

Pathways to Principalship

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

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This work is not mine alone but the contribution of many.

(Maori Proverb)

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Abstract

A qualitative descriptive approach was undertaken to research what was available within the areas of advice and guidance for potential principals who wish to achieve the position of principal at secondary schools in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The literature review for this study uncovered very little in the way of New Zealand-based professional advice and guidance for potential principals, despite there being some leadership development programmes such as the Principal Preparation Programmes for Aspiring Principals (University of Auckland, Centre for Educational Leadership). However, the international literature revealed a greater wealth of data on existing principal preparation programmes, and the phenomenon of leadership.

In terms of the methodology, case studies and interviews of six participants were undertaken. Six current principals of provincial North Island secondary schools in New Zealand were interviewed face-to-face. Their stories were audio-taped and transcribed. The interviews were essentially rich narratives of leadership stories and were somewhat akin to individual case studies of the participants' own leadership and principal development.

Content and thematic analysis of the data revealed eight aspects of principal development which were distilled to four main themes: historical career pathway; managing the journey; handing over the knowledge; and personal costs to the participants.

The findings from this research showed that few principals followed planned career pathways or had access to advice, guidance or formal training for principalship. Participants

generally gained principal positions through good luck rather than good management. The increasing complexity of the principal's role, combined with a projected shortage of competent candidates, requires that preparation for principalship needs to be implemented as a well-structured, rigorous programme. A framework for such a programme is proposed.

Chapter One Introduction

*Keep right on to the end of the road
Keep right on to the end
Tho' the way be long, let your heart be strong,
Keep right on round the bend.
Tho' you're tired and weary still journey on,
Till you come to your happy abode,
Where all the love you've been dreaming of
Will be there at the end of the road.*

Harry Lauder, 1992

Introduction

This study originated from an idealistic dream about arriving at the end of one career pathway, embarking upon another, and accepting the challenge the next pathway offered. This new pathway would lead to me becoming a leader of teaching and learning, the manager and administrative professional of a provincial secondary school in the North Island of New Zealand. The ultimate position of principalship was my dream. Thus the point of this research was to understand the process by which potential principals prepared for this journey and achieved this end.

This research was concerned with the journeys or pathways of six provincial North Island secondary school principals and how they attained the positions they held. I was specifically interested in the process of their knowledge acquisition, whether this knowledge assisted them in gaining the position of principal, and where and how they acquired this knowledge. Was it formally, in professional development arenas, or as they made the transition from being classroom teachers to becoming senior managers in secondary schools?

The literature emphasises the complex multi-faceted nature of principalship which includes mentoring, management and training. The research literature could be important to principals as a source of knowledge and guidance as they develop their roles. Although principals have access to professional development, where and how do potential principals actually gain professional knowledge? Reid and Jones (2006) suggest that "... the more you help others identify and pursue their dreams the greater support and backing you get from them in return" (p. 57). This led me to wonder if a potential principal needs to have a supportive principal who remembers what it was like to learn on the job, and therefore can provide professional development and mentoring to their senior leadership team on a regular basis.

This chapter initially outlines the definitions of "principal," "principalship" and "pathways", as used in this study. Next it presents the research aim and the key research question, followed by the purpose of this research. An outline of the background to this study, an overview of the approach to the study setting and to the research design is given. This is followed by the structure of the thesis.

Definitions

Principal

The *principal* is the most important senior person in an organisation, the head of a school or college and, in teaching, a fully qualified practitioner. In this study, the term principal will refer to the head of, or a senior professional in, a secondary school (*Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 2006).

Principalship

Principalship refers to the office, the service, or duty attached to the position of principal (*Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 2006).

Pathways

I use *pathways* to describe a path or course, specifically the sequence of changes and events constituting either progression or regression of an aspirant principal in attaining the position of principal.

Research Aim

The overall aim of this research was to explore the available pathways of advice, guidance and knowledge available for candidates who wish to apply for the position of principal in New Zealand provincial secondary schools. The focus for this study was to explore the multiple pathways potential principals can take towards principalship.

Research Questions

What is available within the areas of advice and guidance for potential principals who wish to achieve the position of principal within secondary schools in New Zealand? Where do they acquire the knowledge, skills and other leadership qualities necessary to undertake this role?

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research was:

- To *investigate* the varied opportunities available to potential principals
- To *identify* the various support networks that exist, be they in a practical or written form, to assist teachers considering principalship
- To *raise awareness* of the various ways in which the goal of principalship can be achieved
- To *suggest* ways in which strategies might be improved
- To *design* an innovative principal preparation framework from which a potential principals preparation programme could be extended and implemented.

Background to the Study

The Road Not Taken

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;*

*Then took the other, just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim*

*Because it was grassy and wanted wear,
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same.*

*...I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the road less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

Robert Frost, 1992

This poem applies to my personal situation in the sense that the roads that I have travelled towards senior leadership have been many and varied. I have often had two choices, but I knew that I couldn't go down both pathways. I often chose the pathway that was different, or alternative to what was considered the norm. In my second year of teaching I went into the secondary school system without a full degree and taught what was classed as the 'C' band, students who would now be classified as the alternative education class stream.

The last verse of the poem sums up where I was at the outset of this research, looking back over my pathways at all the points of choice, daunted by the work ahead and knowing that one day I too would tell my story. When starting this research I was a primary school trained teacher, with 29 years teaching experience mainly in secondary schools. My current position is Deputy Principal in a girls' secondary school in the North Island of New Zealand.

Initially I was questioning the choices that I had made over the years, and looking into where the alternatives may have taken me. This raised the question: "What do I want from the rest of my career? I could give up the profession altogether, stay in my current position,

or look for new challenges.” This questioning showed that, if I wished to achieve principalship, then a new and challenging spectrum of opportunities would be available to me. I looked at the role models available and saw a variety and range: from those that had been in the teaching profession for many years to those who were new to it; from those that ran successful schools, to those who were experiencing difficulties in personnel and financial management. Villani (2006) states that “... these people are expected to be instructional leaders, as well as managers of operations, staff developers, arbiters of justice, chief financial officers and role models” (p. 5). In other words, it would appear that principals had to be all things to all people within the school.

The available literature about leadership, being a successful leader in a school, the resulting impact on student achievement, staff morale and the relationships between the school and the community, is legion, but it needs to be more accessible to potential principals. The literature for potential principals on how to acquire the appropriate knowledge and skill set and how to use these skills wisely in the promotion of the school was a little more difficult to find. (I note there is some research available, mostly from USA or UK perspectives). Therefore, having attained the role of Deputy Principal I knew I needed to choose either to remain where I was, or accept the challenge of principalship.

I choose to embark on the road towards principalship. I soon discovered that each position I applied for required a different skill set within the formal application and interview process. Schools in different areas, of differing sizes, gender composition (single sex schools, as opposed to co-educational) or decile ratings were each emphasising a different array of competencies. Where was I going to acquire the knowledge needed to take my next step?

The application process required for employment within senior management in New Zealand secondary schools requires prospective applicants to not only possess some degree of skill and knowledge about negotiating the paperwork involved, but also a degree of flexibility in adapting to variations in the process of application from employer to employer. As I applied for positions I encountered different problems associated with the application process, beginning with initial application forms that lacked consistency through to the varied time frames in which notification of the outcome was provided.

Overall I found a minimal amount of professional advice and guidance on offer for potential principals. The various institutions that I applied to required a variety of application forms to be completed with minimal guidelines. They also required responses to questions that expected a vast range and depth of knowledge. This in turn provoked a predicament as to where, or from whom, a potential principal could go to access the required knowledge? Without previous experience on a Board of Trustees or the guidance and mentoring of a supportive principal, the pathway to principalship with its pre-requisite managerial, governance, pastoral and curriculum knowledge, is fraught with difficulties. There is much written about the end of the journey, how to be a competent and successful principal, but little on the attainment of the position in New Zealand secondary schools.

I hope that this study will assist aspiring principals to achieve their goal of becoming an accomplished, visionary, proficient principal, who will excel as a leader of teaching and learning.

It needs to be noted that there are alternative routes to becoming a principal rather than just incremental promotion. There are other circumstances in New Zealand and elsewhere where

principals have not taken this standard route but this situation is unusual. In addition, I position myself within this research as an aspirant principal based upon my experiences of applying for principals' positions and from the knowledge I gained as a deputy principal. I wanted to check whether my experience was unique or whether others had had similar or different experiences. Furthermore, based on the data collected there appeared to be no identified conflicts of interest between my own personal views and experiences and those of the participants.

In this thesis 'potential' principals are defined as those school leaders who are either self-selecting applicants for principals' positions, or who may be identified by others and invited to apply for specific positions.

Overview of the Study Setting

This research was conducted in provincial secondary schools in the North Island of New Zealand, during the period February–December 2008. Six semi-structured interviews were used to gather the data from the participants. These aimed to enable each participant to tell their story and for me as the researcher to gather a rich diversity of data which might be utilised for both research purposes and also for personal and professional knowledge. In this thesis 'provincial' means smaller cities or large towns outside the main metropolitan areas of Auckland, Hamilton and Wellington. These areas were targeted based on my familiarity with these regions having worked in both Whangarei and also in Rotorua. In addition, due to my location in Rotorua but with regular travel to Whangarei where my family was based these sites were chosen with practicality in mind.

Approach to Research Design

A qualitative descriptive approach was designed, incorporating the semi-structured interview with purposive sampling followed by content and thematic analysis of the data. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study was focused on a descriptive exploration of the challenges that the participants encountered when they were potential principals on their way to becoming principals. I endeavoured to explain how these challenges contributed to the professional development of those participants. Chapter three explores my research design in greater depth.

Structure of the Thesis

This study is presented in five chapters.

Chapter One has introduced the study and briefly explained the aim, purpose and background issues that led to the researcher undertaking this study. A brief description of the setting and research design were also given.

Chapter Two explores the literature around the following themes:

Leadership models in some North Island secondary schools that came about due to the Ministry of Education's *Tomorrow's Schools* (Government of New Zealand, 1988).

How succession planning as a formal concept needs to be addressed as a continual process within secondary schools' senior management structure.

Preparation of potential principals, both nationally and internationally, through professional development programmes.

Initiatives that address the training of potential principals to meet the demands of the future.
Continuous evaluation of current and reconceptualised potential principals' programmes through quality management systems designed to meet these needs.

Chapter Three discusses the research design and its application to this research context. Participant selection, the data gathering approach, and ethical considerations are also detailed in this chapter.

Chapter Four presents the findings as themes that emerged during the data gathering and analysis process. This chapter also discusses findings that emerged from the interviews and their relationship with the themes from the literature.

Chapter Five provides recommendations and a framework for a potential principals' preparation and professional development programme, presents my conclusions from this research, and makes recommendations for further research.

Chapter Two Literature Review

*The head goose - leader of the V-
Suddenly veered out, leaving a vacancy
Which was promptly filled by the bird left behind,
The former leader then flew alongside,
The formation continued growing wide
And he found a place at the back of the line.*

They never missed a beat.

*So that's how I found out how the goose can fly
From way up North to way down South
And back again*

*But he cannot do it alone, you see.
It's something he can only do in community.
(Stromberg, 1982)*

Introduction

The aim of this literature review is to investigate possible pathways available to potential principals, enabling them to achieve their goal of principalship. School leadership models from the literature are discussed as to their impact on the landscape of New Zealand secondary schools. The current situation in New Zealand regarding professional development is outlined, and the goals that New Zealand is aiming for in developing principals professionally are discussed. Two current programmes for aspiring principalship preparation are described, one in New Zealand and the other in the United States of America. The states that I particularly focussed on were Atlanta, Carolina, Texas and Iowa in The Southern Regions Education Board (SREB).

This literature review is mostly descriptive rather than analytical, and focuses mostly on literature from the USA which has generated the bulk of the research on this topic. Where relevant, other examples from the United Kingdom and Australia are noted as are some salient New Zealand studies. Utilising data from the USA might be seen as problematic for several reasons: firstly, its relevance and efficacy for the New Zealand context is open to debate; secondly, there is not always consistency of frameworks and implementation across all states of the USA, and this was mentioned in the report that SREB carried out in the Universities of Alabama, North Carolina Texas and Iowa.

The concepts of school leadership and succession planning are addressed within the current climate of principalship appointments. The acceptance and pursuit of continuous improvement as a vital means of attaining quality education, resulting from high quality principalship, requires quality management. A small but relevant amount of research was identified from a number of sources, including text books, websites and journals.

Leadership Models in Schools

Since the late 1990s researchers in the USA have become increasingly involved in studying the role of principals and their programmes of preparation for their positions of responsibility. The role of the principal has been seen as "... pivotal to urban school improvement and effectiveness" (Su, Adams & Mininberg, 2000, p. 455).

Su, Adams and Mininberg (2000) defined the effective principal as:

- An instructional leader

- A guardian and communicator of a clear school mission
- A facilitator of frequent monitoring of student progress
- The provider of a positive school climate
- The provider of a safe and orderly environment
- A person who champions high expectations and equal opportunities to learn
- A key decision maker
- A facilitator and problem solver
- An agent of change at school.

These are all facets of the principal's role "... at the school site as has been discussed by numerous education scholars" (Su, et al., 2000, p. 455), and are attributes expected of potential and current school leaders.

The results of the *Tomorrow's Schools* (Government of New Zealand, 1988) policy was the devolution of many of the Ministry of Education's roles, to school principals and Boards of Trustees. This was seen as the passing on of ultimate responsibility for the running of schools. Hess and Kelly (2005a) connect school leadership to school improvement as a pre-requisite for increased effectiveness: "School leadership is a key to school improvement. School principals are the front line managers, the small business executives, the team

leaders charged with leading their faculty to new levels of effectiveness” (Hess & Kelly, 2005a, p. 245). So where do potential and existing principals go to become “... fully equipped” with the skills that will enable them to lead teaching and learning in the 21st century, asked the researchers, “... [P]rincipals themselves are among the first to agree that they need to be more effectively prepared for their jobs” (ibid, p. 245).

Present day education needs leaders with vision, those who have the ability to see where a school needs to go. Educational leadership, like teaching, is complex and unpredictable. Educationalists learn quickly that what is certain is uncertainty. With the emergence of *Tomorrow's Schools*, the era of self-managing schools began. This model incorporates the ideas of self-governance as well as self-management. Emerging from this model the roles of many within the school hierarchical structure started to change, from that of the principal becoming the equivalent of the chief executive of a large company, to the role of heads of departments becoming middle managers. Schools of the 21st century “... will need leadership themed to learning, to the development of civic virtue and the cultivation of self management” (Sergiovanni, 2001, p. 38). These changing leadership styles required a paradigm shift in the discourse of educationalists and leaders. Sergiovanni argues that amidst a climate of change, people (leaders and potential leaders) should stay true to their intrinsic beliefs, values and norms: “... our leadership practice cannot be separated from its underlying theories. Leadership is distinctly normative, reflecting our values, beliefs and assumptions” (ibid, p. 38).

This new self-managing system led the way to greater accountability, for both the management structures within schools and for the Boards of Trustees. The Board of

Trustees is accountable on behalf of the school to the parents, students and teachers, in other words, all the stakeholders. “This public disclosure is critical to ensure that our practice remains ethical” (Sergiovanni, 2001, p. 38).

The decentralisation of education through *Tomorrow's Schools* “... has seen the introduction of a number of school reforms that have affected the workload” (Krammer, 2006, p. 8). Self-management and accountability led to a reorganisation of leadership positions within schools: Boards of Trustees replaced the Boards of Governors, the Education Review Office replaced the Inspectorate (see also Smith, 2002). This self-management led to school principals changing their management structures. Before *Tomorrow's Schools* the emphasis on leadership had been “... hierarchical with a focus on upward career progress” (Tomlinson, 2004, p. 89).

A typical hierarchical school structure of the time of *Tomorrow's Schools* was:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal (Senior Master)
- Assistant Principal (Senior Mistress)
- Heads of Department
- Deans
- Guidance Counsellor

In this structure, leadership roles were well defined and rigid with little responsibility for tasks being devolved downwards. The Department of Education and the Regional Boards controlled the system. For further critical analyses of the older system, see Codd, 1994; Fiske & Ladd, 2000; Gordon, 1992; Nash, 1988; Novlan, 1998; Openshaw, Lee & Lee,

1993; and Smith, 2002. The principal may have been seen as a somewhat ‘autocratic ruler’ of the school. Although, he/she ran the managerial side of the organisation the overall responsibility and accountability remained within the purview of the Department and Regional Boards, this entailed: the hiring of staff, financial control, property management and a certain amount of curriculum responsibility. Devolving to deputy principals and/or assistant principals were:

- the responsibilities for maintaining discipline
- daily operations
- day relief
- fire drill, and
- the teaching of one or two classes.

Few deputy principals had experience of the hiring of staff, and property or fiscal control, unless the principal was absent. The curriculum responsibilities within the school were held largely by heads of departments (HoDs) who were seen as the keepers of curriculum knowledge and development. The principal and the Boards of Governors were mainly interested in the school’s examination results and the efficient running of the school as reported by the principal. Principals at this stage were solely responsible to Boards of Governors. With the emergence of *Tomorrow’s Schools* this form of leadership and accountability was replaced by a functional model of governance allocated to the Board of Trustees and the principal. The Board of Trustees was now accountable to the Ministry of Education (see Gordon, 1992; Codd, 1990, 1999; Nash, 1998; Openshaw, Lee & Lee, 1993).

School leaders now needed to have an adequate perception of exactly what their role was. The role needed clear direction and a leader needed to prioritise time, so that they could take initiatives rather than react to situations. One of the traits of a good leader was a sound theory base "... some principals lack a good working theory, basically because they receive very little preparation for the jobs they perform" (Jones, 2007, p. 28).

Many principals prior to *Tomorrow's Schools* had been promoted because they were good classroom teachers. "They are selected for administration positions on the basis of successful careers as classroom teachers" (Jones, 2007, p. 28). But the role of the modern school leader became more complex as the reforms were implemented. Storms and Gonzales (2006) emphasise that the expanding nature of the principal's tasks means that an effective leader needs to know more than just how to do things in school.

With the introduction of *Tomorrow's Schools* "... the demands on school leadership had increased and the role of the principal had changed as a consequence" (Jones, 2007, p. 30). In more recent times the focus for school leaders has been that of educational leadership or the leaders of teaching and learning.

Many principals find that juggling their leadership role with that of administration is frustrating at worst and semi-fulfilling at best. "Many of those in positions of leadership feel the administrative demands of their daily work limit them from exercising their leadership role within learning, and learning is what they see as their most important focus" (Robertson, 2005, p. 44). The increased workload and the hours that principals were required put in meant that the "... self responsibility that had occurred and autonomy felt a

sham as they struggled to cope with an increasing raft of centrally imposed policies, innovations and practices” (Robertson, 2005, p. 45).

The increase in workload led to some innovative principals looking at how their senior management structures could be redesigned to align with the extra requirements placed upon schools. From this realignment came two senior management structures that this researcher has worked in, in large provincial secondary schools (in Whangarei and Rotorua, see Figures 2.1 and 2.2).

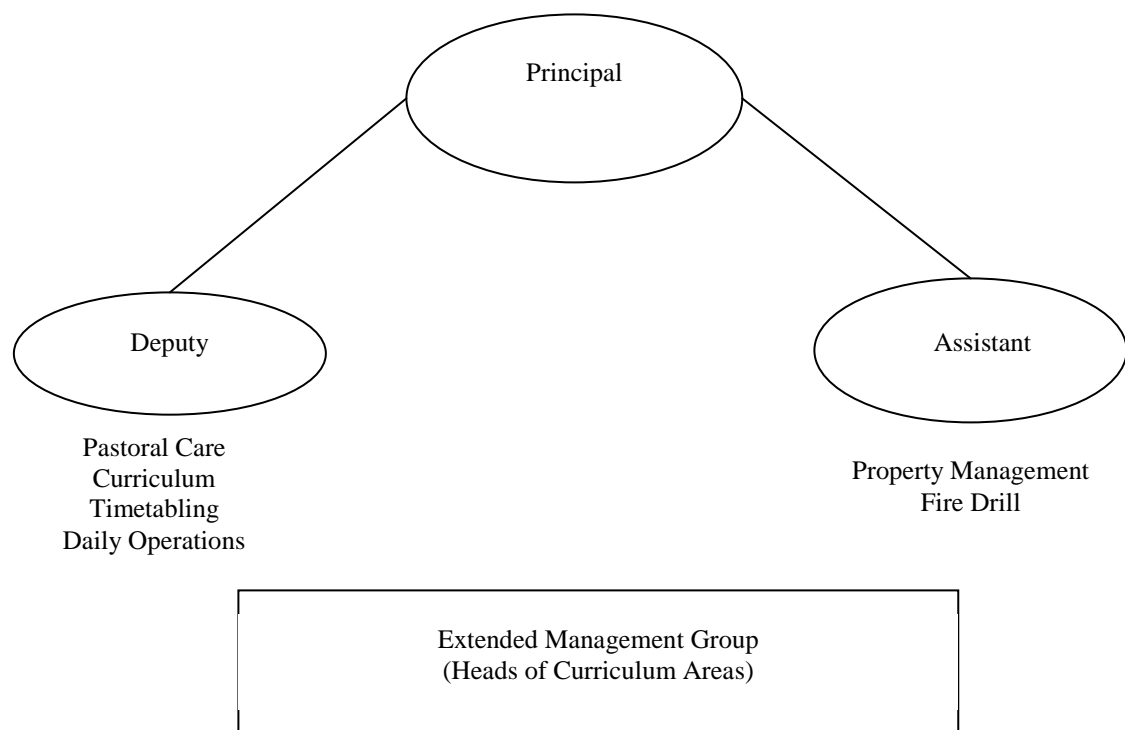


Figure 2.1 - Example: The first secondary school structure the researcher (I) had worked in

This structure was rather unwieldy and all the decisions were still made by the senior management team. The extended management group discussed the points pertinent to the

school but little changed. There were few opportunities for professional development for the senior managers.

More recently, as Barnett (2004) states, “Top-down decision making is being replaced with the opportunities for teachers, parents and other stakeholders to be involved” (p. 121). Lashway emphasises “... a cultural change requiring principals to rethink leadership strategies and policies” (Lashway, 1995, cited in Barnett, 2004, pp. 121-122).

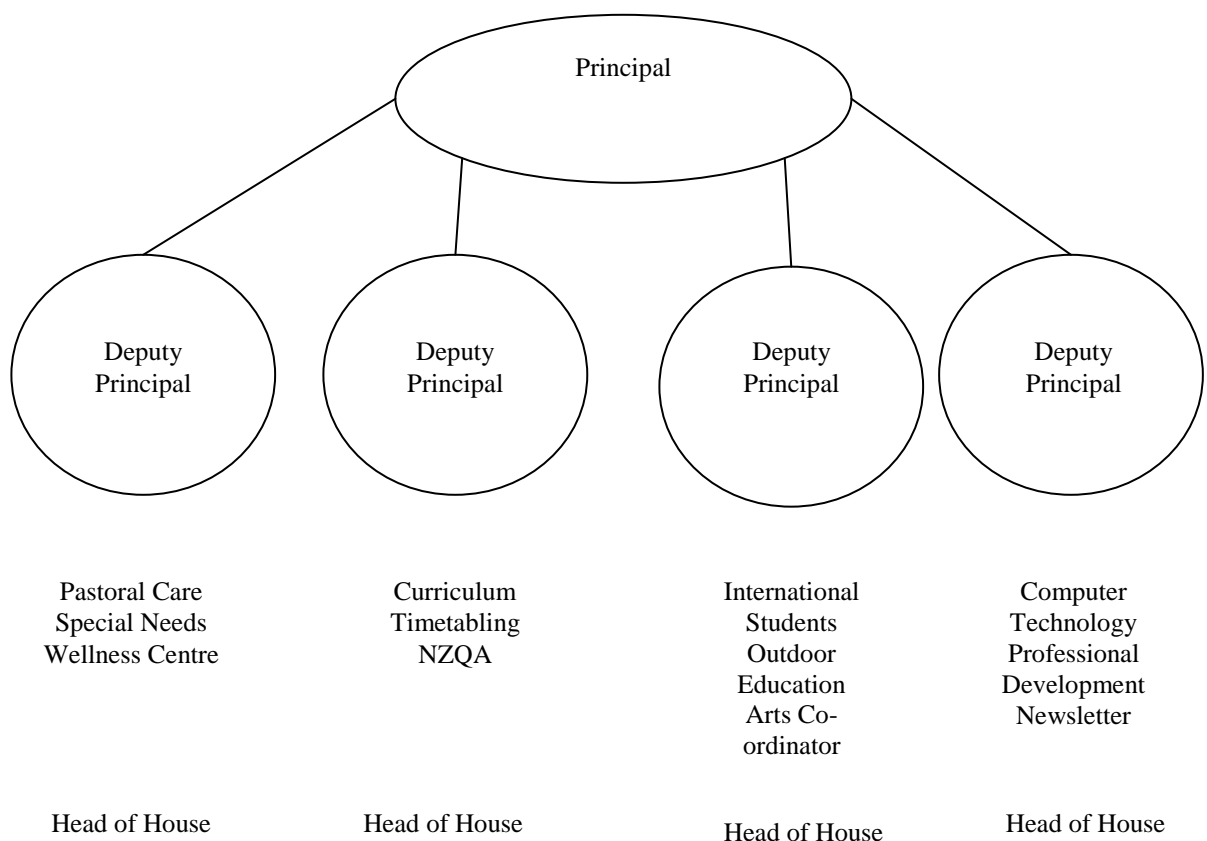


Figure 2.2 - Example B: The second secondary school structure that I (the researcher) had worked in

This second structure allowed for professional development for the deputy principals as they were able to shadow the portfolios of others, thus obtaining a working knowledge of the different areas of the school. The senior management meetings held each week also allowed for discussions about the initiatives that the Government was trying to introduce at the time. Each deputy principal was also responsible for 250 students and the fifteen staff that made up the whanau/form teacher system within the school thus embracing the concept of ‘a school within a school’.

It is widely known that educational leaders deal consistently with the many issues, decisions, changes and concerns that reflect the communities they serve. Therefore, to do this well they also need to start recruiting, training and mentoring the leaders of the future. This may take the form of some sort of professional development be it formally in a recognised programme or in a mentoring role within a local principals’ group.

Professional Development

To enable professionals to be responsible for their own futures we need to be able to choose professional development that is empowering. Robinson (1989) refers to this as “... the empowerment paradigm of professional development” (p. 278). Being able to select from the professional development courses available is one area in which potential principals can become proactive. This enables potential principals to focus on the areas where they feel they have a weakness and be “... active participants in their own development” (p. 274).

This choice should have a flow-on effect and potential principals should be able to select what is appropriate, to read books, observe, or talk to other people so that they will maximise their professional development opportunities.

When new Ministry of Education or Government initiatives are incorporated into school programmes and/or policies, it provides an ideal opportunity for potential principals to sit in with their principal and senior management team, and thus expand their knowledge and learning. This pulls the team together in a cohesive manner, and the management and leadership of the school becomes a working unit, heading in the same direction. To support this professional learning, potential principals need to work closely with their principal to “... establish yearly performance goals” (Lovely, 2004, p. 50). These goals should centre on the specific tasks set, the school goals and yearly targets, and the individual needs of the potential principal, in order to meet their professional learning needs.

The ideal situation would be that potential principals would “... benefit from an abundance of opportunities and experiences” (Lovely, 2004, p. 51). It is the role of the principal to provide these within the day-to-day workings of a school, always keeping in mind the “... learning focus” (ibid, p. 52).

Professional development for this researcher during 2008 took different forms. One was a professional development course designed by an outside agency to help potential principals to explore the role of the principal, before making any firm commitment to this aspiration. This course did not bridge the gap between the two roles, but allowed the researcher to confirm that her knowledge was both useful and invaluable, and that choosing to change status from potential principal to principal was possible. This method of professional

development has been referred to as “... the empowerment paradigm” by Robinson (1989, p. 275). It begins with the participant making choices by looking at their own strengths and abilities then using what the outside agency has to offer in the area of support for learning new practices. The outside agency in this case encouraged all those present to refine their practices as a starting point to consider whether principalship was the pathway for them.

This professional development gave participants the opportunity to look at what was involved in the leadership role, and the question was asked, “Is this still the choice for you?” In this respect the essence of the empowerment paradigm, that of meaningful choice in relation to a person’s professional development, was addressed. This researcher was left questioning the rigour of these professional development sessions, specifically the amount of time required and the superficiality of the content coverage. As Hess and Kelly (2005a) state “... research raises questions about whether preparation is well matched to the contemporary world of schooling and whether graduates of principal preparation programmes are being equipped for the challenges and opportunities posed by an era of accountability” (p. 268).

Potential principals come from all areas within a school. Some are teachers with a few years teaching experience who have climbed the ladder rapidly to head of department (HoD), or assistant/deputy principal. Some are teachers who have worked in all areas of the school, from the classroom to the role of Dean, the head of a curriculum area, the head of a house, careers advisor up to senior management. Regardless of the pathway to becoming a potential principal, there are “... key competencies that principals to be should exhibit” (Lovely, 2004, p. 20). These competencies should have been acquired on the journey. Karen

Dyer, the manager at the Centre for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, North Carolina, outlines these key competencies:

- Ability to lead
- Interpersonal savvy
- Work team orientation
- Conflict resolution
- Managing change in others
- Effectively confronting problem employees

(Dyer, 2001, p. 29 cited in Lovely, 2004, p. 20).

These skills are interpersonal and to be effective, a potential principal needs to know “...what approach to use and when to use it” (Lovely, 2004, p. 2).

For some principals to collaborate takes effort and challenges them to release some of the positional power they have held for a long time. “For principals letting go of power may be as difficult as it is for others to assume that power” (ibid, p. 60). Principals need a whole new raft of skills “... in order to build capacity in others, but also they need to adopt new mindsets related to self identity and the empowerment of others” (Slater, 2008, p. 60). It is sufficient to say that principals now need to move beyond self interest and support and provide the opportunity for others “... to pursue complex tasks that relate directly to their personal aspirations and future” (ibid, p. 60). This empowers people to move onto the next level, from potential principals to principals expanding their visionary boundaries in the pursuit of complex tasks that relate directly to their personal aspirations, growth and meaningful future. The professional development opportunities that have presented

themselves reinforce the notion that there is more than one pathway to acquiring the knowledge to become a good principal and leader. Robinson (1989) believes we need to take responsibility for our own professional growth. To do this, potential principals must be given:

“the opportunity to be fully themselves,
the vision to become aware of the choices around them,
the support to venture down whatever road they choose”

(Robinson, 1989, p. 280)

Making the transition from classroom teacher to head of department, to senior manager is not easy or straightforward. There is ample professional development in the areas of curriculum initiatives, subject development, the social issues that students face, or the changes schools are expected to undertake to keep pace with learning. There is however, very little in the way of professional development or career planning in the early stages of many teachers’ careers. There is minimal advice available on how to bridge the gap from one role to another – from classroom leader to curriculum leader (now also called middle manager) senior manager then principal. Stevenson (2006) has concluded “... that if systemic problems of supply are to be addressed educational researchers need to develop more sophisticated ways of understanding what factors shape individuals’ career paths as they move towards, into and through principalship” (p. 413).

During this study the researcher was unable to uncover a great deal of data about progression to principalship. Stevenson (2006) observes that “... we know little about why teachers decide to move up, stay put or even bail out” (p. 409). This lack of data was one of the reasons that the researcher embarked on this study, to explore the nature of those who decided to stay in the profession and then embark on a career journey that they did not

necessarily foresee when they decided to become a classroom teacher. Why did these principals decide on the pathways they chose or did they just fall into it?

One thing that all educationalists can agree upon as they assume the mantle of principalship is that "... becoming a principal involves assuming a key professional leadership role at a time of rapid social change and considerable uncertainty" (Stevenson, 2006, p. 409). Therefore, to assist potential principals within this climate of change, taking control of one's professional needs turns uncertainty into manageable stability.

Principals Preparation Programmes

The University of Auckland has established the Centre for Educational Leadership, researching how leadership relates to high quality outcomes for students. It is also looking at how to bridge the gap between research and practice. According to the Centre's website, it aims to develop a relationship between research and practice and educational leadership. Other courses offered by the Centre will be discussed later in this chapter.

Within the New Zealand Aspiring Principals Programme, Associate Professor Eileen Piggot-Irvine says "... what she's seen of the participants so far excites her ... It's fantastic to meet so many inspiring, optimistic educators. This is the future of leadership in this country, and it's brilliant" (Erb, 2008, Education Gazette, p. 15).¹ To qualify for this course

¹ Piggot-Irvine and others at the School of Education at Unitec were part of a Ministry of Education funded research team evaluating this programme. However, the outcome of the evaluation was not available at the time this thesis was submitted in 2009.

one is required to complete an on-line application form, and submit a curriculum vitae with evidence. Emphasis is placed on the following areas as criteria for consideration:

- successful teaching practice
- recent professional learning
- relationships with students, colleagues and community
- leading and/or being part of a team
- a personal commitment to leading learning

(Erb, 2008 Education Gazettep.p. 2)

This does not appear to be as rigorous a process, compared to various states in the USA where “... in many preparation programmes applicants are screened carefully, based on their potential for success” (Su, Adams and Mininberg, 2000, p. 460). Following this initial screening process candidates with “... leadership qualities were identified by a team of expert recruiters from schools, school district offices and universities and then provided with paid leave to participate in special administrator training programmes to become principals” (Su et al., 2000, p. 460). A further recommendation to this selection process in the United States was that the recruitment process should begin with the identification of classroom teachers, as they are observed and monitored in their classroom during teaching assessments. Those displaying natural leadership ability were encouraged to investigate future leadership positions and, more importantly, were guided on that pathway: “Those who appear to be natural leaders should be recognised” (Su et al., 2000, p. 460). These qualifying teachers also require role models in the person of their principals, “... they should be themselves dealing with a principal who is a role model” (Su et al. 2000, p. 460). The encouragement of a well respected and competent role model would be “...a further aspect of recruiting promising professionals into the Principalship” (ibid, pp. 460-461).

“A principal preparation programme must appeal to and attract educators with the potential and desire to lead at the site level” (Lauder, 2000, p. 23). Therefore principal preparation programmes are now gathering data about the potential candidates, which comprise more than their academic results; the prospective principal “... has an established history of success in developing and using leadership skills, and to discern the applicants’ personal qualities (disposition) for the principalship. It is common for programmes to require leadership experiences from their adult life” (Lauder, 2000, p. 24). It needs to be noted then that programmes in parts of the USA at least now insist “... on increased standards and criteria for recruitment selection, and rigorous and relevant preparation programmes” (Young & Creighton, 2002, p. 226).

In the United States of America potential principal training is primarily the responsibility of universities and they are referred to as “... educational leadership preparation programmes” (Young & Creighton, 2002, p. 237). The scope of these programmes as McCarthy, Murphy, Young and Peterson state, covers several major areas:

- “recruitment and selection
- programme content
- delivery methods
- programme standards
- faculty professional development
- institutional support”.

(cited in Young & Creighton, 2002, p. 237).

These areas need to ensure educational quality and be the beginning of the conversation "... that is currently shaping the national educational leadership" (Young & Creighton, 2002, p. 237). The USA is currently undergoing discussions and reviews that centre around the preparation of "... high quality leaders, through rigorous standards based, theoretically sound preparation programmes" (Young & Creighton, 2002, p. 238). New Zealand could learn from such programmes and commence the same conversation.

Within that conversation, we must argue for quality leadership preparation, we must share what is known about best practice in leadership preparation, we must urge collaboration among stake holders, and we must insist that all decisions that are made concerning leadership preparation have at their core the interest of our nation's children. (Young & Creighton, 2002, p. 238)

Emerging from these conversations and what is now being looked upon with fierce interest is "... what candidates are actually being taught in principal preparation" (Hess & Kelly, 2005a, p. 246). Hess and Kelly have identified seven areas 'deemed vital' components of principal preparation programmes, ensuring effective school leadership. These areas are:

- "managing for results
- managing personnel
- technical knowledge
- external leadership
- norms and values
- managing classroom instruction
- leadership and school culture"

(Hess & Kelly, 2005a, p. 247)

It would therefore be fair to assume that all seven areas are of equal relevance in a principals' preparation programme. These aims and their possible achievement will be

discussed in Chapter 5. Within the principals preparation programmes that Hess and Kelly researched, they discovered that each “...had 5–10 core courses that were required of all potential principals” (2005a, pp. 251-252). Participants could then access other courses as they saw fit. This push towards positive preparation for school leadership would assist in helping to meet a “... predicted shortage of ...” (Young & Creighton, 2002, p. 229). The authors also acknowledge that there was “... disturbing evidence that schools lacking qualified candidates to fill principal vacancies have become common place” (ibid, p. 226). I discuss this phenomenon within the New Zealand school system later in this chapter. Therefore, to ensure that programmes attract the right candidates and don’t just bow to the pressure of increasing the numbers, insistence must be placed upon maintaining the standards and criteria of the applicant selection process, and the programmes must be rigorous and relevant. The design, development, implementation and evaluation of leadership preparation programmes would become “... a key issue for solving the leadership shortage and for addressing the development needs of future school leaders” (Young & Creighton, 2002, p. 226). Since “... principals themselves suggest that they are not fully equipped for all the challenges that they face,” the standard of the curriculum of principal preparation programmes needs to be of the highest priority to educationalists (Hess & Kelly, 2005a, p. 245).

Future principals need to be adequately equipped to meet the challenges they will encounter; “... changes in the professional preparation of potential principals reflect an increased responsiveness to the work that emerging school principals are expected to perform” (Behar-Horenstein, 1995, p. 18). Witters-Churchill (1992) stated that the school principal has become the centre of concern in educational reform in the United States:

This concern over the central role of the school principal has brought with it severe criticism of the programmes of preparation. Principals themselves are among the harshest critics of the preparation they have received, and they are taking an active part in the examining of such programmes and the directions required to improve them (p. 339).

So as to enable prospective principals to meet these needs they will be required to be trained and/or up-skilled as the school environment changes. As Bellamy, Fulmer, Murphy and Muth (2003) stated "... a fundamental challenge for principal preparation programmes is to help candidates develop knowledge, skills and dispositions that are later applied consciously in professional practice" (p. 254).

Recently there has been a movement towards institutions establishing alternative options; these have been called 'not for profit, or profit models'. These options are still run by "... a number of state departments of education often allied to university based schools of education, and have developed principal academies to train present and future administrators" (Hess & Kelly, 2005b, p. 164).

This challenge to the more traditional approach to preparation programmes has resulted in "... an unprecedented interest in reforming school leadership. New initiatives and programmes have focused on recruiting and preparing effective principals" (Hess & Kelly, 2005b, p. 155). This reform movement has arisen from the identification of "... the wide gaps between the skills that are taught in educational leadership programmes and the new demands on school leaders" (ibid, p. 156). It is now becoming apparent that there is not 'a one size fits all' training model, from this questioning of the preparation programmes must grow a rethink of why? "...the principals job description" (ibid, p. 157).

Although some American universities identified in the SREB report such as the University of Texas, The Delta State University and East Tennessee University have been promoting the conventional principals' preparation programmes for some time, they are now showing "... a remarkable willingness to compromise and acknowledge the need for reforming traditional preparation" (Hess & Kelly, 2005b, p. 157). Although long time advocates of traditional preparation programmes, Kawalski, Cambron-McCabe, and McCarthy applaud changes to the programmes. But the question must be asked whether changes "... mark substantive, positive developments, or do they represent marginal refinements to existing practices?" (cited in Hess & Kelly, 2005b, p. 157). The American Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) warned that redesigning leadership preparation programmes "... does not mean simply rearranging old courses – as staff at some universities are inclined to do. True redesign requires a new curriculum framework and new courses aimed at producing principals who lead schools to excellence" (cited in Hess & Kelly, 2005b, p. 165). To do this effectively courses should be designed to prepare potential principals "... for the challenges of driving school improvement and student achievement as school leaders" (ibid, p. 170).

During 1963 Martin Luther King said: "The nation and the world are in dire need of creative extremists" (King, 1968, cited in Young & Creighton, 2000, p. 238). In New Zealand, the time has come for leadership preparation programme designers to take an informed and proactive role in the national conversation on educational leadership preparation. "In a sense, within this conversation we must be extremists in our support for quality in standards, licensure, accreditation, and leadership preparation that ensures the educational success of all our children" (Young & Creighton, 2002, p. 238). Whilst much of the literature emanates

from the USA, it is relevant to New Zealand also. The complexity, unpredictability, and difficulties of leadership in current times cannot be denied. The literature about leadership is vast; the books, journals, and on line articles that are available are filled with many theories. They espouse such traits of leadership as intuitive, imaginative, creative, and empathetic. “Books and journals are filled with theories that tell leaders what to do and how to do it” (Sergiovanni, 2001, p. 20).

Great leaders of our time have arisen in spite of numerous adversities and far reaching changes. Notwithstanding the unique impact of circumstances on each individual leader, these people have shown common characteristics such as charisma, honesty, integrity and selflessness, and having credibility. “We would affirm that such is the nature of our leaders” (Smyth & Norton, 2007, p. 67). True and effective leadership is further characterised by empowerment, effective delegation, creating a positive climate, consistency of approach, persistency, creating an atmosphere of calmness, and being supportive. These are all ways to lead effectively. These theories and ideas which are being discussed by many authors offer “...no guarantees, that a particular leader will be effective by adopting a recommended approach” (Sergiovanni, 2001, p. 20).

These are diverse approaches to leadership; “... no single strategy, style, list or formula fits all the situations the same way” (Sergiovanni, 2001, p. 20). That is why those who appoint leaders and follow leaders need to be “... tolerant of the different theories. Lots of differences mean lots of exceptions” (ibid, p. 20).

Having mentioned some aspects of the leadership preparation that is being undertaken in the Southern regions mainly those of Alabama, Texas and Carolina and then acknowledging

that in other states things may be carried out differently, I now turn to a brief discussion of principal preparation activities in New Zealand.

The Current New Zealand Situation

The *Tomorrow's Schools* policy stated (Government of New Zealand, 1988) "... that the principal will be the professional leader of the institution". This gave managerial power and authority to the principal, but without putting in place, training or support to enable the new educational order to come about. This managerial power could not always be utilised well or to its full potential, which is effective leadership of teaching and learning. From this new era of reform there came the recognition that principal 'training' was required if the principal was to play the key role in the school by facilitating positive communications between the school and wider community, and being a conduit between the school and the state organisation (Billot, 2003).

In New Zealand there appears now to be an emphasis in leadership development on redesigning organisational structures to focus on leading learning, leading change, strategic direction and future thinking (see also Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009)². The next section outlines the information from the only specifically designed principal preparation programme in New Zealand. However, it should be noted that a number of tertiary providers

² This extensive Ministry of Education funded Best Evidence Synthesis literature review was not released until November 2009, thus it was outside the scope and timeframe of this thesis. However, I add it here for those readers wanting to follow-up this line of thinking.

here offer postgraduate qualifications in the leadership area at certificate, diploma and master's level (see for example, The University of Auckland, Auckland University of Technology, Unitec, University of Waikato, Massey University, and the Universities of Canterbury and Otago).

This programme was established by the Ministry of Education, and the University of Auckland was the successful tenderer for its operation which started in 2002. This is called 'The First Time Principals Programme', an 18 month induction programme for new principals. There is also the Experienced Principals Development programme which is currently being trialled in Auckland and Whangarei. The centre in the University of Auckland also offers one to three day leadership seminars. Aspiring Principal Courses are being offered by the Waikato University and the Auckland College of Education at the Whangarei campus (see websites for further details).

In addition to these courses there are also mentoring groups set up by regional principals' associations to assist new principals coming into the various regions.

There are also many publications now available to new principals on the coaching and mentoring of new educational leaders, for example *Staffing the Principalship* by Suzette Lovely (2004). The professional learning of principals is now being supported by the Ministry of Education's long term strategy to build leadership capacity. These initiatives include:

- provision of laptops
- dedicated website for principals

- induction programme for first time principals
- residential programme for experienced principals
- networking structures / professional learning communities
- support from School Support Services, and
- the Aspiring Principals' National Pilot Programme

(Ministry of Education, 2007)

These strategies are outlined in a draft document *Kiwi Leadership for Principals (KLP)* and were initiated by the Ministry of Education (hereafter, MoE) during 2007. KLP looks towards the leaders that schools will need in the 21st century, and puts a great deal of emphasis on the capabilities of leaders to lead professional learning. It also questions how the Ministry can ensure "... a good supply of the right people to take on the most complex job in a school" (MoE, 2007, p. 1). It emphasises the many challenges facing principals, the main ones being: "To increase pedagogical leadership capacity and capability at every level of the school. To recruit and retain quality school leaders for all school contexts" (MoE, 2007, p. 1). These are the areas that must be focused upon, not just as recruitment and retention issues, but as professional development issues for potential principals. There needs to be more than internationally based literature, or pilot courses. Relevant resources are needed about leadership issues and situations pertinent to New Zealand schools and the situations that potential leaders will face.

An important aspect of the *Kiwi Leadership* document is its emphasis on the empowering of all educationalists to lead, the building of leadership capability, and providing the potential leaders of the future with a concept of their own leadership capabilities. The reinforcement

of a leadership paradigm in any school should continually enhance and support the core purpose of teaching and learning, which will strengthen staff professional development and learning.

Effective principals or leaders communicate their vision, values and goals in such a way that all stakeholders will want to make a positive contribution. This is vital in a school that wishes to make its focus “... improved learning outcomes for all students” (MoE, 2007, p. 5). In order to achieve this, principals must build positive relationships for and with all, and these relationships must be “... built on trust, a shared sense of purpose, and a commitment to developing the capabilities of others” (ibid, p. 2). This building of relationships is important for the “...growing and sustaining of the school’s leadership capacity” (ibid, p. 5). Therefore, the Kiwi Leadership model is a good place for potential principals to ‘Stop, Look and Read’, and incorporate this knowledge to guide their career paths, always remembering that the leading of teaching and learning is the key role.

In order to lead teaching and learning school leaders must be professionally knowledgeable, visionary, the managers of change, be able to work in partnership with external agencies and be the builders of leadership capacity in others. This is shown in the figure 2.3 The Kiwi Leadership Model.

As stated in the above model, underpinning this knowledge is relationships, and these must be sound and include all stakeholders: staff, students, Boards of Trustees, parents / whanau, and the community in general. This is shown when principals respect and care for others and consistently ‘walk the talk’, thereby building learning capacity and improving students’



Figure 2.3 The Kiwi Leadership Model

academic and social outcomes. It is then true to say that when principals get the relationships right and address the educational challenges at the same time this role modelling encourages potential principals to emulate that which is demonstrated as effective and inspiring leadership, culminating in the leading of teaching and learning.

So the best advice that potential leaders can take from the existing literature is:

- Stop and look at the role models that surround you
- Observe their actions
- Look for some key individuals you can connect with
- Approach them for advice and guidance
- Listen to the advice that is given to you, also the feedback both positive and negative

- The advice that is always going to stand potential leaders in good stead: *Stop Look and Listen*.

In addition to the two New Zealand based programmes outlined above there is also some relatively recent New Zealand literature relevant to this topic. Patuawa (2006), in her masters thesis looked at the topic from the perspective of principals already in the role albeit only for a short period of time. Roberts (2007) looked at pre-principalship preparation. Both researchers acknowledged that investment in preparation and training for aspiring new principals is an investment in quality schools of the future. They also questioned where principals received their training prior to taking up their new role, what if any support was available upon attaining the role of principal and whether the support structures were effective. Patuawa, like myself, found there were preparation courses available, but these had deficiencies and required enhancing and improvement. Roberts examined the experiences of pre-principalship preparation through the aspiring and potential principals' pilot, run by the School of Education at the University of Waikato. He concluded that while the programme had worthwhile aspects, more research was needed "into the vital area of pre-principalship preparation" (Roberts, 2007, p. 83).

Furthermore, Martin and Robertson (2003) from the University of Waikato designed an induction programme for first-time principals, resulting from an announcement in the 2001 Government Budget. This programme was part of a "...package of initiatives designed to enhance principals' leadership and management capabilities" (MoE, as cited in Martin & Robertson, 2003). A need had been identified for a programme to ensure a smooth transition from aspiring to full-principalship. The challenge for this programme was to develop 'transformative leaders' who were not afraid of change and who would see their main

objective as leading the learning and constantly improving outcomes for students. Therefore as Martin and Robertson state,

If we choose to focus on tasks to be done, rather than conceptual development of reflective principals, we will run the risk of producing yesterday's principals, instead of tomorrow's leaders who are surely a must for tomorrow's learning communities (Robertson & Webber, 2002). The design of induction programmes around critical, reflective frames of leadership will develop the types of leaders who can, and will, lead complex change in their schools.

I note that the current leadership principal preparation offered by the Ministry of Education is presently voluntary, and aspiring principals apply for these programmes. This may eventually change to become mandatory like the programmes in the USA.

The Relevance of School Leadership Succession Planning

*If you want one year of prosperity, grow grain.
If you want ten years of prosperity, grow trees.
If you want one hundred years of prosperity, grow people.*

(Chinese proverb)

To develop academically sound pathways for principal preparation we must acknowledge that there is a need that requires addressing. Within the current climate of increased workloads, ageing teaching force, and changing requirements for leadership positions, a growing number of western educational researchers portray a decline in suitable candidates for principalships with headlines such as “Shortages of Heads Worsens” and “Headship Beggars’ can’t be Choosers” (Gronn, 2003, p. 61). In New Zealand there is a shortage of suitable competent potential leaders. “Currently, the demand for replacements appears to be outstripping supply and there is an excess of vacancies over appointable candidates” (Gronn, 1999, p. 61). This is also illustrated by the research of Reynold Macpherson (guest speaker at the Secondary Principals’ Conference in Northland, 2008) titled *The National*

Review of the Preparation and Succession of Educational Leaders in New Zealand/Aotearoa. Macpherson identified that there is a decrease in the application rates of talented potential principals and a need to improve the preparation and succession planning required to fill projected vacancies. We need to be addressing the recruitment and retention of potential principals now.

Villani (2006) concurs that the first step towards assisting possible future candidates toward the role of principal is to recognise that “... during the next decade a substantial number of new principals will need to be hired” owing to the “... projected retirements and resignations predicted” (Villani, 2006, p. 5). To help combat this shortfall it is desirable that educational institutions have in place programmes which prepare “... a candidate for the Principalship”, by streamlining activities that must be available at every level of progression (Lovely, 2004, p. 49). Professional development programmes need to focus not only on basic management and administration, but also on the wider needs of school leaders of the 21st century.

As a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), New Zealand plus twenty other countries were involved in an investigation of the issues they were facing in the recruiting and developing of school leaders. To ensure that the right type of leaders are recruited they need to know what the main focus is, and as is stated “... quality leadership is crucial to improving outcomes for students” (Gammie, 2007, p. 8). As ‘quality student outcomes’ is the new catch phrase there needs to be an emphasis on the role of the pedagogical leader of the school. It is also stated “the challenge that we are all facing is how to ensure that school leaders have the time to focus on the quality of teaching and

learning in their schools and are not bogged down with the administrative tasks” (Gammie, 2007, p. 8).

The multifaceted job of a school principal is sometimes seen as larger than life and as one ascends the managerial ladder the question is often asked ‘Is it worth the stress? I want a life, I’m not paid enough for the hassles involved’. The growing complexity of the leadership role is now leading some senior managers to question whether that job is for them. “An impact of the desirability of school leadership as a career option has many countries forecasting difficulties in filling positions in the near future” (Gammie, 2007, p. 8).

As Gronn (1999) suggests “... promotion to such a formal leadership role as the principal marks an important personal development shift from being the young woman or man of promise to the person exercising formal responsibility” (p. 179). We as educators need to grow our leaders of tomorrow. For the principal to become accepted by the staff as the leader of the school, he/she needs to demonstrate an ability to lead in many areas. “... [T]hey must lead as an effective business manager, leader of people, curriculum developer and change agent” (Jones, 2007, p. 30).

Planning for and appointing a new principal is not a process that either schools as a whole or Boards of Trustees are trained to carry out. Succession planning is not formally instituted within New Zealand secondary schools. Potential principals are able to initiate development, but it does not mean that they will automatically succeed the current/outgoing principal. It has been stated by MacMillan (cited in Fink & Brayman, 2004, p. 431), “leadership succession is the process of transition occurring between a new leader’s

appointment and the end of his or her tenure.” The transition needs to be planned and well thought out by Boards of Trustees, and they often contract a consultant to guide them through the change process.

Gronn (1999) stated that when a change of principal happens that “... there are four main perspectives from which to consider succession – the organisation, the predecessor, the followers, and the successor” (1999, p. 131). These are key components that any Board of Trustees must take into account when considering and introducing a new leader. Boards of Trustees in New Zealand secondary schools do not engage in formal succession planning, but they do need to be aware of the need for this and have that need recognised. They then should have either a policy or contingency in place that would outline the process. A Board of Trustees needs to acknowledge in its documentation that a change in leadership can “... disrupt normality and upset an existing balance of interests, can reactivate or bring to the surface a variety of emotions to do with material and psychological loss or gain, and security and change of personal and organisational identity” (Gronn, 1999, p. 132). As most organisations are aware, succession is rarely either a smooth or uncomplicated process, therefore planning must be both comprehensive and inclusive of all stakeholders. When succession planning has not been acknowledged, or comes about through an unexpected departure, often an interim or relieving principal is promoted from the ranks of the deputy principals within the school. The tasks can appear daunting as one relieving principal described:

at the commencement of my term as acting principal I was most conscious of my ignorance of routine processes, what information was required on a given return, files to use, where to find particular records, what new information has been documented, what procedure should be initiated in order to achieve a desired outcome. My perception of my learning needs at that time focused on the deficiencies in my factual knowledge (cited in Gronn, 1999, p. 138).

These comments reinforce the objective of this study, which is to align career planning and potential principals preparation programmes with the norms of professional educational development for those wishing to become principals. Gronn explains leadership succession as fraught with consequences “...be they intended or unintended” (1999, p. 179). Gronn goes on to qualify this by explaining “... every time an existing leader takes on a new set of role responsibilities – through promotion, transfer, appointment or selection – she or he revisits the same experiences and pressures negotiated during the attainment of their initial leadership appointment” (p. 179). Therefore, to ensure that leadership succession is at least thought about by Boards of Trustees and the Ministry of Education they should note what the business literature is saying; “... perhaps the most significant findings from the business literature is that leadership succession must be tailored to an organisation’s unique needs, culture and history” (Souque, cited in Fink & Brayman, 2004, p. 433).

Succession planning practice in New Zealand would be a new concept, but in certain parts of Canada this does occur, especially for assistant principals, “Many of the assistant principals that we talked to would fit into this category because both the school districts in our study moved them to another setting every two or three years in order to gain experience in multiple settings as preparation for principalship” (Fink & Brayman, 2004, p. 440). This is one method for potential principals to gain preparation, unlike New Zealand where candidates apply for positions and remain in them until another is gained. Canadian school boards tend to rotate their assistant and deputy principals: “... most school districts in Ontario regularly rotate their principals and assistant principals as a matter of policy” (Fink & Brayman, 2004, p. 432). The Canadian study has yet to be completed and further areas for investigation have yet to be examined, but the results to date suggest “... teachers appear

to analyse everything a new principal does as a means to gain a sense of the degree to which a principal can be trusted” (MacMillan, Meyer & Northfield, 2004, p. 291). The area of trust can create a sense of tension, whether succession results from internal or external appointments. An internal appointee knows the structure of the school, an external one has to learn it, and the required changes may generate different tensions. These may be seen as positive or negative depending on the side one takes, that of the new incumbent or the predecessor, as Gronn explains “What a successor chooses to do reflects both the particular situational pressures confronting him or her and the new incumbent’s own personality” (1999, p. 130). One of these tensions concerns the role of trust around principal succession. An examination has been undertaken by Macmillan, Meyer and Northfield, Canadians from the universities of Western Ontario and Saint Francis Xavier in Nova Scotia. These authors have researched the area of trust between the new principal and the teachers they will lead. Trust was seen as a “... critical factor for both teachers and principals during a succession event” (Macmillan et al, 2004, p. 283) and merits further investigation as part of the ethics and values that surround the position of principal. Consequently trust needs to be addressed within potential principal preparation programmes, so that staff will see a “... consistency between a principal’s practices and words” (Macmillan et al., 2004, p. 287).

Macmillan et al., found that trust between new principals and staff “...could be described as a four phase continuum that begins at the time of the principal’s entry ... Role, Practice, Integrative and Correlative” (2004, p. 275). These terms range from a level of trust that is purely accountability-based to that which contains an emotional component. These aspects of a principal’s role will determine how they view their staff, how they are viewed by staff, and how these practices bring about a positive school environment; this will also impact

upon the culture of the school and its wider community. This continuum of trust was first used by Bottery (2004) and has been adapted upon by Macmillan et al., (2004, see also Codd, 1999). At the principals' preparation courses that the researcher has attended in New Zealand, the area of trust was never mentioned. The cultures of schools were discussed, the values within education were touched upon, but the aspect of relationship building and the issue of trusting either party within this 'marriage' was never raised.

A school and a principal must have a matched set of beliefs which underpin their developed professional practice. This is an area that would benefit from further research both in New Zealand and in Canada. Macmillan et al., (2004) observe:

Part of the process of building this type of trust appears to be the testing of the principals resolve by discussing and challenging decisions. Through these means, teachers fine tune their understanding of the principal's beliefs that underpinned his practices. The critical part of this type of trust is the match between the belief system of the principal and the school culture. (p. 289)

The degree with which trust is reciprocated varies and as Macmillan et al., (2004) stated "... we also had some indication that the degree to which principals trusted teachers and teachers trusted principals varied. Both these variances in perception need to be examined further" (p. 292). Succession planning is seen within the private sector as a major initiative, but it is not looked upon within educational circles as having much relevance or importance. "Where are new leaders to come from? How should their succession be orchestrated?" (Fink & Brayman, 2004, p. 447). These issues are now relevant both nationally and internationally as potential principal preparation programmes are either being developed, as in New Zealand, or redefined and reconceptualised as in the United States of America.

Quality Management

Ideas of quality management were originally developed in the 1930–1940s, primarily by W. Edwards Deeming, a statistician who was best known for helping post-war Japanese businesses to become world leaders in quality (cited in Steyn, 2000, p. 1).

Current literature strongly suggests a growing interest in the application of the quality management philosophy (hereafter, QM) to the education sector. QM systems, if appropriately applied within school appraisal systems, should help educational institutions cope with poor quality and systematically bring about change. Quality makes the difference between success and failure in education. Steyn (2000) reasoned that quality management in education “...provides a structured and systematic delivery system which has inter alia led to an increase in learner performance, self esteem, motivation and self-confidence, a decrease in learner drop-out, enhanced staff morale, less conflict between staff members, and a decrease in costs due to less need to redo tasks” (p. 1).

Schools within the New Zealand educational framework are required to conduct a self review component as part of their formal appraisal process. This begins with individual teacher appraisals, then progresses to departmental reviews, culminating in student, staff and wider community surveys which will guarantee feedback from a wide ranging group of stakeholders. The outcomes are reported to the Board of Trustees as a quality management component of the self review process.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a review of the literature on potential principals preparation programmes and what is available both nationally and internationally. It has discussed the leadership models in secondary schools that have been in place and have developed and emerged from policy changes. It has discussed the need to prepare future candidates through professional development and career planning, to take up principalship. The relevance of succession planning was outlined; the necessity for quality management processes was introduced, which will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

The following quote summarises what has been said and written about leadership and again illustrates the fact that great leaders in principals' positions come from potential principals in the making:

Great schools grow when educators understand that the power of their leadership lies in the strength of their relationships. Strong leadership in schools results from the participation of many people each leading in his or her own way. Whether we call it distributed leadership, collaborative leadership, or shared leadership, the ideal arrangement encourages every adult in the school to be a leader. Administrators, formal teacher leaders all contribute to the mix. They hold the power to improve student learning in the hands they extend to one another (Donaldson, 2007, p. 3).

Chapter 3 outlines the research design, the data collection process and the analysis undertaken in this research project.

Chapter Three Research Design

There is no such thing as one best research method.

Research should always be tailor made.

(Davidson & Tolich, 2003, p. 21)

Introduction

This chapter describes the research design chosen. To begin, I explain the paradigm used and the rationale and motivation for this choice. I then discuss the research approach chosen. I outline the research setting, the sample group and the participant selection and interview process used. The ethical considerations involved in this research are then discussed. Finally, the process of establishing reliability, trustworthiness and credibility are considered. This research investigates the provision and/or discovery of pathways that potential principals use to become principals. In order to achieve this (and after I had completed the last draft of my literature study) I interviewed principals and examined the pathways they took to achieve principalship.

Although research helps to inform good practice in many areas of education, the application of findings to problem solving in ‘the real world’ is often not seen as a high priority (Wilkinson, 2000, p. 3). The research findings of this study were used to design an applicable and accessible pathway (in the form of a framework) in the ‘real world’ which can be used to help competent leaders who aspire to the position of principalship.

Rationale for Research Design Choice

Before choosing a research design, I investigated a number of approaches that could have lent themselves to this study. Educational research can be deemed to be social science based as it is often used to “... improve the delivery of social policies” and this is viewed by social scientists as a way to improve the conditions of the world” (Davidson & Tolich, 2003, p.8). Social science research has been described as seeing patterns which characterise societies, therefore “... it is because patterns such as these exist that social science researchers can claim what they do is scientific.” (ibid, p. 20).

As this researcher is also a practising teacher, other research approaches were considered as possibilities. The first was *practitioner research* which is widely used to improve the practices of teachers within their classrooms. Here the researcher aims to explore perspectives and shared meanings, to “... develop improved insights into situations and the people involved” (Wellington, 2000, p. 20). The practitioner approach aims at improving the didactic practice of the teacher and participating learner. This method was not fit for purpose as the focus of the outcomes in this type of research is classroom based, and does not address possible pathways to principalship.

The second method is *action research*. This is used in the educational setting to define a specific problem and then attempt to solve it, the outcome being the improvement of educational practice. This form of research is usually conducted by a researcher or a team working together. They both play an active role, from designing the project to interpreting the results, and instituting the change required. The action research approach was considered for this study but as Cohen, Manion and Morrison state (2000) “... literature

interprets these scientific methods much more loosely” (p. 17). Therefore, this method does not have sufficient scientific or academic rigour to be employed in this study.

The third approach was the *quantitative research* approach. This uses scientific data collection tools which provide the researcher with numerical and statistical evidence. “It counts because its data can be counted (measured) and because its researchers know in advance what to count” (Davidson & Tolich, 2003, p 19). Data is collected according to definite objectives. This method does not necessarily investigate the *how* and *why* of a topic. The response gathered can produce a quantifiable result. The issues that are researched are defined at the beginning enabling a highly structured statistical analysis to be used to present the findings in numerical form using scientific and mathematical formulae to generate results.

The fourth approach investigated was the *qualitative approach* and this is more researcher based “... and reflects on the quality of something” (Davidson & Tolich, 2003, p. 19). This research approach deals with feelings about a subject, and what the journey or outcomes have meant for the participants. This is the approach I have chosen.

Research Approach Chosen

Qualitative research is research focussed on the human experience, and which takes place in natural settings. This approach often involves lengthy contact between the participant and the researcher. It can also be said that qualitative research is a valuable tool for exploring everyday life. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) the reasoning behind qualitative research is to “... accumulate sufficient knowledge to lead to understanding” (p.

227). This approach is descriptive in nature and does not require the researcher to divert from the exposed data. The end point is to describe and explain the retrospective experiences of the participants to the researcher.

The approach chosen for this research was the qualitative research approach using the semi-structured interview. Kvale (1996) likens this to a journey: "... the researcher sets out on a journey with the story constructed according to the people the researcher interacts with" (1996, p.4). I used the qualitative semi-structured interview to gain understanding of the meanings expressed by the participants and to explore their described beliefs, experiences and values. This gave me in-depth understanding of the topic from each participant's point of view. The use of the semi-structured interview as a research tool enabled the participants to talk longer, and express their ideas fully, thereby giving more information, and hopefully ensuring an honest and accurate response to all the questions that were asked. "Qualitative semi-structured interviews require the interviewer to establish a relationship with the interviewee" (Mutch, 2005, p.127), thus building a connectedness with the participants. This process should be open and caring in nature. Bishop suggests that "... the semi structured in depth interview is a useful tool for developing the enhanced relationship between the researcher and the interviewee" (1997, cited in Hingston, 2003, p. 25).

The design chosen for this study was Mutch's emergent design adapted from the Maykut and Morehouse (1994) design. "Qualitative designs are more evolving and often circular" (Mutch, 2005, p.46). Figure 3.1 is used to illustrate this. Mutch suggests that by addressing the following questions the researcher will be able to confirm their selection of the most appropriate design:

1. “What will be the most suitable methodology, approach, or research design?
2. What kind of data do you anticipate gathering?
3. How might you gather this data?
4. From whom will you gather this data?
5. How might you analyse this data?
6. How might you display this data?”

(Mutch, 2005, p. 47).

The researcher has addressed these questions in figure 3.2.

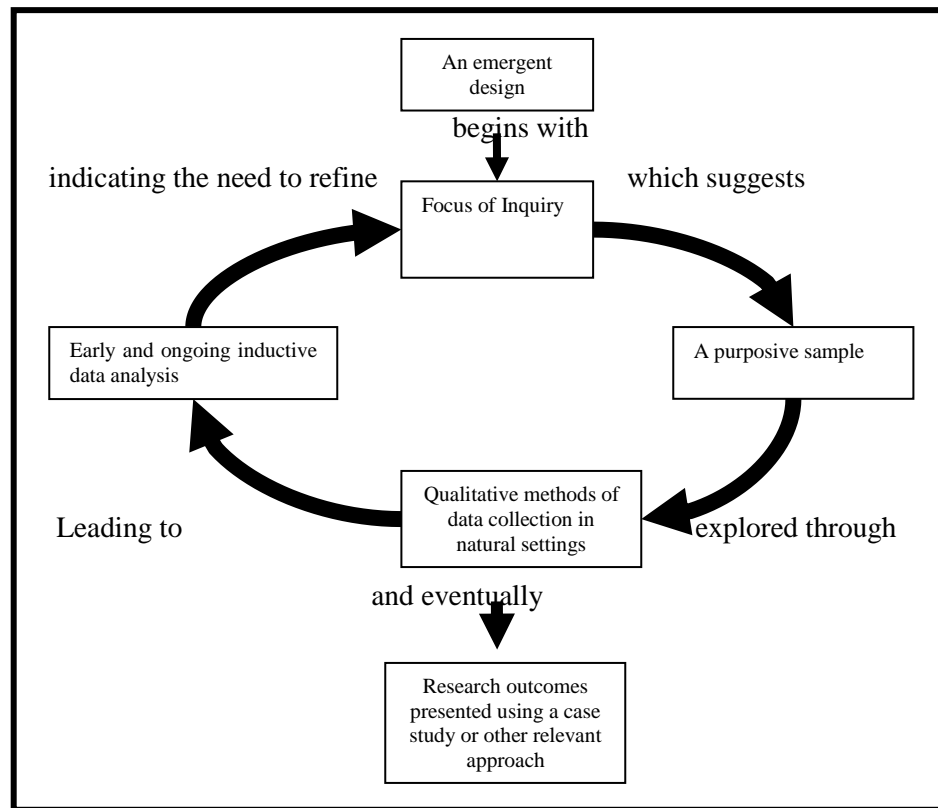


Figure 3.1 - A typical qualitative research design

(Source:Mutch, 2005, p.46, adapted from Maykut and Morehouse, 1994)

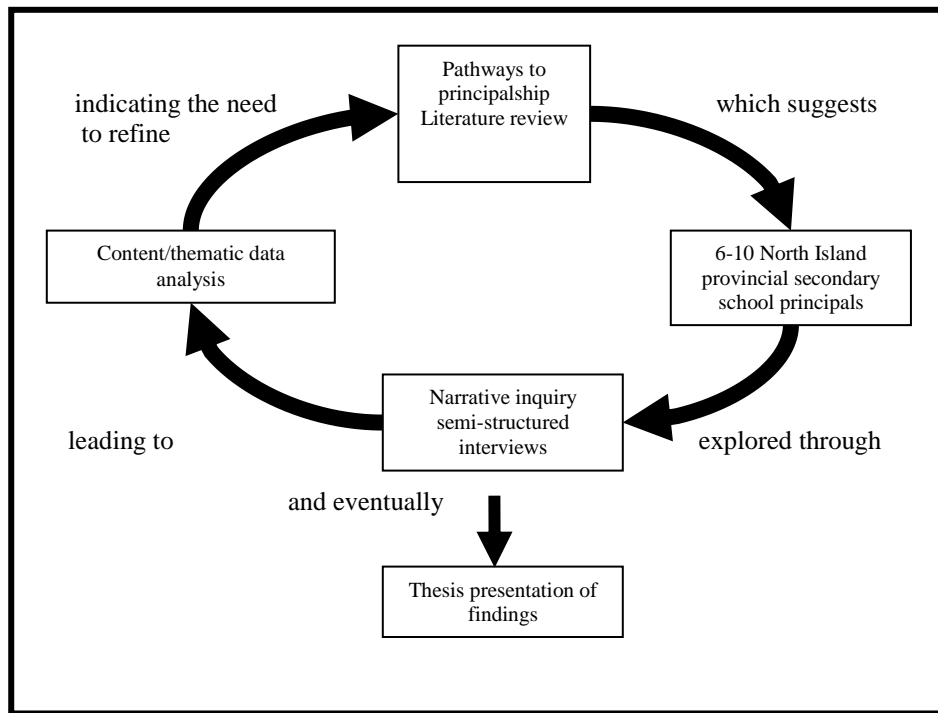


Figure 3.2 - Approach used in this research (Source: Dalglish, 2009, current thesis)

The approach depicted in the Mutch diagram of Emergent Design is very user-friendly and set the pathway for the research (2005, p.46). The researcher adapted this diagram for the purpose of this study as shown in figure 3.2.

“In current thought, there is a shift from modern formalized knowledge systems to the narrative knowledge embodied in story telling” (Lyotard, 1984, cited in Kvale, 1996, p.43). Narrative inquiry is used to tell the stories. Kvale (1996) states that “... people tell stories, narratives, about their lives in open interviews” (p. 43). “Narrative inquiry is a form of narrative experience,” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 19). Narrative inquiry is often referred to as complex in nature, and the stories told have many layers. These are the stories of people’s lives that are eventually retold by the researchers. Therefore, this method of

research can be best described as ‘lived experience,’ which is lives and how they are lived. Clandinin and Connelly refer to John Dewey and his thoughts and feelings on the study of the human experience in social science research. The social sciences are concerned with human relationships with themselves and their environment, thus the beginning point for social science research is people’s “... individual experiences” (ibid, p.20). Researchers position themselves within the narratives, but realise that these positions are liable to change as the stories develop. This has often been referred to as a sense of tentativeness. As researchers we are always revising what we write, so drafts are often referred to as ‘tentative documents.’

Tensions may also arise from how we as researchers come to our inquiry: “... our views, attitudes and ways of thinking about inquiry can create personal tensions” (ibid, p.46). We must be aware of and alert to our own tensions as narrative inquirers. Clandinin and Connelly maintain that “... we are forever struggling with personal tensions as we pursue narrative inquiry,” (2000, p. 46). These tensions may be in the areas of race, class, gender or religion. Since such tensions can cloud the objectivity required of the researcher, it is vital to be aware of them. Clandinin and Connelly further state that “... a narrative inquirer is to acknowledge these truths” (2000, p. 45).

Narrative inquiry can be defined as “...a way of understanding experience” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 45). It is a journey or work in progress taken by the researcher and participants over a period of time. This can be said to be a “... reliving and retelling” of the stories and experiences that make up people’s lives (ibid, p.71). Researchers enter the lives

of the participants at a certain point and conclude the inquiry while still in their midst. Simply, narrative inquiry is stories “... lived and told” (ibid, p. 71).

In the present study, the participants’ stories contributed to the researcher’s understanding of the topic. In addition, the research approach adopted a qualitative research design as an appropriate methodology with specific methods such as interviews and narratives in order to gain in-depth understandings of how participants had become principals and their experiences of seeking employment as aspiring principals.

Motivation for using this Approach

Qualitative research begins with the researcher pursuing a topic of deep personal interest that initially has little grounding in any formal theory. This enables the researcher to make initial judgements that takes them from their original interest through to the development of a formal and grounded framework. A qualitative approach allows the researcher to gather a rich depth of information from a small group of people using case studies, narrative research or interviews to illustrate that the findings are uniquely individual in nature and based on the lives lived. Success in gathering the data is dependent on the objectivity of the researcher. This objectivity can only be gained once the researcher has temporarily bracketed his/her own personal life and world views (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Qualitative research presumes that people know themselves and can describe and relate to their own experiences and environments, which is what this researcher was looking to gain from the participants’ life stories. Whenever a researcher selects a research approach, they must consider their own experiences as these are a catalyst for doing the research. Qualitative researchers have the ability to change both their focus and direction as their research

develops and unfolds, owing to the unexpected data. A researcher delves into his /her own topic with certain assumptions and personal agendas and must be prepared to have these challenged as different perspectives emerge.

Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, and interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical methods, case study, personal experience introspective life story, interview, observational historical, interactional and visual texts that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2)

Therefore a qualitative research design is appropriate to this study as it seeks descriptions of the pathways that current principals took when they were potential principals. This approach had the best possibility of providing answers to the research question; what is available in terms of advice and guidance for potential principals who wish to achieve positions of principalship?

Emergent Design Analysis

“If your research question requires gathering qualitative data, you will use an emergent design, which means you will determine your categories once you have gathered your data” (Mutch, 2005, p. 110). This process suggests a purposive sample which enables qualitative data collection in a natural setting.

In this study, a purposive sample was chosen and this sample was explored by collecting data in its natural setting. The analysis began with ‘browsing’ through the transcribed interviews as a whole and seeing what they were saying. From here it was necessary to “... highlight the important words, phrases, and repeated concepts or themes” (Mutch, 2005, p.131). Data analysis is concerned with “... searching for patterns and regularities in the

data collected” (Davidson & Tolich, 2003, p. 154). Therefore, the first objective of the analysis was to put the data into some sort of order. Mutch (2005) emphasised that when dealing with data, a researcher should “... keep an open mind and try to have it speak for itself” (p.130). Identifying themes within a qualitative study is not always a precise process, and it requires concentration, openness to revelations, and sensitivity when transcribing and ordering the data. The next step in this study was to identify categories or themes and code them either by colour or key words. I then grouped the themes together under headings. This led me to look at the themes that were emerging to see if they fitted into specific categories and how they were linked.

The process used to analyse the data is illustrated in the table below.

1. Interviews.	1. Data collection.
2. Transcription of tapes.	2. Typed by independent transcriber. (see Appendix A confidentiality agreement)
3. Read all transcriptions for first impression of data.	3. Recorded key words while reading.
4. Data organisation and analysis, Immersion in the data.	4. Coded key words and phrases.
5. Re immersion in the data.	5. Coded into initial themes Eight initial themes identified.
6. Refining of the themes.	6. Four main themes emerged.
7. Recommendations.	7. Discussion and recommendations of an emergent model/framework.

Table 3.1 - Data analysis process

Research Settings

“In a research setting it is up to the interviewer to create in a short time a contact that allows the interaction to get beyond merely a polite conversation or exchange of ideas” (Kvale, 1996, p. 125). Prior to the interviews, the researcher consulted with participants regarding the location of the interviews. Five of the six interviews were held in the participants’ offices and the sixth was in the home of that participant. This personal contact was important as both these locations were significant to the participants and told about the world they lived in. As Kvale states “... the personal contact and the continuing new insights into the subject’s lived world makes interviewing an exciting and enriching experience” (1996, p. 124). These relaxed settings enabled the participants to feel comfortable and secure. They could talk freely about aspects of their journeys. Furthermore, they were free of interruptions and in a one to one relationship with me. Face to face interviews allow the researcher to use body language and facial expressions to encourage the participants to expand upon their stories. The atmosphere was open and caring and the participants were supported as they attempted to recall as much as possible about their journeys. All the participants had made notes on their question sheets to bring their memories to the fore. All the locations were welcoming to the researcher, and the amount of participants’ time that had been put aside in what were very busy days for that time of the year in secondary schools, was greatly appreciated.

The Sample

The participants in this study were a purposive sample, Mutch defines purposive sampling as “... a sampling strategy that selects participants because they suit a particular purpose or

fit a certain profile; used mainly in qualitative research” (Mutch, 2005, p. 223). Sampling allows the researcher to gather information and rich in-depth data from a group of participants who have knowledge, experience and an understanding of the topic. Six participants responded to the invitation to participate in this research. The interview situation involved only the researcher and the participants; they had no contact with each other during the research.

Participant Selection

The question is often asked, “How many interview subjects do I need?” (Kvale, 1996, p. 101). The answer is simple: “Interview as many subjects as is necessary to find out what you need to know” (ibid, p. 101). This goal was tempered by the scale of work involved and by time constraints. The six participants were selected using the following criteria. Firstly it was of the utmost importance that the participants had the experience required and were able to converse about their experiences in depth. Second, the participants were known to the researcher³. Third, the participants needed to be situated in provincial areas of the North Island of New Zealand. Fourth the participants were all in existing leadership

³ The fact that the participants were known to me as the researcher was not seen as an advantage for feasibility purposes and for ease of access. Whilst I was a colleague in the sense I was an educator and a deputy principal I was not involved as a staff member in any of the schools so there was no perceived insider status or conflict of interest..

positions but had aspired to the position of principalship for some time. Fifth, they had been in their positions from a minimum of one year to a maximum of ten years.

All the participants were approached informally by telephone and all agreed it was a worthwhile study to be involved in. The phone call was followed up by a letter of invitation to each participant (Appendix B), the participant information sheet (Appendix C), a consent form (Appendix D) and the indicative questions. The question sheet was requested by participants prior to the interviews as they said that it would be helpful to be able to gather their thoughts and jot down notes so as to remember as much as possible during the interview.

The purposive sampling selection method was highly appropriate for this research as the participants were ‘experts’ in their field and had attained the knowledge required to answer the key research question as well as the probe questions listed below. The interview questions were developed in conjunction with my supervisor but were not piloted.

Indicative Questions

Main Question

Can you please tell me about your career in education and in particular your journey toward becoming a principal?

Further possible probe questions

- 1) Considering your career path will you please tell me why you decided to move from the various positions that you held?

- 2) Looking at each of your career steps in turn, can you tell me about any extra skills you needed, and how you went about acquiring these? (Either beforehand, on- the- job, or courses you undertook.)
- 3) Now specifically concentrating on your journey towards principalship, can you please tell me about: a) what you did before you applied to prepare yourself for the position? b) what other applications for principals' jobs did you make? c) what things did you do after you were appointed before you took up the position to prepare yourself? d) what things have you learnt within the job that you wished you had prepared yourself for beforehand?
- 4) With the value of hindsight, what might you have done differently to gain your present position?
- 5) What in your opinion were the most valuable things you did to prepare yourself for the interview for your current position?
- 6) What sources did you use to help prepare for your interviews?
- 7) Were there any obstacles that you experienced (or warn colleagues aspiring to be principals about) that you faced in preparation for the job selection process?
- 8) Are any of your current staff aspiring to be principals? What are you doing to assist them?

The table below provides a profile of participants.

School	Interviewee	Code
School 1 Co Educational	Principal A (8 years' experience)	A 1
School 2 Single Sex	Principal B (4 years' experience)	B 2
School 3 Co Educational	Principal C (7 years' experience)	C 3
School 4 Co Educational	Principal D (1 year experience)	D 4
School 5 Co Educational	Principal E (1 year experience)	E 5
School 6 Co Educational	Principal F (5 years' experience)	F 6

Table 3.2 – Sample coding

Interview Process

Kvale defines an interview as “...an *inter view*, an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest” (Kvale, 1996, p. 2). Therefore, this inquiry requires a low key interactive process between the researcher and the participants, in which the retrospective reflections of the participants’ experiences were the object of the study. The interviewer was the key to enabling the participants’ story to be related to others, by uncovering the relevant data. All qualitative interviews require interviewers with excellent interpersonal skills and when using this technique researchers must always

remember to treat the process with sensitivity and respect. An interview is defined by Anderson (1990) as a "... specialised form of communication between people for a specific purpose associated with some agreed subject matter" (cited in Mutch, 2005, p.125). The interviewer must according to Kvale, (1996, pp.148-149) ensure that he/she creates safe and stimulating interactions. In order to achieve this, the researcher should adhere to the following criteria:

Knowledgeable: Has an extensive knowledge of the interview themes.

Structuring: Has a purpose, procedure and conclusion to the interview.

Clear: Poses clear, simple, easy questions without jargon being used.

Gentle: Allows subjects to complete what they are saying, proceed at own pace, is easy going, able to put forward unconventional and provocative opinions

Sensitive: Listens actively, hears nuances, is empathetic, and listens to emotional messages.

Open: Hears aspects that are important, listens intently, and is open to new aspects being introduced.

Steering: Knows what he/she wants to find out, and controls the course of the interview.

Critical: Does not take all at face value, but questions to test reliability and validity.

Remembering: Recalls earlier statements, and remembers what has been said.

Interpreting: Provides interpretations of what has been said, and extends meanings of interviews and statements (Kvale, 1996, pp.148-149).

It has been noted that research interviews are one of the main ways of collecting data that relates directly to the objectives of the research. The value of the semi-structured interview is that it collects information about issues, through the process of open ended questions. This method has the potential to collect rich, in-depth data in the form of interview transcripts and observation notes⁴ which then become available for analysis. During the interview the researcher documented observations that were conveyed in a non-verbal

⁴ Here the observation notes were a form of reflective journaling for me as the researcher.

manner, the body language of participants was noted, as was their eye contact. Both these aspects were relevant as the participants were well known to the researcher and enabled and assisted the interviews to flow freely and smoothly, giving the researcher a large amount of rich data.

The Interview

To enable participants to tell their stories effectively, the research design needed to be "... governed by the notion of fitness for purpose" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, p.270). Therefore, the semi-structured interview was seen as the best method to gain rich in-depth data. The data obtained took the form of interview transcripts, which were then subject to analysis. "Qualitative research accepts that people know themselves best and can describe, interpret and talk about their own environment" (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998, p.134). The interview in the context of qualitative research is "... an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest" (Kvale, 1996, p.14).

Aspects of Qualitative Research Design

Kvale lists twelve aspects that best describe the qualitative interview as used in this study (1996, p. 30).

Life World. The topic of qualitative interviews is the every day lived world of the interviewee and his or her relationship to it.

Meaning. The interview seeks to interpret the meaning of central themes in the life world of the subject. The interviewer registers and interprets the meaning of what is said as well as how it is said.

Qualitative. The interview seeks qualitative knowledge expressed in normal language, it does not aim at quantification.

Descriptive. The interview attempts to obtain open nuanced descriptions of different aspects of the subjects' life worlds.

Specificity. Descriptions of specific situations and action sequences are elicited, not general opinions.

Deliberate Naïveté. The interviewer exhibits an openness to new and unexpected phenomena, rather than having ready-made categories and schemes of interpretation.

Focused. The interview is focused on particular themes; it is neither strictly structured with standardized questions, or entirely "non directive."

Ambiguity. Interviewee statements can sometimes be ambiguous, reflecting contradictions in the world the subject lives in.

Change. The process of being interviewed may produce new insights and awareness, and the subject may in the course of the interview come to change his or her descriptions and meanings about a theme.

Sensitivity. Different interviewers can produce different statements on the themes, depending on their sensitivity to and knowledge of the interview topic.

Interpersonal Situation. The knowledge obtained is produced through the interpersonal interaction in the interview.

Positive Experience. A well carried out research interview can be a rare and enriching experience for the interviewee, who may obtain new insights into his or her life situation.

(Kvale, 1996, p. 30)

The interview, as a conversation, is not entirely spontaneous in nature, since the participants are on a contrived pathway chosen by the researcher. Questions are posed and answers are carefully listened to. This journey is not taken by equal partners as "...the

researcher defines and controls the situation” (Kvale, 1996, p.6). This does not negate the fact that a virtue of qualitative interviews is their openness. In this regard Kvale states, “No standard techniques or rules exist for an interview investigation based on unstandardized qualitative interviews” (ibid, p.84). Strong demands for advance preparation and interviewer competence are made by the very openness and flexibility of the interview with its many on-the-spot decisions (ibid).

The interviews conducted for this research contained one main focus question and several probe questions, all constructed with the main theme in mind, and in such a way that the participants were able to critically reflect upon their journey to ensure that no sign posts along the road to principalship were left out or not acknowledged.

The interviews were audio-taped and transcribed, with the transcripts returned to participants for verification. The interviews were conducted over a four week period and ranged from 90 to 120 minutes.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval by the Auckland University of Technology committee was given on 13 October 2008 number 08/182. The following basic ethical principles were taken into consideration:

- 1) do no harm
- 2) all participation needs to be voluntary
- 3) preserve the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants
- 4) avoid deceit: analyse and report data faithfully.

These four steps were adhered to by the researcher in the following ways:

Do no harm

The researcher ensured that the participant faced no emotional, physical, and/or cultural risks, (Mutch, 2005). The researcher also explained that at any time a participant felt uncomfortable the interview would cease.

Voluntary participation

Participation was voluntary, with provision of information about what participation would involve. All participants were asked verbally if they would like to be involved. They were then sent a letter of invitation, an information sheet and consent form (see Appendices B-D). Participants were able to ask questions and seek clarification at any time. They could also withdraw at any time.

Confidentiality

The privacy and confidentiality of the individuals and their institutions was respected and no participants were identified without their consent. Confidentiality was ensured by assigning pseudonyms, acronyms, numbers, or letters to the transcripts, so that there could be no connection made between school and participant. Clear and professional protocols were followed during the interview process and all the data collected was kept confidential. The participants were told that the interviews would be transcribed by an independent professional who had signed a confidentiality agreement. The participants were also informed that the data supplied would only be available to the researcher and supervisor.

Storage of all the data was at AUT in locked cupboards or it would be destroyed if the participants so wished. (See Appendix A: Confidentiality Agreement)

Avoid deceit: Analyse and report data faithfully

All information was made available to the participants to ensure that there were no misinterpretations of the objectives or aims of the research. Once the data was collected it was the researcher's responsibility to report accurately the knowledge and information that was obtained.

Content Analysis

Content analysis commenced at the outset when the researcher was gathering ideas about the topic. This process continued throughout the interviews, with the researcher taking notes about the non-verbal aspects of the interview. Once all the relevant information had been gathered, the content of data was analysed with the aim of arrangement into thematic categories. This enabled the researcher to explore the values, beliefs and attitudes of the participants to the topic. To do this effectively a coding system needed to be formalised.

Coding focuses on the interview transcripts and the marking of positive and negative symbols in the margins as the researcher reads the data through. This allows for themes to emerge, both within the scope of the research and outside it. Davidson and Tolich (2003) reiterate that these are said to "... guide rather than structure the research" (p. 169). This allows changes to take place and flexibility to emerge. The themes analysed in this research provided meaning and clear interpretations. They were refined into main and sub themes

and commonalities were identified. The strength of such content analysis is that it is unobtrusive and non reactive. Mutch (2005) refers to this process as thematic analysis.

The use of open ended questions meant that a vast array of data emerged. Each transcript was analysed and the researcher reviewed and fine tuned the data analysis to ensure that all relevant themes had been recognised. This was carried out by reading the texts several times, searching for words, phrases or statements that would reveal experiences as they were described. The eight initial themes (see Chapter 4) that emerged from the data analysis were reduced to four main themes:

- 1) the historical pathway
- 2) managing the journey
- 3) handing over the knowledge
- 4) personal costs to the participants.

The process of data reflection was continued until the researcher was sure that the themes identified were reflective of all the stories told by the participants.

Reliability, Trustworthiness and Credibility

“In qualitative research you need to convince your reader that your study is trustworthy and credible” (Mutch, 2005, p.114). Reliability or consistency of findings can be demonstrated by other researchers using the same questions on a similar sample group and being able to replicate the same or very similar results or conclusions. This is generally referred to as ‘replication’. Trustworthiness means that the researcher has a very clear and well documented paper trail of their research, from the design stage through to the analysis.

Their approach to all aspects of their research must have been ethical and beyond reproach at all times. As Mutch states “... your readers still need to be sure, that they can trust your processes and believe in your findings” (ibid, p.115). Credibility is the final check and is a way of ensuring that what has been reported is truthful and correct. One way of doing this in qualitative research is to use “... member checking, when you return your transcripts, field notes, data analysis or findings to the participants” (Mutch, 2005, p.115). This allows the participants to check that what they have said is a true and accurate account, and lets them change anything that they deem to be incorrect. These techniques ensure “... the reader that your study is valid and reliable” (ibid, p.114).

Researcher Influence

The sometimes diverse and often inconsistent approaches that the researcher encountered when applying for principals’ positions influenced the design of this research. The researcher wanted to find some consistency in the process involved and this led to a series of questions that did not have any formal answers. Initially, there was very little structured information that the researcher was aware of regarding the formal pathways that potential principals undertake to gain the position of principalship. This led the researcher into questioning, researching, and investigating what was being developed nationally and internationally in this area. The data has led the researcher to develop a unique framework that, if adopted and adapted by educational institutions, will enable potential principals to travel the pathway to principalship.

Conclusion

This chapter has given an overview of the design approach used in this research. It has also provided a rationale for the choice of paradigm used to answer the research questions. The chapter also discussed the research approach chosen and the motivation for doing so. The fundamental ethical considerations were presented. As an overview of the content analysis, reliability trustworthiness and credibility were also discussed as they related to the research. The semi-structured interview research approach was used in order to gather significant data. The sample group consisted of six working principals, who had been principals from between one to ten years.

Chapter Four presents the research findings which bring to light the gap that emerged between the research question and the literature reviewed.

Chapter Four Findings and Discussion

I want to understand the world from your point of view. I want to know what you know in the way you know it. I want to understand the meaning of your experience, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, to explain things as you explain them.

(Spradley, 1997, p.34, cited in Kvale, 1996, p. 125)

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from this research concerning the pathways that six provincial secondary principals took to become principals. These findings are discussed in relation to the literature on the research questions: what is available within the academic and non academic arenas of advice and guidance for potential principals who wish to become principals of provincial secondary schools in the North Island of New Zealand; where do they acquire the knowledge, skills and other leadership qualities necessary to carry out this role?

Using the data analysis process discussed in Chapter Three, the following eight initial themes were identified from the participants' interviews:

- the organisation of career pathways
- prior knowledge acquired
- hindsight
- what could have been done differently
- preparation sources used
- obstacles faced on the journey
- preparation of current staff

- personal costs to participants

These eight themes were refined and fused into four key themes, after searching the data to ensure that they were reflective of all the stories told by the participants. The four key themes were:

- the historical career pathway
- ‘managing’ the professional journey
- preparation for the handover of knowledge
- personal costs to participants

These key themes were then utilised as a framework to provide a basis for the discussion of the findings.

In describing their career pathways towards principalship, the participants tended to start with where and how they underwent their formal training. Two participants came to the secondary school sector through their primary training and the other four came from university and teacher training. The two participants from the primary trained sector felt that this was not a disadvantage, but did not elaborate on this.

Theme One: The Historical Career Pathway

Five of the six principals interviewed did not have any specific career pathway in mind when they started teaching:

“It wasn’t on the radar, I just didn’t want to.” (A1)

“I had no aspirations at all in any management positions. It wasn’t a conscious path towards principalship.” (B2)

“It wasn’t something that I had thought about doing when I originally went teaching. Being a principal was something I never envisaged or even thought *about*.” (D4)

The sixth principal had a definite career pathway mapped out:

“I did have a career path definitely. My main aim was to proceed higher up the ladder and become maybe a Head of Department, then Assistant or Deputy Principal at the end of the day so that was what I was aiming for.” (E5)

All participants began their careers at about the same time and came from either a three year degree course and one year teacher training programme, or a three year teacher training programme and straight into primary school teaching. Five of the six had not seen a need to do any career planning. All six commented on the fact that they enjoyed their time in the classroom as shown in the following statements:

“I enjoyed teaching and could really see it. I just loved it.” (A1)

“Magic years, magic teaching, everything was really easy and comfortable, so *there was no imperative to climb the ladders or whatever*.” (C3)

All six had spent from eight to ten years in the classroom before they started to look at other options. During that time, two participants took on extra responsibilities which enabled them to gain experience of the internal workings of large secondary schools, thus becoming better qualified as they saw it to start applying for positions of responsibility within the school:

“I started helping out with timetables and started helping with other things around the school.” (A1)

From my own experience as a young teacher in the early 1970s, I saw young, enthusiastic, and unmarried teachers doing a great many extra tasks around the school, which are now formally recognised by either being credited with management units or extra time within ones timetable. Such tasks ranged from timetabling, social duties, school camps, or outdoor educational experiences to school drama productions, and teachers generally enjoyed the

participation. The amount of regulation that surrounded these activities was not as stringent at that time and the paper war was not as intense.

Once these young teachers had been in the teaching profession for a considerable amount of time, they noticed that other positions at nearby schools were becoming available. These positions not only carried a financial reward, but also a possible title and/or extra non-contact time allowances. These positions were in the areas of pastoral care or as heads of departments. All but one of the interviewees followed the conventional route of:

- head of department (4 principals)
- dean to dean co-ordinator (1 principal: this participant was also assistant head of a large department)

All of the above spoke about acquiring these positions by being:

“Asked to take up the position.” (B2)

“It just happened, it really just happened.” (F6)

The sixth principal went from being a classroom teacher with extra curriculum responsibilities to being an assistant principal:

“Yes ten years experience exactly then I was an assistant principal. Assistant principal was knowing the school inside out, knowing how the systems worked.” (A1)

The next step on the participants’ journeys were semi-planned, in that they were shoulder-tapped to apply for advertised positions and were then interviewed for them. These positions were as assistant or deputy principals:

“I was shoulder tapped.” (A1)

“I remember a couple of Board members came and said why don’t you apply? So I applied and got it.” (B2)

“So I really thank those people who tapped me on the shoulder.” (F6)

The final step on this pathway was from potential principal to their current positions of principal. It was intriguing to discover that two of the participants had spent some time as co-principals which meant that they shared the leadership position with other co-principals. Both principals went through the formal interview process for their co-principalship, and commented:

“The opportunity came up to do co-principal, part of the agreement was that if either one left the other would become principal.” (B2, F6)

Both felt that they complemented the other person, and also maintained many of the roles/tasks that they were already carrying out as deputy principals. Two of the six principals had to apply for numerous positions before they obtained their current appointments:

“So we started putting in applications and I think there were five in all.” (A1)

“Applied for three positions third attempt got the job.” (D4)

The final two principals obtained the first positions they applied for:

“The X job came up I applied and blow me, I got the job.” (C3)

“Applied and got short listed for the position, then appointed.” (E5)

All the principals bar one had not thought formally of principalship at the beginning or even half way through their teaching careers, and described their pathways as:

“The right place at the right time.” (A1)

“Fate – Kismet.” (C3)

“The right doors opened at the right time.” (D4)

As Maxwell (1998) states “... the right action at the right time results in success” but adds that being in the right place at the right time involves “... people, principals and processes

converging to make an incredible impact” (1998, p. 198). This was the outcome for our participants as they gained the positions that they applied for along their pathway.

In linking the literature to the findings on Theme One, ‘the historical pathway’ the following conclusions became apparent:

- This theme described the journeys that the participants undertook on the road to principalship. All but one of the participants said that they did not undertake any formal career planning as this was not the norm or the order of the day at the time. Su et al. (2000) believed that potential for leadership should have been recognised when the participants were in the classroom and they should have been guided in the appropriate direction.
- Climbing the ladder of promotion requires thorough preparation. It was noted by Jones (2007) that to do a sound job as a principal, one must be prepared. However, the participants in this study were not given the pre-requisite career planning or advice and guidance that now comes out of the formalised appraisal system that schools are required to have to ensure accountability and quality management.

Macpherson (2008) discusses the need to improve preparation and succession planning in order to fill the projected vacancies that will inevitably arise. To grow leaders of the future, as Lovely (2004) stated, we must develop programmes that will prepare candidates for principalship. One of the participants remarked that as young teachers in the past they had the opportunities to experience divergent tasks that broadened and enriched the totality of their teaching experiences. Slater (2008) agreed that teachers need alternative

responsibilities and thus gain the experience required for future aspirations. The historical career pathways of five out of the six participants were based solely on being in the ‘right place at the right time’ and had little to do with the successful navigation of a career pathway, setting goals or planning ahead. Only one participant’s career pathway followed a formalised route planned from the outset of their career. Robinson (1989) states that one must take responsibility for one’s actions, choices and professional development. The participants in this study were not following this career strategy as their advancement was in the realm of good luck as opposed to good management. Maxwell says “... timing is everything” for a person to function as a true leader ... Great leaders recognise that *when* to lead is as important as what to do and where to go” (1998, p. 196). It can be concluded that taking responsibility for one’s own professional growth and development will result in success.

Theme Two: Managing the Journey

Although confident in their teaching abilities, the participants acquired extra skills and increased their knowledge as they moved towards principalship. These were gained in two areas: formal qualification and on-the-job training:

“I had already done a post graduate diploma.” (A1, D4)

“I did do papers in a business management diploma.” (B2)

“I had started a Master of Educational Leadership.” (D4)

The motivating force in obtaining these qualifications was that it could be difficult to get short-listed for a principal’s position if you did not hold the required additional qualifications. Another advantage was:

“I actually think that it helped me because it gave me vocabulary to talk.” (D4)

The other avenue was on-the-job training. All participants referred to the knowledge and experiences they had gained while doing other jobs as one of the best preparations for principalship that could have been acquired:

“X actually spent a lot of time showing me how to do stuff.” (C3)

“Time management is the most important skill because you need to organise yourself.” (E5)

“Developing systems, timetabling, what I did on the ground, learning the ropes.” (A1)

“Knowing the school inside out.” (A1, F6)

“Being an old pupil of the school, having family connections.” (F6)

“Discussions with my principal.” (E5)

These experiences were what the participants realised had stood them in good stead, for the next stages of their journey. They had gained credibility as they acquired the extra skills needed to ‘walk the talk’:

“I think my experience at school X running certain programmes gave me credibility.” (D4)

Some participants experienced obstacles. When participants mentioned to other staff that they were going to apply for senior management positions, colleagues were not always particularly supportive:

“Sometimes you feel that they are trying to drag you down, and attack your morale or confidence. Not being professional.” (E5)

A number of participants mentioned that they did not find enough time for preparation and presentation of applications as their days were very full and their evenings contained school functions that required their presence:

“Time just time. Time for preparation.” (B2)

Another obstacle was a lack of advice and guidance in career planning, and because they did not think of it, it is only in hindsight that they noticed its absence:

“It never happened for us, didn’t exist for us.” (B2)

For potential principals, advice and planning is now part the teachers' appraisal system:

"I think there's a lot more in place for them now too though, but I think that career planning is very much out there, and wasn't out there at all for us." (B2)

Participants noted that potential and current principals are expected to be experts in a wide variety of areas. However, it was felt that leaders in the private sector would probably have access to a support team of various experts:

"You have to be so skilled in so many areas and there is nowhere that gives you all that training. You are supposed to know absolutely everything about everything and no other profession demands that, and if you went into private business you would have people with those areas of responsibility." (B2)

"I don't think that any principal would have been trained in and that's the people stuff, managing staff, managing conflicts, and managing histories." (C3)

When questioned about interview preparation, participants made general comments to the effect that a great many questions were asked and that you needed to be yourself. This comment summed it up for the majority of the participants:

"To be yourself, you have to be honest." (B2)

In relating the participants' management of their careers to the literature, five of the six participants commented that they had received no formal training in preparation for the role of principal, but they did reveal a high level of confidence in their own professional competencies to undertake this position. Some participants expressed the view that this confidence was due to the experiences they had garnered as heads of departments, deans/deputy and assistant principals. Lovely (2004) stated that this would have given the participants a plethora of opportunities and real life experiences to draw from. Villani (2006) agreed, saying experience adds depth and complexity to one's abilities, so ensuring not only good leadership but good management.

Four of the participants undertook further academic training. One did a postgraduate degree in school management, but implied that some of it had only been marginally useful for the role of principal. A second participant also completed a postgraduate qualification, but this was in an unrelated discipline. Another had completed some business papers, and a further participant had started a master's qualification but was yet to complete it. This for the participants was the beginning of looking at formalising their career pathways.

The motivation for this research was based upon the absence of thoroughly researched and formally presented programmes for potential principals. In the United States of America, the principals preparation programmes are going through a process of refinement, redesign, and reconceptualisation. The National Association for Secondary Schools Principals (NASSP) and various American universities have made persistent efforts since 1985 to improve existing programmes, with strong participation from principals. Witters-Churchill (1991) reports on the four main recommendations that emerged:

1. "Improve and/or increase instruction of specific job related skills" (1991, p. 342).

Participants in this study suggested that the handling of real life scenarios should be included in graduate courses e.g. personnel management, conflict resolution, filling out forms, budgeting, communication and managing discipline.

2. "Improve and extend opportunities for experience in the field (ibid).

Participants saw a need to upgrade the quality of section placements (practical components of courses) and that these could have been either longer in length or full time internships.

3. “Provide practice-orientated university staff” (ibid).

The responses in this area suggested that the university staff need to keep abreast of school developments, gain more hands-on experience, and return to the field as practising principals every so often. Also visiting principals should be invited to teach on courses.

4. “Improve and/or increase instruction of generic skills” (ibid).

The responses here focused on the concepts of leadership, problem solving, career development and counselling.

The previously mentioned concepts address a large and relevant section of any curriculum in potential principals preparation programmes. These concepts would certainly have assisted the participants in this research had they been included in academic instruction, enabling them to manage their careers more successfully. Difficulties experienced by participants included an absence of adequate advice and guidance and little in the way of career planning. In New Zealand these areas are now partly being addressed, by the National Aspiring Principals Pilot Programme and also by the teachers’ appraisal system. The latter is conducted by heads of departments, deputy principals and principals. There is also the First Time Principals Course which in some ways can be seen as advice and guidance or a principals preparation programme, albeit once the appointment has been made. This course assists first time principals to acquire on-the-job training.

The participants in this research felt that they could have managed their career pathways a lot better if they had had the opportunity to chart a course and then have formalised training as potential principals.

Theme Three: Handing over the Knowledge

Handing over the knowledge has been identified as a significant part of this study, as it is how potential principals start to acquire the mentoring and direction that leads them to principalship. The participants acknowledged that there was a need to identify and consequently support staff who aspired to become principals, and that both the principal and the aspirant needed to be realistic in their expectations.

The following extracts describe some of the ways that current principals are passing on the knowledge that they have acquired to potential principals on their staff or senior leadership teams:

“We will support him/her to do post graduate work. We will give him/her opportunities to actually apply some of the theory. Look at a programme for him/her to start picking up some DP work. Encourage to be a DP or AP for at least three or four years.” (A1)

“Encourage him/her to go on the aspiring principals’ course. I include him/her on anything that I think will be of interest. We meet once a fortnight. I often talk to him/her about the role of the principal and what sort of things that he/she needs to be doing.” (B2)

“At the moment not a great deal, give them responsibilities. I have a conference for him/her to go to. Would ask them what they would be interested in.” (D4)

“Whenever I make any decisions these days, I also involve him/her so that he/she gets to know what is required. I involve my DP when working on something and when I meet with the Board of Trustees for stand downs or suspensions.” (E5)

“Sit with them and say to them if you want to go further tell me now, cause I can take you through what you should do. Showing them how to interview. I coach them. Send them to senior management and aspiring principals courses. I do encourage, but I encourage the realistic ones.” (F6)

All these principals used a variety of ways to ensure that their potential principals received some form of assistance to acquire the knowledge they felt had not been available to them or only if they had thought to ask for it.

All participants mentioned that further education was a necessity, in the guise of conferences, professional development courses and mentoring. The American literature espouses such concepts and Hess and Kelly (2005a; 2005b), Su et al. (2000), Witters-Churchill (1991), Lauder (2000), and Young and Creighton (2002) discuss these programmes in detail from the perspective of instituting potential principal preparation programmes into full time university courses. Such courses would have an internship component involving on-the-job training. The New Zealand literature encourages potential principals to apply for the National Aspiring Principals Preparation Pilot Programme available through the University of Auckland Faculty of Education. The negative side of this option is that participants are also expected to sustain full time positions with the usual responsibilities. Participants in this study acknowledged that postgraduate work, aspiring principals' courses, and working and mentoring were all opportunities for potential principals to be supported in developing their knowledge base.

It takes a leader to raise a leader, and this can be achieved in an environment where leadership is taught. Leaders create a vision, offer incentives, encourage creativity, allow risks, and provide accountability, thus developing a leadership culture. Within a school environment, they successfully impart knowledge to a potential principal and by developing other leaders, become better leaders themselves. The difference between the success and failure of schools could be said to rest upon the quality of the leadership that is

demonstrated by current principals in action, which develops the leadership capacity not only of potential principals but of the other stakeholders in the educational community. The quote from one experienced principal summed up the bigger picture by saying:

“I think it is hard to prepare people for it actually because it is such a weird job.” (C3).

Theme Four: Personal Costs to Participants

Attaining the role of principal did not come without a cost and price that most participants paid was quite high. The three most substantial costs were ‘time, family and finance,’ although ‘loneliness’ and ‘lack of sleep’ were also mentioned. It was also alluded to that as potential principals, these costs had started to compound without them realising it. Costs did not become apparent to the participants until they stopped to think about it, as the researcher added this probe question after one of the interviewees mentioned it.

Maxwell (1998), in his book *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, believes that leadership –in any arena or at any level – comes at a cost, for example:

Iacocca accepted the job, but it also started him down his road of personal sacrifice. The first came in his finances...The next came in his family life...But to lead Chrysler he had to work around the clock. On top of that when he got home he couldn't sleep. (Maxwell, 1998, p. 185).

Maxwell refers here to Lee Iacocca, who was Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of the Chrysler Motor Corporation in the late 1970s. Iacocca believed that leadership required sacrifices and stated “... leadership means setting an example. When you find yourself in a position of leadership, people follow your every move.” (cited in Maxwell, 1998, p. 187).

It would be fair to say that the costs encountered by participants in this study were not exclusively theirs but are shared by all leaders. Iacocca put the Chrysler Corporation on the map, "... why? Because he modelled the Law of Sacrifice". (Maxwell, 1998, p. 187). The participants in this research demonstrated Maxwell's law of sacrifice in the following ways.

Time

"Where I do not have a lot of time to myself." (A1)

"Take time to enjoy things. I certainly got the balance wrong." (C3)

"Like often it is a twelve hour day." (D4)

"Extra time especially at meetings, 10.30pm." (E5)

"I gave up golf." (F6)

The participants realised that their time was now not their own but belonged to the job.

Family

Costs were not borne by participants alone; their families also paid a price:

"It has cost more time with family." (A1)

"I am employed at the cost of my family." (B2)

"There were times when I should have been playing cricket on the lawn and I wasn't. My partner asked me if I was married to that place." (C3)

"Like just having to be out in the evenings. With young kids, teenage kids it would be difficult on your partner." (D4).

Financial

There was also a financial cost they had not reckoned on:

"Economically I am no better off as paying other people to do the things I used to do when I had time." (A1)

"Coming here has cost us financially quite dearly." (B2)

"The salary wasn't as high as I thought it was, principals are definitely not highly paid." (D4)

"I was commuting and I had a vehicle that was drinking the gas like anything, so in terms of total cost well definitely the financial cost." (E5)

Loneliness

Three of the participants felt that they had lost friends and became isolated from colleagues as they climbed the career ladder:

“It’s the loneliness, there is definitely loneliness. Like even the DPs there is certain camaraderie between them that I’m not actually a part of...and that’s part of the loneliness.” (A2)

“Loss of friends ...the job can be quite lonely.” (C3)

“Yeah, but is probably lonely.” (F6)

Sleep

Two of the participants referred to their lack of sleep, or that they awoke in the middle of the night worrying about school things:

“I wouldn’t say that it happens any more as a principal than it did as a DP, I mean I was like that as a DP too.” (A2).

“Yes it can affect your health in terms of sleep.” (F6).

One of the participants summed up the cost by saying:

“Yeah, so there has been a cost and you have to be careful that the price isn’t too high, of being a principal, and not just in terms of family, relationships, and lifestyle. In terms of your own beliefs.” (C3)

As the participants acquired leadership positions, they made small sacrifices as an integral part of promotion to the next level. It was only with the added value of hindsight that they understood the drastic and far reaching impact that these compounded costs had, had not only upon themselves but on those closest to them. Once it was drawn to their attention the participants mentioned the positions they now held had exacted a price.

The literature explores that cost of principalship, such as time, family and finance. Factors identified include increased workload and the hours that principals are expected to put in to complete all the tasks that accrue during a normal day. Robertson (2005) felt that the

amount of paper that needed to be read, the changes in policies that required keeping abreast of, and the imposition of new practices contributed. Juggling all these roles was seen by Robertson as limiting principals' ability to lead teaching and learning. New Zealand based literature concerning costs to potential principals is negligible, but the situation in the United States of America has been better researched. Potential principals programmes in the USA are run by universities and colleges, take one or two years and require the payment of fees, and time away from home. Candidates also needed to be permanently employed in their current positions.

Behar-Horenstein (1995) and Hess and Kelly (2005a) supported the notion that teachers enrolled in potential principals programmes should earn a complete year's salary while studying for the degree. The cost of principals preparation programmes is not cheap. Should enrolled candidates be paid their salary, the burden of cost and stress would be minimised and the candidates would be able to better focus on the study and complete the programme.

The participants in this study mentioned that the interconnection between a person's profession, the academic demands of full time study, family responsibility and social commitments could result in a high and sometimes drastic price. Therefore, if financial support for principal preparation could be guaranteed, the burden on the candidate would be lessened. Figure 4.1 indicates the sacrifices made and the costs incurred as the participants move towards leadership, showing that as one climbs the professional ladder, one's personal rights diminish as professional responsibility increases.

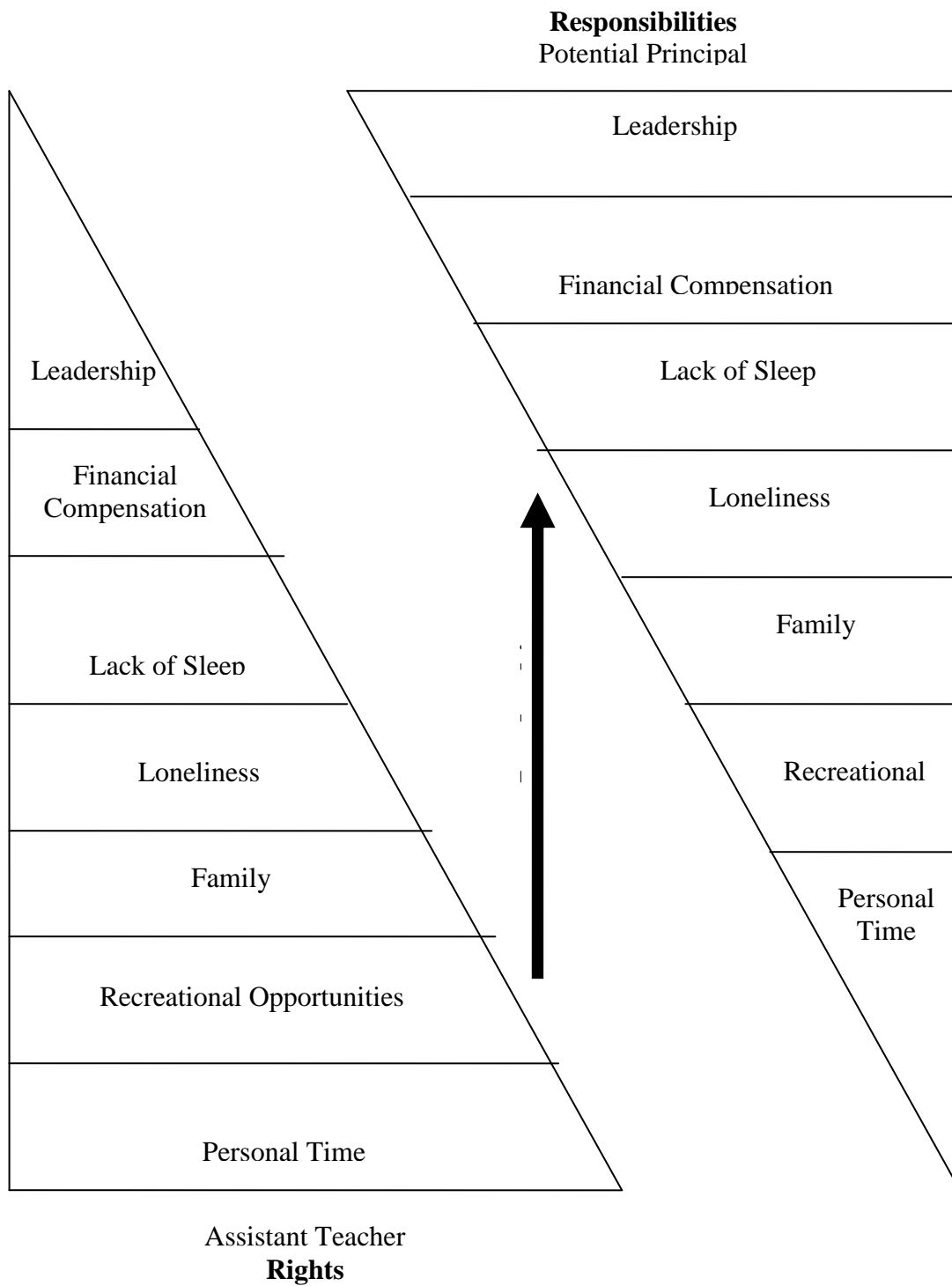


Figure 4.1 Rights versus Responsibilities

(Source: through discussions with Dr W Steyn, we co-developed the illustration above)

“For everything you have missed, you have gained something else; and for everything you gain you lose something else” (Ralph Waldo Emerson, cited in Maxwell, 1998, p. 191).

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to report and discuss the experiences of six practising principals who made the journey towards principalship with, by and large, no conscious or formal planning. They just enjoyed being good classroom teachers who, when opportunities arose to try something new or different, took them. They mainly acknowledged that they happened to be in the right place at the right time for these additional roles to be taken on, and therefore they gained the required experiences. All the participants acknowledged that they had paid a price in the arenas of time, family and finance.

In hindsight, some of the participants conceded that they should have started on the journey earlier, by looking at and/or applying for principals’ positions. The participants also acknowledged that some of the obstacles they had encountered would not have been any easier to manage had there been advice and guidance or preparation available to them. On the whole they agreed that they would not have changed any of the opportunities or experiences offered to them as these have made them the people they are today. The participants’ journeys towards principalship may have had a variety of starting points but there were similarities of experiences and positions attained, therefore the ultimate goal was achieved and the end result was the same.

The next chapter makes recommendations that follow from the findings and discussion, in the form of a proposed framework for a Potential Principals Preparation Programme within the context of New Zealand's educational system.

Chapter Five Recommendations and Conclusion

*The true leader serves. Serves people.
Serves their best interests, and in so doing
Will not always be popular, may not always impress.
But because true leaders are motivated by loving
Concern rather than a desire for personal glory,
They are willing to pay the price.
(Habeck, cited in Maxwell, 1998. p. 33)*

Introduction

Chapter Five concludes this research by describing a recommended framework on which a Potential Principals Preparation Programme can be based, in response to the increased expectation for principals to perform well at this level. This results from an overview of the literature concerning the lack of choice in programmes available in New Zealand, and pertinent points that evolved from the findings and discussion in Chapter Four. The focus of this research has been aligned to New Zealand and the United States of America. Both New Zealand and the Southern regions of the United States (Texas, Carolina Alabama) are in the process of reviewing their potential principals' programmes. New Zealand is concerned with an initial review of its pilot programme (Erb, 2009), and the Southern regions are engaged in redesign and reconceptualising its programmes, to ensure that the contents fit with best practice. In the USA, emphasis is placed on the quality of potential principals programmes as a significant contributor to the long term success or failure of principals and their ability to positively affect student achievement. Therefore, potential school principals in the USA are encouraged to shop wisely for a good quality principals

preparation programme (Lauder 2008). The framework recommended in this research has many generic features designed with New Zealand stakeholders in mind.

Rationale for the Framework Design

All schools have an innate right to good quality leadership, and it is now up to tertiary institutions to provide effective approaches and programmes to prepare potential principals to become quality school leaders. The school principal is the ‘leader of teaching and learning’, and students achieve better overall if this is the case. Recent studies show that quality leadership is directly related to student achievement. Therefore, as stated in an Education Review Office document:

The challenge to the profession is to develop in their cadre of aspirants for the position of secondary school principal the knowledge and skills that will provide the highest possible quality of professional leadership in secondary education for the unknown different future. (Aitken, 1997, p. 27)

The following salient points emerged from the current study. There was no career planning for the participants as they travelled their pathways to principalship. There was nowhere to go to gain advice or guidance on gaining the necessary skills, tools, or practical aspects required to carry out this position effectively, and mentoring or on the job training was sparse. Participants were maintaining positions such as deputy principal, which entailed a full workload, while aiming to garner as much professional knowledge from their principals as possible.

New areas of knowledge and competencies are now required with the tertiary-level principal preparation programmes. These initiatives will aid in enrolling potential principals in programmes that will address the ever-changing role of the principal, from that of

administrator to a leader of teaching and learning in the 21st century. The introduction of *Tomorrow's Schools* ushered in an era of higher standards and greater accountability, so it is important that potential principals are better prepared to do what it takes to improve teaching and learning. Principal preparation programmes, if run correctly, can guarantee a quality principal who knows how to lead the changes required and develop the appropriate classroom and teacher practices that will result in improved student achievement and outcomes. Achieving quality outcomes must be viewed as a journey and not a destination. Furthermore, the potential principal's needs and the secondary school's needs are ever changing and therefore the training and programmes provided must continually change to meet these.

To ensure that our framework will always meet the requirements of our stakeholders (the potential principals), quality management needs to be incorporated into the self review and reflection aspect of the framework. In this context, quality means the level of knowledge and skills which continuously meet or exceed the stakeholders' needs and thereby provide satisfaction. Satisfaction is a vital goal and is considered as the absolute test of an organisation's effectiveness. Quality also means freedom from deficiencies and errors, to the detriment of the future employing institution.

The researcher uncovered within the American literature a sound basis for designing a framework for principal preparation programmes. Spurred by public demand for increased expertise in principalship, a wave of new and redesigned principal preparation programmes has emerged there (Lauder, 2000).

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) in the USA identified that principal preparation programmes of leadership were not meeting the need to improve student performance and achievement. They therefore undertook a comprehensive study of universities nationwide to examine the contents of their programmes, and found them lacking and in dire need of redesign and reconceptualisation.

This USA-based model plus some examples from Aotearoa New Zealand (such as Martin & Robertson, 2003; Robinson, Eddy & Irving, 2006) have been incorporated into this suggested programme. Responding to critiques from examiners, I note it will also be important to develop leadership dispositions and capabilities in aspiring principals too. Whilst it was strictly outside the timeframe of this research I note that the recently released Ministry of Education's best evidence synthesis on leadership (see Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009) might add further dimensions to research in this area in the future. The design and construction for this programme came from general reading on the topic and from discussions with one of my associate supervisors Dr V Steyn.

The programme developed out of this research came about because aspiring principal applicants are now required to be both more knowledgeable and more highly qualified in the arena of principalship preparation, thus a masters qualification framework was developed. I also acknowledge that practical experiences are required so working on the job, as an acting principal would be deemed real world experiences. Shadowing and mentoring in the school should be classified as the gaining of practical experience.

Aim

The aim of designing this framework was to prepare potential principals to become effective leaders of teaching and learning through an academic and performance based programme. This programme must include a balance of managerial knowledge and interpersonal leadership skills that will enable participants to guide, change and explore innovative ways to address the educational challenges posed by New Zealand's changing society. This programme must appeal to those teachers with the potential to be effective leaders of teaching and learning in New Zealand's education system. A further aim of this framework was to provide answers to the following questions identified in the research:

- What is available within the arena of advice and guidance for potential principals who wish to achieve the position of principal at a New Zealand secondary school?
- Where do they acquire the knowledge, skills, and other leadership qualities necessary to undertake this position?

Conceptual Design for a Potential Principals Preparation Programme as a Pathway to Principalship

Mission Statement

A formal alliance between the academic institutions contracted to initiate and implement the course and the Ministry of Education to support the programme initiative.

Goal

- A shared vision of the programme design
- To develop criteria for the recruitment and selection of candidates

- To provide adequate resourcing for the successful implementation/running of the programme

Procedural Components

1.1 Selection, recruiting and supporting of promising candidates for admission to the preparation programme

- Expertise within the curriculum instruction and the raising of student achievement
- Proof of leadership in the academic community
- Up to date and relevant proof of managerial courses and experiences
- A considerable period of time in teaching
- References concerning relationships within the wider school community
- Formal interview with a panel consisting of representatives of the academic institution and a recognised ‘successful’ school principal
- To ensure a high standard of applicant the process of selection and recruitment must be continuously monitored, evaluated and refined to meet the needs of an ever changing educational community

1.2 Support networks for ensuring success

- Appropriate release time from current position to undertake a course of full time study
- Financial assistance to enable participants to undertake the course full time, ensuring peace of mind regarding other financial commitments
- The accessibility of an approachable academic course mentor

Curriculum Design

2.1 Leadership, administration and management in a New Zealand secondary school must embrace the following components:

- Strategic Planning
- Strategic Accountability
- Strategic Reporting
- Financial Planning
- Resource Management
- Legal Accountability
- Board of Trustee Policy Requirements
- Communication with outside agencies

2.2 Educational Leadership Philosophy

- Overview of leadership philosophies
- Educational leadership applications
- Ethical considerations
- Values application
- Culture of schools
- Relationship building, listening, communicating, praising
- Responsibilities

2.3 Curriculum Leadership Responsibility

- Leading, teaching and learning
- Improving student achievement
- Interpreting and reporting of student achievement data in relationship to the school's ability to close the gaps

Courses

3.1 Component Mastery

- Course instruction will include lectures, tutorials and laboratories
- Academic assignments that have real application of the knowledge and skills gained, and relate to problems relating to student achievement and the leading of teaching and learning

3.2 Practicum

- All participants will be required to complete a major academic action research project that is aimed at identifying an issue at senior management level and implementing interventions that display key leadership concepts and skills that would enhance the teaching and learning in a secondary school

3.3 Mentoring

- A mentor principal who would be required to provide adequate opportunities for the aspirant to practice and master the essential skills and components for leading a New Zealand secondary school and improving the quality of student achievement

Timeframe for Courses

4.1 One year full time course of academic study

4.2 Practicum component of eight weeks duration

4.3 One day a week shadowing mentor principal

Outcomes

5.1 Portfolio of recorded activities on one day shadowing of mentor principal and reflective journal

5.2 An action research project that was presented both in written format and as an illustration of newly acquired leadership qualities

5.3 Responses from the host school in the form of a report which consists of feedback both positive and constructive, identifying areas for improvement, from the following:

- Mentor Principal
- Chairperson of the Board of Trustees
- Parent Representative
- Teacher Representative
- Student Representative

5.4 A formally recognised qualification approved by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Regular Review and Modification of Potential Principals Preparation Programme

6.1 Stakeholder review of all aspects of the preparation programme to ensure the maintenance of effectiveness and high standards. Participants will give regular feedback both formally and informally in the following areas:

- Selection and recruitment
- Curriculum design
- Educational leadership philosophy
- Curriculum leadership responsibility
- Course component mastery
- Time frame of course
- Successful outcomes
- Specific stakeholder participation
 - Students
 - Mentor/Principals

- Academic Institution
- Ministry of Education

This monitoring process should make refinements to the programmes to ensure that quality design standards are met at every level within the course framework.

Areas for Further Research

This study generated a series of questions that need to be addressed by further research in three areas.

Category one:

The six main components of the potential principals' preparation programme need to be continuously researched, further developed, then refined and evaluated to ensure quality management within all levels, so that continuous improvement is maintained within the areas of leading, teaching and learning.

Category two:

Assessment within the potential principals preparation programme needs to be further developed, to ensure that academic rigour is maintained and quality management is assured.

Category three:

The potential principals preparation programme must meet and maintain international standards. Therefore, future research might look at principal preparation programmes around the globe and stay abreast of current developments ensuring that New Zealand is internationally competitive.

Limitations of the study

There were various limitations to this study. This study was carried out as part of a postgraduate qualification, therefore all parts of the research were subject to time constraints. Due to the small and purposive sample that was used, it was not always possible to make generalisations from this study. New Zealand only recently introduced an Aspiring Principals Preparation Programme that has yet to have its review completed. It was therefore difficult to compare nationally, which this necessitated international comparisons.

The Researcher's Pathway

This academic journey began eighteen months ago with a problem that had raised many questions for me. It led me to talking with many people from various institutions about the topic 'Pathways to Principalship', and my researching into what was in the literature in the terms of advice and guidance, and other people's thoughts. Reading the literature was enjoyable and the research was enlightening as the stories shared highlighted experiences that both myself and the participants had shared. The greatest academic challenge was collating the sources of information that stemmed from the literature study and the data collected from the interviews. From here, the themes that emerged reinforced the idea that a framework needed to be developed. This framework would assist in advising potential applicants what should be available within the arena of advice and guidance for potential principals. This framework would enhance the acquisition of qualities required for principalship. The legacy of this research is a platform for the further development of a uniquely New Zealand potential principals' preparation programme.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the purpose of this study was to explore pathways of formal advice and guidance available for potential principals. The aim was to uncover the nature of the pathways that led to principalship in provincial secondary schools in the North Island of New Zealand. As this road was travelled by the researcher, it became evident that there was little in the way of New Zealand- based literature offering professional advice and guidance for potential principals. There was also a dearth of international literature on leadership for those who have attained the position of principal. The study uncovered the absence of structured career pathways for the participants as potential principals and whilst the researcher acknowledges the National Aspiring Principals Pilot programme offered by the Auckland University Faculty of Education, there is no other principalship training programme available. Arising from this deficiency, the researcher designed a framework for the development of a potential principals preparation programme. Limitations within the study along with recommendations for further research were outlined. The development of high quality principals, who can lead New Zealand's educational communities towards excellence, requires potential principals preparation programmes that are academically rigorous, standards based and theoretically sound.

Put it before them briefly so they will read it,
Clearly so they will appreciate it,
Picturesquely so they will remember it,
And above all accurately so they will be guided by its light.
(Joseph Pulitzer, 2008)

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Appendices

Appendix A: Confidentiality Agreement

Confidentiality Agreement



Project title: **Pathways to Principalship**

Project Supervisor: *Andy Begg*

Researcher: *Alison Dalglish*

- ☐ I understand that all the material I will be asked to transcribe is confidential.
- ☐ I understand that the contents of the tapes or recordings can only be discussed with the researchers.
- ☐ I will not keep any copies of the transcripts nor allow third parties access to them.

Transcriber's signature:

Transcriber's name :

Transcriber's Contact Details (if appropriate):

Project Supervisor's Contact Details

Dr. Andy Begg

09 921999 extn: 7355

andy.begg@aut.ac.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 13th October 2008. AUTEK Reference number 08/182

Appendix B: Letter of Invitation



To: Principals in Provincial North Island Secondary Schools.

Dear

I am undertaking a research project towards the completion of my Master of Education degree. I am interested in hearing your stories about your experiences as educationalist that have become principal and the journey you have undertaken. The analysis of your experiences and stories may contribute in assisting other aspiring principal travelling this road towards leadership.

My project title is: Pathways to Principalship.

If you are interested in being involved in this study or would like more information, please contact either myself or my supervisor on the following numbers:

Alison Dalglish

Email adalgleish@xtra.co.nz

Phone 07 3480064 /021 614422

Dr. Andy Begg

andy.begg@aut.ac.nz

09 9219999 extn 7355

Yours sincerely

Alison Dalglish

Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet



Date Information Sheet Produced:

Project Title: Pathways to Principalship

Introduction

Thank you for your positive response to our informal discussion about the above titled research. I am conducting this research as a final part to completing my Master of Education degree. I invite you to participate in this research. Your participation in this research is purely voluntary and you may withdraw from it at any time. Feel free to contact me Alison Dalgleish (cell 021 614422) if you have any other questions about this research after reading the following.

What is the purpose of this research?

This research aims to investigate the following problems associated with the application process for employment as a secondary school principal:

The availability of advice and guidance for candidates who wish to apply for principals' positions;

The degree of skills and knowledge that is required of you to negotiate the paperwork that is entailed.

The analysis of the experiences and the stories told by each participant will contribute to recommendations made by the researcher for aspiring principals of the future.

As mentioned previously this research will contribute towards the completion of my Masters of Education degree at the Auckland University of Technology, Auckland.

There is the possibility that the findings from this research may at some time be used in educational journals.

How was I chosen for this research?

You have been chosen to participate in this research because you are currently working in a leadership and management role as a Principal in a North Island provincial secondary school.

I am interested in talking to between 6 / 10 participants.

What will happen in this research?

Once you have consented to be a part of this research project by signing the attached consent form, a one / two hour interview with you will be conducted. It will be at an arranged day and time at a place of your choice, and with your permission it will be audio taped so the conversation can be transcribed. After the interview I may need to contact you again to clarify some details from the interview.

Your privacy and confidentiality of information will be preserved by removing your name and identifying details from the transcripts, a pseudonym chosen by you will be used instead of your name in all the transcripts and report. The person doing the transcribing is required to sign a confidentiality form to ensure that your identity and confidentiality are preserved. Once the interview is transcribed you will be given the opportunity to read and check this and make corrections. Then I will analyse the transcript and hope to gain an understanding of themes and meanings of your experience.

The report will include theoretical information about the research processes and a literature analysis about the background of leadership in education will be included. A discussion around the themes identified in the study which may include some quotes from your narrative

What are the risks and how will these be minimized?

It is possible, but unlikely that some discomfort will be experienced during the interview process as you will be sharing personal experiences about your journey towards principalship. Choosing a venue for the interview that is comfortable for you is important. I will also be prepared to stop the interview if it becomes too uncomfortable for you to continue.

What are the benefits?

Being in this study will give you the opportunity to share your experiences and assist future principals. This study will benefit the researcher personally in that she will attain a Master of Education degree. It will also assist the researcher in acquiring additional information that will help on her on her journey towards principalship.

How will my privacy be protected?

Confidentiality and privacy will be preserved by removing all personal and identifying details from the interview transcript and will not be used in any publications or presentations. Tapes from the interview will be stored in a locked cupboard. Consent forms and data collected in this study will also be stored separately from the tapes in another locked cupboard. Following the completion of this study my supervisor will be required to keep them in a secure place at AUT for a minimum of six years. After six years the tapes will be wiped clean and the rest of the information shredded. If you withdraw from the study your information will be destroyed immediately.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

The only cost to your participation in this study is your time.

What opportunity do I have to consider this request?

If after reading this information sheet you have further questions I would appreciate it if you can contact me on 021614422. Otherwise if you consent to participate in this study please sign the attached consent form and return to me in the attached addressed envelop. Can you please inform me of your interest to be a part of this study within a week of receiving this information sheet?

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

You will have the opportunity to read and approve your transcript. You will also have the opportunity to read the final report of this study.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Concerns regarding the conduct of this study should be notified to the;

Executive Secretary AUT Madeline Banda

09 921 9999 extn: 8044 madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to;

The Project Supervisor Dr Andy Begg

09 921 9999 extn: 7355

andy.begg@aut.ac.nz

For further information about this research please contact;

Researcher Contact Alison Dalglish

021 614422

adalgleish@xtra.co.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 13th October 2008

AUT Reference Number 08/182.

Appendix D: Participant Consent Form



Project title: **Pathways to Principalship**

Project Supervisor: **Andy Begg**

Researcher: **Alison Dalglish**

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 29 / 10 / 08
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one):
Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature:.....

Participant's name

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 13th October 2008. AUTEK Reference number 08/182