PROBLEMATISING STUDENT LEADERSHIP

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Declaration

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This Dissertation entitled **'Problematising Student Leadership'** is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Unitec Degree of Master of Educational Leadership and Management.

<u>CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION</u>

- I confirm that this Dissertation represents my own work.

- The contribution of supervisors and others in this work was consistent with the Unitec Regulations and Policies.

- Research for this work has been conducted in accordance with the Unitec Research Ethics Committee Policy and Procedures, and has fulfilled any requirements set out for this project by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee. Research Ethics Committee Approval Number 2009.973.

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ABSTRACT

Duignan (2006) argued that school leaders had to "work with others and through others to achieve their organisation's vision and goals" (p.22), while Hallinger & Heck (2002) discussed the importance of coherence between the two. However, neither included students in their arguments, but rather concerned themselves with coherence between school leadership and teachers. Duignan (2006) pointed out that communication of the vision is the key to successful coherence. He discussed the importance of values within a vision and argued that, "Clarity of purpose based on a shared set of values and expectations would seem to be fundamental to effective educational leadership" (p.22).

Students and student leaders within a school are stakeholders also and as well as observing coherence of vision between the school leadership and the teaching staff, one would expect to see coherence between the school leadership and the students, particularly within the student leaders of a school.

This research looked at that area of student leadership and considered to what extent school leadership vision was effectively communicated to the student leaders. It involved a multiple case study of three schools, each of which operate a prefectship model of student leadership. It considered the nature of student leadership in the schools, its relationship with each school's values and principles, how it was managed and its relationship to student voice.

The main consideration was the nature, structure and management of the predominant model of student leadership and voice in each school and how that model was perceived by student stakeholders. The intention of the research was to investigate the current paradigm and examine if tensions and/or differences existed between the perceptions of the student leaders and what is expected of them by the school in terms of leadership.

The project aimed to find out if tensions existed because student leaders do not fully understand the conceptual basis of the vision and if the processes within the school for managing student leadership create areas of incongruence. Using interviews and focus groups, the research looked at student leaders' perceptions of what they are doing, why they are doing it, and examined if there were areas of divergence between the school leadership and the student leadership.

The data collected was encoded and labelled under the headings: Values and Principles, Citizenship, Attributes, Selection, Roles, Training and mentoring, and Voice. Each school was considered separate from each other and the perceptions of each school as espoused by the teacher in charge of student leaders, were preceded the perceptions of the student leaders themselves.

Considerable convergence between the perceptions of the teachers representing the schools and those of the students was noted in most areas. The research found no aspects of elitism within the sample group and there was a high degree of democracy and equity exhibited in all three schools. However, tensions existed within the sub-sections of Values and Principles, Roles and Training.

The implications of the research are that school leaders need to be more effective in communicating their vision and the values and principles that underpin it, to their student leaders. Student roles need to be examined and more closely defined in terms of actions and responsibilities, while the whole area of student leadership training requires further research.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

This research project concerned the nature of student leadership in high schools, how it is managed and its relationship to student voice. It developed out of the experiences one had as an Assistant Principal in a large, urban, school, where the student leadership followed the traditional prefectship model. Personal observations led one to question to what extent the school's perception of its student leadership tallied with the perceptions of the student leaders themselves. Ethical problems precluded research in my own school and thereby opened up the general topic of the nature of student leadership within differing schools and whether or not there was coherence between schools' perceptions and those of the student leaders.

The traditional concept of student leadership is based on the English model of an elite group with special roles, responsibilities and rewards. It dates back to the 16th century Eton College prefect system, which was further developed by Sir Thomas Arnold at Rugby School (Curtis & Boultwood, 1964). A key consideration was why such a traditional model is still employed here in New Zealand, the rationale behind it and whether or not it is appropriate.

Models in an organisation can be seen as the practical manifestation of that organisation's vision. The encompassed and coherent theory of a school's vision does not exist in isolation and is only effective if it is communicated to and shared by those who are partners in it. Hallinger and Heck (2002) discussed the role of vision and mission within schools and agreed that when coherence is achieved, it can be claimed that an organisational vision exists. They argued that the motivational force of engaging in a shared quest is where the power of the vision lies. Their claim that vision is not measurable is questionable, and one rationale for this project was that participant perception of that shared quest is qualitatively measurable.

If the vision is successfully and effectively communicated and shared, we would expect to see a high level of coherence between the perspective of the school and that of the student leaders, indicating that there is a genuine shared quest. However, the converse may well be true. Tensions may arise because student leaders do not fully understand the conceptual basis of the vision. The processes within the school for managing student leadership may create areas of incongruence. Perceptions of what they are doing, why they are doing it and where they are going, may differ to a degree between the school leadership and the student leadership.

The premise to be tested was that the prefect system of student leadership is divisive, undemocratic (in the sense of being appointed and/or controlled by senior teaching staff, rather than reflecting the wishes of the student body) and counter-productive to the ideas of leadership-for-all and the preparation of all students for citizenship. However, it was accepted that it could be the case that whereas schools may use the prefect system as a student leadership framework, they have successfully moulded and developed it to be relevant for their environment, community and culture.

That traditional approach to school leadership may well be affected by developments in the New Zealand education system. One immediate consideration is The New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education 2007), which is the official policy of the New Zealand Government and which will drive the future of New Zealand Schools. The foreword by the Secretary of Education states that The New Zealand Curriculum is "a framework designed to ensure that all young New Zealanders are equipped with the knowledge, competencies and values they will need to be successful citizens in the twenty-first century" (p.4).

Citizenship has been an inherent element in schools in the United States for some time. Butts (1980) wrote, "We have gone to enormous lengths to provide universal, free,

compulsory, common schools in response, at least in part, to the rhetoric that civic education should be available, even required, of all students." (p.59).

That idea of citizenship is included in the Principles section of The New Zealand Curriculum, which looks at future focus and states that students should be exploring (among others) the issue of "citizenship," which it sees as significant (p.9). The Values section expands on citizenship, stating that students will be encouraged to value "community and participation" (p.10) and that there should be evidence of such in the school's "philosophy, structures, curriculum, classrooms and relationships" (p.10).

In the Key Competencies appendix (not numbered), of The New Zealand Curriculum includes "participation and contributing," which it defines as "being actively involved." It claims that participation and contributing will produce students who 'understand the importance of balancing rights, roles and responsibilities."

It is important at this stage to understand the linguistic tenor that pervades The New Zealand Curriculum document. It makes it clear (p.44) that the Board of Trustees of the school is *'required"* to implement The New Zealand Curriculum and *"ensure"*(my emphasis) that it meets the requirements of the described competencies. That concept represents the view of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which states that, "UNICEF has a long-standing commitment to ethical and meaningful participation of children as a guiding principle of all its work. Participation enables adolescents to make a significant contribution to their families, communities and society as a whole" (2009).

UNICEF's Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), ratified by New Zealand in 1993 and therefore binding upon us, states in Article 12 that: "Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child."

My main consideration was the nature, structure and management of the predominant model of student leadership and voice in schools and how that model was perceived by student stakeholders The intention of the research was to investigate the current paradigm and examine if tensions and/or differences existed between the perceptions of the student leaders and what was expected of them by the school in terms of leadership. Are there differences?

RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To investigate the principles and values that underpin the student leadership model in selected schools and how they operate in practice.

2. To find out how student leaders perceive those principles and values, and their perceptions of the operational practices of the model within their school.

3. To investigate areas of coherence and/or tension in regard to expectations and practice between the perceptions of the school and those of the students.

The research aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the principles and values that underpin the student leadership model in each school and how is the model operationalised?

2. What are the perceptions of student leaders in regard to student leadership and voice as practised in their school?

3. Why are there differences and similarities between each school's expectations of student leadership and the perceptions of its student leaders?

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

Chapter two concerns the literature surrounding the topic. It firstly reviews writings on student leadership models, definitions, practice and theory, before considering the topic of student voice. Writings surrounding school organisational leadership are reviewed next, as that area is the framework within which student leadership exists. Particular attention is paid to the leadership paradigms of transformational and distributive leadership. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the concept of servant leadership.

Chapter three outlines the methodology employed in the research and the rationale behind it. It argues that a qualitative approach best suited the research aims and objectives and shows how the project was carried out using teacher interviews and student focus groups.

Chapter four presents the research findings from each school separately. Within each school the perceptions of the school leadership are presented first, under the sub headings of Values and Principles, Citizenship, Attributes, Selection, Roles, Training and Mentoring, and Voice. The data showing the students' perceptions are then presented under the same sub headings.

Chapter five discusses the data presented in chapter four and considers areas of tension that the data highlights, while chapter six draws conclusions based on the previous chapters and makes recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

<u>Introduction</u>

Student leadership does not exist in a vacuum, but is affected by and arguably affects in turn, the culture of the school. This review will look at student leadership and voice, school organisational leadership and servant leadership. Because of the paradox between elitist (exclusive) and democratic (inclusive) practices of student leadership, it will look at both transactional and transformational leadership. As the project's main interest is in the latter, the school organisational leadership model considered is distributive, while the section on student leadership will consider the history and rationale behind the elitist prefect system and compare it with the idea of student leadership as being all-inclusive and developmental. Three questions the review aims to answer are:

1. What is student leadership and what theories underpin it?
2. What is student voice and is it the same as student leadership?
3. What are the organisational leadership frameworks in which student leadership exists?

<u>Student Leadership</u>

Student leadership is not a new area of school leadership, though Ryan (2006, p.23) said that, "student leadership in schools has become more visible in recent years." The first recognised development of student leadership began in the sixteenth century at Eton College (Curtis & Boultwood,1964) with its prefect system.

The Eton system was later developed by Dr. Thomas Arnold at Rugby School in the late nineteenth century. Arnold's system was much more humanitarian and democratic according to Curtis and Boultwood (1964), who wrote that he held regular meetings

with his prefects, where he discussed with them ways to improve the school. They further claimed that the Arnold system has been adopted by "nearly every grammar and secondary modern school" (p.65) and that the modern form of the prefect system owes a lot to him. Their attitude to the prefect system was that when it is inspired by the high ideals of Arnold it is very successful even today, but they warn that "when prefects have been regarded as a kind of police force for the headmaster and staff the system has failed miserably" (p. 66).

Curtis and Boultwood's argument was that Arnold believed in the need for a liberal education which would fit students for "the calling of citizenship" (p.6) – a concept that has just been introduced in New Zealand through The New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007), nearly two hundred years after Arnold.

Burns (1978) addressed the issue of the Eton system and rightly pointed out that there was already a socio-political elitist process in place, in that only the wealthy and well-connected could attend Eton College. He added that between 1868 and 1955 Eton provided over one quarter of all cabinet ministers in the British Government. Burns also made a salient point when he underlined the fact that school leaders (principals) have always had fixed tenure.

In Tritenbach's 1984 book 'Auckland's Historic Schools', he included a glossary of terms that he claimed were "special" to New Zealand schools. Under the term prefect he wrote the definition: "Senior students with leadership responsibilities. They assist in the daily running of the school, especially supervising younger students and represent the school on special occasions" (p. 16). That showed a predilection for the historic concept of an elite group that existed in 1984 and may still exist in many schools today. Hopefully, research will show if the latter is true, or a misinterpretation of the phenomenology of current student leadership.

There was no indication from Tritenbach (1984) as to how students assisted in the daily running of the school, but in *The Senior Student* a 1998 report for the New Zealand Education Review Office (ERO), it states under the heading "Preparing for adult life" that schools should be "providing opportunities for peer discussion and the development of leadership and management skills" (p.12). The dichotomy of viewpoints on student leadership in New Zealand is highlighted in a paper (McLellan, 2003) for the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER), which looked at how schools were employing strategies to increase boys' achievement. One of the strategies reported was "a carefully designed prefects system giving responsibility and status to students" (p.6). He failed to explain, or expound upon his term "carefully designed," which in itself raises questions as to who designs the system and what theory underpins it.

In fact the literature is fairly sparse on the topic of student leadership selection, apart from Schneider, Erhart and Erhart (2002), who researched ways to identify potential school student leaders. Any system which incorporates an elite group as its student leadership model, *per se* has to have a selection process and criteria. Reading has indicated that student leaders are appointed, selected, or elected, but that again implies a specific designated group, rather than leadership for all. Currie (1962) argued that whereas there have been many democratic changes in New Zealand education, the change in the use of the prefect system has been much slower. He states that, "some schools still operate prefect systems appointed solely from above and acting largely as minor members of staff" (p.301). It should be remembered that Currie was writing over forty years ago, so it is largely unknown to what extent his statement is still applicable today.

Currie (1962) indicates an irony in that student leaders in a prefect system are active participants of the status quo and the traditional paradigm. If that is the case, then it

could be further argued that in schools with a prefect system of student leadership, even though there may be some avenues for debate and questioning, the avenues are not truly democratic, because one of the prefects' raison d'etre could be to maintain, rather than change.

That leads to an alternative view of student leadership, where students are partners for change (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2008) and actively involved in the governance of the school. In a recent workshop in New Zealand (March, 2009), Hargreaves espoused his Fourth Way Concept of school leadership and made the comment that, "The shy, the embarrassed, those who blush easily, the arrogant, the bullish, the Asperger's student – they all need the opportunity to develop leadership."

Pedley (1963) wrote about the pioneering work of A.S. Neill at Summerhill and in discussing democracy in schools pointed out that the majority of teachers employed in the (then) new comprehensive schools, were products of traditional, conservative grammar schools and they merely transplanted their attitudes of prefects as elite older children into the new environment. He argued that older pupils have the right to have experience in the government of the school and that right should belong to all students and not just a select few.

Summerhill is relevant because it has long been considered an example of democratic student voice. Pedley (1963) reported that before his death in 1973, Neill made some significant comments about his whole school philosophy that illustrate a mind set that is only now being considered in the New Zealand New Curriculum. He pointed out that Summerhill was a self-governing school and "the oldest children's democracy in the world" (p.37), and argued that "as education, self-government is of infinite value" (p.37). His daughter, Zoe Neill-Redhead, the current leader of the school, stated that

"The school has found a new respect as an authority on democracy and citizenship." (Vaughan 2006, p.81).

That view is not held by all and Ryan (2006) claimed that democratic student leadership for all could be seen as mere tokenism, espoused in theory, but not in practice. He pointed out that many modernised countries claim that they adhere to the concept of students' right to be heard and to participate, but that in reality "in most parts of the Western World, this participation is not embedded in policy" (p. 21). Perhaps The New Zealand Curriculum in New Zealand does embed the principle in policy, but to what extent it is practiced is unknown.

Ryan (2006) claimed that democratic student leadership of any sort may not be effective in practice, because it is opposed by a number of educators. He identifies a number of reasons for such opposition. He listed the arguments against student leadership and democratic participation, which can be summed up as:

- a belief that students are not capable of making sound educational decisions

- lack confidence

- cannot handle the heavy workload

- are only at the school for a few years

- have a tendency to challenge traditions, and

- there is potential conflict.

Ryan (2006) did not agree with those negative views and argued that schools need to consider whether their student leadership system is mere tokenism, or genuine. He agreed that duties carried out by student leaders do give actual, direct experience in leadership within the school community. However, he added that that only gives them experience as students. In order to give students direct experience in *adult* leadership concepts and prepare them for their future, they also need to be involved in appointment

panels, staff meetings and school boards: "For student leadership to work, it must become part of the normal operations of the school", (p.24). That implies student leadership needs to be an integrated element in the culture of a school and be reflected in all its policies and practices, both formally and informally, if it is to be seen as truly democratic.

Saunders (2005) expressed concern that in school environments traditional leadership roles are often the norm for young people and she argued that there is a void in identifying, providing practice of and the teaching skills required for student leadership. This highlights another problematic area; it is not enough for students to be given leadership opportunities and then be expected to absorb the skills by some sort of experiential osmosis. Saunders (2005), however, wrote that schools are often seen as the perfect environment for the development of leadership capabilities.

Everard (1988) looked at twenty schools and how they incorporated their student leaders into the management framework of the school. He saw the need for all students to participate in decision-making, but argued that the opportunities are minimal. Because of the potential personal developmental aspect of leadership, he questioned "whether it is right to deprive pupils of opportunities to experience it" (p.112) That view was reflected by Lavery (2003), who pointed out that in most schools elected/appointed leaders are nurtured, promoted and developed as leaders by camps, reflection days, seminars and mixed school weekends, which he argued are all valuable in preparing those students for the "challenges, responsibilities and joys of leadership" (p.15).

However, whereas Lavery (2003) argued for the retention of elected/selected student leaders, he did accept the concept of a more comprehensive leadership model, which he admitted will create new challenges for schools. Ruddock and Fielding (2006) pointed

to the pioneering work of Alexander Bloom in 1945 and his entrenched expectation that if everyone was included in the school community they were in, they would be much more strongly committed to that community. Lavery (2003) did ask an important question which may have valid significance for New Zealand schools, in that he queried whether schools in the future will have a responsibility to train all senior students in leadership. Therein lies a link to The New Zealand Curriculum in New Zealand and its requirement for participation for all.

Klau (2006,) refers to an extensive ten-year study of one hundred and twenty youth-based organisations across the USA and reports that the study showed that there was "a profound disconnect between current efforts at youth leadership education and the experiences and needs of today's kids" (p.60). He argues that many youth leadership education programmes suffer because those running the programmes "project their own beliefs about what youth need" (p.61). He says that the programmes are often based on "unexamined ideas about how young people develop leadership traits and what being a leader entails" (p.61). Based on his own research, Klau presents (Fig. 1.1) his view of what he thinks youth leadership really is. He breaks it down into eight concepts and gives a definition for each one. In terms of student leadership in a school, especially where there is a set group of leaders, no one student leader could possess all of Klau's attributes. However, it may well be the case that a single student may possess several of the attributes described and if the leadership group is selected well, then between them they may well show all of Klau's attributes. It would certainly appear that no attribute is exclusive, in the sense that a charismatic leader may also show intellectual, moral and spiritual leadership.

Fig. 1.1 Leadership definitions in youth leadership education (Klau, 2006, p.82)

Conception	Definition
Civic leadership	Interest in and engagement with issues of broad public interest
Charismatic leadership	Ability to influence peers through enthusiasm, extroversion, or creativity
Leadership as formal authority	Attainment of a position of formal authority in a business or organisation
Relational leadership group	Ability to manage interpersonal dynamics for the good of the group
Service leadership	Commitment to engaging in activities dedicated to helping underserved or needy populations
"Great individual" leadership	Recognition of one or two individuals as "the best"
Intellectual leadership	Ability to reason clearly and persuasively in a manner that influences others
Moral and spiritual leadership	Commitment to the cause of promoting social justice

<u>Student Voice</u>

Several of Klau's (2006) definitions hint at or imply the leader as a voice for others. It could be argued, for example, that the "ability to reason clearly and persuasively in a manner that influences others" and a "commitment to the cause of promoting social justice," have inherent within them some idea of student voice, but Klau (2006) does not include it as an attribute in itself.

There are two main strands that are prevalent in the literature on student leadership. The first, which I have covered, looks mainly at students still in a full, or quasi prefectship role. The other strand, which I have alluded to previously, regards student leadership in the context of student voice, which is much more in alignment with the UNICEF (1990) belief of the student's right to speak and be listened to. It is important to realise that in the context of this dissertation, student voice is aligned to student leadership and school

democracy and is not to be confused with the macro-political realm of student voice in terms of choice of school and the machinations of school zoning. Even within the micro-political realm there still may be tensions, as Woods (2005) suggests may be the case.

Masinire and Sanchez-Cruz (2008) reported the words of a Zimbabwean student on student voice and leadership.The student explained how two particular students were brilliant students, clear and confident vocalisers and paragons of virtue. They were appointed Head Boy and Head Girl and set up as role models. However, as the student reported, that concept of leadership and voice was stifling, because all the other students became overshadowed, disconnected and depersonalised. They were all expected to be like the Head Boy and Head Girl, even though they were entirely different.

Masinire and Sanchez-Cruz (2008) used the above example to argue that educators too often listen to the vocal and outspoken, but do not listen enough to the silent voices. They contended that principals and teachers tend to listen most to those students who support and accept the school ethos, but not to the dissenters: "the voices of resistance and silence are being marginalised and subjugated" (p.2). That view is not new. Williamson (1979), writing about his post Second World War experiences as a teacher at Christchurch Boys' High School, argued the point that even troublesome students should be considered for leadership roles and that, "if a master .. described a boy as the rudest he had ever met, that boy at least had the strength of mind necessary for the job," (p.109).

That view concurs with Hargreaves' (2009) view that even bullish students need to be heard and with Masinire and Sanchez-Cruz, who pointed to research that showed that students who are seen as aggressive and who challenge authority (especially boys), are the ones who are not listened to, whose voice is unheard and who are not selected as

student leaders; one of the objections against student leadership that Ryan (2006) pointed out. Students who challenge the status quo cannot be given roles that involve the maintenance of that same status quo, and herein lies a tension when student leadership overlaps with student voice.

Woods (2005) went further, to argue that what might seem like a true, democratic student voice, might be highly influenced by professional control. He pointed out that most School Councils, while supposedly being democratic organisms within a school's organisational structure, are in fact designed and set up "for students, but not by students" (p.65). He stated his belief that students need free space for the facilitation of independence, confidence and creativity, while accepting that there is a perpetual tension between the desire of the school to hold on to what it feels is fixed, and allowing the students the free space to challenge and question. The former is more likely to result in student voice and leadership becoming a tool for unquestioningly policing, protecting and perpetuating the traditions, values and principles of the school.

Fielding (2006) stated that student voice goes beyond the school and is part of the "wider struggles for a more fully democratic way of life" (p.301). His view was similar to that of Woods (2005) (2005) in that he observed how the student leadership/school leadership interface tends to be formal and traditional. He argued that it merely replicates hierarchy and the culture of excellence, is exclusive, has an impersonal orientation and is purely functional. The individual is seen as counter-productive to the core business of the school and the mechanism involved is efficiency driven; "The function marginalizes the personal"(p.302). He postulated an alternative "affective" model which "valorizes the personal at the expense of the functional" (p.302). He castigated those schools that "trumpet their student engagement credentials" (p.302) through School Councils and Consultative groups, which he claimed represent dishonesty and pretence at student voice.

Student voice was important in Fielding's (2006) view of schools as high performance organizations. He claimed that behind student voice is the fact that students themselves have an insight into what is a good teacher and what is not; what is effective teaching and what is not. Teachers will listen to other teachers and seek to improve, but the receiver of their teaching is not listened to, despite the fact that there are numerous opportunities for teachers to listen to the student voice on mutual preoccupations, particularly in terms of what Fielding called, "high status measurable outcomes" (306). He argued the case for student voice to be represented as lead learners, student ambassadors, student school improvement teams, student leadership programmes, student as researchers and evaluators, student observers of teaching, student as governors on school boards and students as personal and academic buddies. Cardno (1990) listed student leadership as one of the functions of a school and suggested that students should be involved in decision-making through leadership structures.

Woods (2005) found an oppositional view from some educators, who argued that students are not mature enough to undertake such adult tasks. In fact Fielding (2006) himself alluded to the same by positing an alternative view of student voice, which he described as benign. He said that incorporating student voice into a high performance orientation is all about using that voice for adult purposes, which he claimed are ultimately totalitarian.

Fielding's latter view may seem cynical, but Chan (2002) reported on a post-colonial student leadership initiative in Hong Kong, which was aimed solely at gifted and talented students, with a high performance goal. Fielding would not have been surprised to see that the first leadership domain for those elite students in their schools was discipline: "the responsibility of keeping order" (p.263). Student voice was subsumed into a totalitarian framework. Additionally, Chan reported that The Hong Kong

Education Commission defines leadership as "a form of giftedness" (p.264) an ironic twist to the old British colonial attitude of '*noblesse oblige."*

Any consideration of student voice must pay homage to A.S. Neill and his Summerhill school. As stated earlier, Summerhill is a self-governing school and is a true democracy, in that decisions pertaining to the running of the school are made at a General School Meeting, including all staff and all students, where "every child, irrespective of age, has a vote" (Vaughan, 2006, p.33). In relation to student voice Neill explained that he as principal had a voice, which sometimes prevailed at meetings, but that, 'my voice is not always more powerful than that of a child"(p.34). Fielding would no doubt note with interest that Neill's democracy did not apply to all aspects of the school and the General School Meeting did not discuss academic matters.

Therefore students at Summerhill have a clear and strong democratic voice in the management of the school, its rules and operations, but do not have ownership of their own academic matters. Academic decisions are still the preserve of the principal (Neill's daughter Zoe) and the staff. Nevertheless, world interest in Neill's democratic application of student voice continues to garner great interest, with some 80,000 hits a month on its web site and a continuous stream of international visitors.

Mitra (2008) sees student voice as an integral part of school improvement and sees it in partnership with the school organisational leadership. Although it is sometimes called consultation, Mitra points to projects that "partner teachers and students" (p.21) and which led to a greater empowerment of the students. She argues that even at its simplest level, "student voice initiatives give young people the opportunity to share with administrators and faculty their opinions about school problems" (p.20).

Contentiously, Mitra states her opinion that, "most schools are not structured in ways that encourage student voice" (p.20). She posits that "large schools and class sizes and

segregation by age and ability increase student alienation" (p 24). That would tend to lean towards the Summerhill model, with a small, homogenous and more gregarious student body. However, it remains to be seen whether such a view developed by observation in the USA, transfers to the New Zealand model of school structure and management. It implies that because a school is large and is structured in a particular way, its students are therefore alienated. This research project looks at student perceptions of their own voice within their own school and my well show a concurrence or divergence with Mitra's view.

School Organisational Leadership

Whatever form student leadership and student voice may take, it has to sit within the framework of the whole school's organisational structure and that raises the theme of organisational leadership. Even though there are variations and alternatives overall organisational leadership is the domain of the principal/administrator/headteacher, and the style of leadership in operation effects and affects every aspect of the school. In terms of student leadership and voice, which are intrinsically and philosophically intertwined and interdependent, I have reviewed the literature on two forms of leadership; transactional and transformational. I have also considered writings on distributive, or distributed leadership, which is relevant to student leadership as part of a distributed perspective of leadership.

Many recent leadership readings give credit to Burns and Bass for their work in the development of theories of transactional and transformational of leadership, so any literature review must start with those two. Burns conceptualised two aspects of leadership, that separated the "ordinary" from the "extraordinary": the ordinary was transactional and the extraordinary was transformational. In a 2008 paper, Burns reflected on his previous work. He wrote that by transactional he meant leadership that was practiced by means of "bargaining, negotiation and give-and-take" (p.205), what

Popper and Zakkai (1994) referred to as "a framework of exchange relations" (p.5). Burns argued that such leaders are negotiators and are bound by "honesty, responsibility and recipricocity" (p.5). In other words, they make a contract and must stick to it. He felt that it was a crucial leadership style for solving problems, but that it often ended in selfish and even "criminal behaviour" (p.6), an interesting comment when set beside Fielding's (2006) view that the misuse of student voice could be ultimately totalitarian.

Burns continued by saying that he became more interested in transformational leadership, but in parenthesis he stated that he prefers the term transforming and he argued that transformational leadership raises itself above the transactional, because it involves the study and promotion of change and requires vision. He took the time to mention the concept of followership and pointed out that very little is said about the followers of great leaders. For Burns, there cannot be leaders without followers and vice-versa. Skinner (1953), when writing about people in groups, described the inter-relationship of two organisms as a "social episode" and identified "leading and following" as a prime example. In his paper Burns wrote that the ultimate test of leadership is, "the ability to mobilize followers and convert them into new leaders" (p.206). That is a key aspect that is relevant to student leadership.

Bass (1990) stated that transactional leadership is effective when it involves reward for doing well and punishment for doing badly, but that it is a "prescription for mediocrity" (p.22). As long as leaders feel everything is fine, they do not need to intervene and the result is a laisse-faire approach. One of the key components is whether a leader has control over the reward mechanism. In school communities, principals have minimal control over staff rewards, as pay scales are negotiated nationally, but they do have control over the awarding of extra allowances through management units, which may be given or taken away. Principals do have control over the reward and punishment system for students, where status, privilege and reward can be given or taken away.

Like Burns, Bass (1990) saw greater merit in the transformational style, which looks beyond the needs of the individual and towards the good of the group as a whole. Success here is dependent upon the leader generating an awareness of the organisation's mission and values, and working to ensure acceptance of them. Burns (2008) set out his views on the characteristics of the two styles of leadership. The transactional leader depends on contingent reward, passive management by exception, active management by exception and a laisse-faire attitude. The transformational leader has charisma and gives intellectual stimulation, inspiration and individualised consideration. He reported the findings of his own research that transformational leaders "make more of a contribution to the organization than do those who are only transactional" (p.206). He argued that transformational leaders should be encouraged and they make the difference between success and failure.

Nevertheless, Burns (2008) did admit that "transformational leadership is not a panacea" (p.206) and that in many situations it is not the appropriate style. He conceded that in the main, a transactional leadership style is more effective in a stable market. That has relevance to schools, in the sense that it could be argued that when times are stable, the best style is transactional, whereas in times of change, transformational is best. One weakness of Bass's views is that it is possible for leaders to change their style as circumstances demand. I would also contend that a leader may be charismatic in both a stable organisational situation, as well of one of flux and change.

Bass et al (2003) commented on the importance of the interaction of the leader and followers and again assert that charisma is an attribute of the transformational leader. They stated that the followers feel a sense of involvement, cohesiveness, commitment and potency. Performance is improved because there has been forged a "personal and social identification among the followers with the mission and goals of the leader and

organization" (p.210). It creates followers who have belief in themselves and their own mission within the organisation. The concept of followership was also considered by Sergiovanni (1992), who argued that the whole basis of leadership is followership.

Sergiovanni (2000) wrote about a school's "lifeworld," which he saw as being the school's culture, vision and values, which act as "a compass setting, steering people in the a common direction" (p.43) and for which the leader is the steward. He used as an example a school which involved all of its students in change, while at the same time emphasising academic engagement and posited that the school's approach to "personalism and academic press" (p.83) enhanced the community and also resulted in greater academic progress. Student voice is a key element in the school culture. Whereas Sergiovanni felt that leadership should be explicit, he also felt that it was less obvious that the need for leadership would be less, if there were substitutes for leadership.

Parry and Bryman (2006) considered the work of Bass and contended that there are two transformational leadership/followership paradigms. The first is authentic and according to Parry and Bryman will develop followers into leaders, whereas the second, which they termed pseudo, "might develop submissive disciples" (p.448). They cited research by Pitzer (1995) and Babick (1996) showing that one in twenty managers showed signs of "psychopath" (sic). They argued strongly that some people who outwardly display the correct transformational leader behaviour, may not be as honourable as their followers believe. Perhaps it is a case that could be levied against some student leaders, who may be more interested in and motivated by the status and power of their position, symbolised by their badge of office.

However, Parry and Bryman (2006) contended that within a distributive or distributed leadership framework, the intrinsic motivation of followers can be transformed. They

believed that distributive leadership develops the capacity of followers to become leaders, which is seen as a liberating influence. Woods (2005) saw distributive leadership as both transformational and democratic and much more than just being "a means of engendering compliance with dominant goals and values" (p.27). He agreed with Fullan (2001) that the democratic (transformational/distributive) leader constructs consensus by means of participation.

Harris (2008) contended that distributive leadership is inclusive, because it does not depend on a hierarchical structure. She argued that it is not centred around any individual, "but results from multiple interactions at different points in the organisation" (p.22) and involves many members of the organisation in a flatter hierarchy. She predicted a future where student organisation will be entirely different and student participation will be part of the framework. The leadership of the school will no longer be fixed, but will have to be pliant and fluid. However, it needs to be noted that in the foreword to Harris's book, Spillane (2007) wrote that "Fads are commonplace in education, especially in school leadership and management" (p.ii) and warns that distributed leadership may well be just a fad. He finished by adding that, "Imagining brave new worlds is considerably easier than putting them into practice" (p.ii)

Harris (2007) made a strong case for the potential of distributed leadership, but Robinson (2008) pointed out that most schools already have some form of distributed leadership, involving a number of members of the school community and added some realism with her comment that it is a "risky business and may result in the greater distribution of incompetence" (p.244). In relation to student leadership the same can be argued; that distributing leadership amongst all students might lead to more incompetency than distributing it amongst those identified with leadership potential.

Servant Leadership

The types of leadership discussed so far, presuppose a particular model of student leadership (transformational and distributive) and leads to a consideration of an alternative paradigm, servant leadership; the student leaders as servants, giving leadership to their school and broader community, by serving the school's mission. It is perhaps wrong in a sense to think of servant leadership as an actual model, rather it is a particular philosophical ethos that underpins the leadership model that a school might employ. Any consideration of the literature surrounding student leadership must begin with Robert Greenleaf.

Greenleaf (1998) saw servant leadership as being transformational on a personal level. In order to transform institutions, the individual had to be transformed. He felt that servant leadership could be used in programmes to develop personal spiritual, professional, emotional and intellectual growth, and that it had the potential to raise the quality of life throughout society, as it would encourage people to serve and lead others. He also felt that servant leadership could be institutionalised and that has relevance to schools. While he saw that personal servant leadership had to come first, he argued the need for people in institutions to "work together towards synergy" (p.23), which he believed would transform the institution. He expounded the view that the transformational power of that synergy would work best in large institutions.

Greenleaf (1998) showed great optimism for the future, because he felt that he could transform society through the transformational effects of servant leadership. Most relevant to topic of student leadership was his notion that teenagers, in large numbers, had "student leadership latent in them" (p.23) In a criticism of educational institutions he contrasted the amount of time, resources, coaching and development put into a budding athlete, with the paucity of approach to potential leaders. He cited John W.

Gardner (1964), who castigated educational establishments for "administering what he called the *antileadership vaccine (sic)."* (1998, p.29)

For Greenleaf, persuasion is a key element in servant leadership and he argues that followers can be voluntarily led by a servant leader, "because they are persuaded that the leader's path is the right one - for them" (1998, p.44). He sees persuasion as being in sharp contrast to coercion and manipulation. His argument is that some student leaders could be coerced into the role, while others could be manipulated, which Greenleaf describes as, "guiding people into beliefs and actions they do not fully understand" (p.44). He felt that the preparation for servant leadership should begin in schools and certainly "not later than secondary schools – before if possible" (1998, p.46). I find Greenleaf's word choice here to be of interest. He does not say that school students should be given roles as servant leaders, but that they should be *prepared* for it. He indicates his belief that school students are mature enough to understand servant leadership and I believe there is a tacit implication that the words "by giving them experience of it," should be added.

Nonetheless, he firmly linked servant leadership to mission (1998) and claimed that students (among others) are the servants to the mission and must ask themselves the question, "what does the mission require of us?" (p.196). If the mission is strong, clear and compelling then power resides in the mission and servants of it can perform in relation to it. As shown earlier Sergiovanni (2000) and Bass (1990) understood the importance of mission in leadership, but they contended that a strong, clearly espoused vision led to strong followership, whereas Greenleaf contended that those followers are also leaders in terms of the vision, if servant leadership is present. Certainly it could be argued that student leaders ought to be servants of the school's mission

Spears (1995) contended that lasting change is evolutionary, rather than revolutionary and that servant leadership is the former, as it is "now in its third decade" (p.1). That is a misconception, as the idea of servant leadership has existed for a very long time. In an internet essay, Lopez (2009), writing about Greenleaf's servant leadership, pointed out that it can be seen in the shamanism of Peruvian Amazonia and in Buddhism. The latter is significant, as Greenleaf's ideas were greatly influenced by the work of Herman Hesse, especially his book Sidharta (Greenleaf 1998; Lopez 2009; Wallace 2007; Spears 1995). Wallace, (2007) went further and showed the compatibility of servant leadership to the basic tenets of the world's five major religions: Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, and argued that it had a spiritual element. The servant leadership paradigm is hardly three decades old, as Spears stated, but is a concept that is several millennia in its evolution. That in no way negates its efficacy and relevance for today's society. Nor does it diminish the concept of student leaders as servant leaders.

Summary

The literature review led me to argue that it does not really matter what leadership paradigm prevails within a school's organisation, for student leadership and voice to operate effectively. Sergiovanni (2000) hinted at, and Ryan (2006) postulated, that good leaders slip in and out of differing styles, contingent upon the situation presented to them. Over the last twenty years in New Zealand education there have been a number of major changes, with their own bedding-in periods followed almost immediately by more change. I contend that based on the literature on transactional and transformational leadership, successful school principals in New Zealand have had to move back and forward between the two paradigms. Burns' (1990) paper offered the view that transformational leadership is not a panacea, which reflects his (1978) view that both transactional and transforming (sic) leadership can contribute to human purpose.

The main thrust of my review has been student leadership and voice. The New Zealand Curriculum (MoE, 2007), UNICEF (1990) and the writers I have studied agree that education has something to do with preparing for citizenship and preparing for adult life. Most, but not all of them believe that there is a need for students to have the right to participate and contribute. The sustaining of a seemingly antiquated elitist system of student leadership is opposed by most, in favour of a leadership-for-all approach. The argument is that all senior students have a right to experience leadership and develop leadership skills. However, it is also be argued that not all senior students want leadership responsibilities, or have the mature skills and experiences necessary for the role.

In this chapter I considered writers' statements and contentions, especially about student leadership and voice. The readings could lead to a vast research project, but because of constraints my main concerns address areas where I feel there are gaps in the literature. Those areas can be considered under three broad heading: Students, School and Curriculum. The first area involves the motivation of students to become leaders and how they perceive their roles within the school organisation. The second is how school leaders perceive those roles and their perception of how those roles are managed within the school's organisational framework. The final area is how schools view the designated concept of student participation and contribution in The New Zealand Curriculum, how they intend to develop citizenship and whether that will effect any change in their student leadership organisation and practices.

The chapter established a background for the research by reviewing literature surrounding the topic of student leadership (including student voice) and how it fits within an institutional leadership framework that is transformational, distributive and inclusive. It also reflected on literature around the concept of servant leadership. It considered the historical evolutionary development of student leadership and balanced

that with current understandings and future needs within the New Zealand education context.

CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The interest of the researcher was whether or not there existed problematic differences between student leadership as perceived by school leaders and student leadership as perceived by the students involved as leaders. The research did not start with a theory to be proved, but rather set out to collect and analyse data, from which theory might be constructed. The methodology required appeared to fit Bryman's (2004) construct of qualitative research, in that its theoretical orientation was inductive, its epistemology was interpretative and its ontology was constructive. The research also reflected Bryman's definition of qualitative as "an emphasis on the ways in which individuals interpret their social world" (p.20) and was therefore phenomenological, in that it studied the perceptions of the participants as to what was actually occurring in their experiences.

Patton (1990) outlined various themes relative to qualitative research and stated that qualitative data gave "direct quotations capturing people's personal perspectives and experiences" (p.40). Strauss and Corbin (1996) pointed to qualitative research as an ideal methodology for obtaining "intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes and emotions" (p.11).

Epistemology

In a qualitative framework, the research project was epistemological, which Bryman (2004) described as, "an understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants" (p.266). As the research topic dealt specifically of perceptions of reality, situations, relationships and roles, it was decided to use qualitative methodology to investigate individual's worldview, which would be subjectively interpretive in nature.

It was decided that the case study approach would best suit the topic. Cohen, Mannion & Morrison (2007) argued that case study was an appropriate tool for the researcher who "typically observes the characteristics of an individual unit – a child, a clique, a class, a school or a community" (p.258). They state that case studies offer the researcher "an insight into the real dynamics of situations and people (p. 258). Ary, Jacobs, Razavier & Sorensen (2006) write that case studies "can provide rich detailed accounts of phenomena" (p. 457) and as such it was considered to be an apt fit for a qualitative approach.

The research was designed as a multiple "within-case study" (Yin, 1981, p.58) of three schools. It investigated and compared within each school the expectations of its student leadership model with the perceptions of the student leaders. Each school was therefore seen as a separate case and within each case, data from teachers and students was collected and compared.

<u>Sampling</u>

A consideration for the researcher was what form of sampling would best fit the aims and objectives of the project and give valid data to answer the research questions. Due to time constraints and the nature of the dissertation, it was considered that a sample of three schools would be sufficient. A search of literature on qualitative research resulted in the decision to use a "discriminatory form of sampling" (Strauss & Corbin (1998, p.211). Bryman (2004) used the term "purposive" (p.133) for such sampling and justified its use by stating that it fits the qualitative researchers' purpose by enabling them to select and interview "people who are relevant to the research questions" (p.334). Similarly, Silverman (2001) used the term purposive sampling and reflected Bryman (2004) by stating that, "purposive sampling allows us to choose a case because it illustrates some feature or process in which we are interested" (p.250).

To offer diversity, three different types of schools were invited to participate in the research. School A was an all-boys state-integrated Catholic secondary school, with a historical base of servant leadership. School B was an all-girls state school and School C was a co-educational state school. The researcher had prior knowledge that all three schools operated a prefect system as their model of student leadership, although that fact in itself did not influence the choice of schools.

While enabling research covering single-sex, co-ed, state and integrated schools, the sample group had an accepted inherent weakness. The sample could not be considered to be representative of all schools and even if there appeared to be correlation factors between the three chosen schools, it would not imply that the findings could be extrapolated to apply to all schools.

Data collection

The methodology entailed semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Silverman (2001) stated that interviews in qualitative research should involve "open-ended questions to small samples" (p.12). Patton (1990) suggested that, "the purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in and on someone's mind" (p.278). He pointed out that it is impossible to observe everything and that interviewing is effective because it allows us to gain the other person's inner perspective. Observation requiring a long-term approach over a period of time was seen as inappropriate, due to the short-term nature of this project. Semi-structured interviewing of the school staff members and the use of the informal, open-ended interviewing of focus groups, were seen as the best methods to employ in order to achieve the aims and objectives of this project.

Bryman (2004) made the point that a focus group is in fact an interview, i.e. "the focussed interview" (p.347) and its original idea was "that people who were known to have a certain experience could be interviewed in a relatively structured way about that

experience." Goodwin and Goodwin (1996) talked about the importance of using a focus group because it gives participant perspective; "The ethnographic researcher seeks out and considers in depth the points of view of insiders, those actually experiencing the culture or phenomenon" (p.110).

Bryman (2004) stated that a focus group is in fact a group interview. He said that the participants need to have experience about the research topic, which should be "fairly tightly defined" (p.346). One key point that he made was that a focus group is not a means of ascertaining *individual* (my emphasis) views and perceptions, but should be seen as a method for finding out the perceptions of the group as a whole. The interviewer should be "interested in the ways in which individuals discuss a certain issue *as members of the group*, (sic) rather simply as individuals." (p.347) As the student participants involved in this research were all members of the leadership group within their school, the focus group was seen as the best research method for this project.

Ethics

This study was approved by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee and conformed to its regulations. Before commencing the actual research, ethical considerations were addressed. Meetings were arranged with the Principals of each school, where the nature, scope and methodology of the project were explained. Each principal then signed a form (Appendix 1) allowing the researcher to approach a designated member of staff and through that teacher, the students. In School B, the teacher-in-charge of the student leadership group was the Principal herself. A full information sheet (Appendix 5), was given to each teacher and they were asked to sign a consent to participate form (Appendix 6). The teacher was asked to facilitate the focus groups and through them all interested student leaders were given information sheets (Appendix 2) and student/parent

participation consent forms. Once those ethical imperatives were met, the collection of data could proceed.

As there was a possibility that some of the participants could be Maori, the advice of the Ethics Committee was sought concerning protocols. However, the advice received was that there was no specific Maori content or perspective in the research and therefore it was not necessary to put protocols into place.

In consideration of physical context in respect of the interviews with the teachers in charge of student leaders and focus groups of the student leaders themselves, it was decided that they would take place in the respective schools. The school was thought to be the natural territory of the participants and being in their own domain would give familiarity and create a more relaxed atmosphere, than if they were asked to attend an environment more familiar to the researcher. Yin (1981) stated that, "As a research strategy, the distinguishing characteristic of the case study is that it attempts to examine: (a) a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context, especially when (b) the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p.59). In this instance it was felt that the phenomenon and the context were contiguous.

The first interviews were with the teacher-in-charge of managing the student leadership model in each school. They were interviewed separate from each other and had been specifically chosen by the senior management of each school to represent their school's espoused theory and because they had first-hand knowledge and experience of how it is managed in practice.

Those teachers were also asked to approach all of their student leaders to find out how many would be prepared to take part in a focus group. From the population list it was hoped to generate a group of six, chosen by the researcher using simple random selection, providing more than six student leaders volunteered. One weakness of this

approach became immediately obvious when the desired number for the focus group was not met in two of the schools. In the all-boys school six student leaders volunteered, but on the day of the focus group one boy was absent through sickness, while two others had important exams at the time of the interview. Because of time constraints the situation was accepted and the focus group continued with three. In the girls-only school two girls were absent, while in the co-educational school only six students indicated a desire to participate, so they became the focus group.

The teachers-in-charge were given, in advance, a copy of a number of areas of discussion, which the interviewer wished to pursue. (Appendix 7) and were asked to give to each of the students involved a copy of the areas to be discussed in the focus groups (Appendix 4).

The interviews and focus groups were digitally recorded and then transcribed. Analysis was assisted by means of coding, involving reading and rereading of the texts by the researcher. The coding was established after microanalysis of the text in order to establish categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Open coding reduced the texts to a manageable data size and axial coding facilitated fuller analysis and interpretation (Bryman 2004). During that process, coding was referenced back to the recorded words of the participants, in order to keep in context with what was actually said (Bryman 2004). Analysis of the data was developed into a theorized interpretation, which was then related back to the literature, research aims/objects and key questions, leading to an informed and considered conclusion.

Data analysis

Creswell (2002) suggested a modus operandi for the analysis of qualitative research data. Firstly, he stated, the researcher should read through the text data and then divide it into "segments of information," before labelling those segments with codes. He urged

the researcher to then "reduce overlap and redundancy of codes," and then collapsing the codes into "themes." Coding is an accepted practice in analytical methodology, but Bryman (2004, p.402) deferred to the work of Charmaz (1983, p.186), who said that coding is merely a form of labelling, separating, compiling and organising data.

Because the transcribing of the tape recordings was done by a third-party, the transcribed texts were read and re-read several times to ensure the researcher had a sufficient depth of familiarity with the interview data. It was felt that all of the data fell into fairly well-defined areas, or themes. The texts were first of all separated and compiled into seven areas of concern to the researcher: attributes, selection, values and principles, roles, management, voice and citizenship. As the study involved three teachers, plus three focus groups and seven areas of concern, that meant the original texts were split into forty two labels. The researcher then arranged the split texts so that the perceptions of the teacher and pupils within each separate school could be easily compared with each other, under the various headings. To avoid overlap and to assist with the process of eliminating redundancies, the data was then arranged in three broad areas:

i)   Values and Principles - those values and principles that the school expects its student leaders to uphold and including citizenship and those attributes that the school feels make a good student leader.

ii)   Operational Activity - the selection criteria and process, the training and management of student leaders, including roles and mentoring, and student voice.

iii)   Student Leaders' Perceptions – how the student leaders perceive the realities of i and ii.

Areas i and ii contain factual data and the teacher's views and perceptions on behalf of the school and forms a base for iii, which is all about the students and their perceptions of the reality. As this was not a comparative study *between* three schools, but rather a comparison *within* three schools, the analysis was completed one school at a time, separate from each other.

The use of tape-recording everything that was said, the transcription of the recordings into text, researcher and transcriber checking of accuracy in transcription, and "respondent validation" (Bryman 2004, p.275) all contributed to the trustworthiness of the collection of data. However, one does acknowledge some limitations may exist.

In the first instance it could be argued that trustworthiness is threatened by the sample size of three schools, the size of the focus groups and the fact that only one teacher was involved to represent each large institution. Cohen, Mannion and Morrison (2007) argued that the very nature of qualitative research creates its own dilemma. They suggested that the sources of bias may arise from: the interviewer's attitudes, opinions and expectations; the interviewer seeing the respondent in his own image; the interviewer seeking answers supporting a preconceived idea; misunderstanding by the interviewer about what is said; and misunderstanding of the respondent about what is asked. Bryman (2004) on the other hand, stated his view that validity is less important than trustworthiness in qualitative research. Trustworthiness in the collection of the data was addressed by the researcher, by ensuring that there was a "sameness" (Cohen, Mannion and Morrison, 2004, p.124) in:

- the interviewees

- the focus groups

- the areas of discussion

- the format of the interviews and focus groups

- the method of recording

- the method of coding, theming and analysis.

Trustworthiness was addressed by constant reference to the tapes in order to confirm the honesty of the quotations used from the interviews and focus groups.

This chapter has reported on the research methodology employed by the researcher and why it was qualitative in nature. It considered the sampling and justified the case study approach. It showed why and how the specific tools of interviews and focus groups were used and explained how the data collected was coded. It considered the limitations of the project and discussed validity. The following chapter presents, one school at a time, the data collected from the teachers and the student leaders.

CHAPTER 4 – RESEARCH FINDINGS

The problem for the researcher in presenting the research data was the length of the interviews and focus groups, which when transcribed filled over a hundred pages of text. It should therefore be noted that this chapter presents selective data, in the sense that the researcher had to eliminate text that he considered irrelevant and then subjectively select the data that he felt best addressed the needs of the research questions. Three schools were involved in the data collection, as shown below.

Fig. 1.2: School profiles (Population as of July 2009)

	SCHOOL A	**SCHOOL B**	**SCHOOL C**
Type	Catholic Integrated Secondary	State High	State High
Years	7 – 13	9 - 13	9 - 13
Gender	Boys only	Girls only	Co-educational
Population	886	1127	1106
Model	Prefect group	Prefect group	Prefect group
Selection	Democratic vote	Democratic vote	Democratic vote
Electorate	Students and staff	Students and staff	Students and staff
Staff veto	Yes	Yes	Yes

In the following pages, section i and section ii for each school solely represent the views, perceptions and realities of that school as presented by the interviewed teacher-

in-charge of student leaders and therefore all quotations in those sections are from that teacher. Section iii deals solely with the views, perceptions and realities of the student leaders and all quotations are from those students.

SCHOOL A

School A is a boys-only Catholic 7-13 integrated school in a suburban area, with around 1200 boys. The student leadership model is a year 13 prefect system, with a Head Boy and sometimes one or two Deputy Head Boys, depending upon there being suitable candidates. There is no set number in the leadership group. Rather, the number of prefects is dependent upon the school's perception of how many suitable leaders there are in any particular cohort.

> *One cohort we had a particularly small number of strong leaders … definitely a lack of leadership in that cohort. So there would have been eight from that year and twenty-one from a very strong year. This year we have sixteen. Last year we had eighteen.*

i) VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The Catholic nature of the school and the values and principles of its particular religious order, drive its ethos.

> *They'd have to be Christians in terms of they have not only have joined a Faith school, but they are practicing their Faith and proud of it.*

According to the teacher in charge of student leaders, its organisational and spiritual focus is formed around Seven Pillars: Diligence; In the way of Mary; Supporting those in need; Family; Loyalty and Pride; Presence for others; Spirit of simplicity. Students are taught the Pillars from year seven, so, according to the teacher, their impact as values and principles are well embedded by the time they become prefects.

> *The Seven Pillars of character are what they all know and follow.*

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The teacher felt strongly that it was vital for student leaders to uphold the values and principles inherent in the school's motto.

> *If we are looking to turn boys into men, they have to follow that principle for them to eventually be a man.*

Citizenship

The school perceives citizenship as being both internal and external and involving not just prefects, but all students during their time at school and in their lives when they leave school. Internally citizenship is seen as leadership, community service and charity work. The citizenship skills the school expects its students to take with them when they leave are: servant leadership within their family (first) and the community; and the schools values.

> *If they take the values we instil in them into their family and into their community, we think the community's better off.*

Attributes

The teacher was of the opinion that leadership potential may be innate in some cases, but the their development depends on both motivation and opportunity.

> *I think some are born leaders. I think there are some boys who just have that leadership within them, whether they are role models, or family members. I think we can identify boys in year ten and in year nine. So they are all given the opportunity. Whether they take that opportunity, whether they have the motivation to do it, it's there.*

The school ethos is carried into its perception of the key attributes for a good student leader.

> *First and foremost, servant leadership.*

'Servant' is seen as service to the school and/or wider community and is an attribute that the school has been observing in its students for many years.

> *If they get into years ten, eleven and twelve and they are not being involved in the community as a leader, then they probably don't have leadership skills. Boys*

wouldn't make it through the door unless they have a proven record of servant leadership.

Leadership was described as an influence. The teacher expounded the view that the special religious character of the school includes the concept of 'charism' – not only in the Christian sense of practising their faith, but also as a quality which makes someone stand out and contributes to great leadership. That quality is sought as an attribute in the school's student leaders.

> *Our charism, definitely. That determines everything we do. If they haven't got our charism they probably wouldn't be in our year thirteen anyway, they would have left earlier. If they haven't got our charism they won't be a prefect, they won't shine out. The boys would recognise it and the staff would recognise it.*

ii) OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY

Selection

Students do not apply to be prefects, but are selected. The teacher explained that the boys have been continually observed by staff for leadership potential from their first years at the school, up to year 12 when they are sent to a retreat, where there is a more formalised assessment of their leadership potential.

> *We look at them in different scenarios, look at them in different settings, give them games and we see how they interact with each other and how they take leadership roles themselves. Everyone is given the opportunity at that camp.*

At that stage year 12 students are asked to vote for a list of those fellow students who they think would be suitable prefects. After the retreat, the two senior teachers in charge of special character select those boys who have shown leadership potential and they are given roles in the school during terms three and four at the end of year 12. The staff then vote and the two votes are collated. After collation, the names are placed in the staffroom and staff are asked if any of them have a major objection to any names on the list. If three staff oppose a particular student, he is withdrawn. If less than three staff

oppose, then discussion takes place the final decision is made at a meeting where all staff are eligible to attend. From the students selected as leaders, three or four are interviewed by senior management and the Head Boy is then appointed.

A major criterion for selection given by the teacher, is the service the student has given to the school during his time there.

> *Our model is a service one, based on the students' ability to serve ... and the belief that to lead, first you have to serve. If they are based on, 'This College has been good to be, what can I do for the College,' it's recognised, and the staff see it as genuine.*

Roles

The interviewee contended that students are not given any roles that involve discipline.

> *I don't think they can get the same relationship with the juniors if they are given the discipline mantra of a member of staff.*

Each student is instead allocated a physical area of responsibility in the school and his role is to build up relationships with other students, especially juniors.

> *Every prefect has a specific role every break and lunchtime in terms of certain areas of the school. They are looking after certain areas of the school, building up relationships with junior kids, making sure that the area they are in is safe, so that if anything happens in that area they are the first port of call.*

Their key role around school is to show by example and be a positive influence in their area of influence, where leadership was seen as taking ownership of that area and all that happens in it.

> *If they ask a boy to pick up litter and the boy tells them to get stuffed, he'll pick up the litter himself and put it in the bin. He'll deal with it and the boy who has spoken to him like that has been obviously shown in a correct way, this is what you should have done. I don't think a prefect would be asking them to do something he wasn't prepared to do himself.*

The prefects also are expected to show influence as leaders in other areas such as sport, music and cultural groups.

<u>Training and Mentoring</u>

Initial training is given to the selected group of prefects, immediately prior the start of their year of service. There was no indication of any further formal leadership training as their year of service progressed, but mentoring was viewed as an ongoing process.

Prefects are allocated to particular member of staff, with the principal taking responsibility for the Head Boy and Deputy Head Boy. There is a weekly meeting between senior staff and the prefects, where minutes are kept. During that time, staff and students identify any prefects who may be struggling academically, or in their leadership roles and those boys are given the assistance they need. Halfway through the year, there is a formal appraisal report of the prefects' performance in leadership and academic achievement. From that, prefects may be given new roles, or a reduced workload to allow a greater concentration on schoolwork.

> *If you look at the report the wheels are coming off. Maybe they are doing too much within the prefectship and it's actually affecting their academic performance. And vice versa.*

<u>Voice</u>

The need for an effective student voice is recognised by the school and is seen as an extension of servant leadership. However, according to the interviewee, the prefect group is not seen as the voice of the students.

> *We have a Student Council, which is selected by the boys. It's totally democratic.*

Each class votes for its own representative on the Council and through that representative can bring matters to the Council, which meets six times a year. Any issues that the Council decides upon are taken to the Board of Trustees by way of a weekly meeting between the Board and the Leader of the Council. The Leader of the

Council is elected by the whole student body. Candidates put their names forwards and are allowed to address the school assembly before voting commences. Any prefect my stand as Leader of the Council, but they are advised by senior management not to, because of the danger of an overload of responsibilities. However, it does not work the other way round; the Leader of the Council is not automatically made a prefect.

The prefect selection system has a certain degree of democracy in it, but the school sees the selection Student Council and its Leader as being fully democratic. Staff and senior management do not have any say in selection, even if they think the Council leader is inappropriate in any way.

> *We try to address it in terms of who you vote for is who you get. If you vote for a joker, if you vote for somebody who is funny and he gets up there and tells the most jokes and you vote for him and he does absolutely nothing the following year, you deserve that.*

Student voice is also a component in staff appraisals, both in the sense that any teacher can request a student appraisal and also as a formal part of staff end-of-year appraisals.

> *We get feedback from the boys to say how their homeroom teacher is doing in the first half of the year. Boys will do a lot of subject appraisals, homeroom teacher appraisals and Dean's appraisals.*

iii) STUDENT PERCEPTIONS

Values and principles

The students felt that for them the key values were best espoused as Christian values, which incorporated the school motto.

> *Prayer definitely. I think the pillars we have each year are very important, like diligence this year.*
>
> *There's Christian values, I think.*
>
> *Truth, loyalty.*
>
> *Forgiveness is a big one. It's like the commandments. But we've also got our .. we live by our motto; which is "take courage and act manfully". Yes that's one of the big things too. Definitely becomes part of our lives.*
>
> *Initiative.*

Citizenship

Confidence was seen as the most important citizenship skill by all of the students. They felt that such confidence is gained through their public speaking experiences, but they saw it as much more than just that. They agreed that the real confidence they gained was the confidence to be themselves and make a difference in society in the future.

> *Confidence, I suppose.*

> *It prepares you to be yourself and have confidence of who you are and you can .. next year you can go into that world and be that person and not be afraid to understand and develop who you are as a person.*

> *I guess it gives us a lot of confidence for next year at Uni. If we see something that's wrong in the community .. we can take our initiative .. and do something about it*

Attributes

The students all initially felt that leaders could be born or developed.

> *Both.*

> *Both I reckon. Because to be honest I never thought I would make prefect until our retreats in sixth form, and that really turned me around.*

However, further discussion within the group elicited the view that leadership may well be innate and is waiting to be released and developed.

> *I think it was there, but they just said you've got to stand up, you're not a sheep anymore, you're actually a leader and you have to get out there and do something.*

> *Same kind of thing with me I reckon. I think everyone has that potential, to be a leader … everyone can lead; they just have to understand that they can lead.*

The desire to serve the school was seen by the students as the main attribute for a student leader. They also added pride in the school, approachability, courage, being a good listener and having the capacity to see things though. One student commented, to the nods of agreement from the others that happiness was also a key attribute.

> *Just wanting to be there. I think that's one of the main things. You can't be a leader if you're not happy being at the location.*

<u>Selection</u>

The students felt that they were being observed for leadership qualities since they started the school, but that serious consideration really began in year 12, which is when the selection process begins.

> *The whole way throughout the school you are almost looked at to see how much of a leader you are.*

> *Then once you are in sixth form the process, the actual selection starts.*

They repeated the selection process as described by the teacher and felt that it was fair for staff to have a vote.

> *Yes, I reckon the teachers should be involved.*

> *Teachers have had a lot more experience in life and so hopefully we can trust their judgement.*

There was disagreement among the group as to whether a student had a right to know who in the staff voted against them and the reason why.

> *No, it's all confidential.*

> *Yes, I reckon we should know.*

> *No. I think it is important in some ways, but also teachers have had a lot more experience in life and so hopefully we can trust their judgement.*

The group expressed the view that there should be a greater scope for leadership in the school, especially, but not specifically, in year 13. They still wanted to keep the prefect group, but also felt that more opportunities for leaders could be created.

> *I reckon just more…a wider appeal.*

> *The prefects are kind of driving the vehicle for others to step onto. So, I reckon maybe even more opportunities if anything.*

> *I think like leadership in the school can start even younger. Some more leadership through the younger years.*

> I think some younger boys could be fully capable of helping out with some of the committees we do. I'm sure lots of them would want to, but we never seem to even ask if any of them want to.

Roles

The group agreed that they did not have rostered duties, but each had designated areas of influence. The roles they felt they had were indistinct and although they each had some direction at the start of the year, they worked more homogenously as a team, rather than individuals.

> *The kind of roles we take are not just all so specific; at the start of the year we are given academic, sports or, but then throughout the year it sort of spreads out. Like, 'cos some people have a big workload and then others have small ones and we have to work all together to do that.*

With regard to their roles in the school the group was adamant that they were not in any way a quasi police force, or substitute teachers. Rather than exercising power and authority, they made it clear that they felt their roles involved service and influence. If they encountered a problem, it was referred to a teacher. Playing a part in the wider community was seen as an important role for them as student leaders, raising funds, doing charity work and being an example to others.

Training and Mentoring

The retreats were acknowledged as the key training element. The students commented that they gave them confidence, understanding, team work, organisation and a new way of thinking. In the retreats they had to show initiative, which they felt was very important as the year progressed. After that there was no further training, but the group's perception was that that was not necessarily a bad thing, as it forced them to work together as a cohesive unit. They felt that the weekly meetings with the senior staff helped them identify out areas of weakness and formulate a way to deal with them.

> *I think you have to find your own way. We work as a group, so we kind of refer to each other in meetings and that. We work well as a group and I think that's the development as you're going along, because you're working as a team, getting to know each others strengths, weakness and see how we can all work together to get specific jobs done.*

Mentoring was recognised by the group as being crucial to the balance they needed between their roles as prefects and their academic success. They also felt that the mentoring process focussed them and gave them motivation in the classroom. Students write down a list of teachers they would like to have as mentors and they are matched to a teacher of their choice.

> *And what they do is they catch up with you throughout the term and they just check on how your academic results are going on, your timetable plans, revision and your kind of goals for where you are going on each internal. So, that is keeping you mindful of where you are heading with your education, keeping you on track.*

Voice

The feeling among the group was that they '*could*' (student emphasis) be the voice of the students, in the sense that students could talk to them and they could bring issues to senior management. However, they accepted that the real voice of the students was the Student Council.

> *So everyone can really have their say.*
>
> *Any student can put their opinion forward, new ideas or changes.*

The group did not feel that the voice of the student body was in any way weakened by having only one student member on the Board of Trustees. Conversely they believed that the system of class meetings, class councillors and the democracy of the School Council actually gave strength to their Board member.

> *Yeah, but it sort of branches out though. It's strong - lots of other people coming, with information.*

Summary

There was a degree of coherence between the perceptions of student leadership at the school as presented by the teacher interviewee and the perceptions of the student leaders in the focus group. Nevertheless, two areas indicating tension were noted and will be

further discussed in the next chapter. The first involved the feeling of the students that there could be more openness around the staff's power of veto during prefect elections, while the second concerned their belief that there could be more leadership opportunities in the school.

SCHOOL B

School B is a suburban girls-only school, with a roll of around 1000 students. The school employs a mix of the traditional year 13 prefect system, with a number of Committees, involving a total of around 40 girls. The prefect group comprises 25 students and from that group a Head Girl, Deputy Head Girl and Sports Captain are appointed. The leadership model is described as one of serving.

i) VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The school's values and principles are encapsulated in a charter, which has been developed through consultation between the staff and the Student Council. The student leaders are shown it during leadership training and at that stage, if they feel they may not to be able to live up to the charter, they can drop out. Those who remain are pledged to uphold the charter. The teacher explained that the key values that the student leaders were expected to uphold were manners, excellence, integrity and tolerance. Aroha was also seen to be important and it was described as:

> *Encompassing friendship and acceptance of each other and our cultures and each other as females.*

The school motto also incorporates honour as a value.

Citizenship

The teacher stated that she believes that the student leaders learn to look outwards at their community, to understand the problems that exist there and to be involved in doing things like giving their time, helping with fundraising and mentoring. Outside speakers are invited into the school to talk to girls about community issues. The major community issue addressed by the school is breast cancer.

Attributes

The teacher interviewee was strongly of the opinion that leadership is not an innate quality, but something that is learned. She felt that the notion of the born leader was a historical notion that was false in its assumption.

> *I think they can learn to be leaders. I don't think they're born at all. I think that some people are ready for leadership and some aren't.*

She listed the personal attributes that made a good student leader as: courtesy, respect, pride, self confidence, good at relating to their peers and staff, good at communicating, and a sense of ownership.It was also felt important that they are keeping up with their schoolwork, had good attendance, and had been previously involved in some sort of community leadership activities in the school, or in the wider community. It was noted by the teacher that a shy and retiring student might still be seen as having leadership potential and an example was given of one such student, who responded very positively to the extra responsibility that a leadership position gave her.

ii   OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Selection

Leadership positions are advertised to year 12 students and students can self-nominate, or be nominated by another student. That generates a group of around 80 potentials,

which is whittled down after discussion by the principal and the year 12 Dean, to around 50. Those names are presented to the staff for comment and based on those comments and the attributes listed in the previous section, a group of 40 is chosen, from which 25 will be prefects and the rest will be part of the school's Peer Support Programme.

Students are given the opportunity to discuss the matter with their parents and then asked to apply in writing if they want to be considered for any of the senior leadership positions of Head Girl, Deputy Head Girl, Sports Captain, Heads of Houses, or Head of any of five Student Committees. All applicants are interviewed by the Principal, one or two Board of Trustees members, the year 12 Dean and one other senior manager. That panel makes the final decision.

Roles

Working in pairs, the senior leadership group of 40 girls (including the prefects) are timetabled to meet a specific group of year 9 students once a week for mentoring, bonding and supporting activities, as part of the schools' Peer Tutoring Programme. That is seen as the main role for those leaders and they are encouraged to continue the relationships they build with the juniors beyond that time slot. Some times the mentoring is one-to-one, helping poor readers for example.

The senior group of student leaders, the twenty five prefects have rostered duties around school on a fortnightly basis, mostly gate duty, where they deal with breaches of the school rules on uniform, lateness, leaving school without permission and so on. The students are expected to deal with situations themselves and if the are unable to sort things out using their own skills, they take the problem to the appropriate member of

staff. The teacher did not feel the prefects were acting as the school police, but simply showing responsibility. The students were coached in confrontation avoidance.

> *I always role model for them approaching the kids when they are doing something that is inappropriate.*

Because so many of the student leaders are involved in leadership roles within their own cultural community outside of school, there is no formal expectation for any of them to do community service.

Training and Mentoring

Formal training used to be in place for the Peer Support Programme, but the organiser of that left and was not replaced, due to budgetary constraints. An externally-provided leadership training programme also ceased, due to the trainer moving on. However, the teacher felt that the course had successfully imbued the school with the notion of service and being there for the good of the school, which still influenced the current leaders. The leadership group does have formal training in public speaking.

The prefect group meets weekly with the Principal, who acts as their mentor and support. The school is paying for some of them to do extra study classes at a local tertiary institute. The Principal keeps a close watch on their academic progress and if they are slipping, she works with them to get them back on track.

> *I meet them once a week, so it's been their opportunity to raise any problems they are having and they know they can e-mail me at any time if they've got a concern. And I'm relying on that really, to help them; give them support that way.*

Voice

Student voice was seen to be adequately catered for through the School Council, which is chaired by the prefects and has a student representative from every form class.

Meetings are held weekly and matters arising are conveyed to the Board of Trustees by the student representative, or to senior management by the prefects. The student representative on the Board of Trustees can be from any year group and if fact the current representative is in year eleven, meaning she stood and was elected while still in year ten.

> *One of the important things that the Student Trustee on the Board - she attends the meetings as part of her job - one of her jobs as a Board member is to attend student meetings, and she listens to things - and usually they're the usual things -- the uniform needs to have this, that, or the other changed in some way. So she organises surveys and things; they sometimes run surveys in the classes. She collates it and takes it to the Board. And then she reports to them from the last Board meeting so there's that sort of stuff happens.*

iii) STUDENT PERCEPTIONS

Values and principles

In the focus group the four students all agreed that the school expected them to uphold its values and principles, but when asked what those were, their answers were short, vague and non-specific.

> *We are representing the school.*
>
> *So you have to do the right thing all the time.*
>
> *If you are going to wear the blazer you have to show that you are the right role model and when you are out of school you have to be the right person.*
>
> *Because we have to uphold our school motto.*
>
> *Always standing up for what you think is right, no matter what the situation is.*

Citizenship

The students were unsure what citizenship skills were.

> *Is it that I as my own person am able to go out into the world and use my own voice? Is that it?*

They felt the whole topic of citizenship was difficult, but affirmed that school certainly gave them a dose of reality – if that was citizenship.

That's a hard one.

Yes and no. I think we do learn that you don't just get everything handed to you that you want.

We definitely learn that.

They did not feel they had much involvement with the local community, or perform any role in the wider community. What involvement they did have, they perceived as being mostly marketing for recruitment. They acknowledged that citizenship, in the form of community service, was exercised by the Environment Committee.

But you don't really hear of it though.

Mmm.

You don't hear what happens outside the school.

In a similar vein, prefects visiting and helping out in local Intermediate and Primary schools, was not seen in terms of good citizenship.

It's recruitment.

Raising funds for a citywide charity was seen as their main exercise in citizenship.

Attributes

The group did not feel that leadership was a quality that all people were born with, but agreed that some people do have leadership potential that could be developed. Confidence was accepted by the group as the most important attribute for a student leader.

Yeah, confidence is a big thing. Because you can't walk up to a year nine student and go, "Excuse me, can you take that incorrect gear off please,' if you don't have confidence.

One girl mentioned authority as a main attribute, but readily agreed with another girl who amended that to authority without undermining others. Communication, being able to relate to everyone, the perseverance to see things through, respect and not being too assertive, were other attributes that the group felt were important.

<u>Selection</u>

The focus group concurred with the teacher's description of the selection process and had very little to add, except that they were unhappy that students did to have a vote and had concerns over the fact that the teacher vote was confidential, giving an example of a mistaken identity when a student was voted down by some staff.

> *One problem is that if they are, you know – actually this happened to one of our leaders where a couple of teachers mistook this person for another student and started saying, "No, this person would be a bad leader," and took them out, until the Dean said, "Hang on, that person hasn't done those things wrong," and so she got it sorted out.*

<u>Roles</u>

When asked what their roles were around the school the group first of all stated that the committees took precedence.

> *First of all you've got your committees.*

Those committees were seen as important, but further discussion elicited the fact that a Students Against Drunk Driving Committee fell over, because there was no teacher in charge. When asked if they really needed a teacher for every committee, the girls said they did.

> *Yes we do.*
>
> *Because whatever we decide to do we need a teacher to say, "Yes I will support the students and I'll help them do it and make sure things get done," because they don't trust us to do them.*

That feeling of a lack of trust was investigated further and the students expressed a feeling that the school did not fully trust them as leaders.

> *They all think that we will bring up ideas we won't follow through.*
>
> *Yeah.*
>
> *Or it's just an idea that they don't agree with.*
>
> *Because they don't think it is important for the students.*

Some things that we try and organise we need a teacher to back us up, otherwise the Senior Managers will turn around and say, "Well who's going to help you? You can't do it by yourselves, you are only students."

The one problem with having a teacher, one teacher, is that sometimes the teacher likes to organise everything, organises everything and everyone.

There's no point in the committee.

And there's no point in the committee leader.

The group agreed with the teacher's description of other daily roles, like gate duty, but disagreed totally about the best way to fulfil those roles. Some felt that they should try to deal with any situation that arose and if unable to resolve it, they should refer it to an appropriate teacher. Others felt that confrontation was the best approach and going to a teacher would lose them respect.

I often actually think when I see someone out with a phone, [that are not allowed in open school settings] do I actually want to have an argument with them? It's not my job to have an argument with this person.

Can I disagree with you, because I think the other way. Confronting the student is more effective, but I don't think that is the way the school wants us to do it. But it gets the student back into school. By the time we go and tell the teacher the student is long gone.

Training and Mentoring

The girls did not feel that they had had enough training as leaders and what training they had they felt was irrelevant.

I don't think we have sufficient training.

The training we did before .. we just did a lot of ice-breaking.

Team-building games and getting-to-know-each-other games. Not really any skills we would use.

Like when we were making dresses by tearing newspapers I was wondering, what has any of this to do with leadership?

There was also a feeling that the training they had been given for Peer Support had not helped them to deal with situations where confrontation was a possibility, or a reality.

We don't have training for it. It's just like instinct in that situation.

In that situation you just do the first thing that comes to you.

However, as the group continued its discussion, it did agree that the training helped them to get to know each other, communicate with each other, support each other and work as a team.

The group thought it was appropriate that the Principal was the teacher-in-charge of the prefect group. They respected her and thought that she was the best option for mentoring. They usually met with her twice a week and she kept them on track academically, as well as advising them as leaders. One group member stated that they could go to the Guidance Counsellor for advice, but one of the other members of the group did not know that the school had a Guidance Counsellor. When asked if they had a specific teacher mentor to help with their academic progress, the reply was unanimously negative.

Voice

When asked if they felt, as student leaders, that they had an effective voice in the school, their response was negative.

> *No.*
>
> *We think that we do, but at the end of the day we really don't, because I remember a past Board of Trustees they told us, "You are a Board of Trustees rep, but your voice doesn't get heard in the Board of Trustees meetings, so …"*
>
> *You are only there to report back what they say. They don't really take into account what you say, what you think.*
>
> *I think we should have a say in things that concern us, like our subjects. I was talking to a teacher the other day and she said they were thinking of introducing another subject and I said, "Well you haven't consulted us and you guys are going through this process and you have been trying to get this subject for ten years and then ..*
>
> *Do we want it?*
>
> *Exactly. No-one has said to the students, "If we give you this subject, who will take it?"*

That perception of the student body not having an effective voice, applied also to the prefect as a group.

> *Even if we go as a group and speak as a group, they don't listen.*
> *The leaders need to have more of a voice, or at least a more effective one.*
> *We need to know why decisions affecting us are made.*
> *A process.*
> *It won't get carried through anyway, so why bother.*

Summary

Although they did not use the same words as the teacher interviewee, there was concurrence in most areas, between the group's perceptions and those espoused by the teacher interviewee. With regard to selection, the group expressed the view that more openness was needed when teachers vetoed a candidate. However, the main areas of tension surrounded their leadership training and a feeling of lack of trust in them as leaders. Student voice was seen by the group as ineffective, not just for the prefect group, but also for the whole school. Further analysis of those tensions will be addressed in the next chapter.

SCHOOL C

School C is a suburban co-educational school of around 1200 students. Its student leadership model also uses a mixed system, with sixteen prefects from year 13 at the top.In the past, the school changed the role title from 'prefect' to 'student leader', to avoid any idea of elitism, but changed it back again at the request of the senior students, who felt that 'student leader' was not as well understood by the public as 'prefect.'

> *They said that the student leader model and things in that sort of name wasn't recognised, so when they went out and applied for things they then found that no-one knew what it was and they would be questioned as to what it was, whereas if they had been Head Prefect and prefect, people understood that.*

Each prefect has an area of responsibility and has the support of other non-prefects to help them manage that portfolio.

> *They then control a portfolio, which they have a whole load of … each prefect … they have a whole series of students working underneath them. It reaches right down as far as Junior School. And so there's probably in the prefects' programme something like a hundred to a hundred and fifty students involved in some ways with the sixteen prefects at the top.*

The school has three Head Boys and three Head Girls, with a boy and a girl coming from each of the three Houses. When seniors leave for exams, the school employs a junior student model of leadership.

i) VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The values and principles of the school are taught to and inculcated into all students from the first day they enter the school and it is expected that those are well known by the time they reach year 13. Being a good role model for the school, dressing well and behaving well are seen as paramount, as is sound academic progress, which does not mean that only top academic students become prefects, but that students are seen to be trying in the classroom. The school does periodical checks on its prefects' personal websites to ensure there is no content that might be contrary to the school's values and principles.

> *We peruse their Facebook and Bebo sites and if there is something inappropriate there, we get them to remove it.*

Citizenship

Being a prefect in charge of a portfolio is seen as giving the prefects strong citizenship skills, especially confidence and organisation, but also marketing.

> *I think we probably help turn out … we take confident young men and women and make them stand out in their confidence and their abilities to communicate and their abilities to organise themselves and their abilities to sell themselves to people. Does that make good citizens? It makes leaders. Is that good citizens?*

66

<u>Attributes</u>

The view of the school is that leadership is an innate quality, but it is the role of the school to recognise that natural potential, develop it and build other leadership competencies around it. The school sees the attributes of a good student leader as being closely allied to its values and principles. Academic endeavour comes first.

> *We largely tend to believe in the Coach Carter principles, that the kid is achieving in School academically before we start looking at other things.*

Upholding the good name of the school is another attribute required, along with being an upstanding citizen and loyalty.

ii) OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

<u>Selection</u>

Information sheets are given to all students near the end of year 12. Students apply for a prefect's position in writing, explaining why they want to be a prefect and what they think they can offer. Applicants have an opportunity to speak to an assembly if they wish to do so. The student body and staff then vote separately and applicants are listed in order. The Principal and teacher-in-charge review the two lists, interview the candidates and then meet and make their selection, with the Principal having the final say.

> *It is democratic to an extent but ultimately it is a benevolent dictatorship, with the Principal in charge.*

The number of prefects is not fixed and is relative to the number of applicants considered suitable for the job. In previous years it has ranged from 14 to 18. The perception was that popularity played a part in selection, but not totally.

> *Popular students tend to be and the kids they tend to choose … well they don't choose your jock who is hopeless but is popular. They tend to choose very well.*

<u>Roles</u>

The school expects the prefects to show leadership at all times, but especially at events like Open Nights or at the Anzac Day commemorations. They are expected to keep up their portfolios and the goals they have set within them. They do not have formalised, rostered duties around school, but one manifestation of their leadership is to take ownership and responsibility of situations if and when they arise. However, that is also seen as a responsibility of all senior students in the school.

> *That's the leadership role of all the senior students in the School.*

One portfolio covers the Environmental Group and they have a local community role in that they keep the local streets clean and tidy. Prefects raise money for charities and help out in local Primary and Intermediate schools. However, community involvement is accepted as not only for the benefit of the community, but also for the benefit of the school in terms of marketing.

<u>Training and Mentoring</u>

Training for the prefect group initially takes place before school starts and takes the form of a three-day camp run at, and by, a local tertiary institution. The school believes that the use of an external body strengthens the message, rather than just hearing it from someone they have know and heard for years, creates greater impact.

The most important part of this preparatory training is the organising of personal portfolios and the setting of personal goals, the first of which is academic progress. The goal setting is crucial, as it is designed so that those goals are both achievable and measurable. The tertiary trainers come to the school for a half or full day twice a term, when further leadership training takes place and students' progress is assessed.

> *It's measurable and we can see where we are going with it. It's very clear,*
> *involves a lot of students, they achieve the things they want to achieve and I*

think it's been fantastic. We think it really, really works and it has given us an organisation that we have never had before.

The school offers training throughout the year in areas such as coaching, organisation and public speaking. Outside motivational speakers, such as the local Mayor and local kaumatua, are invited in to contribute to the ongoing training.

Mentoring dovetails with the training. When the tertiary trainers visit the school and help the prefects assess their own individual progress against their stated goals, mentoring takes place. The prefect group meets with the teacher-in-charge and/or the principal on a regular, when their academic and leadership performance is discussed. Mentoring advice and support is given to any who need it and where necessary, parents are also involved. A prefect not achieving in the classroom will be given a lighter leadership role, or if necessary, none, until academic work is acceptable.

Voice

Each House has a House Council, with a boy and girl representative from each class within that House. The House Council then elects two members, a boy and a girl, to represent the House at the Student Council, which includes the student representative to the Board of Trustees, the six Head prefects and any other prefect who wants to attend. Any matters coming from the House Councils go to the School Council and, if required, from the School Council to the Board of Trustees. The teacher interviewed expressed the opinion that it was not as effective as it might appear to be.

It hasn't been incredibly effective. I think it's a little bit too big and a little bit unwieldy.

He did feel that the system gave real effectiveness to the student Board representative.

The people that have been there have been the student reps to the Board have been very, very effective people. And they have a lot of influence, which I think is appropriate.

iii) STUDENT PERCEPTIONS

Values and principles

The students quickly listed, love, perseverance, safety, knowledge and respect for each other. One student said family, but quickly rescinded it. Another student stated 'The School Way'. They agreed that 'The School Way' incorporated all the values and principles of the school, but hesitated when the interviewer asked them what it was.

> *To be … (Mumbling, silence, confused faces. No response.)*

When asked to continue their discussion on 'The School Way' they all agreed that they were not quite sure what it was.

> *It's about the School values. I don't know what they are. The three pillars.*

> *Three pillars*

> *Yes there's three pillars.*
> *One is respect though.*

> *One of them is safety. A safe environment.*

However, they were unable to state what the third one was.

Citizenship

There was agreement that organisation and communication were the two main citizenship skills they would take with them when they left. They felt that interaction with others and the experience the school had given them, would be of real benefit and all but one of them wanted to actively seek leadership roles in the future.

> *It really comes from always being a leader, so even when I leave School I'm still going to be wanting to lead.*

Attributes

There was disagreement in the group's views as to whether leaders are born, or developed.

> *Both. Different people are different things.*

It's kind of like knowing people who have natural genius, you know they are really smart and others have to learn more to be were they are.

And I think it depends on leadership style as well.

I would strongly say developed. I think leaders are developed, not so much from learning to be a leader but your background. Like me, I was always very, very shy right up until I got to high School and was introduced to drama and that got me on stage a lot and that got me communicating with large groups of people and that's pretty much were all my leadership skills came from.

There was a feeling that to be a good prefect, prior service was important, as were hard work and reliability. Motivation, drive, dependability, flexibility and approachability were also seen as key attributes. The concept of charisma was raised and there was agreement that it was important, with one proviso.

Charisma I think as well.

But he also has to have the drive to do things … you know, get things done. Not be a charisma person, but then have nothing done.

Selection

Discussion on selection was short and concurred factually with the description by the teacher. Popularity was seen as perhaps being a key element in the student voting, but with a codicil.

People all voted us to be prefects and then you could either agree with it or not agree with it and then we got to become a prefect, you know. So it was largely based on, popularity.

Or respect.

Roles

The students' perception was that they did not have any specific rostered roles or duties and did not see themselves as having to police the school. They did feel that there was a responsibility on them to intervene if they saw anything and deal with it, or refer it to a teacher.

But that is just a general thing that we are told to do. It's not so much like, right today you're allocated to go round looking for students. If we see a fight about to break out …

If we're there we stop it.

We all hang out pretty much in different areas, so we have the whole School covered.

The students acknowledged that they represent the school at formal and public events, like Anzac Day, but they saw their main roles as being within their portfolios. They agreed that sometimes they had teachers supervising their portfolios, but felt that mostly they had autonomy.

It's mostly ..

Mostly students.

Yeah.

When asked about tradition, they responded that they felt that one of their roles was to uphold the tradition of the school, but that they also had a duty to challenge that tradition.

If it's a bad tradition, yes.

Further discussion brought out the feeling from the group that they could act as agents for change within the school and felt they had enough autonomy and influence to do so, as long as it was within the parameters of their portfolios.

It's completely up to us. If we see something that needs changing then we can change it.

Training and Mentoring

The group were unanimous in their praise for the external training given to them by the tertiary institute, both at the start of year camp and in the regular meetings with the trainers. They said that the camp gave them planning, organisation, action plans, teamwork and most importantly, friendship and bonding.

We really got to know each other. On that first day we really became friends.

Some of the group said that they had a teacher as a mentor, whom they met weekly, while others felt that they did not need them. The latter were happier without teachers mentoring them and said they enjoyed being independent.

> *I think we're fine to be honest.*
>
> *I honestly don't think it would help that much. It feels good, I like it actually.*
>
> *It's independent.*

When questioned further, the group agreed that they felt that they were in charge of their portfolios and had the right to override their mentor, but also acknowledged that the teacher was there to oversee their leadership work and step in if things went wrong.

> *Yes, you do. Because it's up to us how we do it, but I think the teacher is just there to agree and make sure we're doing it. And if we have a better way of doing it or we want to do it differently he'll let you as long as he's watching over it and making sure it's not going to destroy everything.*

In relation to academic mentoring, the group agreed that the Principal and Deputy Principal helped a lot. They felt that falling behind academically was the result of a lack of balance, caused by taking on too much as a leader and that the advice usually given to them was to say "No!" to anything that might hold them back academically. They pointed out that it was all about time management, but agreed with each other that the responsibility for balance should not lie with the mentor, but with the individual leader.

> *No. Not exactly. It's up to us actually. It's our responsibility.*
>
> *It's a maturity thing. They kind of see it as we're mature enough now to actually manage ourselves.*
>
> *It's time management.*
>
> *Time management, that's really what it is, just time management; trying to get everything done. If you procrastinate in your academic stuff and your prefect stuff gets screwed up then you stuff those up. So, it's really up to us I guess.*

Voice

With regard to the prefect group having an effective voice, the group felt they definitely did. The six senior prefects met with the Principal and Deputy Principal on a regular,

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but ad hoc basis. There was not formal procedure involved. The senior prefects communicated with the rest of the prefects by e.mail. Apart from that, the non-senior prefects felt that they could arrange meetings with the school's senior management at any time if they had any issues, but there was no formal timetabled meeting structure, something that the group appreciated.

> *I don't think it's a good idea to have regular meetings with everyone, because (over talking)*
>
> *It would okay if it was a small group of people which is with the Head Prefects - there are six of them - and they have regular weekly meetings even, but with seventeen of us it would be way to hard to do. There would always be somebody missing.*
>
> *And meetings would be impossible anyway.*
>
> *So, at this School it's a good system where we just, if we need to talk about something, we organise it. And that way, if it's informal like that then we can organise it ourselves and make sure we do it on a day, on a time, that is where everyone's free, as opposed to all the time.*

Summary

Concurrence between the perceptions of the teacher and the student leaders was apparent in most areas. Although the students gave lists of values and principles, and attributes, the teacher gave more generalised statements. But that is not to say there is tension there. The perceptions of the students could well be encapsulated by the teacher's terms of 'being a role model', 'being upstanding citizens' and 'upholding the good name of the school'. One tension that arose was the school's Three Pillars, which according to the students incorporate the values and principles of the school, that all students are expected to uphold. However, they were not mentioned by the teacher and although they were mentioned by the students, not one of the six knew what they were, apart from a few guesses.

Another tension appeared to exist concerning student voice. The teacher explained that there was a School Council and a student Board of Trustees member, both democratically elected, but that he had concerns over the validity of the latter. The

students on the other hand felt that they as a group had a strong voice with management and did not even mention either the School Council, or the student representative to the Board, as being part of that voice.

The following chapter will consider the data presented in this chapter and will discuss it with reference to the relevant literature.

CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the findings in Chapter 4 in relation to the research questions outlined in Chapter 1. Although the research questions were postulated as separate in Chapter 1, it was obvious as the project continued that many of the areas of concern within those questions overlapped and in a sense became homogeneous. Instead of a close examination of each question, the structure of this chapter will be to look at the identified areas of concern and to discuss what has been revealed through the data, with the integration of relevant literature from Chapter 2.

The structure of the discussion will be thus;

- Values and Principles
- Citizenship
- Attributes
- Selection
- Roles
- Training and mentoring
- Voice
- Areas of tension

Values and Principles

Although each of the schools' teacher interviewees expressed the values and principles that they expected the prefects to uphold using different terminology, there was a fair degree of cohesion between them. School A was influenced strongly by its religious ethos and its consequent concept of servant leadership, and the culture of the other two schools also showed an idea of service, which is aligned to Greenleaf's (1978), view that servant leadership should begin in schools.

Greenleaf (1998) also said that servant leadership should be bonded to mission and that the mission needed to be clear, strong and well communicated. In all three schools the teachers interviewed felt that that was the case for them and that the students were clear as to the values and principles of their mission.

Alongside the idea of service, family was seen to be important, along with the concepts of excellence, respect tolerance, loyalty and integrity. Schools A and B indicated a sense of spirituality in their values, an element considered to be essential by many writers, especially Wallace (2007). The idea of doing the right thing and being role models also permeated all three schools, while academic progress was seen as important also.

Although the teachers in charge of the leadership groups all stated that their schools' values and principles were well known to the students, that was not the case in practice. There was almost total concurrence from the students in School A, but the one contends that that is because of the special character of the school, which influences the choice of that school in the first place and which underpins the whole ethos, fabric, culture and management of the institution.

In Schools B and C it was found that the students did not have as clear an understanding of what they were supposed to uphold as the teacher thought they should have. They stated many ideas as to what they thought they were doing, but in School B they were very vague and responded in general terms only. Being a 'role model' and 'doing the right thing' is non-specific and indicated a lack of specific understanding of expectations. There was no link to the school charter, or any idea of a vision. In School C they knew that some 'Pillars' existed, but could not name them. There is certainly an area of tension here, which runs counter to Greenleaf's (1998) view on the absolute need for clear communication of the mission.

Lavery (2003, p. 34) says that, "Outstanding leaders have a vision for their organisation," while Sergiovanni (1996) outlined three "sources of authority". His view was that two of those sources implied personal and bureaucratic styles of followership that emphasised following the leader, whereas the third source was firmly centred on shared community leadership and followership. Sergiovanni felt that the most appropriate leadership occurred when the students were acting with a firm belief in the shared values and principles. They were following a concept, rather than a person and their motivation was altruistic, rather than mercenary.

Woods (2005) suggested that distributive, transformational and democratic leadership was much more than creating unquestioning compliance with the institution's values and goals, but that the latter is exactly what happens in schools. That is aligned to Currie's (1962) view that the role of prefects is to maintain, rather than to change, and Masinire and Sanchez Cruz (2008), who reported a feeling among interviewees that students who challenge the status quo are not given roles where they are expected to maintain and uphold the status quo. However, unquestioning compliance was challenged by the student from School B who said that whereas the prefects had a duty to uphold the values and principles of the school, they should seek to change them if they disagreed with them. That is more aligned with Hargreaves and Shirley (2008), who stated that students are partners for change.

In a similar vein, a student in School A felt that leadership had given him the confidence to see where change needed to be made and the courage to do something about it. In School C, the feeling was that students had the right to over-ride teachers in the management of their leadership portfolios, if they felt there was a better way of doing it. The focus group from School C also agreed that it was their duty to challenge a tradition, if they felt it was a bad one and that if they saw something that needed changed, they should work to change it.

<u>Citizenship</u>

Greenleaf (1998) also saw servant leadership in schools as in someway preparing students for citizenship. Citizenship was the one area where the researcher found tension, not only between the views of the teacher interviewees, but also between the students. The teachers and students did not have any in-depth understanding as to what citizenship is, or should be. Most follow-up questioning on citizenship elicited either initial silence, uncertain mumbling, or the redirection of the question back to the researcher. Teachers and students alike asked the researcher what he meant by citizenship and although answers and discussion did eventually take place, it was still apparent that it was an area that lacked consideration in the schools.

That leads one to question how aware the teachers and students were of the inclusion of citizenship in The New Zealand Curriculum (MoE, 2007). Although it states (p.9) that, "the curriculum encourages students to look to the future by exploring such issues as ….. citizenship", it does not define what it means, or give any suggestions, guidelines or directions in the booklet on how and when to teach it. Many schools in the USA teach Civics (Butts 1980, p.95), with citizenship as an integral part, but this research indicates that there is tension between what The New Curriculum (MoE, 2007) expects and what is happening.

In general terms the teachers believed that the citizenship skills the students learned from their leadership experience were to do with community service, while the students mostly stated that they learnt communication and confidence. The students of School A were of the opinion that the one citizenship skill they took away with them was the courage to make a difference, to change something they saw that was wrong. A significant tension arose in schools B and C, where students commented that some of the citizenship activities they carried out in their community, were merely recruitment exercises and not as altruistic as the teachers had suggested.

Attributes

Analysis shows that there is no real tension in the area of attributes. There was agreement between the perceptions of the teachers and those of the students as to what attributes were required to make a good student leader. Some form of prior service and involvement was seen as paramount and School A made the point that a student could not just turn up in year thirteen and say he wanted to be a leader. Pride in the school was seen as a key attribute, as were confidence, communication, approachability, confidence and perseverance. In School A, the teacher and the students added charism, both in its religious sense and in its leadership sense. Although School C was not a religious school, the students there agreed that charisma was important, but they added that charisma was invalid without positive action. Those views reflect Bass *et al* (2003), who argued that charisma is a key attribute for transformational leadership and also indicate an aspect of youth leadership defined by Klau (2006, p.82) as the "Ability to influence peers through enthusiasm, extroversion, or creativity."

Selection

Each school has a prefect system of final year students who were selected by both the students and the staff. In a sense all three schools demonstrated a certain amount of democracy in their processes, but it was akin to Aristotle's view of limited democracy, rather than the Summerhill concept of full student democracy. There was an acknowledgement that the system owed a lot to the Eton prefect system of Dr. Arnold, as reported by Curtis and Boultwood (1964), although each school had moulded that system to best suit its own culture.

The power of veto by staff and the final approval by the principal were present in all three schools. It is reflective of the reasons that Ryan (2006) observed among teachers for opposing democratic student participation and election to leadership. This research

cannot make any assumptions as to the exact nature of that opposition within these schools, as it is outside the research parameters. However, the fact that a veto could be exercised in each school, leads us to Ryan's (2006) argument that democratic student leadership is mere tokenism.

Nevertheless, the situation was accepted by the teachers and the students, although in each focus group the view was expressed that perhaps a student should have the right to know why he or she was vetoed and by whom.

Roles

All participants saw student leadership as having something to do with ownership. A.S. Neill claimed that his Summerhill School gave students full ownership of their learning (Pedley, 1963), but the leadership attributes this research highlighted were the courage and confidence to take ownership of a situation which may occur. Schools A and C did not have formal supervisory roles for its student leaders, but instead expected them to exert an influence for good around the school, aligning with Klau's (2006) concept of charismatic leadership and the ability to influence others. School B did have specific roles for their prefects, which necessitated confrontation at times. Although the prefects were given training in dealing with confrontation, it did create an area of tension, as the students were divided as to whether their role was to confront, or observe and report. One student felt that it was absolutely vital to confront, but perhaps that is the wrong word and is more aptly described by Klau (2006) as the ability to manage interpersonal relationships. Although the students of School A felt that confrontation was not their role, they did feel that it was their responsibility as citizens to have the courage to confront something that was wrong and try to change it. Currie (1962) would argue that confrontation puts students leader in the position of minor members of staff. However, the counter argument postulated by Ryan (2006) was that it is giving the student leaders actual direct experience in leadership.

The three schools, but B and C in particular, showed elements of distributive leadership and leadership for all, through the formation of committees. There was coherence between the teachers' views and those of the students, that one way they served the school was through the committees. In School A, the focus was mostly on charitable works; in School B there was charitable work, but also an extensive Peer Tutoring Programme, with prefects and other senior students mentoring juniors. School C had the most extensive system of distributive leadership amongst its students, with prefects each managing a portfolio of responsibility and running a committee with other students participating.

Training and mentoring

The literature on the training and mentoring of student leaders was very sparse, but this project indicates that it is seen as absolutely vital, both by the school management and the student leaders. All three of the schools have used external training agencies (usually in the form of camps) and have had follow up training throughout the year. The only area of tension was in School B, where the prefects were given leadership training, but the students did not see the significance of it. Their observations might be accurate, or it could instead be a failure by the trainers to effectively communicate the aims and objectives of the various exercises.

There was agreement by all that mentoring took place and was effective. Students felt that they were adequately advised and guided in both their work as leaders and also in academic work. They felt that the schools helped them to keep a suitable balance between the two and that decisive action was taken if they were experiencing difficulties in either area.

<u>Voice</u>

The teachers and students of all three schools agreed on two aspects of voice: the first is that the prefects are not the democratic voice of the school (although they did have access to senior management) and secondly, that the School Councils represents the true voice of the whole student body. In each school every class has at least one representative on the School Council and their views, opinions and suggestions are carried to the Board of Trustees by a democratically-elected student representative to the Board.

However, Woods (2005) questioned the democratic validity of School Councils and whether students had any real voice. He stated his belief that such Councils were the realisation of a perpetual tension between the desire of the school to hold onto what it feels is fixed and that student voice and leadership can become a tool for unquestionably policing, protecting and perpetuating the traditions, values and principles of the school.

Certainly, within the three schools there appears to be a superficial democratic voice, but it is a far way from the Summerhill model, where students vote on the curriculum. That area of tension was highlighted by the students who reported that the students had been given no say on a change to their curriculum.

Whether or not it can be argued that student voice is effectively and democratically heard on the Board of trustees is an area for further study, but within the context of the project it is very pertinent to note the views of one set of students, who reported that they were told by a member of the Board that their student representative's voice was not heard and whose role was merely to report back. That aligns with Woods' (2005) opinion that there is a continual tension between what the school sees as being necessary to hold on to and at the same time giving student voice space and freedom to develop effectively. The example given by the students in School B fits with Woods'

(2005) opinion that tension could exist when what might appear on the surface to be democratic in a school, could actually be strongly influenced by professional control.

Fielding (2006) argued that teachers will listen to other teachers, but not to their students. He posited the view that students should be involved in all aspects of a school, especially school improvement teams, which would include teacher appraisal. If teacher appraisal is seen as a positive, transformational experience, there is no reason why students should not be involved in the process. Only one of the schools in this project included students in their teacher appraisal system, which indicates a variance with Mitra (2008), who stated that most schools are not structured in ways that encourage student voice.

Summary

There is a degree of synergy between the three schools in all aspects of the research project. There is also considerable concurrence between the perceptions of the school as espoused by the teacher in charge of the student leaders and the perceptions of those students themselves.

A key aim of this research was to indentify and highlight any areas of tension that might arise. The researcher indentified six such areas:

Values and Principles

Tension arose when the schools' values and principles were not effectively communicated to the student leaders. Schools B and C did not effectively communicate their mission to the students, as Lavery (2003), Sergiovanni (1996) and Woods (2005) argued as being essential. The students in those schools indicated that their reasons for being student leaders were not strongly aligned to their schools' values and principles. That is not to say that there was no coherence at all, but that which did exist was more by coincidence than by design.

Citizenship

Tensions in this area existed because of a lack of clear understanding by all participants as to what citizenship actually is, and consequent to that, an uncertainty as to what skills student leaders are, or should be learning through the leadership experience. Citizenship, or Civics, is not taught in the schools as it is in the USA (Butts, 1980) and although it is mentioned as a value in the New Zealand Curriculum (MoE, 2007), it was obvious through the absence of coherence within schools and between schools, that the theory and practice of citizenship is an area of tension that needs to be addressed.

Attributes

There was no perceived tension in this area, which showed a high degree of coherence between the school leaders and the student leaders.

Roles

The tension here occurred not because of the roles themselves *per se,* but because of a lack of full agreement and understanding underpinning the roles. There was a degree of difference in perceptions as to whether or not the role of the prefect was one of authority exercised through confrontation and potential conflict, or authority through influence and example.

In a similar study of student leadership in three Australian schools, Lavery (2003) concluded that all student roles in those schools centred around the idea of service. It may be significant that Lavery's case studies all involved Catholic schools, which is only true for School A in this research. There was a degree of prevalence within schools B and C concerning some idea of their roles devising from the idea of service, but it was not seen as an over-riding concept.

Training and Mentoring

Training took place in all three schools, but tension occurred where the aims and objectives of various exercises within the training, were not communicated to the students taking part, meaning that that did not see the relevance of what they were doing. Lavery (2003, p.57) cites research done on New South Wales that noted a tendency for schools to see student leadership training as a single, one-off event and although schools claimed to have leadership programmes, the training was usually in the form of a camp at the start of the year, with little or no on-going training. In this research only School C had an on-going training, where their start-of-year goals were reassessed and mentoring was given.

Voice

It was seen that some aspects of voice belong to the macro politics of the State, but within the micro politics of the schools, the one aspect of tension concerning voice, was whether it ultimately was heard. Students in all three schools acknowledged that there was a democratic voice process - namely the School Council – but questioned whether or not the students' voice was effectively heard at Board level. As stated earlier, one student was even told by a member of the Board of Trustees that the democratically elected student representative was not listened to. One teacher expressed the view that perhaps such a system was not the correct process to bridge the gap between governance and management.

Perhaps this tension is a reflection of Mitra's (2008) view that the majority of schools are not organised in such a way as to allow for genuine student voice, even though she felt that creating effective voice would empower students. It also aligns with Fielding's (2006) opinion that student voice is benign. Fielding also posited that students should be involved in teacher appraisals and that view was manifest in School A, but missing in Schools B and C.

This chapter has considered student leadership within the three schools, as perceived by the teachers in charge of the student leaders, and has reflected upon the areas of tension between those perceptions and those of the student leaders in the focus groups. The following chapter further investigates those tensions and makes recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In the opening chapters it was stated that one rationale for this research project was that the perceptions of school leaders and student leaders as participants in a "shared quest" (Hallinger & Heck, 2002) was qualitatively understandable. I stated my view that tensions could arise if student leaders did not fully understand the conceptual basis of the vision. Without that understanding, the shared quest is diminished.

Although it cannot be claimed that any findings from these three case studies can be extrapolated to a wider sample, it is my view that a lack of effective communication, particularly of the underpinning values and principles, undermines the success of the shared quest. It also affects the motivation and effectiveness of student leaders, leading them to a degree of disenchantment and cynicism.

I also pointed out that use of a prefect system as a model of student leadership is over five hundred years old (Burns, 1978) and is seen by many writers as being elitist in nature. I queried whether that would be the case in the schools I studied, or if, as I also suggested, that they would have adapted the prefect system to the needs an culture of their specific institution. The schools involved did not appear to be elitist in nature, being state or integrated schools and there was no obvious ethos of elitism in the prefect systems that each employs. In fact they are fairly democratic, in that the students and staff vote on who should be selected, rather than any magnanimous appointment from the principal.

The attributes needed to be a student leader are reflective of the culture of the school and yet have a degree of consistency with each other and with the literature, especially Klau (2006). One found it difficult to come to any definitive conclusion regarding the roles that student leaders take around schools. On the one hand it could be concluded

that there is evidence of students undertaking policing roles (Curtis and Boultwood, 1964) of a confrontational manner, but on the other hand it could be argued that they are actively and openly being seen to upholding the schools values and principles. The line between the two is very fine and is an area where adequate training is essential.

The general impression is that the training the students had at the beginning of the year really bonded them and helped them to work well as a team. However, there was no indication that there was any specific training on what it means to be a leader and formal on-going training was only evident in one school. The cynical views of one set of students need to be listened to. Masinire and Sanchez-Cruz (2008) and Hargreaves (2009) all pointed out the need to listen to the cynics and the dissenters. There is a need for some consideration of the content of training programmes, to ensure a clarity of understanding between the providers, the school and the students as to the programmes concept and contents.

Citizenship is included as a principle of The New Curriculum in New Zealand (MoE, 2007), but it is not defined in the document, is not taught in the three schools and consequently is not fully understood by either teachers or students. Schools could wait for a political definition to influence their curriculum, or they could be proactive and develop their own. In the meantime, this research shows that citizenship is a nebulous concept, which confuses both teachers and students.

UNICEF (1990) believes that students have a right to speak and be listened to. Student voice is apparent in all three schools and the democratic format of the School Councils and election of Boards of Trustees student representatives, imply that the students do have a right to speak and be listened to. However, if they are only able to speak and listen to each other, then there is no real voice. It is disconcerting to hear a report of a Trustee who feels that the student representative is there only to listen and not be heard.

None of the schools demonstrated any mechanism for continual, open, democratic dialogue between students, teachers and management.

It is enigmatic that in all three schools the prefects are elected by the students and the staff to be the leaders of the student body, but are not considered to be the voice of the students. To what degree it is essential for the elected student leaders to be automatic members of the School Council *and* to have formal access to management and government as the voice of the students, is a matter that requires further critique. Fielding (2006) expressed it best when he argued the case for students to be involved in all and every aspect of the school, as lead learners, ambassadors, agents for improvement, observers of teachers, researchers and evaluators.

Recommendations for further research

1.   A number of institutions offer student leadership training to schools at a cost. One suggestion for future research is a multiple case study of those training programmes to ascertain what their training programmes involve, the concepts behind them, to what degree they align or diverge and whether they are cost effective.

2.   Further research is recommended into the nature of student voice in New Zealand Secondary schools, with emphasis on the role and status of the Board of Trustees student representative.

3.   In a similar vein, research is suggested into the effectiveness of School Councils as the voice of the student body.

4.   Citizenship is an area that demands further research. What is it, should it be taught as a subject and how? Do schools incorporate it into their curricula and if so, how? Does it have macro, or micro political implications, or is it apolitical?

Conclusion

This research was concerned with the values and principles that underpin the student leadership models in selected schools. It sought, through interviews, the perceptions of the respective teachers in charge of those student leadership models, as to what those values and principles were and how they were operationalised. It also sought, by means of focus groups, to ascertain from students involved as leaders in the selected schools, what their perceptions were of those values and principles and how they were operationalised. The research findings led to the investigation of areas of coherence and/or tension between the perceptions of the school and those of the students.

The findings, analysis and conclusion may have implications for all schools that have student leaders. There are implications for student leaders themselves, school managers/leaders/executives and Boards of Trustees, especially with regard to student effective student voice and across-the-board coherence of the role and influence of student representation on those Boards.

Further implications surround the nature and content of student leadership training programmes, which may be considered by schools that use such programmes and the tertiary institutes that design and run them. Finally, there are implications for the Ministry of Education around the issue of citizenship, what it actually is and how it should be incorporated into a school's curriculum.

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APPENDICES

To be printed on school letterhead and signed by the principal

School approval form

I have been fully informed of the proposed Master of Education in Leadership and Management dissertation research project on student leadership, by Roy Lilley under the supervision of the Education Department at Unitec. I can confirm that should this school be invited to participate in the said project we would be happy to support it.

Signed   (Principal)

Date:

Information for student participants

PROBLEMATISING STUDENT LEADERSHIP

My name is Roy Lilley and I am a student at Unitec completing a Masters Degree in Educational Leadership and Management. Part of my degree programme involves a research project looking at student leadership as seen from both the school's point of view and the student leaders' point of view. I will be doing the research at your school and have the approval of the principal to carry out the research.

What I am doing?
The aim of my research is to look the topic of student leadership and find out what similarities and differences exist between a school's perceptions of student leadership and the perceptions of student leaders themselves. I will be researching the school's view of why it has student leaders, how the student leaders are organized and managed, and what roles those students are given. After that, I will look at student leaders' perceptions of the same issues, which may involve you.

What it will mean for you?
You will be invited to participate in the research. Once I have a list of all the student leaders prepared to take part, I will randomly select six to be part of a focus group.If selected, your involvement will entail sitting with me and five other students. Your group will be discussing together your views and perceptions of student leadership as it exists in your school and how you see your experiences as a student leader. I will facilitate and guide the discussion.

The focus group interview will last for about 45 minutes during school time. I will tape the meeting and will be transcribing it (typing the conversation out) later. All features that could identify you, or your school will be changed, or removed and the tapes used will be erased once the transcription is done. When the tapes have been transcribed, you will be given a printed copy to read and check for authenticity and anonymity. You will have the opportunity to change anything that you feel might identify you, or that you think is not a true record of what was said.

Before the interview takes place, the focus group will be asked to invite one adult to sit in on the meeting as a student advocate. The group should chose someone, not necessarily a teacher, who all the members will feel comfortable talking in front of and who can be approached afterwards if you have any personal concerns.

Your name and any information that may identify you will be kept completely confidential. All information collected from you will be stored on a password-protected file and only you, the researcher and the Unitec supervisors will have access to this information. The results of the research activity will not be seen by any other person in your school without the prior agreement of everyone involved. You are free to ask me not to use any of the information you have given, and you can, if you wish, ask to see the Thesis before it is submitted for examination.

I hope that you will agree to take part and that you will find your involvement interesting. If you agree to participate, you and your parent/guardian will be asked to sign a consent form. This does not stop you from changing your mind if you wish to withdraw from the project, without penalty of any sort. Your parent/guardian can also ask for you to be withdrawn. However, because of our schedule, any withdrawals must be done within two weeks after I have interviewed you.

You can contact me at roylilley@xtra.co.nz or phone 0275733255, or if you need more information about the project. At any time if you have any concerns about the research project you can

contact my supervisor at Unitec, Howard Youngs, email: hyoungs@unitec.ac.nz or phone 815 4321 ext. 8411.

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2009.973
This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 24.06.09 to 24.06.10. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162. Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Student participant consent form

PROBLEMATISING STUDENT LEADERSHIP

I have had the research project explained to me and I have read and understand the information sheet given to me.

I understand that I don't have to be part of this if I don't want to and I may withdraw at any time prior to the completion of the research project.

I understand that everything I say is confidential and none of the information I give will identify me and that the only persons who will know what I have said will be the researcher and the supervisor. I also understand that all the information that I give will be stored securely on a computer at Unitec for a period of 5 years.

I understand that my I will be part of a focus group and that our discussion with the researcher will be taped and transcribed.

I understand that I can see the finished research document.

I have had time to consider everything and I give my consent to be a part of this project.

Student Participant Signature: ………………………….. Date: ……………………………

Parent/Guardian Signature…………………… Date………………………………

Unitec
NEW ZEALAND
Te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka

PROBLEMATISING STUDENT LEADERSHIP

AREAS OF DISCUSSION FOR STUDENT LEADERS FOCUS GROUP

1. Why and how did you become a student leader?

2. What attributes are necessary to be a student leader?

3. What principles and/or values do you feel the school expects you to uphold?

4. What roles do student leaders have in the school and how are they organised?

5. Do the student leaders perform any role(s) in the wider community?

6. What do you think of any training, personal development and mentoring processes you have had as student leader?

7. Do you have a voice in the school and if so, how does it work? Are you happy with it? What changes would you like to see, if any??

8. What citizenship skills do you think you will take with you when you leave?

9. Are there any changes you would make to student leadership in your school and why?

The focus group will be semi-structured, so may not follow the above structure exactly. Other more relevant areas of discussion might arise out of the interview with the teacher-in-charge of student leaders. It is envisaged that there will be an average of five minutes discussion on each of the above questions.

Information for teacher participants

Problematising student leadership

My name is Roy Lilley and I am a student at Unitec completing a Masters Degree in Educational Leadership and Management. Part of my degree programme involves a research project looking at student leadership as seen from both the school's point of view and the student leaders' point of view. I will be doing the research at your school and have the approval of the principal to carry out the research. I am requesting your participation as the teacher responsible for organizing and managing the student leadership model within your school.

What I am doing?
The aim of my research is to look the topic of student leadership and find out what similarities and differences exist between the school's perceptions of student leadership and the perceptions of student leaders themselves. I will be researching the school's view of why it has student leaders, how the student leaders are organized and managed, and what roles those students are given, which will involve you. After that, I will look at student leaders' perceptions of the same issues.

What it will mean for you?
You will be asked to take part in a one-to-one interview with me, lasting for about 45 minutes, arranged by agreement at a time and place convenient to you. I will tape the meeting and will be transcribing it later. All features that could identify you, or your school will be changed or removed and the tapes used will be erased once the transcription is done. When the tapes have been transcribed, you will be given a printed copy to read and check for authenticity and anonymity. You will have the opportunity to change anything that you feel might identify you, or that you think is not a true record of what was said.

Your name and any information that may identify you will be kept completely confidential. All information collected from you will be stored on a password-protected file and only you, the researcher and the Unitec supervisors will have access to this information. The results of the research activity will not be seen by any other person in your school without the prior agreement of everyone involved. You are free to ask me not to use any of the information you have given, and you can, if you wish, ask to see the Thesis before it is submitted for examination.

What other involvement is required?
The student leaders' perceptions will be gained by means of a focus group.I request that you help facilitate that for me. You will be asked to distribute information sheets to all of your school's student leaders and then make up a list of those who are prepared to participate. From that list I will pick six at random to be part of the focus group for your school. I will then inform you of the names of the chosen six and ask you to distribute and collect consent forms to them. It is my intention for the six focus group students to choose an adult they all feel comfortable with (other than you) to sit in on the discussion as a student advocate for the whole group.Your assistance with that would be appreciated. I also request that you arrange a suitable time and place for the focus group to meet.

I hope that you will agree to take part and that you will find your involvement interesting. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form. This does not stop you from changing your mind if you wish to withdraw from the project, without penalty of any sort. However, because of the research schedule, any withdrawal must be done within two weeks after I have interviewed you.

You can contact me at roylilley@xtra.co.nz or phone 0275733255, or if you need more information about the project. At any time if you have any concerns about the research project you can contact my supervisor at Unitec, Howard Youngs, email: hyoungs@unitec.ac.nz or phone 815 4321 ext. 8411.

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2009.973
This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 24.06.09 to 24.0610. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162. Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Teacher participant consent form

PROBLEMATISING STUDENT LEADERSHIP

I have had the research project explained to me and I have read and understand the information sheet given to me.

I understand that I don't have to be part of this if I don't want to and I may withdraw at any time prior to the completion of the research project.

I understand that everything I say is confidential and none of the information I give will identify my school or me and that the only persons who will know what I have said will be the researcher and the supervisor. I also understand that all the information that I give will be stored securely on a computer at Unitec for a period of 5 years.

I understand that my discussion with the researcher will be taped and transcribed.

I understand that I can see the finished research document.

I have had time to consider everything and I give my consent to be a part of this project.

Participant Signature: ………………………….. Date: ……………………………

Unitec
NEW ZEALAND
Te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka

PROBLEMATISING STUDENT LEADERSHIP

AREAS OF DISCUSSION FOR INTERVIEW WITH TEACHER-IN-CHARGE OF STUDENT LEADERS

1. What model of student leadership is used in your school?

2. Why do you feel the school uses that model?

3. What attributes does the school look for in a student leader?

4. What are your criteria for eligibility to be a student leader?

5. How is the student leader group selected?

6. What principles and/or values does the school expect its student leaders to uphold once selected?

7. What roles do the student leaders fulfil in the school?

8. What role expectation(s) do you have of your student leaders in the wider community?

9. Explain any training, personal development and mentoring processes you have for your student leaders.

10. How does the school enable effective student voice within its leadership model?

11. What citizenship skills do you think your student leaders take with them when they leave?

As the transcriber of oral texts provided to me by Roy Lilley as part of his Master of Education (Leadership and Management) dissertation **"Problematising Student Leadership: Case studies of perceptions of official student leadership in three high schools,"** authorised by Unitec Research Ethics Committee from 24 June 2009 to 24 June 2010 (File # 2009.973), I (_____) do hereby confirm that the format of the said research and the paramount need for confidentiality and anonymity has been explained to me and that I fully understand it.

I therefore give my undertaking that nothing I have heard or written will be disclosed to any other party, directly or indirectly, except to Roy Lilley.

I further undertake that any and all recordings, texts and documents (written or electronic) that I possess will be destroyed after being given to Roy Lilley and that I will not retain any part of them afterwards.

Transcriber

Name:

Signature:

Researcher

Name: Roy Lilley

Signature:

Date: 29.09.2009