role and so teacher leadership as an ideology is something that is developing in schools in New Zealand today.

### *Teacher Leadership*

Educational leadership has always been part of being a teacher and professional teachers’ function as leaders (Gunter, 2005; Robertson & Strachan, 2001). The very nature of teaching requires effective teachers to make responsible decisions and demonstrate leadership in the day to

day work they do (Gunter, 2005). However, Robertson and Strachan (2001) stated that teachers very often do not recognize their part in leadership or their role as a leader. They found that teachers often refer to leadership as a role that principals and senior managers carry out, rather than seeing leadership as an action all are involved in (Robertson & Strachan, 2001). Gunter (2005) says:

It (teacher leadership) may not always have been done well or in the interests of those we are meant to serve, but it is central to how we might begin to engage in dialogue that will enable teachers and teaching to recapture vitality and validity. (p. 7)

Therefore, I was interested to talk with teachers about their role as a leader and the leadership activities they are involved in. Murphy (2005) stated that the development of teacher leadership has an effect both on individual educators and teaching as an occupation, by the way it works to strengthen the professional nature of teaching. The responsibility of leadership is at the heart of teaching (Gardner, 1990; Robertson and Strachan, 2001). Great leaders are responsible for what they do (Gardner, 1990). Effective teachers, like great leaders, are willing to accept responsibility for their students because they believe that they can affect student learning (Gardner, 1990). For some time in Canada, teachers have been questioning their role in the improvement of the quality of the educational experience, especially when they feel they have no ownership of the direction, such as during the times of reform imposed upon teachers (Hargreaves, 2003). This too has been the case in New Zealand (Gilbert, 2003). Murphy (2005, p. 52) believed that teacher empowerment will create ownership in the educational experience to allow for the leadership skills to develop in those responsible for the teaching and learning and he suggested that “Teacher leadership is about raising teachers’ sense of empowerment, expanding teachers’ professional status and supporting local autonomy, so that teachers can realise their professional worth.” It appears then that teacher leadership today requires an understanding of how schools raise levels of teacher empowerment which will be a focus of this study. Silva, Gimbert and Nolan (2000, p.780) discussed the emergence of teacher leadership as “three different waves” that schools have embraced. Their “first wave” of teacher leadership that developed was the identifying of leadership roles within the school that focused on the effectiveness and efficiency of the system. Their “second wave” of teacher leadership began as the importance of teachers as instructional leaders was recognized and positions were created to capitalize on the instructional knowledge. Their “third wave” was recognizing that the empowering of

teachers will help as they grapple with the more complex situations faced today, and that teachers can participate meaningfully in the school as an organization. This third wave uses the concept of collaborating to improve the teaching and learning. Silva, Gimbert and Nolan (2000) also stated:

Slide open the doors to collaborate with other teachers, discuss common problems, share approaches to various learning situations, explore ways to overcome the structural constraints of limited time, space, resources and restrictive policies, or investigate motivational strategies to bring students to a deeper engagement with their learning. (p. 781)

It may be that many schools are still working through the “first wave” stage or the “second wave” stage. I was interested in analyzing teachers’ perceptions about teacher leadership and teacher professionalism to see if there were indications that they have progressed to the “third wave” concept. This “third wave” concept suggests that teacher leaders challenge the status quo in order to improve the learning and teaching, and have a voice in the decision-making and direction-setting. Teacher leaders need to see the importance of sharing in the vision and mission of the school and questioning policies and procedures and help the school to build capacity for mutual learning (Harris & Muijs, 2005; Silva, Gimbert and Nolan, 2000). This will assist in developing new strategies for accessing and meeting the requirements of the learners in the knowledge society (Hargreaves, 2003).

Crowther et al, (2002) have also defined teacher leadership as being critical to school success:

Teacher leadership facilitates principled action to achieve whole -school success. It applies the distinctive power of teaching to shape meaning for children, youth and adults. And it contributes to long-term, enhanced quality of community life. (p. 10)

Hall (2001) suggested that principled action is a very important role for teachers, and therefore again the importance of one’s values and beliefs is noted. Understanding one’s own values and beliefs, allows for discourse and teacher leaders need the ability to reconcile them to the values and beliefs of the school community (Henderson & Thompson 2003). I address the role of the organizations values further in the following section.

It appears then that teacher leaders need to understand themselves as well as understanding how teacher leadership develops and how it is organized. Murphy (2005) suggested that the concept of teacher leadership is built on a set of guiding statements, which provide a framework for collaborative leadership and promote shared leadership in schools.

Harris & Muijs (2003) argued teachers need to identify that teacher leadership begins in the classroom and as such teachers who are seen as leaders are able to show skill in the mastery of the challenges in the day to day life of the classroom. It has also been identified by Crowther et al (2002) and Murphy (2005) that teacher leaders show effectiveness in teaching, as teaching, learning and leading are inextricably linked and it is through the credible modeling of teaching and learning that others follow, as teacher leaders show authenticity in their teaching. Murphy (2005) added teacher leaders understand that teacher leadership is collaborative work and as such teacher leaders seek opportunities to collaborate and thrive in an environment of cooperation and collaboration because teacher leadership is a co-learning process and is co-constructed (Murphy, 2005). The idea that teacher leadership thrives in an environment of community that has a professional orientation rather than a bureaucratic one, is also a very important guiding principle (Murphy, 2005). The seeking of improving professional knowledge to enhance outcomes for students steers the teacher into leadership action. As leaders, teachers realise they improve their practice and this in turn leads to improving student outcomes (Murphy, 2005). Teacher leaders also understand that leadership is influenced by the situational dynamics and need to be understood in the broader context (Murphy, 2005). Also, as teacher leaders are involved in a service function they seek to help and provide assistance through facilitation (Murphy, 2005). These understandings contribute to empowerment for the teacher and strengthening of the professional nature of the work these teachers do (Murphy, 2005). Murphy (2005) believed that there are three important variables that bridge the idea of teacher leadership being highly successful in a school. He stated these are, “commitment, efficacy and satisfaction or motivation.” (p.53). According to Murphy (2005) teachers need to be committed to the ideals of continuous enquiry for improvement and as leaders ensure this commitment is evident in the work they do. He stated that they must also strive to be effective in their work and in order to continue to go forward teachers need to gain satisfaction from their work that motivates them to keep moving forward. Murphy, (2005) believed that these all work to empower the teacher further. The development of teacher leadership is powerful for schools as it points to a much improved learning experience in the classroom for students and it supports the revitalization of the teaching profession through allowing all teachers to share their expertise with others, initiate new projects and ideas, support colleagues and to experiment with innovation (Crowther et al, 2002; Harris and Muijs, 2005; Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999). In order to

reprofessionalise teaching, teachers need to be involved in upskilling their professional knowledge and as such lead and share their knowledge within the school (Hargreaves, 2003).

It appears therefore, that teacher leadership has several understandings that define it. Harris & Muijs (2003) stated that it is the leadership of other teachers through coaching, mentoring and leading working groups; it is the leadership of developmental tasks that are central to learning and teaching; it is the leadership of pedagogy through the development and modeling of effective forms of teaching that encourages others in the team to develop further understanding and informed practice. Murphy (2005) stated that it is also recognised that teacher leadership fosters professional recognition, professional involvement and professional opportunities and that teacher leadership is considered to be a suitable vehicle to create a more professional workplace in schools and more professional working conditions for teachers. Finally, Crowther et al (2002) believed that there needs to be both public and professional acceptance of teacher leaders and that these people require active support from their principals and administrators.

In summary, teacher leadership points to a professionalism that has its basis in empowerment, support, trust and mutual recognition (Crowther et al, 2002; Harris and Muijs, 2003). There is a link between the increased empowerment of teachers affecting the development of the professionalism of teachers, but these concepts cannot happen as isolates. There are other variables that have their base in the school culture and that have a great effect on this development. This leads into the next theme of literature on the importance of school culture.

### School leadership and culture

Southworth (2005) believed that the type of teacher leadership where teacher leaders focus on improving teaching and learning and the resulting enhancing of teacher professionalism is supported and encouraged by all stakeholders in the school, would encourage the development of the learner-centered school. All stakeholders in the school would then have an influence upon the leadership development within the school and would be closely connected to organizational learning (Southworth, 2005). Mulford and Silins (2003, p.178) showed that organizational learning involved “establishing a trusting and collaborative climate, having a shared and monitored mission, taking initiatives and risks, and, ensuring ongoing, relevant professional development.” These facets of organizational learning are at

the centre of developing a positive school culture that in turn supports the development of teacher leadership (Murphy, 2005). Hargreaves and Fink (2006, p.97) stated that leadership action can be happening in all directions from and upon all who are involved when they commented, “Leadership doesn’t just exert influence in a downward direction but flows throughout an organization, spanning levels and circulating up and down hierarchies.” This section of the literature review is on school culture and its link to teacher professionalism and teacher leadership. It falls into six main themes:

- The role of the principal;
- Coaching and mentoring leadership;
- Mutualism / Trust;
- Reflection and Critical thinking;
- The role of values; and
- The development of teams.

### *The role of the principal*

The role of the principal is a crucial one in determining the type of leadership characteristics evident in the school (Mulford and Silins, 2003). Hargreaves and Fink (2006, p.101) stated that the research still “equates leadership in schools with principalship and that it is the principal who does the distributing of leadership or creates the culture in which distribution emerges.” In their role of creating the culture, principals have a critical role as they foster the environment where teachers feel empowered to be involved in decision-making (Coles and Southworth, 2005). The principal also has a responsibility to give to teachers the sanction for the professional leadership role in their classroom and with the stakeholders they immediately associate with (Dufour and Eaker, 1998). Fullan (2003, p. 6) also stated that school leaders must “pay close attention to whether they are generating passion, purpose and energy – intrinsic motivation.” Mulford and Silins (2003, p.178) found that a principal needed to be “transformative and distributive for organizational learning to take place.” Principals who value the people in the organization know also when and how to and why they should create learning environments where people are supported, connected to one another and are assisted in their development of knowledge, skills and required resources (Waters et al, 2003). Dufour and Eaker (1998, p.58) stated that: “Principals must foster this image of the teacher as a leader and demonstrate that they regard teachers as fellow leaders

rather than as subordinate.” Dufour and Eaker (1998) stated further that it is the principal’s role to develop a community of learners, and so encourage teacher professionalism and teacher leadership. Therefore, the principal has a lead role in developing the culture of the school and whether teacher leadership is fostered or not. One way of doing this is through the coaching and mentoring of leadership.

### *Coaching and Mentoring Leadership*

The principal and the culture within a school need to encourage the development of teacher leaders. However, that in itself is not enough to see continual improvement and growth in the area of leadership (Harris and Muijs, 2005). New knowledge needs to be constructed in the rapidly changing educational context (Robertson, 2005). Constructivism is based on the idea that “learners form knowledge and beliefs within themselves as they integrate new information and reframe what they already know” (Pounder, Reitzug & Young, 2002, p.266). Coaching leadership partnerships are based on understandings of constructivist theory and are a way of building educational capacity within schools (Robertson, 2005). Robertson (2005) believes that through the development of coaching partnerships leadership will then flourish within the school. This is due to coaching partnerships as being a reciprocal arrangement by its very nature. Robertson (2005, p.194) stated, “Coaching is a transformative model. It moves people to action, to becoming proactive and to challenging the status quo.” Coaching does this because the emphasis is on leadership practice in context, and is ever changing to meet the needs of the educational leaders (Robertson, 2005). Coaching also encourages inquiry into professional issues which in turn has a spiral effect and the consequential development of life long learning capabilities and continual improvement (Bush and Middlewood, 2005). Robertson, (2005) summarized why coaching is crucial to shared learning as thus:

Coaching leads to enhanced critical reflection on practice; coaching emphasizes the educational leadership role; increased professional interactions are an important outcome of coaching relationships; as a result of collaborative engagement with others through coaching, leaders focus on how their learning informs their educational practice, and the impact this has on improvement and innovation in their institutions; and coaching establishes processes and practices for action research and education development, which helps bed in long-term positive change. (p. 73)

Coaching leadership, as a tool to help in the development of leaders, also assists in the development of positive professional relationships (Robertson, 2005). Positive professional relationships link back to the issues of collegiality and working collectively which are essential for building schools into organizations that meet the needs of the complexities of today's complex society (Murphy, 2005).

Mentoring is also used positively in schools to assist in the development of the teacher as a professional and a leader (Bush and Middlewood, 2005). Mentors are often put in place in schools in New Zealand in order to help young teachers begin their careers and these people give guidance surrounding the professional nature of the work they do (MOE, 2006). However, mentoring has now become more significant in many countries throughout the world as a method of teacher improvement in schools. Bush and Middlewood (2005, p. 157) suggest: "Support and development are important in the leadership and management of all staff, not just those new to the post, and mentoring and coaching are two of several approaches used." Mentoring and coaching within schools helps teachers to focus on the real issues and bring about changes that will be sustained. Harris and Muijs (2005, p. 58) stated: "If the use of new practices is to be sustained and changes are to endure in schools, then teachers need to be able to engage in professional development that is collaborative and meaningful." Mentoring supports the development of professional relationships where the focus is on the development of the professional and leadership skills of both involved and as such is a useful support in the development of teacher leadership and teacher professionalism (Harris and Muijs, 2005). Clutterbuck, (2003, p. 615) argued that coaching and mentoring are excellent for helping people "establish a greater sense of self-worth and self-discipline, which enables them to take more advantage of learning opportunities." According to Ryan (2006), critical conversations work best in schools when there is an effort made to promote dialogue and this requires a climate of trust.

### *Mutualism/Trust*

The development of teacher leadership indicates a collegial environment is necessary in the school (Harris and Muijs, 2005; Murphy, 2005). When working with and alongside others in a collegial manner, trust is a highly important factor (Ryan, 2006). When trust is highly valued in an organization and attended to, new ideas and positive change is often generated, and this is due to the very nature of what trust means in an organization (Kochanek, 2005).

Kochanek (2005, p. 7) in a study carried out in the USA commented “five components of faculty trust were identified; benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and openness.” Benevolence is the confidence in the goodwill of others. Reliability is the idea that someone can be counted on to come through, and competence is the ability to come through. Honesty is a global concept for one’s character and includes acting in accordance with what one says, accepting responsibility for one’s actions, avoiding manipulative behaviour, and behaving consistently. Finally, Kochanek (2005) said that openness is the degree to which information is freely shared across parties. As schools seek to improve their student achievement levels, new ideas and change are often the outcome and therefore trust is a crucial component (Crowther et al, 2002). Crowther et al (2002, p. 39) extended trust to what they called mutualism and they said “Mutualism, in the form of mutual trust and respect between administrator leaders and teacher leaders, is a distinct feature of the workplace.” Crowther et al (2002, p. 39) believed that from the establishment of mutualism came, “the creation of an environment conducive to the generation of new ideas, reflective of a willingness to acknowledge and support others’ ideas and supportive of the application of others’ proficiency.” Trust is not an automatic response for those in the school situation and it needs to be worked on by all in the organization as part of the daily work (Kochanek, 2005). Robertson (2005, p.71) stated: “Because trust takes time to develop, it cannot be assumed, and may require careful facilitation by the members of the learning community or by someone selected to provide a facilitative role.” Kochanek (2005) argued that trust is an important part of any change process and that people and the relationships they have with each other are the variables affecting the outcome, therefore trust building needs to be part of the school’s work. Trust by itself will not bring about positive changes in student achievement and develop teacher leadership and teacher professionalism, without the development of the skills of reflection and critical thinking.

### *Reflection and critical thinking.*

According to Fraser and Spiller (2001, p. 80): “Reflective practice is an essential element if the learning environment is to be a place of growth for both teachers and learners.”

Bush and Middlewood (2005) argued that critical reflection cannot be practiced in isolation, but rather schools need to be communities of reflective practice. Leadership development is most effective when reflection-in-action is used to develop new mental constructs (Crowther

et al, 2002). They believed this type of critical reflection encouraged teachers to take the initiative to embrace change in order to develop quality outcomes for the students, and as such the teacher developed leadership qualities. Bush and Middlewood (2005) stated that some of the reforms in education today decrease the actual time for reflection and enquiry and that schools need to account for this. Extended professionals involve themselves in reflection and critical thinking as a part of what they do because they recognize it assists their development (Harris and Muijs, 2005). I was interested to find out if the teachers in this study highlight this. Murphy (2005, p. 148) argues that the “teacher as inquirer” and the “teacher as researcher” are at the centre of effective professional development and therefore, organizational values will have an important part to play in the cultural aspects of the school.

### *The role of values*

I have discussed the importance of an individual’s values and beliefs on teacher professionalism and teacher leadership. The literature around school culture highlights that the values of the organization are also very important (Harris and Muijs, 2005). Harris and Muijs (2005) stated that in fostering teacher leadership within a school community the role of values and the goals of the organization have an important part to play. Gronn (1999) in his work on leadership, discussed the tensions that arise when a new (formal) leader is appointed. He stated:

The second area of immediate concern to followers on their first encounter with a new leader will most likely be to do with his or her values. They will probably be asking themselves something like: What does this person believe in? What is it that he or she stands for and would be prepared to fight for at all costs? To what extent do her or his values square with those to which I am committed? (Gronn, 1999, p. 85).

People display their values through their actions, as values are the link between emotion and behaviour (Henderson and Thompson, 2003). Schools in New Zealand are required to develop a set of shared values and goals in order to develop a consensus surrounding the moral ideas that guide the community. This is regulated through the Education Act 1989 that states that all schools must have a charter that is “a reflection of the school community, its vision and values and its goals for the school” (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 17). Dufour and Eaker (1998) believed that right at the heart of building the foundation of a professional learning community are values and goals. The identification of the attitudes, behaviours and commitments that will advance the vision of the school is crucial to the process of building a professional learning

community, and the idea of shared leadership and teacher leadership (Dufour and Eaker, 1998). Gronn (1999, p. 87) stated that the connection between leadership and the values of the organization could be considered as “values-in-action.” Do teachers see the importance of their own values in developing their leadership capability and what form do they take as ideas are challenged by the group? These questions may be answered in part, in this study of teacher professionalism and teacher leadership.

### *The development of teams*

Senge (2000) outlined the importance of people working in teams to enhance organizational learning. In schools, systems need to be set up to allow people to work in teams that are complementary, and for the formation of teams to be dynamic in order to meet the ever changing needs (Bush and Middlewood, 2005). Time is also essential for allowing teams to function effectively, and allow teacher leadership to develop (Murphy, 2005). Teacher leadership is based upon the principles of professional collaboration, development and growth, as it is an empowering of teachers to lead development work that impacts directly on the quality of teaching and learning of others (Harris and Muijs, 2005). Leithwood, Begley and Cousins (2004) stated:

The shared cultures of exemplary schools are built on norms of collegiality, collaborative planning and continuous improvement. The staff is cohesive and has a strong sense of community. Norms are established which contribute to the integration and cohesiveness of the student body...There is reciprocity between and among staff and students.(p. 39)

Therefore, for schools to go forward in the development of teacher leadership and teacher professionalism, a focus on working together in teams is critical. This leads me to my next section on developing a sense of teams within a professional learning community.

### Distributed leadership and professional learning communities

The challenge for schools as they look to the future is how to sustain the capacity of the school in meeting the changing needs of society and focus on raising student achievement (Murphy, 2005). Researchers suggest that building capacity can be done by developing many leaders within the school (Fullan, 2002; Hargreaves, 2003; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Harris & Muijs, 2003; Hord, 1997). The development of a distributed or shared leadership focus for the school, and the building of a professional learning community where the focus is on continual inquiry for improvement (Hord, 1997), would go a long way to developing

capacity within the school. Shared leadership tends to encourage inclusiveness and creativity and this is when the best ideas and innovations come to the fore (Noonan, 2003). The collectiveness of the community helps lead to improvement and sustainability (Noonan, 2003). Street and Temperley (2005) suggested that for schools to continue to make improvements they need to encourage research into their own practices. Collaborative enquiry is one way of doing this. They stated:

We believe that collaborative enquiry is an essential process for all schools to engage in at this time for three reasons: the implication of the external context in which schools operate; its usefulness as a change management strategy; and the importance of the transformation agenda. (Street & Temperley, 2005, p. 136)

The focus on collaborative enquiry has an impact on leadership at all levels in the school and leads to a more distributed type of leadership, and the development of leadership teams within schools (Harris and Muijs, 2005). Street and Temperley (2005) said the thrust for developing leadership teams within schools is as a result of the benefits that can be gained in school improvement. They stated:

The demands of the 'knowledge society' require practitioners in schools to develop their own professional expertise and professional capacity to be able to make sense of their changing context and to continue to respond to the challenge of continual development and growth, both for themselves and for their pupils. (p. 137)

This then is at the very core of the business of a school. In order to make sense of the changing context in which teachers work today there is an understanding (Harris and Muijs, (2005; Street & Temperley, 2005) that teachers use methods of enquiry into their practice. Harris and Muijs (2005) also suggested that the practice of learning alongside and with other teachers in a collaborative environment leads teachers to developing more confidence in their effectiveness, and a preference for working collaboratively and collegially. According to Harris and Muijs (2005) this collaboration and collegiality are at the core of distributed leadership. To sustain the direction of the school and to build capacity to develop a resilient school lies in developing educational leaders at all levels of the school (Fullan, 2003; Hargreaves, 2003). Lambert (1998) stated that:

The teacher analysts failed to recognize that leadership lies within the school, not just in the chair of the principal; that the school must build its own leadership capacity if it is to stay afloat, assume internal responsibility for reform, and maintain a momentum for self-renewal. (p. 3)

For a school to develop many leaders it needs to follow a distributed or shared leadership model. Southworth (2005) suggested that the case for distributed leadership is based on three ideas:

- the belief in leadership teams: belief in the power of one is giving way to a belief in the power of everyone;
- as schools become more complex places to manage and lead, we need many more leaders than ever before; and
- ensuring there are lots of leaders enables us to create pools of talented leaders. from these pools of talent we can draw and grow tomorrow's leaders. (p. 162)

These ideas create some challenges that need to be addressed if the school is to have many leaders (Southworth, 2005). According to Southworth (2005), the purpose and direction of the school needs to be such that all believe in it, feel they have a stake in it and will work towards or the goals of the organization will stand to be at risk. Southworth (2005) stated that distributed leadership must be coordinated. Another challenge is the need to look at the issue of how, having many leaders in a school, will help the students, and improve student achievement (Southworth, 2005). If the role of educational leadership is to lead learning, then there is a need to think about how that can happen. Sharing leadership should mean distributing learning-centered leadership. Southworth, (2005, p. 162-163) said: "We should create and develop lots of leaders who influence and improve the quality of learning and teaching." Therefore, the outcome of distributing leadership, would be that teacher leadership comes to the fore. So distributed leadership is essential for the growth of teacher leadership (Southworth, 2005). A professional learning community has been defined as a group with a focus on continual inquiry for improvement (Hord, 1997). It is an organization that is focused on leading learning and has the potential for sustainability of educational leadership, within an organization (Southworth, 2005). The Ministry of Education's (2004) recent booklet on literacy development, based on the work of Dr Helen Timperley, stated that a professional learning community is one where teachers update their professional knowledge, and are individually and collectively focused on the goal of improving student achievement. Timperley's (2004) research showed greater effect where practice is shared in the sense that all teachers discuss the progress of students, based on achievement information, and the collaborative approach points to a new professionalism. Hord, (1997), outlined attributes and outcomes of a professional learning community, that include supportive and shared leadership, collective creativity, shared values and vision, shared personal practice

and physical conditions and human capacities that support such an operation. Therefore, a professional learning community with a focus on distributed leadership encourages the further development of teacher professionalism and teacher leadership.

### Summary

In summary, therefore, the literature has supported the argument that a school which has a distributed leadership model rather than just a delegating model, becomes a professional learning community where the focus is on teacher enquiry and student achievement. The variables that affect the development of a professional learning community have been outlined and the role of the principal in developing a culture suitable for the growth of a professional learning community highlighted. The development of a professional learning community leads to the growth of teacher leadership which affects teacher professionalism and leads to improved educational outcomes for students.

The following chapter explains the methodology used in this study.

## Chapter Three – Research Design

### Methodology

This investigation examined teachers' beliefs about their professionalism and their leadership in two schools where the principals have established a distributive leadership model with the stakeholders in the school. The main question that guided this research was: How do teachers view the concepts of teacher professionalism and teacher leadership in relation to their work in schools?

The literature review revealed there is acknowledgement internationally about the importance of teacher leadership and professionalism as schools employ more of a collegial focus to their work and develop the school as a community of continuous inquiry for improvement. I was interested to see what teachers believed was the impact of such movements on their work in school. I wanted to employ a methodology that would enable the teachers to tell their stories of what they believed contributed to teacher professionalism and teacher leadership. I also wanted to find out what they thought were some of the issues they faced surrounding these two concepts and what the elements were that needed to be in place in a school that helped them become leaders and professionals. Therefore, it was a qualitative approach (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2003) that would best help explore the research question.

### Hermeneutic-Qualitative Methodology

The aim of research methodology is to help us understand the research process itself (Cohen et al, 2003). Qualitative methodology is sometimes called an “umbrella term” (Merriam, 1998, p.10), as there are many variants of this approach (Cohen et al, 2003). With regard to the many variants of qualitative methodology, Merriam (1998, p. 11) stated that there were certain characteristics shared among them all, “the goal of eliciting understanding and meaning, the researcher as a primary instrument of data collection and analysis, the use of fieldwork, an inductive orientation to analysis, and findings that are richly descriptive.”

My goal was to gain understanding of the teachers' views of the concepts of teacher professionalism and teacher leadership through analysis of the teachers' ideas and produce findings that were richly descriptive of the work they do. What I wanted to achieve directed how I gathered the information. I believed that the best way to find out this information

would be to talk directly to the individual teachers and then to bring the emerging findings back to the interviewed group for clarification and further discussion. Therefore, I needed to decide on the selection of a specific research paradigm that aligned with seeking the views of teachers in a primary school situation. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2003, p.29) stated that when researchers decide on carrying out a research project, “how one aligns oneself (to a research paradigm) profoundly affects how one will go about uncovering knowledge of social behaviour.” As I was using the constructivist-interpretive research paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), to seek the teachers’ views, I chose the option of a hermeneutic – qualitative methodology that would encompass a case study approach (Cohen, et al, 2003). Cohen et al (2003, p. 29) explained hermeneutics as that which “seek to clarify, understand and interpret the communications of speaking and acting subjects. Hermeneutics focuses on interactions and language; it seeks to understand situations through the eyes of the participants.” Cohen et al (2003, p. 29) further explained that hermeneutics is “premised on the view that reality is socially constructed.” As interview with the teachers in the study was the method of data collection the use of language and interacting with the teachers was the priority. Cohen et al (2003, p. 29) stated further that “hermeneutics involves recapturing the meaning of interacting others, recovering and reconstructing the intentions of the other actors in a situation. Such an enterprise involves the analysis of meaning in a social context.” As I would be analyzing the teachers’ views in terms of the social context of the school in which they participate and to gain meaning from the emerging information, hermeneutics was well suited. Cohen et al. (2003, p.23) stated that, “theory is emergent and must arise from particular situations”, and that “theory should not precede research but follow it.” In this study the theory of what the participants believe would arise out of the findings of the research. There are various means of conducting hermeneutic-qualitative inquiry (Cohen et al., 2003; Merriam, 1998).

#### *Constructivist –Interpretive Paradigm*

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) recommended a qualitative case study as a viable means for interpretation within the constructivist paradigm. In this study, I was the primary instrument of data collection and my goal was to interpret the understanding of others. The aim of the study was to seek the perspectives of the teachers in the schools surrounding the areas of leadership and professionalism. The aim was to engage in thick description connected to the

constructivist-interpretive paradigm (Lincoln & Guba, 2000), through the method of individual interviews with the teachers. In understanding the methodology of this research, I was aware the process allowed for interpretation and as a researcher I was aware that authenticity can be skewed in this situation. Therefore, I chose to follow the initial interview with a focus group interview (see methods) to allow for discussion with the participants around key findings and to ensure the meanings gained were those intended, and to gain deeper insights into the information. I selected a constructivist-interpretive paradigm in which to locate this study. Cohen et al (2003) suggest there are two main approaches to the study of behaviour; normative, and interpretive. The normative paradigm has two main underpinning ideas; “that human behaviour is essentially rule governed and; and second, that it should be investigated by the methods of natural science” (Cohen et al, 2003, p. 22). The interpretive paradigm, in contrast to the normative paradigm, is characterized by a concern for the individual. Cohen et al (2003) stated that the normative positivist approach encounters many difficulties in a school:

Where positivism is less successful, however, is in its application to the study of human behaviour where the immense complexity of human nature and the elusive and intangible quality of social phenomena contrast strikingly with the order and regularity of the natural world. This point is nowhere more apparent than in the contexts of the classroom and school where the problems of teaching, learning and human interactions present the positivistic researcher with a mammoth challenge. (p. 9)

Therefore, an anti-positivist approach is preferred to the positivist approach. Cohen et al (2003) described the anti-positivist paradigm as constructionist-interpretive, due to the interpretive nature of theory being constructed. Cohen et al (2000, pp. 19-20) stated that anti-positivists believe that “an individual’s behaviour can only be understood by the researcher sharing their frame of reference; understanding of individuals’ interpretations of the world around them has to come from the inside, not the outside.” In this investigation my view was informed by the constructivist-interpretive research paradigm. This view holds the belief that personal construction of knowledge is socially mediated and the role of the researcher is to derive meaning from the socially constructed reality of others (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). As this paradigm is a human construction and interpretation is part of this investigation, I was mindful that it is susceptible to error. My philosophical standing on this paradigm encompasses a belief that there are multiple realities that affect any construction of

knowledge. The interaction between the investigator and respondents are important. It is this interaction that creates understandings. The construction of knowledge happens through the eliciting and refining of ideas through the interaction between and among researcher and participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). This relates to this research as through interviewing the teachers on topics of teacher professionalism and teacher leadership I would be interacting with the participants in order to understand their meanings and construct knowledge.

I chose to base this study in the interpretive paradigm as I gathered data that would be used as a basis for inference and interpretation, explanation and prediction (R. Coll, personal communication, August 8, 2004). Such studies are “characterized by a concern for the individual” and I was “actively seeking the teachers’ views, beliefs, feelings and opinions” (R. Coll, personal communication, August 8, 2004). Cohen, et al (2003) stated:

The central endeavor in the context of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience. To retain the integrity of the phenomena being investigated efforts are made to get inside the person and to understand from within. (p. 22)

Cohen et al, (2003) suggested that in this type of research, researchers begin with individuals and try to understand their interpretations of the data presented to them. It is recognized that “theory is emergent and arises from particular situations” (Cohen et al, p.23). This theory therefore would be ‘grounded’ on data generated by the research. While this small-scale study only involved 12 teachers, the findings should signal these teachers’ perceptions of the development of their leadership and professionalism. Therefore, in this study a hermeneutical-qualitative methodology was chosen in the constructivist-interpretive paradigm as I would be gathering teachers’ perceptions of their reality surrounding these concepts. As a result a case study approach was used.

### A Case Study Approach

A case study approach provides a unique example of real people in real situations, and a qualitative case study is a viable means for interpretation within the constructivist paradigm (Stake, 1995). R. Coll (personal communication, August 9, 2004) stated that the insights of a case study are generally easily understood, they may be able to be directly interpreted and put to use, and the case study approach is good for investigating issues in depth. A case study was suitable for this study as it allows for the gathering of data in a real context, and it takes

into account the political and ideological context within which the research is situated (Cohen et al., 2003, p. 181). A case study is an intensive description and analysis of a bounded system (Merriam 1998: Stake 1994) used to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. As the study was carried out in two schools the data was used together to form one case. According to Merriam (1998), case studies are particularistic, descriptive and heuristic. A case study is a specific instance and usually designed to illustrate a more general principle (Cohen et al., 2003), and is particular to a certain context. The case study usually has a more human face than other research methods, as it is strong on reality and context which enables thick description and this bridges the gap between theory and practice (R. Coll, personal communication, August 9, 2004). Therefore, in this study gaining the teachers' descriptions was a crucial part of the study. "Thick description" is described as "a commitment to catch the diversity, variability, creativity, individuality, uniqueness and spontaneity of social interactions" (Cohen et al., 2003, p. 139). I worked to achieve this. A case study is heuristic in that it serves as an aid to discovery and can utilize self-educating techniques to improve performance. I hoped the findings would signal, to the teachers involved, the ideas surrounding teacher leadership and teacher professionalism in their schools.

As this case study focused on the views of the teachers surrounding teacher leadership and teacher professionalism in two schools, it was a bounded study, and particularistic (R. Coll, personal communication, August 9, 2004). It was particular to the specific context of the teachers in two New Zealand primary schools. I used the teachers' self reports to gather information. I drew out the factors that impact on these interpretations in examples of good practice. This formed the boundary of this case study. An instrumental case study is defined as one where a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue (R. Coll, personal communication, August 11, 2004), which in this study, was teacher leadership and teacher professionalism.

#### *Semi- structured Individual Interview*

My investigation was conducted firstly through individual interviews that were followed up by a focus group discussion around the trends that emerge from the interviews. I used a semi-structured interview format (Cohen et al., 2003). Cohen et al. (2003, p. 146) commented "The qualitative interview tends to move away from the pre-structured, standardized form

and toward the open-ended or semi-structured interview, as this enables respondents to project their own ways of defining the world.” The semi-structured interview permits greater flexibility than the closed situation of a structured interview. It allows for the participants’ perspectives on the issue to unfold, and is more like a conversation with a purpose (Merriam, 1998). It also allows participants to raise issues and new ideas that may not have been included in the schedule (Cohen et al., p. 147). Stake (1995) stated:

Qualitative case study seldom proceeds as a survey with the same questions asked of each respondent; rather each interviewee is expected to have had unique experiences, special stories to tell. The qualitative interviewer should arrive with a short list of issue oriented questions, possibly handing the respondent a copy, indicating there is a concern about completing an agenda. The purpose for the most part is not to get simple yes or no answers but description of an episode, a linkage, an explanation. (p. 65)

Therefore, I organized an interview schedule (see Appendix A) based around teacher professionalism and teacher leadership. Cohen et al, (2003) stated :

The framing of questions for a semi-structured interview will also need to consider prompts and probes. Prompts enable the interviewer to clarify topics or questions, whilst probes enable the interviewer to ask respondents to extend, elaborate, add to, provide detail for, clarify or qualify their response, thereby addressing richness, depth of response, comprehensiveness and honesty that are some of the hallmarks of successful interviewing. (p. 278)

The aim of my study was to gain a rich understanding of the participants’ views surrounding the concepts of teacher professionalism and teacher leadership and therefore prompts and probes around the question were part of the interview.

The interviews were held in the selected schools in private rooms and took about 45 minutes each. I transcribed the interviews and gave the participants their transcripts to allow them to change or make additions where they saw fit.

### *Focus Group Interview*

Following the process of analysing the trends from the individual interviews I organized a focus group interview with each group of teachers. The focus group was an opportunity for teachers who took part in the initial interviews to discuss the initial findings. Cohen et al. (2003, p. 288) stated that, “focus groups are a form of group interview”, where the “reliance is on the interaction within the group who discuss a topic supplied by the researcher.” The participants are able to make comment and provide feedback on the issues discussed and it allows for deeper insights to be gained. It gives the researcher the opportunity to delve deeper

into the key ideas in order to get a richer understanding, and also as another method of triangulation (Cohen et al., 2003). Cohen et al. (2003) stated that focus groups are a contrived state but:

their contrived nature is both their strength and their weakness: they are unnatural settings yet they are very focused on a particular issue, and therefore will yield insights that might not otherwise have been available in a straightforward interview. (p. 288)

I organized two focus groups, one at each school, following the collation of the key ideas emerging from the interviews. Prior to the focus group interviews the data from the individual interviews was analysed and the findings collated as a result of using the data across the two schools. From this information the main trends that emerged were organized into a group discussion interview schedule (see Appendix B) that the participants was sent a week before the focus group interview. This helped to focus on the topics and issues that arose during the initial interviews and to maintain transparency, so each participant was fully informed. Cohen et al. (2003, p. 288) stated that focus groups are useful for “generating and evaluating data from different sub-groups of a population.” Following the focus group all data was further analysed.

### Analysis of the data

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 2), “qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected methods, hoping to get a better fix on the subject matter at hand.” Cohen et al. (2003, p. 23) stated that: “investigators work directly with experience and understanding to build theory on them.” Further to this, Cohen et al. (2003, p. 23) stated: “The data thus yielded will be glossed with the meanings and purposes of those people who are their source.” Therefore, for the purposes of this study I recognised that the findings gathered would be those that the participants believed at the time and in the situation of the specific schools investigated. The aim of the investigation for the interpretive enquirer is to understand “how this glossing of reality goes on at one time and in one place” (Cohen et al, 2003, p. 23). Thus, theory becomes “sets of meanings which yield insight and understanding of people’s behaviour” (Cohen et al, 2003, p. 23). Therefore it was important for me, as the researcher, to recognise that the understandings gathered were dependent on the many variables affecting the participants at that particular time. Following interviewing of the participants, I transcribed the interviews from the tapes to ensure that all data was taken into

account. I made three copies of the transcripts, one for each participant to confirm as authentic or change, one as a reference copy and one to cut up into units of information. This was then collated electronically. According to Merriam (1998) units are segments of discrete information relevant to the study. By constantly comparing one unit with the next, I was using a comparative analysis (Cohen et al, 2003, pp. 282-283), and from this method gradually group the units into broad categories, such as:

teacher professionalism - professional knowledge;  
professional standards;  
professional responsibility; and  
professional relationships.

teacher leadership - leadership style;  
collegial practice;  
classroom practice of a teacher leader; and  
practices and outcomes of teacher leadership.

Merriam (1998) stated that categories are abstractions derived from the data and should reflect the purpose of the research. As I selected data for interpretation from the interview, I needed to provide for triangulation. According to Cohen et al. (2003) triangulation is used to support a process where we are using multiple perspectives and data sources. The focus group will helped with triangulation, through the discussion and clarification process. A cross-sectional study is one where data is collected from different groups at one point in time. This study is cross-sectional as I collected data from 12 teachers in two different schools at the same point in time. The need to gain the ideas from the teachers at the same time was due to the many variables impacting upon the teachers' responses. So to assist with reliability and validity of the data in the two schools I ensured the interviews were carried out within a short time frame so the similar variables were impacting on each participant. The key ideas of teacher leadership and professionalism as identified by the participants, were analyzed and interpretations made in terms of their importance. The data collected across the two schools was mixed so neither school could be identified. The findings are presented as one case study in Chapter Four. These and other types of ethical considerations were very important in the design of this research study.

## Ethical considerations

A researcher has an important responsibility to the welfare of the participants and therefore known risks must be acknowledged and strategies put in place to try and lessen any such risk (Scott & Morrison, 2006). It is recognized there can be many sources of tension in carrying out such research (Cohen et al., 2003). Harm can be physical harm, harm to future development, loss of self-esteem, coercion, and stress (Bryman, 2001; Cohen et al, 2003). In this study there was no risk of physical harm, and no coercion of any of the research participants either to be involved in the research, or to disclose information, as the participation in this study was purely voluntary. Potential participants were advised of this at my first meeting with them. There was perhaps potential for stress due to the process of gaining support from the school principals and boards of trustees in the first instance. This could encourage an atmosphere of stress as teachers felt they needed to be involved because the principal had sanctioned the research. However, I tried to alleviate this by presenting the information to the participants myself and always contacting the teachers directly. I was also guided by the procedures of the University of Waikato Ethics Committee. All participants were assured that I would maintain confidentiality and while confidentiality could not be guaranteed, due to the focus interview, all participants were reminded of the need for discretion at all times. Cohen et al. (2003. p. 66) stated that in qualitative research the “researcher will often find that methodology and ethical issues are inextricably interwoven.” One way to help combat some of the ethical issues is to ensure there is a feeling of goodwill between researcher and participant. Cohen et al. (2003) argued:

The list of questions is endless yet they can be related to the nature of both the research technique involved and the social organization of the setting being investigated. The key to successful resolution of such questions lies in establishing good relations. This will involve the development of a sense of rapport between researchers and their subjects and lead to feelings of trust and confidence. (p. 66)

Therefore, the development of purposeful relationships was uppermost in my mind at all times with trust and confidence paramount. I assured the participants that I would retain confidentiality about all aspects of this study and outlined how this would be done through all contacts with them.

## Trustworthiness of the Research Process

In order for the participants to feel at ease and to feel confident with the research process I needed to ensure elements of trustworthiness were incorporated in the research process.

Bryman (2001, p. 273) stated there were four elements of trustworthiness that help to ensure the validity, reliability and objectivity of the research. The four criteria that Bryman refers to are; credibility, which parallels internal validity; transferability, which parallels external validity; dependability, which parallels reliability; and confirmability, which parallels objectivity.

### *Credibility*

In order to confirm information and enhance the credibility or internal validity I followed several strategies. Respondent validation is referred to by Bryman (2001) as a method to establish credibility. He stated: “Respondent validation is a process whereby a researcher provides the people, on whom he or she has conducted the research, an account of his or her findings” (p. 274). In this research, a transcript of each of the participant’s interviews was sent to the relevant participant for validation and further clarification. Taking the findings to a focus group situation following transcript clarification also assisted in gaining respondent validation. Triangulation is also a strategy used to confirm credibility. Triangulation (Cohen et al, 2003) can incorporate the use of multiple informants, multiple sources of data, or multiple perspectives to confirm the findings. In selecting six teachers in each school and using two schools I was using the methods of multiple informants and multiple sources of data. Bryman (2001, p. 273) stated that internal validity is “whether there is a good match between the researcher’s observations and the theoretical ideas they develop.” Following the interviews and transcription process, discussing the emerging trends and findings with a focus group allowed for multiple perspectives to be included and another way for triangulation to be verified and therefore credibility established.

### *Transferability*

In order to improve transferability or external validity, it was essential to provide sufficient thick description grounded in contextual evidence so that readers can decide what is relevant to them (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Therefore, by taking note of the particular and giving sufficient contextual detail, the question of transferability would be open to individuals to

determine themselves ( Merriam, 1998). In this study, every effort was made to probe the intentions of the participants. The intended meaning was constructed through the voices of the participants. This is a case study involving two schools, and findings may not necessarily be generalisable to other settings. Bryman (2001, p. 273) stated: “external validity refers to the degree to which findings can be generalized across settings. This is recognized as a problem for qualitative researchers because of the tendency to employ case studies and small samples.” So while I was mindful of the importance of transferability of the data to provide external validity I recognised there were some shortcomings in developing this criterion due to the nature of my research study. External validity was also supported through the work with Waikato University. I presented my research proposal to the ethics committee of the Waikato University and throughout this study I have had the support and assistance of my supervisors from the Waikato University . This has assisted ensuring validity of the process through ongoing review and critique of the work and the process by these external personnel.

### *Dependability*

Dependability is ensuring the researcher does not allow personal bias or information of a suspect nature to influence the findings (Yin, 1988). Bryman (2001, p. 275) stated: “To establish the merit of research in terms of this (dependability) criterion, researchers should adopt an ‘auditing’ approach. This entails ensuring that complete records are kept of all phases of the research process.” I kept complete records of the transcripts. To guard against personal bias I presented the actual words of the participants that have informed the findings. I also continually reviewed the transcripts and reflected on my analysis.

### *Confirmability*

Confirmability is ensuring the researcher acts in good faith. Bryman (2001, p. 276) stated that “Confirmability is concerned with ensuring that while recognizing that complete objectivity is impossible in social research, the researcher can be shown to have acted in good faith.” Throughout this study, my intentions have been transparent and uppermost in my mind. My supervisors, through questioning various aspects of my work, opened up new perspectives for reflection and further research. Also, in the work I do as a Leadership and Management Facilitator, I discuss and work through issues surrounding building leadership capacity with my colleagues on a daily basis. Having my views challenged by colleagues

and supervisors allowed me to step back, confront my values and reconstruct meaning from a wider view.

## Reliability in qualitative research studies

Cohen et al (2003, p. 120) stated “in qualitative methodologies reliability includes fidelity to real life, context and situation-specificity, authenticity, comprehensiveness, detail, honesty, depth of response and meaningfulness to the respondents.” Authenticity, therefore, is seen as an important part of qualitative research and needs to be preserved. According to Bryman (2001) there are five elements of authenticity:

- fairness;
- ontological authenticity;
- educative authenticity;
- catalytic authenticity; and
- tactical authenticity. (p. 276)

Bryman, (2001) suggested some succinct questions that researchers need to consider in order to preserve the authenticity of the research. When considering fairness he questions: “Does the research fairly represent different viewpoints among members of the social setting?” (p.276). In considering ontological authenticity Bryman (2001) suggested the researcher ask the question: “ Does the research help members to arrive at a better understanding of their social milieu?”(p.276). For the researcher to review educative authenticity Bryman ( 2001) suggests the researcher consider: “ Does the research help members to appreciate better the perspectives of other members of their social setting?”(p.276). He suggested when reviewing catalytic authenticity the researcher should ask the question: “Has the research acted as an impetus to members to engage in action to change their circumstances?”(p.276). Lastly Bryman (2001) suggested for tactical authenticity the researcher should consider: “Has the research empowered members to take the steps necessary for engaging in action.”(p.276). Due to the nature of my study I am unable to answer these questions in a formative sense, however they are questions I considered. In thinking about the authenticity of the research Bryman (2001, p.276) further states: “The authenticity criteria are thought provoking but have not been influential, and their emphasis on the wider impact of research is controversial. They represent criteria for evaluating qualitative research.” I designed my study to ensure it genuinely reflected the views of the participants.

## The Research Process

### Research Time Line

The research was carried out from March 2005 to August 2006. The data collection phase of this study was carried out in March and April 2006.

### The Research Process in Action

#### Selection of Participants

I began my selection of participants by firstly selecting schools where there was a distributed leadership model. I began this exploration by discussing with my colleagues at Team Solutions in the Leadership and Management division which primary schools they believed demonstrated shared leadership. Following this discussion, I carried out further investigation through discussion with people I knew in the teaching profession. I then set up a formal meeting time with the Principal at each of the two schools chosen, to discuss the possibility of carrying out the research in their schools, and to find out if they would be interested in me doing this. As a result of these meetings, and with their agreement, I sent out a letter to the Principal and Board of Trustees at each school outlining my intentions and seeking their support (see Appendix C). I asked the Principal for a 10 minute slot at a staff meeting where I could outline my proposal to all staff and seek their support. At this meeting I distributed a letter to all staff (see Appendix D) with a return letter (see Appendix E) and a return envelope for them to use, if they wished to participate. These letters explained the study in brief and informed the participants that the initial method of information gathering would be by interview that would be audio-taped, followed by an audio-taped focus group conference. At this meeting I outlined, to the participants, the process of selection that would be used if more teachers wished to participate than I could manage. I was seeking a variety of class levels taught, a variety of positions of responsibility held and a variety of years of experience. The reason for the above criteria was so I could gain a cross-section of responses, as I wished to identify the main factors affecting all teachers. I initially was going to select five participants from each school, but when six teachers at each school elected to take part in the research I decided to include all the 12 teachers in the research, following advice from my supervisor about this. These 12 teachers represented a cross-section of teachers in years of experience and formal positions of responsibility in both schools, and so there was no need to

have a selection process. In terms of gender there were 11 female respondents and only one male. However this percentage reflected the gender balance of teachers in both the schools selected. I informed the participants that all information from the 12 participants across the two schools would be synthesized in order to be representative of the participants' views and to conceal the identity of individual teachers and either of the schools.

## Interviews

The interviews were carried out in each school on a day that was suitable to all involved. A room was chosen where no interruptions would hinder the audio-taping of the discussions. The participants each received a copy of the interview questions several days before the interview. Each participant was interviewed on an individual audiotape to ensure there was no confusion and the participants were identified only by an alphabetical order system. I interviewed the participants in this semi-structured interview, following an interview schedule (see Appendix A) about their personal views on teacher professionalism and teacher leadership, and how it affects them and the work they do. The aim here was to get the teachers to tell their stories. My desire was to allow the interview to remain fairly conversational and situational to gain a collection of comprehensive case study data. Each teacher was interviewed once, on the questions they had received beforehand. This allowed for a more transparent process and enabled the participants to perhaps think about their ideas before the interview. I had also previously informed them of my intention to audio tape the interviews as per the ethics procedures.

## Transcription

Each audio taped interview was transcribed. A copy of the transcript was sent to each participant in order for them to verify or make any changes they wished. Transcription was seen as a very important step in the process and one, as it is open to interpretation, in which care needs to be taken. I was mindful that Cohen et al. (2003, p. 281) stated: "This is a crucial step, for there is the potential for massive data loss, distortion and the reduction of complexity." It was therefore necessary to try to overcome this, and so giving the transcripts back to the participants for verification purposes was one way to do this. After this process I

analysed the transcripts looking for trends and patterns, and then took the findings back to the participants in a focus group discussion forum.

## Data Analysis

The trend categories were itemized on sheets of paper with all the units of information pertaining to each category under it. An example of this is:

Category: teacher professionalism- professional knowledge

Units of information: *Professional knowledge is highly critical in developing professionalism.*

*Professional knowledge is always developing – we share new knowledge and look at trends. Changes need to be worthwhile.*

*Research is constantly being reviewed and looked at to see if it is appropriate for the school itself.*

Category: teacher leadership- collegial practice

Units of information: *teacher leadership is supporting teachers within their role of being a teacher.*

*Leadership is about being accountable to other people.*

*Taking collective responsibility for schoolwide initiatives.*

This categorizing enabled me to identify all the key ideas that were of importance to the teachers. I particularly focused on ideas that were identified by a majority of participants, that is three or more out of the six participants. All key ideas given were identified and I took this information back to the teachers in the focus group forum.

## Focus Group

Prior to the focus group discussion all teachers were sent a copy of the trends and questions to be further explored (Appendix B). The questions delved into each trend area further in terms of what it meant for them (the teachers) in their particular schools. The discussion was audio taped and following the session it, too, was transcribed. Cohen et al, (2003, p. 288) states that focus groups are useful for “generating and evaluating data from different subgroups of the population.” Also another particular facet of focus groups is that the

interaction between the participants allowed for their ideas to emerge rather than the focus being on the interviewer's questions. Cohen et al, (2003, p. 288) stated: "Hence the participants interact with each other rather than with the interviewer; such that the views of the participants can emerge the participants' rather than the researcher's agenda can predominate." The transcription from the audio tapes of the focus group then enabled me to synthesize the ideas from the two schools. I did this by following the previous system of identifying the trends and linking the units of information. This was more specific and more in depth than the previous analysis as the questions were more focused.

## Summary

In this chapter I have outlined how this study was planned. The criterion for the planning was to fit the purpose of the study. The selection of the strategy was governed at all times by the suitability. Therefore, I chose hermeneutic-qualitative methodology using the constructivist-interpretive paradigm. A case study approach was selected and the method of data collection was by audio taped interview in order to hear the teachers' voices. I was mindful at all times of the purposes of the research, the time frame within which to carry it out, the constraints on the research, the methods of data collection and the methodology of the research. All these factors needed to be considered if trustworthiness and reliability of the research was to be served (Bryman, 2001). The trends and patterns outlined from the transcription of the interviews informed the discussion and questioning at the focus group discussion forum and then all the information was synthesized to develop an outline of the findings of the study. They are presented in the next chapter.

## Chapter Four – The Findings

This chapter presents the findings from the study. The five categories outlined in the literature review have been used as a framework. Subheadings then identify the themes that emerged in the findings.

### Teacher Professionalism

In the analysis of the data around teacher professionalism five main areas emerged:

- Professional content knowledge;
- Professional standards;
- Professional responsibility;
- Professional relationships; and
- Professional culture in the school.

Each of these will be discussed individually and the main points evident in the discussions around these topics will be highlighted.

#### *Professional content knowledge*

All teachers interviewed discussed the need to be continually upskilled in the areas of professional content knowledge in order for them to maintain their status as an effective teacher and to be able to make judgments and decisions based on new research. One teacher put it this way: “Professional knowledge is highly critical in developing professionalism.”

That professional knowledge was highly critical in the schools in this study had some interesting aspects to it. The teachers were aware that not all new information provided through professional in-service developments was necessarily of value and that part of their role as a professional was to critique what was being provided to see if it had benefits to them and their school. New information needed to be shared and then critiqued to see whether it was worthwhile or not, and this was commented on by one teacher in this way: “Professional knowledge is always developing - we share new knowledge and look at trends. Changes need to be worthwhile.” Another teacher also alluded to this as being part of her professional role by making the distinction between trends and trendy patterns in professional development, and checking to see if such work fits in with the vision for the school. She said:

We have a lot of people off on courses and they come back and share it back to us. So we want to know that what we are hearing is part of our vision not trendy, we don't want trendy stuff but the trends.

The teachers also recognized that research into educational practices played a very important part. They felt it was the responsibility of the professional teacher to be kept informed of recent research trends, and whether this information or required change would be appropriate for the direction of the school. One teacher stated:

Research is constantly being reviewed and looked at to see if it is appropriate for the school itself....it is very much a part of professionalism, so people are always taking on new research and trialling to see whether it is appropriate.

One school had joined ten teachers to the Professional Online Learning Tool ( PLOT) and these teachers gained information that they then took to their teams for further discussion and development. A teacher described it like this:

Only a certain number can use PLOT. We have a certain number of teachers that can log on, because of the cost involved. So we have ten people who have access to PLOT. So that is available to leadership teams and we use PLOT to design our staff meetings.

When asked at the focus group to elaborate on how they explored this new knowledge and developed shared meanings, one teacher said: “We use our quality learning circles. That would be the main way we explore new knowledge in depth.” However there were a variety of methods used and another teacher agreed and added: “Yes and sharing on Friday.” The “sharing on Friday” was a big part of this schools culture and was further discussed at the focus group. When questioned at the focus group to elaborate on the role of classroom practice on the development of teacher leadership, one teacher stated:

With our sharing on Friday morning tea, and the people always have something to share – it’s a celebration that’s shared and people can adopt that if they want to, so that’s taking on the exemplary classroom practice. It motivates you to go and use it in your class.

There was no one way of developing professional knowledge content as the schools used a variety of ways and that impacted upon the teachers in this study. This was highlighted when a teacher at the focus group stated: “There are things like us working across teams, you know always having opportunities to work with different people not always the same group you work with.”

In summary, the ongoing development of professional content knowledge was of high importance in the schools in this study and there were many ways of providing for this aspect

of developing teacher leadership and teacher professionalism. The next area of professionalism that was of high importance to the teachers in this study was that of personal and professional standards.

### *Professional Standards*

Professional standards were certainly affected by personal standards and these were something that the teachers saw as being critical to their professional role. One teacher described it like this:

I think it [teacher professionalism] encompasses the whole manner in which you operate as a teacher within your school, within your community, within your learning, willingness to take things on. I think professionalism is more than just what you do in the classroom, it sort of encompasses your whole being as a teacher.

Reference was made to the Teacher Professional Performance Standards (MOE, 1998) as being a type of benchmark for the profession, and this was elaborated on at the focus group.

One teacher stated:

I think a lot of them [The Teacher Professional Performance Standards] though are quite basic. I think that when I set my goals I was looking at extending beyond what they are expecting as a minimum requirement.

Another teacher added:

I think that they [The Teacher Professional Performance Standards] are definitely there (in our appraisal system) and teachers are aware of them but we tend to be more specific and we make our goals and design them with clarity so you can actually see what it looks like.

The role of professional and personal standards in the job of the teacher was summed up by another teacher as:

You are representing your school and you are representing the teaching profession. So you need to have very high standards, even the way you speak, present yourself, your knowledge about what you are talking about, you need to be confident and you need to be able to express yourself.

Many of those interviewed stated the need for high personal attributes that demonstrated they cared for each other and that respect for each other was highly held. Comments that

supported this stance included “confidential,” “non- judgmental,” “considerate of diversity,” and “constructive.” The necessity of teachers to hold such high personal attributes affected how they viewed the world around them and made them more able to achieve the professional standards required of a teacher in today’s society. Two of the teachers interviewed were quite specific when talking about reliability and integrity as personal attributes. One said:

I felt that being a professional in terms of being a teacher, as being reliable, so that you can be relied on to follow through on any tasks or any initiatives you have been asked to do.

And the other teacher commented:

I think it is your integrity. If you have got that inside you; a professional attitude or a professional manner, is going to be second nature to you.

Therefore, the teachers interviewed in this study put considerable importance on their personal attributes as affecting their professional standards and all interviewed stated that standards of behaviour and standards of their professionalism were uppermost in being an effective professional. However, different standards of professional behaviour that individual teachers bring to the school situation was something that was seen as an issue in teachers developing their leadership and professionalism skills. One teacher stated:

I think because there is such a variance in standards and how teachers view themselves as professionals. I think there is quite a range of standards...there is nothing that is actually said, ‘this is what you do to be a professional’.

The teachers made a connection between the effect of the Teacher Professional Performance Standards and the ability of the school to enact these to a high degree. One teacher in making reference to the Teacher Professional Performance Standards stated:

Well teacher professionalism, I think your standard of professionalism definitely depends on what happens within the school and with the people you work with...

The better the people you work with, and [who] appraises you against the standard.

The subjective nature of the Teacher Professional Performance Standards was identified as an issue if the standards of those around you were not of a high calibre. While this was not identifiable in the schools in this study, it showed that the teachers had a wider perspective on the role of the teacher and were aware of the importance of high professional standards.

These areas of the professional standards were seen as part of their professional role. Other findings around the professional responsibility are outlined next.

### *Professional Responsibility*

Many of those interviewed talked about the responsibility of the professional side of the work of a teacher. One teacher stated:

If you consider you are in a profession there are certain behaviours and responsibilities that go with it. ... Professionalism in our behaviour, in our dress, in our confidentiality and our need to keep ourselves upskilled and our relationships with our colleagues.

The professional responsibility for discretion, alluded to in the above statement, was reiterated by others as a responsibility due to the ethical nature of the work of teachers.

Another teacher said: "Professionalism... It's not just meeting the expectations of the job, but an ethical side to it as well." Ethics and the understandings surrounding this were not addressed specifically and may have been due to the way the questions were asked, however the teachers in this study viewed that their work had an ethical perspective to it. One teacher gave an example of this, in response to a question about values:

Teaching is a lot to do with relationships and communication and the kind of person you are and that you genuinely care for people, you genuinely care for children, you want to be part of the education process. As a person I think you have to be aware of differences and be inclusive. You have to be reflective, you have to be able to get on with people and work together as a team.

Some of the discussions around teacher professionalism centered on the collaborative approach to the work of teachers. Teacher professionalism was viewed as a collective responsibility. One teacher described it this way: "Taking on that collaborative approach, that collective responsibility I felt is something that being professional entails." Another teacher elaborated on the collective responsibility of teaching as thus: "With a shared vision we should all be on the same page." The collective responsibility was seen as being closely associated with effective relationships of the teachers and was further elaborated on in the focus group. One teacher said: "Because we have a collective responsibility with the children, then creating effective relationships with each other and all the children in the school are

important.” Another teacher supported this statement “So I think probably here at this school there would be a higher focus on effective relationships first in order to achieve collective responsibility.”

The findings suggest that professional responsibility centres around the need to have a collective focus on the responsibility to all the stakeholders in a school and that teachers need to be informed by ethics in all they do. So, the development of professional relationships is crucial and the findings in respect of this will now be presented.

### *Professional Relationships*

Positive professional relationships with all stakeholders in the school were seen as being an important part of the role of the teacher as a professional. One teacher identified it this way: “Teacher professionalism is really important to me, being professional with the staff and the children and the parents and the wider community.” Another teacher also said: “I must be able to relate to staff and to relate to parents and relate to students.” One teacher believed very strongly in the role that positive relationships play in the school. She said that professional development work in all schools needed to be done on establishing positive relationships and that the vision should encompass beliefs surrounding the developing of positive relationships with the school community. She put it this way:

I think within the school vision there needs to be professional development at a staff level for teachers to understand the importance of relationships. In that way, what we value as staff, as relationships, we would hopefully pass on to children to improve teacher and student relationships.

When the teachers were asked at the focus group how the development of effective relationships was fostered in their school they responded that this was multi-faceted. One teacher summed up the comments of the focus group in this way: “There are things like working across teams, always having the opportunities to work with different people, not always the same people.”

It appeared that in the two schools in this study the opinions of others were highly valued and that everyone had something to contribute. Another teacher stated that the value placed on others’ opinions was important in fostering effective relationships. She stated:

I think also that everyone’s opinions are valued and that there is not a hierarchy within our school. I have heard a BT [beginning teacher] talk at staff

meetings and their opinion is valued as much as an experienced teacher.

It was also stated that focused work on developing professional relationships was part of how the school worked and that part of the professional learning for some teachers was about coaching and mentoring. A teacher said: “We are consciously trying to build on our ability to coach and mentor each other, because that is what we consider as an effective professional relationship.” When asked about how they learn about coaching and mentoring one teacher said:

Well, we are probably at the beginning stages of that, so there are some who have that as part of their professional learning and so they seek out opportunities to develop that as the year goes by, and so if anything was offered in the way of training for coaching and mentoring, it would be something that they would go into.

It therefore appeared that being able to choose their own professional focus for part of their professional development each year helped to accelerate learning within the school as new knowledge was acquired. Through the development of strong professional relationships, this new knowledge was able to be disseminated through the school.

Cultural diversity within the school was another issue that was discussed in terms of professional responsibility and that culturally sensitive relationships were important. In order to be able to cater for cultural diversity teachers stated that it is important to establish positive professional relationships with all in the school community. One teacher put it this way:

For students, we have a role [professional] to play in accepting them as an individual, we have a role in providing learning opportunities matched to their needs, we have a role in valuing them for the people they are, we have a role in involving the parents in the child’s learning, and treating students and parents with respect, valuing different cultures and different cultural backgrounds that they come from.

These statements showed that changes in society have impacted on schools in New Zealand today and that a positive school culture that encompassed such attributes as those identified above was essential. I will next address the findings around the area of a professional school culture.

### *A professional culture in a school*

It appeared that there were certain outcomes that resulted when a culture in the school was established where professional content knowledge, professional standards, professional responsibility and professional relationships were seen as an important part of the school life. Teacher professionalism was seen as impacting directly on the culture of the school. One teacher said:

Teacher professionalism leads directly into the culture of a school. You can't be professional if standards aren't there, that discussions with parents are not on a formal or a professional basis. Because professionalism has to be there and it influences what happens right throughout the whole school and the whole culture of the school.

This idea was taken further by another teacher who believed that a strong school culture will be built when teachers are professional in their approach. She stated it this way:

I feel that if you are not professional or teachers aren't professional then things won't get off the ground, initiatives won't happen but that everyone needs to have ownership, everyone needs to work together. So if you are not professional in your conduct, in the way that you dress, or the way that you act and speak, and the way you interact with children and parents, things aren't going to happen. You are only going to get that surface school, you are not going to develop that in-depth school culture.

Teachers also believed that when the school fostered a professional culture it allowed them to challenge issues that they, as a professional, saw as negative or not fostering the collective well-being of the school. One teacher put it this way: "I think there is room for us to challenge things. I don't think everybody feels comfortable about challenging, but from my perspective I am perfectly happy challenging anything I am not happy with."

The findings from both schools identified five important points that contributed to the development of teacher professionalism. They were; professional content knowledge, personal and professional standards, the professional responsibility of the job, the importance of positive professional relationships and the development of a school culture including professional attitudes. I will next highlight the main points that arose from the discussions around teacher leadership.

## Teacher leadership

In this part of the study, there were four main areas of teacher leadership that were important to the participants. They were:

- Leadership style;
- Collegial practice;
- Classroom practice of a teacher leader; and
- Practices and outcomes of teacher leadership.

### *Leadership Style*

It was recognized by the participants that leadership is found at different levels in the school. Leadership styles were discussed in terms of that which is promoted by the management of the school and that which is part of the work of all teachers. In discussing the leadership style evident in one school it was referred to as a “sharing of the leadership” and even the younger participants in terms of years of experience saw this as a valid part of how the school operated. A teacher stated : “I don’t see it [leadership] as something that’s directed [in this school]. I see it more as not the hierarchical image but linear, more shared that’s how I see leadership.” This type of leadership was seen as supporting collaborative methods of working within the school, one teacher commented: “The linear image of leadership encourages sharing with the rest of the staff.” The sharing of the leadership roles helped empower the teachers to take leadership and initiate new directions. Another teacher in the study stated how people who were not in formal roles of leadership were still recognized by her as leaders due to how she understood and experienced leadership. She stated it this way:

For example, there are teachers here who are not in the leadership role in our school, but I always look to them as leaders – because they are always professional, always knowing what is happening within the school and are helping you as new teachers to learn, develop and cope with the many stresses and pressures of being a teacher.

A more experienced teacher talked about the place of situational leadership in the complex environment of the school and she recognized that it was important to understand and be able to meet the changing needs that leadership in a school requires: She said:

They can be of different types [leadership roles]. There maybe a situation where you have a teacher that is not performing so that has a different kind of leadership role to

where you are inducting new teachers. It could be where you are empowering people to try new methods of teaching. It could be helping people manage with change. It could be ensuring that consultation occurs so that everybody feels valued and have a place and then they take on ownership of whatever the decisions are, so there is decision making.

This belief was backed up by another teacher who stated that not only knowing the style of leadership one needed to handle a certain situation but also knowing the people that you are working with was seen as being of great importance. She said:

I think being a really good professional leader, is knowing the people you are leading and knowing the way they work, and knowing how they feel most comfortable, and what works for one team may not work for another, or what works for one of the staff may not work with another. Depending on the situation you are in you have to know. I think that is all part of the pastoral care and that's one of the most important things.

The teachers interviewed all recognized that they had a leadership role as part of the professional responsibility of being a teacher but that their work was still very much dependent on the senior managers and the dispositions of these people. One teacher stated:

Having the support from senior management is really important. Empowering teachers to move through middle management... wonderful to see other people being given the opportunity to grow and further their careers.

Therefore, the teachers in this study felt more empowered to take leadership as the school had a leadership model that seemed to go further than the distributed leadership model and the associated power structures that are seen to sit with this. The teachers in this study connected to a model that was viewed as a sharing of leadership. The sharing of power and the leadership capabilities that go alongside this in a school pointed to a strong emphasis on collegial practice in these schools. I will address this in the next section.

### *Collegial practice*

One of the main themes that came through all of the discussions around teacher leadership and teacher professionalism was the role of colleagues and importance of collegial practice. There was a definite link seen between colleagues and leadership as one teacher stated: "Leadership is about being accountable to other people." So while leadership was seen as

part of the accountability towards others, the role of a teacher leader working with colleagues was explained further by one teacher. She believed supporting others in their development as being a very important facet of teacher leadership. She said: “Teacher leadership is supporting teachers within their role of being a teacher, working alongside teachers, and being able to move them on to the next step and deepen their understanding of the pedagogy.” The teachers identified that due to the complex nature of the work teachers do, teachers learn the art of leading from being a teacher. One teacher stated it this way: “So to be able to be an effective leader of teachers you have to understand what teachers do, and how teachers operate, and how it is different for different teachers in different schools.” The teachers interviewed went deeper into the understandings surrounding working with colleagues and recognized that their role changed from time to time depending on the context in which they were working with colleagues. Another teacher expressed it like this:

Being a role model, taking a leadership role but not necessarily taking the lead. So in that I mean, being a role model, setting the standards and showing the way you expect things to be done as a leader. Also facilitating as well, so setting an example and being a facilitator either guiding alongside or supporting from the back.

Working with colleagues and developing a collective responsibility to the work that is done in schools was seen as a very important part of the leadership action that teachers in these schools recognized. One teacher stated it this way: “Taking collective responsibility for school wide initiatives. Doing a bike day, but making sure everyone is on board, giving people ownership.”

The findings revealed that the teachers appreciated the collegial nature of their practice and that they definitely understood the benefits of working in this way. The common viewpoint of all of the teachers in this study was that classroom teaching and credible classroom practice was an important aspect of teacher leadership.

#### *Classroom practice of a teacher leader*

Many of the participants commented that classroom practices needed to be of a very high standard and that this is where a teacher needs to begin to develop leadership capabilities. The teachers in this study emphasized the core responsibility of their job as that of improving student achievement. They made statements that supported this belief such as “credibility in

your own classroom practice”, “exemplary classroom practice”, “being the best teacher I can be”, and “by being a good role model as a good practicing teacher.” Therefore, the classroom practice of the teacher encouraged the development of teacher leadership, and needed to be of a high standard in order to influence colleagues and encourage the individual teachers to try out further initiatives. Classroom practice was only part of the practice that teachers described. There were other practices that played a part in developing teacher leadership.

#### *Practices and outcomes of teacher leadership*

The teachers interviewed stated there were other important practices of teacher leadership that assisted the collegial approach to the work they did. They identified; “modeling and letting others observe,” “delegating,” “giving positive/ constructive feedback,” “acknowledging everyone as learners,” and “values are articulated to other teachers and students.” This sharing of the teacher leader’s ideas and views in an open and honest way was respected by all those in the study as being an important practice of the teacher leader. Respectful relationships were also addressed as part of encouraging teacher leadership. One teacher put it this way: “We got recognized and our opinions got valued...So people have always listened to my opinion and I have always valued that in this school.” Another important practice of being a teacher leader was identified as the skill of reflection on the work they do and being able to change or challenge if things aren’t quite working out. A teacher commented:

The only way you are going to improve is reflecting on yourself...I think if you don’t reflect on yourself and look at what you are doing in the classroom and see if its you that’s creating the problems then you are not going to be able to resolve them and improve your practice. I mean you should always be reflecting.

Most teachers interviewed realized the benefits to the school of having many leaders at many levels in the school. They recognized that this led to empowerment and these teachers felt this was an important part of their school. One teacher said:

I think the more empowerment for all actually fosters the idea of people achieving their potential, individuals achieving their potential, and this model encourages that to happen more readily.

Another teacher stated:

Giving people the opportunities to work with their strengths and their interests, what

they like to do and what they are interested in and being the lead and helping other people, they get the chance to lead.

These teachers also recognized that some teachers chose to not take on any leadership activity other than what they did in the classroom, and those interviewed recognised that some teachers preferred to work in this way. One teacher expressed the view:

I think too, it's important to be aware that everybody is at different stages with their teaching and learning journeys as far as teacher growth goes, and that we are about moving teachers on from where they are at, so its not necessarily empowering them to take on leadership roles if they are not wanting to.

There were further reservations about the role of leadership and collaborative decision-making. One teacher put it this way:

This school is really big on everyone having ownership and taking responsibility and having that 'buy-in'. I think you can have a fine line between that and too much. I think sometimes with work loads and pressures, and what all schools and teachers have on their plate, sometimes it's good just to say this is what we are doing and this is why...people value it!

However, those that did aspire to developing further the practices of teacher leadership made reference to the satisfaction they got from assisting others and that there was an enjoyment they felt in taking on extra responsibilities and roles. One teacher stated: "I have found it really neat to see other people blossom under my leadership." Another teacher believed that her professional status was enhanced by her leadership role and she was very proud of this. She stated: "But now I feel a lot prouder of what I do."

I have analysed the findings from the discussions on teacher professionalism and teacher leadership as separate concepts. However, I was interested to see if the teachers could see any links between these two concepts and so one question put to the participants was whether they saw any links.

## Links between teacher professionalism and teacher leadership

The twelve teachers in this study all believed that their professionalism and their leadership were linked and that one reinforced the other. One teacher stated it this way:

I don't actually see them as being different. I think being a teacher as a professional is being a teacher as a leader because you are supporting others within that profession of teaching. It's not just leading other staff or colleagues or community, its leading our students as well because you are modeling all the time.

The close link between the two concepts was reinforced by others. One teacher said: "To be able to be taken seriously as a leader you have to show professionalism." A further teacher stated: "Taking on a leadership role, if it's in the best interests of others, is being professional." Some other teachers in this study talked about their effectiveness in the role of a teacher and believed that they had to be seen to have both leadership and professionalism as a major part of who they are in order to be validated as a worthy teacher. One put it this way:

I think that as a professional and as a leader you set an example for both...it goes hand in hand, leadership and professionalism, you can't have one without the other or you can't be effective in one without having the other. You can't be a true leader without being professional.

It therefore was noticeable that the teachers in this study believed that those who subscribed to the ideals of a teacher as a leader also believed that these teachers had to show high professional behaviours, as the two concepts were so closely linked. Teachers in this study felt there was a benefit to schools in developing teacher leadership and teacher professionalism as it encouraged further professional development. The teachers believed that the development of teacher professionalism and teacher leadership led directly to improving standards in the school which led to the positive impacts on the culture of the school. One teacher declared:

Teacher professionalism leads directly to the culture of the school. It influences what happens right throughout the whole school and the whole culture of the school. If your standards are low then your expectations of others are not high. If your standards are really, really high then children or the teachers are going to try and reach those higher standards.

The connection between developing teacher professionalism and teacher leadership and the setting of high standards was reiterated by another teacher who said: “ Being a professional and being a leader I think sets the high standard for everyone else in our school. It filters down.” The role of clear expectations also was seen as a benefit in developing teacher professionalism and teacher leadership. One teacher elaborated on this further. She said: “ The routines are set so that everybody knows what’s expected, everybody knows the rules and routines and procedures and protocols of the school.” In discussing the types of leadership evident in schools today the teachers discussed these in terms of empowering of all in the school. One teacher said: “I see a more level type of leadership (rather than hierarchical) as more empowering and motivating for teachers.”

Developing teacher leadership at many levels in the school and encouraging teacher professionalism was also seen as assisting teachers to develop reflective practices and pursue new learning. A discussion at a focus group interview when asked what a professional teacher looks like in this school where teacher leadership is encouraged, went like this:

Teacher 1: “They are good role models, they are open to new learning.”

Teacher 2: “They pursue new learning too or perceive the gaps.”

Teacher 3: “They are reflective, they actively work on developing areas or weaknesses. They pick up challenges. They are here at 7.30 in the morning.”

Teacher 4: “They genuinely care for kids and want to make a difference.”

Teacher 5: “Good communicators. I think that is really important, communicating you know, its nearly a non-stop job.”

It therefore seems evident that it is of benefit for schools to embrace and enhance the work of the teacher professional and to encourage the development of leadership skills in all teachers. In the next section I will address how schools can grow teacher leadership and teacher professionalism.

### **How schools grow teacher leadership and teacher professionalism**

Throughout the interviews with the selected teachers in this study it became evident that there were several things that they perceived needed to be in place in order for schools to be able to grow leadership and professionalism. The main areas that emerged from the analysis of the data were:

- Role models;
- Opportunities to develop skills;
- Support and encouragement;
- Clarity of expectations;
- Methods to embed school wide beliefs and practices; and
- A trusting environment.

### *Role models*

Most of those interviewed believed the role models they had had during their careers affected the development of their own professionalism and leadership. One teacher stated: “They [teachers] develop or learn through the modeling and practices of other teachers.” Another teacher stated: “It is the role models that I have had throughout my career and the mentors I have modeled myself on.” One teacher specified that even the ineffective models helped them to learn their craft. She said:

Mentoring, good role models. I know I have had a range of team leaders. Some have been entirely ineffective and I have learnt from them as much as I have learnt from my team leaders who have been really good. I have learnt what works for me as a young teacher.

The teachers’ ability to reflect on things happening around them and critique in order to develop their own style also helps teachers to improve their own way of working. A teacher stated:

We look at our leaders and our people in responsibility. [As a teacher] you do look at the different styles of leadership that people have, and you do critique what they do, and how they behave, and the way they speak or their tone of voice and actions that they have and you make judgments about the effectiveness of that style.

While the teachers identified that having role models assisted in their own development they also specified that they needed to be given opportunities to develop their skills in a supportive environment.

### *Opportunities to develop skills*

Opportunities to be able to further develop the skills and attributes of being a teacher leader and professional was also something that was identified by the participants as being crucial to

their growth within schools. One teacher believed the environment that supported this was critical. In response to the question of what do you think helps teachers become leaders and professionals, she stated it this way:

Opportunities to have a go. Just the whole environment that allows teachers to pursue their interests or passions. The way that that is shared among staff, the way it is valued and the way it is nurtured. The way those strengths are nurtured.

The fact that extra responsibility was seen as opportunity by these teachers demonstrated the positive attitude that was evident in the school. Another teacher stated; “Whereas I take lots [responsibilities], and I want to, but in saying that [I realize] that gives me opportunities other people don’t have.” At one focus group interview the teachers were discussing the empowerment of all staff, and one teacher stated:

Yes, because there is a that culture [within the school] of “ putting your hands up”.

Like; I will organize that, or I’ve found a really good resource, or I have been on the internet and found... it’s not just left to one person who is in charge of that to do, it’s the collective, everyone takes part.

At another focus group interview, the teachers were discussing the support for the beginning teacher who was also present and one teacher asked the beginning teacher: “ Do you feel you have opportunities to become a leader?” The beginning teacher replied:

Yes I do, with your help also, I get pushed into areas which I have never been before which is fantastic actually. Like yesterday I have never been to a schools cross-country and all of a sudden I am into that area. But its things like that that make you push your boundaries. The other day I did the coin trail and took on a leadership role there. I have never run a coin trail in my life before, but all these things build up that leadership potential. I start with little things for myself because I am a beginning teacher, but maybe in the future I will be able to perform in a greater capacity.

Another teacher indicated a note of caution about giving teachers opportunities to develop their skills in the leadership area. She believed fully in giving others opportunities but she stated quite strongly that she felt she must then let go and let the other person do it in their way. She said:

But I think you have to be very careful when you hand over something for someone else to do that you don’t criticize them. You don’t give someone the responsibility to do something and then say ‘well you could have done it like this’ or ‘I would have

done it like this' You have to be very careful to make sure that the person feels they have done it and they have ownership for what they have done.

The teachers in this study therefore recognized that giving others the opportunities to develop their leadership skills was paramount and that, again, respect for the other person and their ideas ensured that they felt supported and encouraged but not directed.

#### *Support and Encouragement*

Support and encouragement by others was also seen as a very important part of the mix required to grow teacher leadership and teacher professionalism and seemed to go hand in hand with taking opportunities. One teacher in response to the question as to what helps teachers to become leaders and professionals stated it as this:

Through support and encouragement by others. Others who see that leadership there and putting support and professional development in. Working alongside the teachers and giving them support and setting them up for success. It's the confidence to know they can do it.

At a focus group interview the teachers were discussing how a collaborative work environment supports the work of the teacher. One teacher stated:

You feel supported, you feel that you are not trying to get through everything on your own, you have back up, which you know, that support is there for you, so all those things that have been given to you – useful feedback etc. and that develops your confidence.

These descriptions by teachers in the study showed that while the discussion centred around the support and encouragement for teachers as leaders and professionals, as the theme, it was very much seen as part of the whole that has an effect on student achievement and that these teachers had that at the forefront of all they did.

Another area that the teachers in this study identified as being crucial to schools successfully growing their teacher professionalism and teacher leadership was the importance of clarity of expectations.

#### *Clarity of expectations*

Clarity of expectation was attributed to those in formal leadership positions. One teacher stated: "Having that leader to follow. I think having clear expectations of what you are

expected to do as a teacher.” Another teacher went further to outline the role of the management leaders in defining expectations. She stated:

If you have effective leaders and professionals running the school then you are not having to second guess. You know that as leaders they are one step ahead of you. So things are rolling over all the time...All teachers are seeing and hearing the same message.

The clarity of expectations was further highlighted at a focus group interview where it was suggested that the shared values and beliefs that the school as a group have are clearly articulated at all times and this helps to understand and clarify expectations. One teacher believed:

High expectations are fostered through discussion. I think what we value and believe is often a big statement put in front of anything whether it's expectations of behaviour, expectations of classroom environment, or whether its expectations of professionalism as a teacher. We always have lots of discussions and teachers have ownership by having lots of discussion about what we value and believe in, in terms of those things. So everyone has that shared ownership and buy in.

The findings showed that the clarity of expectations within the school therefore was part of the values and beliefs that the school adhered to. The importance of these being explicit was seen as a way of helping schools grow teacher leadership and teacher professionalism. These important beliefs were seen as needing to be embedded into the school for them to be effective. Therefore, the staff of the school took part in certain practices to ensure these were part of all they did.

#### *Methods to embed schoolwide beliefs and practices*

Practices to embed beliefs into the work they do were also seen as something that helped schools grow teacher professionalism and teacher leadership. In this area, the role of professional development being ongoing and building on itself was something that was seen as critical. One teacher stated that: “Ongoing professional development. Discussions with staff members and even informal discussions will assist you develop your skills and also being proactive in your role.” Also, the way the school was set up to enhance the things it valued further assisted the professional development and practices of the teachers. One teacher stated:

Well I know things that we value here at this school as a staff we regularly talk about it, and the whole way we are set up as a staff, and the way we do our staff meetings and the way we talk about our personal development and the way we share in quality learning circles, all that contributes.

At a focus group interview the teachers were discussing the idea of the development of 'shared meanings' as a school wide practice. A teacher said:

We try to work as a whole school and keep the school's focus, so that some parts of whatever we are doing are given to everybody at the same time and we have discussion about the same thing and then move into our areas, or teams, or groups, or whatever to put it into place. We monitor what happens throughout the school and we discuss again and come back.

Continually articulating and discussing the work they were doing helped to ensure the embedding of the new ideas and directions into the work of all in the school community and schools needed to be set up for this to happen. This developed a confidence in the teachers and the work they do, and helped to grow teacher professionalism and teacher leadership. However, the culture also needed to be one in which they felt complete trust for this growth to be able to happen.

#### *The importance of trust as part of the school culture*

Being trusted in the work the teachers do, by the parents, children and colleagues was an important facet in the school environment that needed to be fostered by all in order for leadership and professionalism to be enhanced. The teachers talked about how trust and developing confidence in themselves and their work were closely linked. A teacher stated: "Support that teachers receive from each other enhances trust which in turn enhances confidence." The confidence one feels as a result of being part of a trusting environment was closely connected by one teacher to empowerment, and she felt that schools needed this environment in order to promote teacher professionalism and teacher leadership. She stated:

You feel empowered; confident...you are not second guessing yourself all the time...because you have that role of trust. If I had any niggling in the back of my head and something is not going right I don't feel threatened about going to the Principal and saying this is what's happening and I don't feel right about it can you give me some ideas to change it.

The role of the principal was discussed in terms of the trusting environment these teachers worked in. The principals were seen as colleagues who teachers could openly ask for suggestions to help them with a problem, this was valued. However, unfortunately sometimes trust takes time to build. One of the teachers said: “Trust takes time to build and consequently the feeling of being valued as a staff member takes time.” The feeling of being valued as a staff member is closely connected with the confidence one has in oneself and the task at hand, so the role of professional knowledge content played a big part in helping new teachers settle into a school and to feel valued. One teacher stated that as a professional she must have trust in making the right decisions for the learning of the students. She said:

I have trust in my own judgment about children’s learning. And I wouldn’t have had that in my first or second year of teaching. I think last year is when I could see I was making a difference and my methods were effective. I think it makes a huge difference because I felt in my old school I was trusted and I was valued as a teacher and that my knowledge was good. I haven’t been here at this school for long, but I am already making a difference and I can see how that affects my own confidence”

Confidence, trust and being valued were highly held by these teachers in their development, and were seen as important aspects of a school environment.

The teachers in this study believed that the aspects of role models, opportunities for development, support and encouragement, clarity of expectations, embedding of school wide beliefs and practices and the existence of a trusting environment were all extremely important aspects that needed to be provided for, in order for teacher professionalism and teacher leadership to flourish in a school. However these teachers also identified some issues surrounding this development.

## Issues surrounding the development of teacher leadership and teacher professionalism

There were three other areas that seemed to cause concern in the developing of teacher professionalism and teacher leadership and that the teachers in this study were concerned about. They were:

- Trust from community;
- Overload and change; and

- Time management.

### *Trust from the community*

The teachers in this study believed that trust from the community was an issue in developing their leadership and professional skills that was more relevant in today's schools than in earlier times. One teacher stated:

I guess some of the difficulties are that trust that parents have in you as a professional. That would be one of the biggest things because we find ourselves having to ask parents to trust us in our role as teacher professionals and it's not a given anymore.

One teacher felt that although teachers' qualifications have improved over recent years, parents do not always understand this. She said:

I think the biggest issue is an understanding by the community of our knowledge base, of our qualifications, of our tertiary training. I feel one of the issues is a lot of the community have come through the education system and related this education system to what they went through.

How parents experienced school seems to affect how they see schools today. The issue of trust from the community impacted on teachers workload and as a result many meetings and workshops were set up with parents throughout the year to help inform parents and to gather their views on topical issues. One teacher stated:

We are running workshops [with the parents]. We have three meetings during the year. We as teachers meet first. We share and then we meet with the parents. We share the philosophy. We offer and run workshops on new theories and new practices that we are putting into place within the school. So its sharing all of that knowledge so that everyone has an understanding and comfortable feeling about what's happening within the school.

The teachers in this study identified that they were in schools that went to great lengths to involve the parent community in the work they did and this caused other pressures such as the feeling of work overload sometimes.

### *Overload and change*

The issue of work overload and being able to cope with the complexities of change was something that many saw as an issue that sometimes hindered the development of their professional and leadership capabilities. One teacher stated: “Part of the impact is coping with all the requirements and demands from parents and children and leaders in the school and these are quite an issue because often I’ve felt overwhelmed by what has got to be done.”

This was discussed more fully at a focus group where it was stated by one teacher:

I think the whole issue of change is very complex. It’s complicated not only from the people driving to get change, but from the recipients of whatever you are doing. Some people are resistant to change and some people lap it up and some people are between the two ends... So I think the issue of change is extremely complex, and it’s not something that you can change in a hurry.

However, the teachers interviewed believed that challenging the issues that arose following a process of reflection and critique was a part of their role as a professional and leader, and this was accepted as part of the way schools worked. One teacher stated:

I think we overload ourselves...sometimes there is too much happening for people to take on board quickly and currently teachers are feeling disillusioned but on Monday we are going to revisit some of the stuff we do [as a whole staff]. I think because it is coming from the school we are being listened to.

While the teachers did have times when they felt overloaded there were channels built within the school that allowed them to address the concerns they had in order to make the situation easier. Also, while there was a whole school focus to some of these concerns there was also a recognition that the individual teacher needed to take ownership of some of the difficulty and develop their own skills of time management.

### *Time management*

The issue of time was seen by all in the study as a problem as they tried to grapple with the complexities of developing their leadership and professionalism in the school environment. Time management was seen as an important skill teacher leaders and professionals needed in order to carry out their professional requirements. A beginning teacher stated:

Having the time to do everything you want to do, I suppose as a leader and a professional. There are so many different things I think of that I want to do in my class, let alone out of class, and I probably only get 70% done, because you don’t have

time to get things off the ground. I think time management with everything else that happens in the school, like meetings and after school commitments, I think are preventing many teachers in reaching their full potential as leaders or professionals within their work as there are just not enough hours in the day.

The feeling of not getting everything done in the classroom was reiterated by another teacher who had developed strategies to manage the time she had. She said:

Often I've felt overwhelmed by what has got to be done. So as a professional I just have to make decisions about how I am going to pick my way through everything that has to be done and what form is it going to be done in.

For the younger teachers it was evident that the role modeling from those around them in terms of time management was something that inspired them. One teacher stated:

Time management I think is a huge thing...I notice my tutor teacher as an example. Her teaching is first, and then she puts everyone else first to help other people or to show other people or see other people getting along before she worries about herself. To keep a balance between all these things and carry out your leadership role.

It appears from the findings that while the teachers in this study recognized that time management was an issue in developing their professional and leadership capabilities they also had adapted methods to cope with the pressures on them, and improve their time management skills.

In summary the main aspects surrounding teacher professionalism and teacher leadership that surfaced during the discussions were wide ranging and complex due to the variability of the aspects. The importance of a professional culture in the school that was supported by professional relationships, a professional responsibility toward the job of teaching, high personal and professional standards and the overriding importance of professional content knowledge were identified as major components of teacher professionalism. Leadership style, collegial practice, classroom practice and positive relationship practices all affected the outcomes of teacher leadership within the school. There were definite links drawn between teacher professionalism and teacher leadership and the teachers in this study identified several areas that supported the growing of their professionalism and their leadership. They also identified the areas of trust from the community, work overload and the impacts of change, and time management as being issues they felt that impacted on their day to day work. The following chapter discusses these findings against the literature.

## Chapter Five – Discussion

This chapter provides a discussion of the findings of the study in relation to the literature and research discussed in Chapter Two.

### Teacher Professionalism

The teachers interviewed identified four aspects of professionalism that contributed to the development of their professional status:

- The role of professional development of professional content knowledge;
- The role of personal and professional standards;
- The role of a professional responsibility; and
- The role of relationships in supporting teacher professionalism.

I will discuss each of these in turn and then sum up the factors surrounding these that impact on the development of teacher professionalism.

#### *The role of professional development of professional knowledge*

The teachers all identified that professional content knowledge was a critical aspect of the role of a teacher and they recognized that this needed to be evident in their classroom performance in order for a teacher to gain credibility as a professional and a teacher leader. This supports the statement by Morley (1999), who said that professionalism was about performance in the classroom and so professionalism is tied directly to the teachers' classroom practice. Busher and Saran (1995) went further than Morley (1999) as they believed that professionalism is about quality of performance. The teachers in this study also believed that quality of performance linked directly to the improvement of student achievement and they felt these links became even more refined when they sought new knowledge in order to improve their teaching quality. Like Caldwell (2002) found in his work, the teachers in this study saw that the focus on student achievement was the core business of the school. They stated that they needed to be informed about the trends happening in education but to not be caught up in things just because they were trendy. The teachers were committed to continuous professional learning which Hargreaves, (2003) stated was so important to teacher professionalism and teacher leadership. There were many ways in which new knowledge was gathered and disseminated within the schools in the study,

but all methods were seen as valid and assisting the cause of improving outcomes for students. The schools used a variety of methods, for example, individual and group staff course attendance, staff meetings, celebration mornings, quality learning circles and the intranet, and the teachers involved had experience at working with many different groups within the school. This supports the work by Harris and Muijs (2005) who stated that when the school is organized into groups with the focus on student achievement then professionalism becomes a focus. This cross- grouping was seen as beneficial and the main influence on this happening effectively was the development of collegiality and professional collaboration at a high level as outlined by Hall (2001). These organizations within the school helped the teachers to learn to teach in new ways and as Hargreaves, (2003) highlighted was so important in the development of the ‘new professionalism.’

#### *The role of personal and professional standards*

When asked about the facets of professionalism most teachers made reference to standards of behaviour and expertise that were either assumed to be part of their role or were clearly explicit in documentation in the school. High personal standards of dress, professional knowledge and communication skills were seen as important aspects of the professional teacher. These high personal standards also were respected, as the teachers identified that they felt good about their chosen profession and, as Chincotta (1992) stated, that the professional status they believed they had, affected how they felt about themselves. The teachers interviewed believed that their personal and professional standards were also affected by their own values and beliefs. Those interviewed believed that teachers needed to understand their own values and belief systems in order to be able to work professionally with others in a collegial environment and this is supported in the work of Henderson and Thompson (2003) who stated that teacher leaders need the ability to reconcile their own values and beliefs to that of the school community. The teachers in this study believed that professionals required an intrinsic desire to perform well as discussed by Argyris (2000) when he stated that people are intrinsically rewarded because internal energies are activated. The Interim Teacher Professional Standards as set down by The New Zealand Ministry of Education (1998) were seen as only baseline criteria by the teachers in this study and they aspired to be working at a higher level than these demanded. Goldring and Greenfield (2002)

stated that such performance standards could cause a tension because such standardization could work as a deprofessionalising force. However, this was not the case in the two schools in this study but could perhaps be in other school contexts.

The teachers in this study also stated that clarity of expectations was an important point in developing a school culture that supported teacher professionalism and teacher leadership and that the Teachers Professional Performance Standards helped to clarify the expectations of what the work of the teacher was about. They also identified that the school needed to go further in outlining expectations of standards of personal and professional behaviour and that teachers needed to be encouraged to further develop their academic abilities and continually be enquiring into practices with the view to improving them. It was evident these teachers believed that they needed to participate in deep cognitive learning as outlined by Hargreaves (2003), in order to continue to improve and extend their professionalism (Hoyle, 1995).

Hall (2001) discussed the need for personal attributes to be displayed toward students and families and the teachers in this study believed that as professionals they were required to display the personal attributes of confidentiality, reliability, integrity and being non-judgmental, in working with all stakeholders in the school.

There was a concern around the variance of professional standards that teachers bring to the school and the teachers in this study identified that they preferred working with others who had high standards of professional behaviour, that is more likely to lead to continuing professional development as outlined by Hoyle (1995).

Therefore, the critical importance of personal and professional standards that were highlighted in the findings supported the literature on this topic.

#### *The role of professional responsibility*

The teachers in this study all recognised the ethical nature of the job they do which was also outlined as important by Hall (2001). This was seen as a priority in all their work. They felt professionally responsible to ensure confidentiality in their work and that the acceptance of cultural diversity, that has become so important in schools today, required an ethical approach also. This too was supported by Gunter (2001), when she stated that teachers needed to be aware of social and political issues and be all the time pushing for social justice and democratic freedom. Hargreaves (2003) also discussed that teachers today need to be

counterpoints to the knowledge economy in striving for social justice and democratic freedoms. This was identified by the teachers in this study as being part of the professional responsibility of their job. It was recognized that this is a lofty aspiration and therefore working in teams and the collective responsibility of teaching today was supported.

Many of those interviewed referred to the collective responsibility of their job in order to achieve high student outcomes. Silva, Gimbert and Nolan (2000) commented in their work that the 'third wave' of teacher leadership carries with it the concept of collaborating to improve the teaching and learning and that therefore the concept of professional responsibility and teacher leadership are closely intertwined. The schools in this study had set up systems within, that allowed for the embedding of school wide beliefs and practices as part of the developing of the collective responsibility. Teachers were encouraged to work in many different teams within the school and all were explicitly aware of school vision and values and articulating these was part of what the teachers did each day as was noted by Mulford and Silins (2003) when they stated that organizational learning was about sharing and monitoring the mission of the school. All teachers needed to have some responsibility for every child in the school and that the collective initiatives had higher impact when all took responsibility. These systems in place in the schools developed a collective responsibility towards the job of teaching. This is supported by Harris and Muijs (2005) when they discussed the collective capability within a school they believed is important to have for a collective focus in building leadership capacity within a school. The collective responsibility also had an affect on how they worked with each other and these collaborative approaches, to work and to collegiality, were accepted as the norm. This was also noted by Hargreaves (2003) who stated that teachers must develop a collective intelligence and refer to it in their interactions with each other and their work. Sharing of new knowledge was seen as a responsibility of the professional nature of the job.

However, too much change and the areas surrounding the change management processes were seen as areas of potential concern in this study. Some teachers identified that at times they felt overwhelmed by the change happening and this is also discussed by Hargreaves (2003) in his work in schools in North America. However, the collegial nature of their work, the support systems in place and the confidence to challenge such potential threat, all allowed them to take professional responsibility and do something about it and this too is supported by the work of Hargreaves (2003).

Therefore, in this study it was evident that the teachers interviewed believed they had a responsibility to the professional nature of their job and that this responsibility was important in developing teacher professionalism and teacher leadership. Due to the fact that the job of teaching was seen as a collective responsibility, the role of positive professional relationships became another important facet in the development of teacher professionalism and teacher leadership. This was supported in the literature by Leithwood, Begley & Cousins (2004) when they identified that there is a cohesiveness in the staff when there is a strong sense of community.

#### *The role of professional relationships*

The teachers believed that effective professional relationships played an important part in the overall development of teacher professionalism. This lends support to what Hargreaves (2003) stated, when he said teachers will need to foster trust with those they engage with and treat parents as partners in learning. Hargreaves (2003) also stated that teachers need to work in collegial teams and this too was evident in the practices described by the participants of this study. Ryan (2006) outlined in his work that working in collegial teams requires a certain level of trust and respect, and this was supported when the teachers identified that respect for others was highly regarded. The teachers also stated that having high levels of respect for each other has a spin-off effect in the classroom where students see what is modelled and include it in their patterns of behaviours and this is supported by Crowther et al (2002) when they stated that mutualism supports a respectful environment.

The development of trust in the working environment was seen as an important part of the school culture and this led to developing confidence with the teachers. Crowther et al (2002) stated that the 'new professionalism' needs to have its basis in empowerment, support, trust and mutual recognition. The teachers interviewed in this study all believed there were high levels of trust amongst the staff of the schools in the study, but developing trusting relationships with the community seemed to be a continuing issue today and that schools had to work hard at this. They identified that the programmes of work that the school put in place to enlighten and assist the community to nurture the learning of the students was an added workload and this sometimes caused difficulties. This supports the work by Crowther et al (2002) who identified this aspect in their work and said there needs to be both public and professional acceptance of teacher leaders. The schools had set up clear strategies and

avenues for teachers to seek support from other staff members when faced with an issue of trust from the school community.

Bush and Middlewood (2005) identified there are benefits of being able to work with a variety of different people and that by doing so professional knowledge and problem solving skills were enhanced, and this concept was supported by the findings. According to Harris and Muijs (2005), there are further spin-offs from working with others and this was supported by the teachers in this study when they identified an improvement in their own knowledge of what was going on in other parts of the school, and the implications of this for their class. Also the teachers recognised their own social skill development was enhanced in this process.

Another way professional relationships were enhanced in the schools studied was through the development of mentoring and coaching leadership. While they felt they were at the early stages of learning about coaching relationships, mentoring of others had been a part of the school culture, from the mentoring of beginning teachers through to the mentoring of new people in formal leadership roles. However, some of the facets of coaching leadership as outlined by Robertson (2005) as being the basis of educational leadership were evident in the work of these teachers when they referred to their ability to critically reflect on their practice and participate in collaborative engagement to improve their practice. The role of reflection on practice was seen as a major part of the professional role as was the impact of the role of the principal.

Mulford and Silins (2003) noted if organizational learning was to take place, principals needed to be transformative and distributive. The participants believed that the development of collegial relationships was something that was evident in the principals of the schools in this study, and that these people not only modelled it, they also articulated it daily as part of the way of working. This was identified in the literature by Waters et al., (2003) when they discussed the need for principals to understand how the people in the organization are connected to others and assist in this.

Teachers saw that the main outcome of developing teacher professionalism with each and every teacher in the school positively enhanced the school culture and this in turn saw an improvement in student achievement as the school culture focused on improved student achievement as its main theme. As Busher and Saran (1995) and also Harris and Muijs (2005) identified in their work, the main measure of effective professional development is the focus

on student achievement. The teachers in this study identified that if professional knowledge, standards, responsibility and relationships were in place, then ownership of the direction would be a collective manifestation and it would help the school to be propelled forward. This was identified in the work of Hall (2001) when he suggested professional collaboration and collegiality extends professionalism as teachers develop the collective responsibility towards their clients.

The teachers also recognized that challenging issues is a viable facet of the teachers' job and is closely linked to the fact that they were valued for their opinions as collegial professionals. As a result challenging issues was able to be kept separate from the personal aspects. This was identified by Levy (2006) when looking at attributes for leaders of the future. It was interesting to note that the teachers believed that as these things were in place to enhance teachers' professionalism, teacher leadership was a natural spin off, as teachers took leadership initiatives and continued the upward spiral of improving their role, the school culture and student achievement.

## Teacher Leadership

In this section I will discuss the findings in terms of these headings:

- The role of leadership style;
- The role of collegial practice;
- The role of classroom practice;
- The practices of teacher leadership; and
- The outcomes of developing teacher leadership in the school.

### *The role of leadership style*

For teachers to be able to develop their own leadership capabilities, the participants in this study believed the type of formal leadership in place in the school was a crucial piece of the puzzle. Noonan (2003) identified that shared leadership tends to encourage inclusiveness and creativity and the teachers in this study supported this as they believed a more sharing of the leadership was empowering for them and that this assisted in teachers developing ownership for the direction of the school. Murphy (2005) refers to the idea that where the position of power was situated led to the role of influence as critical in developing school culture. This was supported in this study as teacher leaders were seen as a positive part of the school culture with important information to share and learn from each other. The participants in

this study discussed that teachers were well placed to lead each other as teachers needed to be able to understand the complexities of the job in the context they were working in. This was outlined by Robertson and Strachan (2001) when they stated that teacher leadership came from 'doing' and 'being'. The support and encouragement of others was identified as being an extremely important facet in the school's ability to grow teacher leadership and teacher professionalism as this led to the development of new initiatives as teachers sought out feedback from others around the work they were doing. The sharing of leadership that was identified in these schools is discussed by Harris & Muijs (2005) as a distributed leadership model and they suggest that collaboration and collegiality are central to this model. Therefore, the role of collegial practice has an important bearing on developing teacher leadership capabilities.

#### *The role of collegial practice*

The participants in this study recognized that collegial practice has a large influence on the development of teacher leadership just as it does on the development of teacher professionalism. The discussions with the teachers around collegial practice showed that their main focus was on student achievement and working with others to improve this was the core business as they saw it. As Street and Temperley (2005) outlined, being encouraged and supported to work together and take the collective responsibility of raising student achievement requires an environment of collegiality. There was an orientation towards respect for others in nearly all of the discussions that took place with the participants of this study and an encouragement for those who took on initiatives. It was also identified that working alongside colleagues in a collaborative way helps deepen knowledge and therefore a heightened awareness to practice develops, as Murphy (2005) stated. This heightened awareness to teaching practice then supports the teacher in furthering their development, and new knowledge is formed, therefore the co-constructing of knowledge is an important facet of these teachers work. Leithwood, Begley and Cousins (2004) identified that collegial practice also ensures that the beliefs and values that the school subscribes to are continually being articulated by all and these become a living part of the school culture and this was evident in the discussions.

The teachers in this study also stated that their development had been affected in some way by role models they had had in teaching and this was outlined also by Clutterbuck

(2003). Leaders in the wider education forum were seen as role models as well the formal leaders within the schools. Mentors were also seen as role models and it was identified that the mentor who guides, facilitates and coaches a teacher had a very important role to play in the development of teacher professionalism and teacher leadership. The teachers identified that they learn the art of teacher leadership from being a teacher and working alongside other professionals. As Waters, Marzano and McNulty (2003) identified, effective leadership is not only knowing about what to do, but when, how and why to do it as well, and the teachers in this study identified that these skills were heightened by the working in collegial teams, with role models around them. Therefore, my findings around the role of collegiality are supported by the literature.

#### *The role of classroom practice*

This study found that teacher leaders needed to display excellent classroom practice and that the credibility that developed from this ensured that they would be seen as a leader within their school community. Harris and Muijs (2003) stated that improvements in learning are more likely to be achieved when leadership is instructionally focused and situated closest to the classroom. This was as Gunter (2005) also identified, when she said that educational leadership is integral to the learning processes and outcomes. Murphy (2006) also stated that teachers need to identify that teacher leadership begins in the classroom and it was clear the teachers in this study recognized this. They believed that their colleagues not only demonstrated excellence, but they and their colleagues were always willing to share their expertise with others. Raising student achievement was seen as their core business and so the teachers were willing to seek ideas from others and develop innovative strategies that they were willing to share. Crowther et al, (2002), Fullan (2003), Gunter (2005), Hargreaves (2003), Hord (1997), Murphy (2005), and Robertson (2005) all identified that educational leadership is about leading learning so the findings of this study support the literature.

There were a variety of methods used that supported the sharing of helpful and effective strategies for raising student achievement. The most readily identifiable were the professional learning groups or teams that worked within the school and these were systematically set up to support this priority. Also informal networks and teacher talk within their working day at school also assisted in helping teachers find new and innovative ways to raise the achievement levels in all students. Therefore, the credibility of the teacher in the work he/she

does in the classroom is an important facet and also the notion of “sliding the doors” (Silva, Gimbert, & Nolan, 2000) or deprivatising of practice has a crucial role here too, and was evident in this study as the teachers shared their expertise with one another.

### *Practices of teacher leadership*

The teachers in this study acknowledged that everyone was a learner and therefore they were open to new learning themselves. In acknowledging everyone as learners they identified that they valued others and their contributions, and that this was part of working collegially and this was also outlined by Harris and Muijs (2005).

As was noted by Fraser and Spiller (2001) reflection was a very important tool that the teachers used in order to continue their own development and that reflecting and analysis were constantly part of what they did. This was also referred to by Bush and Middlewood (2005) when they identified that critical reflection cannot be practiced in isolation but needed to be part of a community of reflective practice.

The teachers in this study used strategies of modelling to assist others in their learning, and recognised they were supportive of each other and these facets of teacher leadership were also identified by Crowther et al., (2005) who also added that this helped to bring authenticity to their teaching. Murphy (2005) noted that in order for teachers to thrive in an environment of cooperation and collaboration they needed to recognize that learning is co-constructed. This was supported in this research as the teachers believed that ownership by all was critical in any new development taking hold and that staff “buy-in” was something they consciously sought when discussing issues or innovations.

Murphy (2005) also discussed that teacher leadership thrives in an environment of community. This was supported as the teacher leaders in this study referred to their self satisfaction from assisting others, be it staff, parents or students and this service aspect of their job was something that supported their inner drive. Murphy (2005) also stated that teacher leadership had three variables of commitment, efficacy and satisfaction that made the difference as to whether teacher leadership was highly successful or not and these were evident in the teachers in this study as a strength. Henderson and Thompson (2003) stated that values are the link between emotion and behaviour and the teachers recognized that their own values and beliefs played a very important part in how they viewed the world and therefore they needed to understand their own values and beliefs in order to be able to accept

and work with the diversity they faced everyday. Crowther et al (2002) identified that teacher leadership facilitates principled action to achieve whole school success and it is one's values and beliefs that drive principled action. The teachers in this study showed they recognized the importance of their own values and beliefs and ethical action was something they believed in.

Southworth (2005) identified the need to develop lots of leaders in a school to so improve the quality of learning and teaching and therefore teachers needed to be afforded opportunities to further develop their skills and the schools in this study set up systems so that this was part of the way they worked.

Time was an issue the teachers felt they faced in the schools in this study and there were various ways that these schools dealt with this. Murphy (2005) also identified time as being essential for allowing teacher leadership to function effectively, therefore time management became a fundamental practice of developing teacher leadership. The systems set up within the school and the collegial goodwill helped them overcome this to a certain degree, but it was certainly something of which they needed to be constantly aware.

#### *The outcomes of developing teacher leadership in the school*

The participants felt that teacher leadership was an integral part of the work they did and this is supported by Gunter (2005) and Robertson & Strachan (2001) when they identified that professional teachers function as leaders. Crowther et al., (2002) noted that the development of teacher leadership was seen as the vehicle for the development of the collective responsibility of the job of teaching and helping schools cope with the complexities of society today. Developing teacher leadership through all the facets described also enhanced further the leadership skills of the teachers and encouraged reflection and development of the five commonalities that effective and successful leaders require that Goldberg (2001) identified. The teachers maintained; a strong belief in the importance of the work the teachers were involved in; the courage to make challenges if necessary and take on the harder aspects of the role; the belief in teaching for inclusion; a strong desire to be extremely effective, and the knowledge that they needed to be continually enquiring into their practice in order to improve it. Therefore these outcomes of strong support and development for teacher leadership in a school are important to note.

## Implications of the findings for professional development

The teachers in this study all recognized that leadership and professionalism were very closely linked and that as a teacher they needed to exhibit both in all their actions and interactions with others. They believed that one of these concepts reinforced the other and so teachers need to be aware of this partnership in their career make up. Therefore, schools need to include in their professional development work opportunities for teachers to explore these concepts and understand the importance of being explicitly aware of their impact.

As Murphy (2005) too stated in his work, teacher leadership is about greater empowerment, which expands a teacher's professional status, and therefore teachers can realise their professional worth. The teachers in this study identified that they were empowered by the many systems and relationships set up within the schools and this helped to enhance their professional development. Therefore, schools need to set up many, varied ways teachers can usefully explore the core business of student achievement and teachers at the same time develop their skills of working with others.

The teachers in this study recognised that the effect of teacher leadership without an emphasis on the professional nature of the job is shortsighted, as the nature of leadership is about influence on others and without the high standards and expectations of professionalism such leadership will falter. As a result, all teachers in the school need to be encouraged and supported in their development of the professional side of their role and given the confidence to take leadership that will in turn further enhance their professionalism. The development of teacher professionalism and teacher leadership then should lead to school improvement as new knowledge and practices are taken on and student achievement is positively enhanced. Teacher leadership should then be seen as leadership for school improvement as outlined by Murphy (2005) and Harris and Muijs (2005).

The teachers identified that open communication, collaboration and trust were important parts of the workplace and the way they worked, and these facets assisted them in being able to deal with the disruption that change sometimes causes. It was clear from the discussions that the teachers felt they had a part to play in constructing the way forward for school improvement. As Lambert (1998) outlined leadership for school improvement is a form of constructivism, as building leadership capacity requires a constructivist approach when teachers learn together through interaction, discussion and professional dialogue. These

facets of school culture need to be explicitly articulated by all members of the school community and the culture of respect for others nurtured. School personal need to be aware of how they demonstrate what they value and professional development exploring this concept would be of benefit.

It appears that developing teacher leadership is closely related to re-culturing as outlined by Harris and Muijs (2005) and as according to their findings there are four conclusions that can be drawn from the developing of teacher professionalism and teacher leadership as seen in this study:

1. Common or shared beliefs are very important;
2. Teachers need to experience extrinsic and intrinsic rewards for the job they do;
3. The school environment needs to foster trust and respect; and
4. Structures and systems can support a culture of collaboration when the above three items are in place.

Therefore, teacher leadership needs to be consciously nurtured within the school at all levels. Schools will be assisted in their improvement journey by a strong focus on teachers taking leadership as there will be a central focus on teaching and learning and this will lead to the development of a 'new professionalism' as outlined by Hargreaves (2003) where teachers:

- Promote deep cognitive learning;
- Learn to teach in ways they were not taught;
- Commit to continuous professional learning;
- Work and learn in collegial teams;
- Treat parents as partners in learning;
- Develop and draw on the collective intelligence;
- Build a capacity for change and risk; and
- Foster trust in processes.

## Recommendations for further study

Although this is a very small scale study into teacher professionalism and teacher leadership in New Zealand schools, I believe it has identified some interesting findings that reiterate some of the findings of recent international research into this area. The schools chosen in this

study were those with forward thinking principals who consciously promoted the development of teacher professionalism and teacher leadership and as a result these schools were recognised by the profession as highly performing schools. The current emphasis on sustainable leadership to improve student achievement levels signals an area for further study. A longitudinal study of one of the schools over a five year period could investigate if the sustainability of school improvement for higher student achievement levels was able to be maintained through the building of the leadership capacity within the school, by the conscious development of teacher professionalism and teacher leadership. A further longitudinal study over a longer time frame, perhaps eight years would be investigating the development of the beginning teachers in this study as teacher leaders and following their career to see how high levels of professionalism and leadership capability propel them forward.

## Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate the close link between teacher leadership and teacher professionalism. The development of leadership capacity within a school supports the development of teacher professionalism as teachers engage in higher levels of professional activity. The culture of the school has a crucial part to play in enabling the development of teacher leadership as it requires sharing of power as being the norm, and the collective responsibility of the job of teaching as the ‘way we do things around here.’ Each teacher takes the initiative to enquire into their own practices and those of others in order to improve the achievement of the students and this informs the collective enquiry and development. For teachers to take this initiative they need to feel truly empowered and again the school culture needs to support this stance. It is of significance that in the two schools in this study even the beginning teachers felt that sense of empowerment and viewed the development of their leadership abilities as an important part of their professionalism. As a result of the collective responsibility the teachers in this study were better able to cope with the complexities of school life today. They were able to draw on recent research findings and to co-construct new knowledge together in order to address the needs and desires of the communities and improve the outcomes for their students. A significant link to being able to work together in such ways was the importance of the human qualities of respect for themselves and others,

reliability, integrity, trust and caring. These personal attributes were highly regarded and seen as necessary in a working environment that was collaborative and able to address matters in an in- depth way.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

### Introduction

The literature on leadership in schools shows there have been huge changes in the last thirty years. Leadership in schools has moved from the autocratic type leadership of the Principal to a more sharing of the leadership responsibilities. Alongside this, there has been a change in the professional role of the teacher. There is now a need for teachers to share knowledge and be more collegial and collaborative in their work. These changes have happened in response to the societal changes that have been impacted on schools and education in general. I am carrying out a study on teacher professionalism and teacher leadership, and, I would like to talk with you today about your job here in this school as a teacher, a leader and a professional. I am interested in finding out your views about how these things affect you. Do you feel comfortable about this?

To begin then:

1. How long have you been teaching for?
2. How long have you been teaching in this school?
3. What is your understanding of the term “teacher professionalism” ?
4. Can you give me an example of this in action.  
Probes – knowledge, collegiality, support for mission and vision
5. What is your understanding of the term “teacher leadership”?
6. Do you see yourself as a teacher leader?  
Probes- why?/why not?
7. Can you give me an example of this from your own experience.  
Probes – inside the classroom and beyond it, team work, responsibility.
8. What do you think are some of the issues which you face as a teacher in these two roles?  
Probes – school support, trust, empowerment.

9. Do you believe there is a link between teacher leadership and teacher professionalism?

Probe – Can you explain this?

10. What do you believe helps teachers to become leaders and professionals?

Probes - professional development role, inner values and beliefs, school role.

11. Do you think teacher professionalism influences the way things are done in this school.?

What does this mean for you?

12. How do the issues of teacher leadership and teacher professionalism impact on the daily life in this school.

What does this mean for you?

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today, and share your ideas and beliefs. I have found this a very valuable time for me and it will contribute very positively to the work I am doing.

## APPENDIX B

### TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AT FOCUS GROUP

1) The role of professional development of professional knowledge in teacher professionalism.

- Question: (a) How do you keep up with current research findings and trends that impact upon your professional knowledge?  
(b) How do you, as a group, develop the shared meanings of new knowledge?

2) The role of personal and professional standards in teacher professionalism?

- Question: (a) How is the development of high expectations of personal standards fostered in this school?  
(b) In what way, if at all, do the Professional Performance Standards work to effectively enhance your professionalism?

3) The role of relationships in supporting teacher professionalism.

- Question: (a) How does the fact that teaching today is about a “collective responsibility” impact upon the development of effective relationships?  
(b) In what way is the development of effective relationships consciously fostered in the school?

4) The role of the collegial nature of teaching today impacting on teacher leadership.

- Question: How does this school ( system) allow for collegiality to be an effective arrangement for the development of leadership capabilities for all teachers?

5) The role of leadership style – sharing/ distributed/ hierarchical

- Question: How does the style of formal leadership ( i.e.

distributed roles) in this school lead to more empowerment for all?

6) The role of classroom practice in teacher leadership.

Question: How does exemplary/credible/good classroom practice impact on other teachers, in terms of developing your teacher leadership and what role does this student achievement play in this?

7) The practices of teacher leadership were outlined as ability to implement change, challenge issues of concern, respect others, trust in yourself, modeling, being a role model and valuing others. These all contribute towards effective relationships.

Question: (a) How do effective relationships and a collaborative work environment support the work of the teacher?  
(b) How do effective relationships within the staff affect student achievement?

8) Your responses to the links between teacher professionalism and teacher leadership showed you believed they were inextricably linked.

Question: In light of the above what does the professional teacher look like in this school?

9) From the above scenarios it appears that schools need to work on facets to grow teacher leadership and teacher professionalism.

Question: Why is there a need to develop leadership capacity within a school?

10) The issues surrounding teacher leadership and teacher professionalism centred on;

- relationships and trust from community/ parents.
- support from seniors within the school
- time constraints and overload of work expectations
- ensuring shared meanings of the expectations of the school.

- coping with change

Question: Are there any strategies that this school uses that serves to support these factors in a positive way and lessen the burden?

11) We have talked a lot about school systems that support teacher professionalism and teacher leadership but the intrinsic attitudes of the individual teacher have an important bearing in all this. It is recognized that teachers are all very unique, and have different values and beliefs. Many of you made reference to ones values and beliefs as being important.

Question: Why is it important to understand your own values and beliefs when you are working as a teacher?

## APPENDIX C

### LETTER TO PRINCIPAL AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES

443 Grove Road,

R.D.5.

Hamilton.

10 February, 2006

Attention : The Principal and Board of Trustees

..... School

Dear Sirs/ Mesdames,

My name is Jill Lunn and I am a Masters student at Waikato University, completing a Master of Educational Leadership degree. I am at present pursuing a research thesis on the topic of "Teacher Professionalism and Teacher Leadership – How do teachers view these concepts." The literature on leadership in schools shows there have been huge changes in the last thirty years. Leadership in schools has moved from the autocratic type leadership of the Principal to a more sharing of the leadership responsibilities. Alongside this, there has been a change in the professional role of the teacher. There is now a need for teachers to share knowledge and be more collegial and collaborative in their work. These changes have happened in response to the societal changes that have been impacted on schools and education in general. I am interested in finding out the teachers views on teacher leadership and teacher professionalism. I would like to be able to include your school in my research project and I seek your support and agreement for this as per our phone discussion on ..... I ask if I may be able to interview teachers in your school on their ideas surrounding the issues of teacher leadership and teacher professionalism, and how it impacts on the work they do in your school.

I would like to interview five teachers in your school. These interviews would be audio taped and transcribed, and the interview should be no longer than 30- 45 minutes. I will need to conduct these interviews in the school in late February and early March, 2006. Pseudonyms would be used in all documentation relating to this work and I would go to all possible lengths to endeavor to maintain anonymity for all those involved. As there will be a

focus group following interview I am unable to guarantee anonymity, but the individual data will be kept anonymous with the use of pseudonyms. There will be two schools involved in this research but you will not know the name of the other school and the data from both schools' participants will be mixed together which will help with overall anonymity.

With your approval, I would like to have a ten minute meeting with all staff to explain the study and seek their support. At this meeting I will inform all teachers that I wish to have participants from this school, and they have a right to decline if they so wish. If too many teachers choose to be part of the study then I will select the participants according to a variety of levels taught, a variety of seniority in terms of identified leadership and a variety of years of service. Also at this meeting I will distribute letters to all teachers outlining the study and the process. The teachers will also receive a consent form that they can fill in if they wish to be part of the study. I will collect the consent forms from your school on a given date. I would greatly appreciate your support in this.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my request.

Yours sincerely,

Jill Lunn

Postscript:

If you wish to contact either of my supervisors about this study their contacts are below

Supervisors – Ms Peggy Lee – Waikato University. Ph: 078384500 extn 6970

Associate Professor Jan Robertson – Waikato University. Ph: 078381983

extn 7839

[peggy@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:peggy@waikato.ac.nz)     [jan@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:jan@waikato.ac.nz)

## APPENDIX D

### LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

443 Grove Road,  
R.D.5  
Hamilton  
10 February, 2006

To The Teachers  
..... School

Re: Research Proposal -Teacher Leadership- Teacher Professionalism – How do teachers view these concepts?

My name is Jill Lunn, and I am a Masters student at Waikato University, completing a Master Of Educational Leadership. At present I am pursuing a research study on teacher professionalism and teacher leadership. I would like to have your contributions towards my research thesis. I am interested in how you view the concepts of professionalism and leadership, as I believe your ideas and experiences would benefit this research. My data collection would be by audio taped interview and I would endeavor to maintain anonymity to your contributions. As there will be a focus group I am unable to guarantee anonymity, however it would be prudent that following the focus group the names of others involved were not disclosed. There will be two schools involved in this research, but you will not know the name of the other school and the data from both schools' participants will be mixed together which will help with anonymity. The individual data will be kept anonymous with the use of pseudonyms. The interview would take about 30 -45 minutes and would be at a time suitable to you. I would tape the interview to allow for correct transcribing following the interview, and I would send you a transcript of the interviews before publication in order for you to check the information. All documentation relating to this study would have pseudonyms used in order to protect anonymity. I intend to carry out the interviews during

late February and early March, with a focus group discussion in March. The findings will be completed by June 2006. I would give a copy of the research document to the school following completion.

If you would like to participate in this research could you please fill in the attached permission slip and return it to me in the stamped addressed envelope enclosed, by 22 , February, 2006.

You have a right to decline, and doing so will not affect my study. I thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Jill Lunn

Postscript:

If you wish to contact either of my supervisors about this study their contacts are below

Supervisor –Ms Peggy Lee – Waikato University. Ph: 078384500 extn 6970

Associate Professor Jan Robertson – Waikato University. Ph: 078381983

extn 7839

[peggy@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:peggy@waikato.ac.nz)

[jan@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:jan@waikato.ac.nz)

## APPENDIX E

### CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEW

Teacher Leadership- Teacher Professionalism.- How do teachers view the concepts?

I \_\_\_\_\_ wish to be part of your research investigation into the issues surrounding teacher leadership and teacher professionalism.

I am available for interview (time to be arranged) during late February/ March. I would prefer my interview to be on \_\_\_\_\_(date), at \_\_\_\_\_ (time)

I understand that every endeavor to maintain anonymity will be followed, and that the information given will remain confidential to the researcher. I also understand there will be no reference to me or this school in any part of the document that is produced, or any documentation or information surrounding this study. I understand that the researcher will maintain privacy with the tapes following interview and that the tapes will be kept secure at all times.

\_\_\_\_\_ signed

## APPENDIX F

### LETTER OF REPLY TO CONSENT

443 Grove Road,  
R.D.5.  
Hamilton.  
12 March, 2006

Dear -----

Thank you for your consent to participate in my study. I would like to interview you on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_. The interview should only take about 30- 45 minutes. Should this time not be suitable, we can make another time. Please contact me on phone number 0274985134, so we can finalize your interview time. Thanks for all your support in this venture.

Yours sincerely,

Jill Lunn.