HOW LEADERS DEVELOP AND DIRECT RELATIONAL TRUST-BUILDING EFFORTS IN SCHOOLS

Masters by Research Thesis

By

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DECLARATION

I declare that:

This thesis presents work carried out by myself and does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university;

To the best of my knowledge it does not contain any materials previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; and all substantive contributions by others to the work presented, including jointly authored publications, is clearly acknowledged.

David O'Brien

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ABSTRACT

Trust is inspiring; distrust is deflating.
Perkins, 2003, p. 191

Although the concept of trust has emerged in a number of studies as a key element in improving schools (Manion, 1998; Hopkins, 2001; MacBeath et al, 2007), little systematic research exists on the nature of trust and how it is developed in educational communities. This point is emphasised by Daly & Chrispeels (2008) who acknowledge the positive impact of trust on school performance but also highlight the lack of research into the relational aspects of trust and leadership. The purpose of this study was to investigate and identify the behaviours and actions of school leaders that direct relational trust-building efforts in schools.

Using a qualitative research methodology, data were gathered through a series of group interviews involving a total of 26 teachers at a primary school in the north of Adelaide. The interviews were held in a focus group format and conducted by an independent facilitator who asked a series of open-ended questions. Responses were recorded and analysed.

The results of this research confirmed findings from previous studies showing that trust-based relationships between leaders and staff are dependent upon certain individual qualities and characteristics of the leader. Data gathered through the interviews highlighted the attributes of openness, compassion, respect, honesty, confidentiality, integrity, a willingness to acknowledge and recognise others, a commitment to treating people equitably and a dialogue of contribution as key contributors to trust-based relationships between leaders and staff.

However, the research findings went beyond previous studies by showing that personal traits are a necessary but insufficient condition for establishing and maintaining a trust-based culture. Such qualities need to sit alongside a set of embedded organisational practices that build a sense of community and collective responsibility. These practices include systems, processes and structures such as:

- developing and maintaining structures and processes that bring people together to enable a better understanding of each others' life experiences, values and belief systems
- the collective development and enactment of an agreed set of norms, values and beliefs that govern relationships and organisational practices
- utilising formal and informal structures to bring people together to develop and sustain a shared sense of purpose and commitment to the organisation
- shared decision-making processes that see staff deeply embedded in decisions that connect with their work
- ceremonies and celebrations that acknowledge and recognise achievement
- the equitable distribution of resources.

The findings suggest a relationship between human agency and the structural conditions of the school, with a concept such as trust created, maintained and changed through leadership behaviours that are both independent and interdependent of system or organisational practices. For leaders to build and sustain trust the school's organisational practices need to reflect the leader's personal values, daily actions and basic organisational aims – there is both personal and organisational integrity.

The premise of this research is that establishing and sustaining stronger trust-based cultures within schools will place them in a better position to effect the sorts of changes that are needed in an increasingly complex educational environment. The results show that a stronger social bond between leaders and staff enhances a sense of community, increases motivation, fosters a willingness to engage with risk and promotes a greater sense of efficacy among its members. It is hoped that the study will stimulate further thinking and research in relation to the attributes and characteristics of school leaders and the organisational structures and practices that enhance or diminish the level of trust in schools.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Over the last 3 decades I have witnessed enormous changes in the demographic, social, and cultural composition of our society which have presented a range of new challenges, dilemmas and opportunities in my role as an educator and school leader. This was never more evident than in my 6 years of leading the Ingle Farm Primary School community, one of the most complex and diverse primary school settings in South Australia. In 2008 the school context included 12 mainstream classes characterised by significant economic disadvantage as well as large numbers of English as a Second Language (ESL) and Aboriginal learners. The school also hosted 2 Special Education and 18 New Arrivals classes. The New Arrivals classes largely catered for the children of refugees and skilled migrant workers. In these circumstances there was no shortage of challenges, dilemmas and issues to contend with in the development and implementation of an effective educational program. It is well documented that public schools existing in socially and economically disadvantaged communities face enormous difficulties (MacBeath, 2007). Given the size of classes and the overwhelming needs of the population they serve, staff can harden themselves against their students and families troubles and easily lose sight of the individuals they seek to assist. Ingle Farm Primary existed in such a community but external reviews and feedback from departmental personnel and the parent community highlighted an energised and engaging environment where students and staff had a real sense of significance and belonging. New parents, visitors to the school, external support agencies and Education Department personnel all commented on the happy and relaxed environment that existed and the 'feeling of community' that pervaded the culture of the school. A common theme to this commentary was the deep level of 'trust' that existed across the school community and the importance of this in relation to school change. This is illustrated in the following statement taken from one school review:

> *Learning involves taking risks. The stronger and wider the safety-net the more likely learners are to take risks and improve their learning. This applies to both children and staff. The greater the sense of attachment, the*

> *greater the trust, the more secure the learner the greater the resilience and the greater the chance for improved learning outcomes. Ingle Farm Primary espouses and promotes democratic principles. Students are encouraged to negotiate their learning and are involved in democratic decision-making. Teachers ensure that classroom decisions are made in a democratic manner, are made transparent and that there is a measure of accountability. IFPS promotes resilience, trust and collaboration over power control and punishment.* (Wirth G., Whole School Change Coordinator, 2007)

In my opinion the foundations of this culture were laid in 2004 when the complex nature of the school led to a number of discussions amongst staff about how they might organise themselves to best meet the challenges they faced as an educational community. The response was to embrace a model of collaborative research and inquiry based on the belief that professional learning and student outcomes would be enhanced through opportunities to share ideas and critically interrogate practice in an ongoing, reflective and collaborative manner. Consequently, the school set about focusing its efforts on developing a 'professional learning community' where teachers share and interrogate their practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning oriented, growth promoting way (Bolam et al., 2005). Quite early in this process it became apparent that teachers were unlikely to open themselves up to 'deeper' conversation about pedagogical issues or curriculum innovation unless they felt safe to do so. Developing a culture of trust amongst staff and a feeling of psychological safety was identified as a crucial element in the school's journey to becoming an inquiring educational community.

Beck (1992) argues that we are living in a risk society where much of our well-being depends on the phenomena of trust and trustworthiness. From a leadership perspective important questions arose around my behaviour and the systems that I developed that would facilitate the emergence of trust within broader social and institutional contexts of increasing accountability. Driven by the ideal of creating and sustaining a trust-based culture within my school

setting I felt it was important to identify more clearly the factors that cultivated trust in the midst of significant school complexity as well as broader accountability regimes. As an educational leader, I see a significant need to identify, draw attention to, better understand, theorize about and explain this phenomenon. As I have already stated, it was widely perceived that the dense social relationships that support collaboration and collective effort existed at Ingle Farm Primary. Consequently I saw this as a unique opportunity to not only inquire into what school leaders do to engender trust in an educational community but also model the behaviours that I was looking to embed within the organisation.

Reading through the literature in this area it became apparent that although the concept of trust has emerged in as a key element in improving schools (Manion, 1998; Hopkins, 2001; MacBeath et al, 2007), little systematic research exists on the nature of trust and how it is developed in educational communities. This point is emphasised by Daly & Chrispeels (2008) who acknowledge the positive impact of trust on school performance but also highlight the lack of research into the relational aspects of trust and leadership. In my role as a school leader I saw it as important and relevant work to understand how trust is interpreted in a school setting and attempt to identify the behaviours and actions of school leaders that that either enhance or diminish the level of trust in a school environment. Consequently I have committed to undertaking this study with the aim of exploring how leaders "spark and direct relational trust-building efforts in school" (Stoll and Louis, 2007: 95).

Research Question and Organisation of the Report

In an effort to best understand how leaders develop and sustain a trust-based culture in schools a series of questions were posed to staff in group interview situations (details of this process are covered in Chapter 3 of this thesis entitled 'Methodology'). The questions posed were as follows:

- Can you talk about an event or situation that illustrates trust in this school? Something that took place that fostered trust?
- Can you talk about an event or situation that was detrimental to developing a trusting culture? Something that caused you to lose trust?
- How would you define the concept of trust?
- Think of a school leader with whom you had/have a high trust relationship. What is it that inspired/inspires confidence in this particular relationship?
- Think of a school leader with whom you had/have a low trust relationship. What is it that did not inspire confidence in this particular relationship?

The data gathered through these interviews form the basis of this research and its findings. In an effort to reference the relevant literature in this area and accurately report the findings from this research I have structured the thesis in the following manner.

Chapter One has outlined the introduction to the study and the reason for pursuing this research subject. Chapter Two contains the literature review which begins by exploring the changing nature of our social and organisational constructs. These changes are then linked to the rise trust as a central concept in the organisational health of schools. The review then investigates the current definitions of trust and the dynamics of distrust within our organisations. Chapter Three focuses on the methodology for this research project and this includes the Research Design, Qualitative methodology, Methods of Data Collection, Data Analysis, Validity and the final section is on Ethical Considerations for the study. Chapter Four contains an analysis of the findings and the final chapter, Chapter Five discusses the findings, makes recommendations and gives a statement of conclusion. These chapters are followed by the list of References, which were used to support this study and the final section is the Appendices, consisting of the research questions as well as all letters and agreement forms utilised in this research process.

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

The first section of the literature review focuses on an array of variables that contribute to our understanding of trust in educational communities and why it has become such an important commodity. To begin with there is a focus on the broad social changes that play such a significant role in the changing nature of schools and approaches to educational leadership.

The review then looks at how these changes have impacted on our public institutions in terms of organisational dynamics and work attitudes. It then explores the possibilities for how schools may best adapt to these increasingly complex and uncertain contexts.

Changes in Social and Institutional Structures

Changes in social and institutional structures, policy, governance, the nature of educational work, schooling structures and professional identities are all impacting on each school's ability to meet the developmental needs of our children and the professional needs of staff. Today's educators face enormous changes in the demographic, social, and cultural composition of our society. Giddens (1998) argues that we are dealing with profound processes of change in the nature of personal and cultural identity, family and work. Kalantzis & Harvey (2003) refer to a society transformed in the broadest sense by new relationships to knowledge. It appears that not only is the pace of social change much faster than in any prior system, so also is its scope, and the profoundness with which it affects pre-existing social practices and modes of behaviour.

Theorists such as Giddens (1998) and Beck (2000) propose that we face increasing uncertainty as we move towards a society in which fixed sources of meaning provided through religion, gender, class, marriage, lifetime employment and the nuclear family diminish. An ever-increasing matrix of risks associated with financial security, personal relationships, health, self-image,

security, ecology and global instability have developed a state of uncertainty and threat (Beck, 2000, Denney, 2005). We now see individuals continuously reflecting on new information or knowledge in most aspects of social activity and their awareness of risk is heightened at the everyday level (Lupton and Tulloch, 2002, p. 318). Furthermore this information is no longer a commodity that is mined and exported by the institutions, authorities and specialists in society. Advanced communication technologies provide ready access to information that did not exist for previous generations. In this 'knowledge age' (Castells, 1997), individuals are constantly seeking out information that they use to create, maintain and revise a set of biographical narratives, social roles and lifestyles (Giddens, 1991; Beck, 1992; Furlong and Cartmel, 1997). As Giddens (1991) points out, the focal questions for many individuals living in contemporary society are 'what to do, how to act and who to be?' (p.70). It appears that we are increasingly free to choose what we want to do and who we want to be but increased choice can be both liberating and troubling (Giddens, 1991). On one side there is a greater sense of autonomy and agency in determining our life pathway but this is balanced against increased anxiety and stress associated with the need to analyse the available choices and minimise the risks of which we are increasingly aware (Beck, 1992; Elliott & Lemert, 2006). As Saul (2001) argues that whatever the rights, protections and prosperity of people, there is still a wide spread sense of personal powerlessness - a 'gilded depression' (p.4).

MacBeath (2007) points out that in this social context a new value of autonomy has arisen which emphasises the importance of individuals following their own pursuits and putting their needs before the interest of others. People are much less concerned with the precedents set by previous generations, and free to choose what they want to do within the constraints of the law and public opinion. Sennett (2006) contends that the idealised person shuns dependency and there is a focus on personal initiative and enterprise (p.46). Saul (2001) argues that in this era of individualism a larger number of us than ever before have some control over our lives, as well as concrete rights and protections.

Elliott and Lemert (2006) contend that this new individualism represents the coercive effects of advertising, the growth of egoism and impoverishment of civil society leading to continual self-reinvention and new moralities disconnected from religion. It is interesting to note that in this context of a new individualism surveys show that younger generations are sensitized to a greater range of moral concerns than previous generations (Wilkinson H. & Mulgan G., 1995). Giddens (1991) argues that they do not, however, relate these values to tradition, or accept traditional forms of authority as legislating on questions of lifestyle. He sees the new individualism associated with a retreat of tradition and custom from our lives but argues that this should be viewed as a period of moral transition rather than moral decay. Throughout the literature it is evident that there is a stronger sense of autonomy and individualism within our communities which is impacting significantly on the culture and structure of our public institutions.

Significant change is also evident in the nature of family life. Elkind (1997) points out that a new social context has seen family settings become more diverse comprising a variety of kinship patterns including two working parents, single parent, adoptive and remarried families. Divorce has risen steeply in all Western countries and the numbers of people living alone has risen (Children's Services Subcommittee of the Community and Disability Services Ministers' Advisory Council, 2008). Fewer children are now brought up in the traditional context, where father and mother are married and living in the same household as their biological children, where the father is the economic breadwinner and the mother the housewife. Giddens (1998) points out that the family is the meeting point of a range of trends affecting society as a whole – increasing equality between the sexes, the widespread entry of women into the labour force and the changing relationship between home and work (p. 89). Smart (2004) suggests that these new family structures push people to negotiate new moral terrains on which they have to make decisions about how to act, how to relate, how to prioritise, how to safeguard their children, how to balance their own needs against those of others, and ultimately how to reconstruct family

living. Perceived in this way family life is informed by a much closer appreciation of people's moral reasoning in conditions of instability and uncertainty. Giddens (2003) asserts that social relationships have become 'democratised', so that the bond between partners – even within a marriage – has little to do with external laws, regulations or social expectations, but is based on the internal understanding between two people – a trusting bond based on emotional communication. Where such a bond ceases to exist, modern society is generally happy for the relationship to be dissolved. Thus we have 'a democracy of the emotions' in everyday life bringing with it an increased sense of risk associated with family life and greater uncertainty in how people should respond to the choices they now have (Giddens, 2003).

As we witness the breakdown of traditional family groupings we also see a decline in religious practice and a significant decrease in the number of community service groups (MacGilchrist 2004, Elkind 1997). Across social frameworks there seems to be a declining sense of community with limited opportunities for citizens to talk collectively about common issues and concerns. Civic decline is real and visible in many sectors of contemporary societies. It is seen in the weakening sense of solidarity in some local communities and urban neighborhoods, high levels of crime, and the break-up of marriages and families (Giddens, 1998:78; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009). Van der Veen et al. (2007) describe our current society as chronically insecure, unstable, and turbulent, due to both the complexities of society and the influence of various groups such as scientists, politicians, social activists and business leaders as they seek to exert greater control over our living conditions. As Melleuish (2010) comments:

> *…we now have a generation of scientists and academics with a desire to have an impact on the world. They are willing to create dogmas so governments will act according to their wishes (p.12).*

A truly democratic society can only flourish if it allows a range of ideas and views to thrive. Scientific and academic activity will always be open to challenge as new data come to light. Currently there is real conflict between the

provisional nature of scientific and academic activity and the need for governments to take clear-cut and definite action (Melleuish, 2010). Definite action requires certainty and it appears that the political has become more important than the intellectual – political action trumps rigorous intellectual investigation. In this context the spirit of open inquiry where a variety of viewpoints and opinions jostle for public attention becomes increasingly difficult to achieve.

Society has also been transformed through new technologies that provide ready access to information that did not exist for previous generations. Here we see a society remodelled in the broadest sense by new relationships to knowledge (Castells, 1997). As Lumby (2009) comments:

> *This has huge social and cultural implications for how people connect with each other: how people work and entertain themselves. There are risks and opportunities that come with this. We have moved beyond the utopian phase where there was a gee-wow factor and we are now beginning to look at the challenges and the social, cultural and ethical questions of these changes (p.1).*

The internet and its related offshoots, from email to Google, Facebook, Skype and Twitter, have transformed the way we live and work. It is argued that this sudden overload of information has led to citizens who are less patient and more demanding of instant answers and instant solutions (Chalke, 2008). In this context people can now access a world of information but the disposable facts they discover are often devoid of context and meaning (Stewart, 2009).

Kalantzis & Harvey (2003) argue that new media have led to identities which are more self-made than received. Instead of being passive receptors of mass culture, we are becoming active creators of information and sensibilities, which precisely suit the nuances of our identities and the image in which we want to fashion ourselves. Merrow (2005) argues that the media is part of public education's problems through its contribution to the continuing deterioration in

public discourse. Much of what is valued in today's media involves finding fault in our public figures and institutions. Talkback radio and sensational coverage on television do substantial harm to the public image of schooling, and thus to public support for the institution (p.204). Chalke (2008) claims that individuals now have a newfound craving to know stemming from an erosion of confidence in the institutions of our society which itself is the result of a twenty four hour media cycle that produces countless stories that cast doubt on our public institutions. Individuals are not sure the system works any more, so they attempt to take control by finding things out for themselves. In today's society individuals are continually questioning authority and challenging the hierarchy. As Tschannen-Moran (2004) points out:

> *We live in an era in which all our social institutions have come under unprecedented scrutiny' (p. xi).*

In government systems this has seen a move towards standardization and bureaucratic control resulting in increasing pressure to make schools accountable, mainly through standardised testing and tighter curriculum control and credentialing (Degenhardt & Duigan, 2010). This trend away from trust in our institutions poses a significant challenge for leaders in our educational communities as it plays such a pivotal role in successful models of school improvement (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2004; Elmore, 2005).

With the thinning of the more traditional boundaries between home and workplace, home and school, between children and adults, and between private and public lives social institutions such as schools are increasingly influenced by the new dynamics and complexities of today's society (Grey & Carston, 2001; Nippert-Eng 1995; Hochschild 1997). Risk and uncertainty have become intrinsic features of our daily lives and in this situation trust is needed more than ever (Giddens, 1998; Sennett, 2006).

The literature also highlights an era of increasing uncertainty and new organisational dynamics for our public and private institutions. Increased

competition in global markets, the disintegration of production processes, the availability of advanced communication technologies and post-bureaucratic forms of work organisation have impacted significantly on the nature of our institutions (Bachmann & Zaheer, 2006). In the classic era of bureaucratic organisation there was hardly any awareness of the problem of trust as rigid procedures existed for most operational issues, job descriptions were narrow, the environment of the organisation was stable, there was significant job security and high institutional loyalty (Sennett, 2006; Bachmann & Zaheer, 2006). As our society and organisational institutions came to embrace more neo-liberal or market-based theories of operation we have witnessed a change in employment patterns, organisational dynamics and a growth in consumerism (Sennett 2006, Saul, 1999; Gee et al. 1996). Neo-liberalism promotes competition and encourages the individual to maximize self-interest usually in a material or economic sense (Beder, 2006). Markets are seen to promote civil order because they thrive on individual initiative whilst the welfare state is seen to be destructive of such concepts. Here the belief is that the world will get along best if markets are allowed to function with no or little interference (Treanor, 2005).

Giddens (1998) argues that the dynamism of market societies undermines traditional structures of authority creating new risks and uncertainties. For example Nye et al., (1997) point to a significant decline in the confidence people express in politicians but goes on to state that the same is true of their attitudes to other authority figures, such a police, lawyers and doctors . Grey & Garsten (2001) contend that the principle features of post-bureaucracy include the reduction of formal levels of hierarchy and an emphasis on flexibility rather than rule-following. In education we have seen the concept of unilateral respect for positional authority virtually disappear as students come to school today expecting to relate to teachers as equals and this is often mirrored in the relationship between parents and staff. These new contexts have brought about added pressure on schools, particularly in more disadvantaged settings, to build

social capital within their communities in more democratic and socially equitable ways (MacBeath et al, 2007). Putnam (1993) defines social capital as:

> *…the features of social organisation, such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions' (p.169).*

Field (2003) argues that by encouraging and developing connections between members of a community around a shared set of values, and keeping them going over time, individuals should be able to achieve things that they could not achieve by themselves, or could only achieve with great difficulty. In this sense personal networks constitute a resource; they can be seen as forming some form of capital.

In recent times we have also witnessed a significant change in the nature of work and commerce. The agrarian land and labour intensive industries that served Australia so well in the past are now competing with a burgeoning services sector and new industries that are based primarily on knowledge (Kalantzis and Harvey, 2003). As mentioned previously the strictly hierarchical nature of workplaces typified by the old economy is being eroded, and the search for knowledge is increasingly seen as a collaborative one (Senge, 1990). Sennett (2006) argues that our institutions now have thinner networks for informal contact and support in a context where there is a centralization of power, more responsibility with less authority and a devaluation of deep and broad corporate knowledge. According to Grey & Garsten (2001) the prospect of life-time employment with one organisation, in a defined hierarchy, with a promotion path and pension plan has virtually disappeared.

The negative consequences brought about by increased uncertainty, isolation, unreasonable demands and a lack of continuity are evident throughout our organisations (Wheatley, 1999). The fragmenting of big institutions has left many people's lives in a fragile and uncertain state. Sennett (2006) highlights this frailty describing the places people now work resembling 'train stations

rather than villages' (p2). Institutions no longer provide long-term stability, the shelf life of many skills are short and past experience is not a guarantee to ongoing employment. Whether we look at the private or public sector, we see institutions armed with the power and responsibility to investigate performance and call to account those in positions of authority. Gallop (2007) states that there has been a decline in trust and lowered expectations about the ability of the individual conscience to ensure that the pursuit of individual interest and power is not at the expense of the public good.

In modern institutions we are also witnessing the democratisation of knowledge accompanied by the growing contestability of that knowledge. Delanty (2001) argues that as more members of society are drawn into the field of knowledge production, the legitimacy of the older knowledge elites becomes less certain. In today's society professionals do not just need knowledge as a basis for carrying out their tasks; they are also called upon to defend their professional practice scientifically towards other professional groups as well as the lay audience. Smeby (2006) contends that today's public institutions are increasingly responding in a reflexive manner to information mediated by expert systems. Here individuals engage with the wider environment through information produced by specialists which they routinely interpret and act on in everyday life. In pre-modern societies, it was the elders who possessed the knowledge and people engaged with them on a 'face to face' basis. In today's society there is a reliance on expert systems which people don't engage with on a personal level, but they need to trust them (Giddens, 1990). Giddens (1990) points out that even if we trust them, we know that something could go wrong - it is a risk we have to take. Beck (1992) argues that a positive engagement with risk is a necessary component of social and economic mobilization. In more complex and dynamic environments we all need protection against risk, but also the capability to confront and take risks in a productive fashion.

In this environment we also find that research is now inclined to generate ambiguous conclusions and disputed interpretations rather than a clear-cut set of findings for our policy-makers. Therefore, the more the sciences expand, the

more uncertainty there is in the modern society (Giddens, 1990). Wolk (2007) argues that in today's society researchers seem to delight in neutralising each other - and the bigger the question addressed, the more vulnerable the findings. Beck (1992) refers to a 'risk society' characterised by a widespread loss of scientific legitimacy and growing calls for the accountability of science and technology.

Our social and economic frameworks have also been significantly affected by new technologies which supposedly reduce limitations while providing greater freedom. A quarter of a century ago a majority of the working population were in manual jobs, mostly in manufacture. Information technology has drastically affected the nature of manufacturing production, and cut the demand for unskilled labour dramatically (Sennett, 2006). The nature of science and technology generates great benefits but also creates new risks and uncertainties (Giddens, 1998). Simply put, the institutions of global society are being reinvented as technology redefines relationships between individuals and organisations. In an information age the world is vastly more interconnected than ever before. The internet and mobile phones have overridden the spatial and temporal lines separating work and non-work (Grey & Carston, 2001). Citizens increasingly now live in a single information environment where existing ways of doing things come under scrutiny and the scope of what is seen as unacceptable widens (Giddens, 1998; Husband, 2007). The increasing use of technology has seen a drastic change in the structure and the nature of relationships within our organisations. Bachmann & Zaheer (2006) argue that the vast degree of uncertainty and the need for flexibility that characterises the relationships within our institutions is 'unprecedented in the history of modern organisations' (p. 2).

This heightened sense of uncertainty implies that there is a need to look for new means of producing social solidarity and a sense of meaning for people's work. If social cohesion can no longer be guaranteed by top-down action or by appeal to tradition then there is a need to find a new balance between individual and

collective responsibilities. The challenge facing educators is to understand this 'modern world' and to respond to it in an ethical, strategic and effective manner.

A New Dynamic for Education

As this literature review has highlighted the classical foundations of civil society and how we socialize students to become effective citizens are weakening (Fuller & Rasiah, 2005). These changes have also impacted on our public and private institutions in terms of organisational dynamics, employment patterns and work attitudes (Sennett, 2006; Saul, 1999). In this challenging, complex and turbulent environment many of the problems faced by educators are unfolding in unfamiliar and unpredictable ways (Reid, 2004). In education, as in other services such as health and welfare, it is possible to identify the promotion of a new institutional culture, where schools are thought to be more efficient if they become more 'businesslike' incorporating the good practices aligned with market-based ideologies. The values of the new economy have become a reference point for how government thinks about the way education systems should operate and the kinds of skills they should provide (Saul, 1995, Fielding, 1999). If we look at the current discourse of educational policy we find that it is often linked to political compromises between competing but unequal interests. Taylor (1997) argues:

> *Education is no longer discussed in terms of broad visions and ideals but in terms of what governments believe to be possible and often expedient, and what interest groups feel they can persuade governments to do' (p.3).*

These conservative influences advocate for a model of schooling out of step with the needs of our emerging 'knowledge society' (Saul, 1995; Sennett, 2006). Schools currently operate in the midst of political imperatives which focus on high stakes testing, performance indices and accountability measures that leave little room for discretionary action. Hayes et al. (2006) contend that politicians

are more preoccupied with the logics of 'observables', 'deliverables' and 'vote winning' than with the logics of student learning (p.205-206).

Within this context we see a trend towards accountability programs that transform teaching into a more standardised and superficial activity. Recent curriculum reforms in the context of devolved systems of schooling lead to a culture of 'performativity' rather than enrichment of learning opportunities (Ball, 2003). Whitty et al. (1998) point out:

> *There is some evidence that the emphasis on standardised testing and attainment rather than the learning process is leading to an increased fragmentation and unitisation of the curriculum, the marginalisation of non-assessed fields of inquiry and a more rigid compartmentalisation of students' (p. 87).*

Adams and Tulasiewicz (1995) argue that this change in the dominant discourse of teaching has brought about a sense that the teachers' role is more strongly associated with that of a 'technician' rather than reflective practitioner. As the complex relationship between teaching and learning is ignored we see governments looking increasingly for quick fixes, creating a culture of blame in which teachers and schools are held responsible for a narrow set of prescribed pupil outcomes (Bonnor and Caro, 2007). Batagiannis (2009) argues that the demand for quick fixes has seen schools move to technocratic strategies 'focused on narrow, superficial issues which are evaluated by surface criteria alone' (p.40). As Daly (2009) comments:

> *Educators are in an unparallel time in public education, with high stakes accountability and increasing governmental and public pressure to improve. Teachers and administrators are expected to manage a host of standards, assessments, and learning needs while responding to increased demands for standardised assessments meant to ensure that all children are proficient (*p.170).

Gerwitz (2000) argues that school professionals now live in the shadow of constant surveillance. Here surveillance refers to the supervisory control of workers, whether this control takes the form of 'visible' supervision, or the use of information to coordinate the activities of the worker (Cassell, 1993). Perry (2007) suggests that such a situation encourages risk-averse behaviour and risk minimisation strategies within both individuals and organisations. She goes on to state:

> *Innovation, experimentation and daring are hardly likely to be a feature of the educational landscape when people actively avoid any idea or activity which might be seen as risky' (p.10).*

In such a culture trust is eroded through the imposition of standards, regulations and forms of public reporting which blame and punish while purporting to show the relative efficiency, or inefficiency, of teachers and school leaders. Groundwater-Smith and Sachs (2002) suggest that we are currently experiencing the 'conditions of an audit society' and go on to argue that the greater the governance by rules the less the practice of trust.

A New Institutional Architecture for Schooling

In these new social and economic contexts Kahane (2004) proposes that the solutions to our problems require a systemic view, a tolerance of emerging solutions and a commitment to what Fielding (1999) refers to as 'radical collegiality'. In this context Waters et al. (2003) argue for an 'adaptive' approach to leadership where conditions are created for individuals to confront existing values and norms. Heifetz (1994) states that adaptive leadership is necessary when there are no routine answers to the problems that have arisen. In this situation both defining the problem and finding a solution involve learning. Adaptive leadership addresses problems that arise when there is a conflict between the values people hold and the reality they face. At one point in time

these strongly held values may have been effective, but now impede a school's ability to address current educational challenges (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). As Daly & Chrispeels (2008) argue:

> *… this represents a shift in the work of leadership from problem-solution, to facilitating a process that clarifies conflicting values inherent in problems, promoting strategies that narrow the gap between exiting beliefs and challenging situations, creating a wrenching organisational transformation (p.33).*

Similarly Glen (2009) points out that old models of heroic leadership are not viable in the turbulent uncertainty and complexity of the 21st Century and that workload intensification and the unrelenting demands on positional leaders have increased the pragmatic value of sharing or distributing leadership functions widely within schools. Hayes et al. (2006) contend that these circumstances provide a unique opportunity to develop and sustain more connected educational communities, which are fundamentally relational, inquisitive, democratic and inclusive. In this context they see schools as having the capacity to act intelligently and creatively in response to more complex social and institutional contexts. Beatty (2007) builds on this concept:

> *Holistic school renewal demands a qualitatively different discourse, one within which turf wars can be transcended, feelings of discomfort confronted and acknowledged and real issues integrated as the focus on improving practice for its own sake as an adventure in professional partnership becomes the main event. In order to be up to the task, leaders need to reconceptualise leadership itself as the invitation to share and embrace uncertainty so that their leadership serves to create openings for these different kinds of conversation. Leadership for whole school renewal requires emotionally safer spaces for learning and growing together (p.328).*

It is here that the notion of a professional learning community or learning organisation takes shape. Researchers argue that today's schools need to create learning opportunities where educators have access to the collective intelligence of the organisation and work on issues, in a systematic way, that are relevant to their practice (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Hargreaves, 1997; Reid, 2004; Beatty, 2007). In this context educators become inquirers into professional practice who question their daily routines and assumptions and who are capable of investigating the effects of their teaching on student learning. Reid (2004) defines this process in the following manner.

> *I understand inquiry to be a process of systematic, rigorous and critical reflection about professional practice, and the contexts in which it occurs, in ways that question taken-for-granted assumptions (p.3).*

There is also a need for this process of inquiry to be embedded within a notion of 'joint work' in order to break out of our current individualistic, present-oriented and conservative practices. As Fielding (1999) describes, 'it needs to be a truly collective action' (p.5). Evidence has shown that schools who have found ways of embedding democratic learning into their daily practice with a strong focus on learning that emphasises disciplined inquiry and substantive conversation not only improve learning outcomes for students but do so in a manner more equitable than traditional schooling processes (Ladwig & Gore, 1998, p21).

In building a culture of inquiring professionalism, in a communal form, schools are, in many ways, challenging the notion of neo-liberal ideals by adopting a 'critical social-justice' stance to educational reform (Fielding, 1999). Elkind (1997) argues that while the western ideals of rationality, objectivity, and measurement remain important values, they are only part of our future. These ideals need to be integrated with ways of thinking that rely as heavily on inquiry, collective insight, and emotional and spiritual intelligence. This is not an easy task, especially for organisations, such as schools, that are grounded in

traditional forms of management and further challenged by new social contexts and a market-based value system. As MacGilchrist et al. (2004) contend, in this new society schools need people who can generate ideas, reflect professionally on their practice and adapt to constant change. Unfortunately, our current political and bureaucratic institutions value and promote a form of performance quality that is destructive of the interpersonal and professional conditions that enable teachers to think and act creatively (Ball, 2003). If schools are going to be able to respond to these changes in an intelligent and productive manner then they will need to embrace a new design for the way they act and organise themselves – a new form of institutional architecture (Sennett, 2006). Daly (2009) argues that leaders need to shift from being technicians in charge of monitoring and evaluating prescriptive curriculums to building trusting relationships that facilitate the spread of information and provide opportunities for flexible responses. Beatty & Brew (2007) argue along similar lines and see the need for school leadership to be reconceptualised, 'as being essentially relational, requiring emotional skills of the leader' (p.330). Marshall (2006) points out that contexts of increasing uncertainty schools should be focused on engagement, not transmission; inquiry, not compliance; exploration, not acquisition; interdependence, not individualism; collaboration, not competition; and trust, not fear. So how do we go about developing this new 'architecture' in public institutions such as schools?

The development of a professional learning community (Senge, 1990; DuFour et al. 2005, DuFour & Eaker, 1998) has been promoted as a mechanism to achieve more democratic working relationships between all members of the school community. One of the premises that underlie a learning community should be a reduced reliance on the use of power as an element of leadership and increased levels of collaboration and cooperation (Senge, 1990; Stoll & Seashore Louis, 2007). However, power is an element of any relationship and exists even when not set in motion (Foucault, 2003; Giddens, 1998). Furthermore, this premise rests on the notion that cooperation is the polar opposite of power, a view taken up by some authors who suggest that an emerging construct is

cooperation, which stands opposed to the concept of power (Daparin & Hogarth Scott, 2003). These authors seem to be viewing power only in a negative sense, in the sense that it is destructive in organisations. The suggestion is being made that the two ends of the scale are power, on the one hand, and trust or cooperation, on the other. Research into the nature of power has determined that such a narrow interpretation was not only incorrect but also restrictive in further development of the construct (Cartwright, 1959). Researchers such as Grey & Carston (2001) conceptualise power and control as being productive as well as repressive and go on to define 'trust' as a specific form of power. They see trust as a social process through which control is affected in the sense of rendering people and events relatively predictable.

Power has been defined in various ways but all definitions essentially contain the idea of the control, influence or direction of one party's behaviour by another (Forster, 2005). The use of power need not involve coercion where we see the use of force or the threat of force to bring about change. At one extreme, it more closely resembles 'influence', although some authors make a distinction between power and influence - the means by which power is used (Handy, 1993*).* Power can be seen as various forms of constraint on human action, but also something that makes action possible, although in a limited scope.

An educational leader's power derives from a power base or source. Social psychologists French and Raven (1959) developed a schema of five categories of power which reflected the different bases or resources that power holders rely upon. These are: reward power, coercive power, expert power, referent power, and legitimate power (Forster, 2005; French and Raven, 1959). One additional base, 'informational', was added later but it is possible to perceive this as a facet of expert power. Expert power is defined as superior knowledge or insight possessed by one of the parties. Clearly this knowledge can be based on sources of information. It has been noted that control of information is a source of power and has the potential to result in dependency on partners for strategically important knowledge (McDonald, 1999). Each of these schema are outlined as follows:

Reward Power

Reward Power arises from the opportunities leaders have to use rewards as a way of influencing people. This has some parallels with coercive power, because the threat of removing rewards can be considered as a form of punishment.

Coercive Power

Coercive Power means the application of negative influences onto employees. It might refer to the ability to demote or to withhold other rewards. It's the desire for valued rewards or the fear of having them withheld that ensures the obedience of those under power.

Legitimate Power

This refers to power derived from the formal structural power and authority of office, position or role in the organisation. Legitimate Power is formal authority delegated to the holder of the position.

Referent Power

Referent Power refers to the power or ability of individuals to attract others and build loyalty. In this instance power stems from the images, impressions or perceptions that people have of the leader. Research has shown that employees have great respect for leaders who exude professional trust, integrity, empathy and reliability (Goleman, 2004).

Expert Power

Expert Power is an individual's power deriving from the specific technical expertise and/or professional knowledge they possess (Forster, 2005). Unlike the others, this type of power is usually highly specific and limited to the particular area in which the expert is trained and qualified.

This type of power can be further broken down as *Information Power*.

Information Power

> While the difference between expert power and information power is subtle, people with this type of power are well-informed, up-to-date and also have the ability to persuade others. Another difference would be that people with Expert Power are perceived by his/her image of expertise to show credibility, while one with Information Power does not have a strict need to 'look the part of a professional', but they must keep up to date with new research, and have confidence in debating, or are persuasive.

The issue of power and control and its visibility, or otherwise, in a learning organisation requires strong consideration. More contemporary approaches to leadership denote 'powerful leaders' as those prepared to give power away by empowering staff and not using power in a coercive manner (Forster, 2005). It appears from the literature that while the 'learning organisation' (Senge, 1990) may seek to reorchestrate power relations, they cannot remove them. Fielding (2001) argues:

> *…even if organisational structures are flatter, segmentalism eroded, teams empowered, status replaced by stature, and information more readily accessible, power remains as interstitial as it ever was in the heyday of archetypical bureaucratic organisations (p.7).*

Coopey (1995) argues that reconfigurations of power in a learning organisation are likely to coalesce around the capacity to use discursive proficiency and penetrative knowledge of organisational structures and systems to build up agency, both alone and in collaboration with others (p.202). Here power lies with those who are able to create what Foucalt (1980) terms 'a regime of truth' describing 'the type of discourse that society accepts and makes true' (p.131). Popkewitz (1987) goes on to explain:

> *They shape and fashion what can be said and what must be left unsaid, the types of discourse accepted as true and the mechanisms that make it possible to distinguish between truth and error (pp.4-5).*

Furthermore, it is likely that managers are particularly well placed to do this since they operate at nodal points of organisational life where a number of circuits of power intersect (Coopey, 1995, p.203).

Much of the literature surrounding new learning communities promotes the democratisation of practice and the importance of tapping into the expertise and wisdom of the community as schools attempt to resolve the increasingly complex problems they now face. It is here that an interesting dilemma arises in terms of what constitutes a democratic forum. Sennett (2006) describes a truly democratic forum as every citizen having the right to think aloud and debate with others, no matter if he, or she, is not an expert (p.158). According to Giddens (1993) democratic practice implies not just the right to free and equal self-development, but also the constitutional limitation of power. Here democracy involves formal equality, individual rights, public discussion of issues, and authority which is negotiated rather than given by tradition. It implies equality, mutual respect, autonomy, decision-making through communication and freedom from punitive actions. In this instance the 'liberty of the strong' is restrained, but this is not a denial of authority (Giddens, 1998 p.93). In this context authority is justifiable to the degree that it recognises the principle of autonomy, in other words, to the extent to which defensible reasons can be given as to why compliance enhances autonomy. Here the democratic order provides institutional arrangements for mediation, negotiation and the reaching of compromises where necessary.

Some believe that democratic practices should overcome difference and, while establishing a common language and common logic, enable a consensus among the members of the communities within a civil society (Putnam 2000). In their work on relocating social learning as a democratic practice Wildemeersch & Vandenabeele (2007) argue that this form of democracy eventually leads to a 'loss of momentum' as democratic principles are 'compressed by the consensus-seeking rationality of various policy approaches (p.29)'. Along similar lines Cooke and Kothari (2003) point out that radical and democratic language can be co-opted with the aim of bringing people's views and expectations 'into line'

with the plans devised by their leaders. Within the organisation there is rhetoric of participation but these new forms of collaboration are used to reinforce rather than overthrow existing inequalities.

Alternatively Wildemeersch & Vandenabeele (2007) argue that democratic practice is not about creating consensus, but about dealing with difference, agony, and disturbance – there is a shift from notions of identity and community towards notions of difference and public space. They define 'public space' as:

> *The place where we engage with others, or with strangers, who by definition are not and will not be like ourselves (p.28).*

Here democratic practice develops a community 'where people actually give up the stability of their joint enterprise, let their identities be disturbed, and are prepared to engage in a new beginning' (p.29).

Along similar lines Fielding (1999) argues for the development of a democratic community in schools 'which embrace difference as an important source of practical energy and intellectual activity' (p.24-25). He contends that the 'heart of the democratic project lies in dialogic encounter' pointing out that this form of democratic community is based on an equality, 'both expressive of and contributing to the furtherance of a democratic way of life' (p.25). Here the structure and culture of schools are more dynamic and dialogic, with intentions that are 'unremittingly inclusive' (Fielding, 1999, p.26). There is preparedness and a capacity within the school community to be both teachers of, and learners from, each other within the context of a shared set of ideals. At the heart of this democratic project lie dispositions, cultures and structures that build equality and inclusivity across the education community (Fielding, 1999). Trust appears to be a foundational element in the development of such a democratic community and this research project attempts to explore the factors, at Ingle Farm Primary, that cultivated trust in the midst of significant complexity and the broader ideals of accountability and measurement. Significant questions revolve around the conditions that are necessary to facilitate the emergence of trust and

bring greater clarity to the dispositions, cultures and structures that develop the capacity of our public institutions, such as schools, to function in a truly democratic form.

Trust as a Central Concept

Drennon (2002) argues that learning communities never become the wholly democratic learning communities we wish them to be stating:

> *They will never wholly achieve our democratic ideals, but they can become more democratic (p.63).*

She sees democracy packed with 'inherent tensions and outright contradictions' such as the desire to lead a group and yet remove the focus on oneself as leader (p.69). Fukuyama (1995) argues that the cultural habits of reciprocity, moral obligation, duty towards community and trust are crucial if today's organisations are going to overcome these tensions and move towards more democratic forms. Other research also contends that the concept of trust has become one of the fundamental mechanisms for coordinating organisational relationships in contemporary society (Grey & Carston 2001; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2004; Powell, 1990; Sydow, 1998; Bachman and Zaheer, 2006). Trust is seen as a characteristic of new hybrid forms of operation within organisations where alliances, joint ventures and cooperative problem solving have become increasingly relevant. In this context trust is seen as a vital element in developing more coordinated interactions in complex relational arrangements.

Grey & Carston (2001) argue that as employees become more empowered and less directly managed, the issue of trust takes on new significance. More recently, systems theory (Capra, 1996) sees the processes of societal and organisational modernisation as those that inevitably lead to an increased need of trust. The more complex and dynamic social and economic relations are today, 'the more

trust is needed as a lubricant to keep the motor running' (Bachman and Zaheer, 2006, p.2). As Perkins (2003) argues:

> *Trust is one of the building blocks of cohesiveness in teams, communities of practice, networks, and communities and organisations of all sorts* (p.185).

Powell (1990) argues that the new found interest in trust reflects the unstitching of conventional bureaucratic forms of organisation, and Sydow (1998) states:

> *…in a world of increasing uncertainty and complexity, flat hierarchies, more participative management styles and increasing professionalism, trust is thought to be a more appropriate mechanism for controlling organisational life….* (p.31)

The literature also highlights that the norms we are seeking to foster are, in many ways, contrary to the norms that teachers are socialized into (Drennon, 2002). A number of researchers argue that the dominant culture and norms of schooling are often associated with teacher privacy and autonomy working against the objective of more democratic and inquiring schooling communities (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992; Holly, 1987; Little, 1990). In this context Elmore (2005) sees trust as an essential but fragile commodity of school reform describing trust as hard to construct but easy to destroy. He goes on to state:

> *The fact that we can identify trust as an exceptional variable in determining school performance means that it is in short supply* (p.291).

In a study involving over 120 teachers Bragg et al (2005) identified relationships and trust as the most important factor in the transfer of good practice between educators. Researchers have argued that school improvement is directly linked to the levels of trust that exist within that community (Bryk and Schneider 2002; Stoll and Louis, 2007; Tschannen-Moran, 2004). Drawing on the literature of

social capital they argue that when trusting relationships are developed and sustained, schools are more likely to have the dense social relationships that support collaboration and collective effort to improve over time. According to Bolam et al. (2005) collaborative inquiry cannot occur without trust and a deeper understanding of each other's work.

Fielding (1999) makes a similar case arguing there is a need for a new collegium in education with trust playing a central role. He suggests that the kinds of practice that nurture this form of community are:

> *….dialogic by nature supported by dispositions requiring virtues that stand in marked contrast to the duty of delivery and the unremitting anxiety born of endless audit' (p.24).*

He goes on to state that openness, informality, care, attentiveness, lateral working relationships, reciprocal collaboration, candid and vibrant dialogue, and a willingness to face uncertainty together are the basic ingredients of an effective inquiring school community. Hargreaves (1997) argues that these qualities are the basic day-to-day foundation on which trust, successful decision-making and collective responsibility will depend (p.22).

The prominence of trust in more contemporary structures for school effectiveness and improvement is grounded in significant changes to societal and political structures and, as a consequence, the changing nature to our purpose for schooling. Tschannen and Hoy (2000) argue that trust is required for many of the reforms taking place in schools stating that new forms of governance, collaborative decision-making, and teacher empowerment depend on trust. (p.37) Along similar lines Bryk and Schneider (2000) comment:

> *Equally important, trust also lubricates the necessary social exchanges among school professionals as they engage together, learning from each other in the trial and error of implementing new practice. To be able to*

> *talk honestly with colleagues about 'What's working, what's not' means exposing one's ignorance and making oneself vulnerable. Absent trust, genuine conversations of this sort remain unlikely* (p.123).

And in a similar vein:

> *Scholars have reported the positive association of trust in schools, including increased collaboration, engagement in organizational citizenship behaviors, promotion of risk-tolerant climates, and links to improvement in academic productivity. Moreover, absence of trust has been associated with anxiety, estrangement, and isolation* (Daly, 2009, p.174).

While there are strong arguments for the design of more community like structures in our institutions it appears that the dominant policy response of most organisations has been to develop management practices that work to undermine rather than promote more democratic principles. The creation of rigid hierarchical systems, centralised top-down decision-making, limited access to information, and the stifling of divergent views are the characteristic responses of many organisations where increasing uncertainty and new organisational dynamics has created a greater sense of vulnerability (Fukuyama, 2005; Daly, 2009; Barlow, 2001; Tschannen-Moran, 2004). Organisational practices that value and reinforce functional silos or top-down management do little to support collaborative social systems (Sandow, 2007). The literature on the reengineering and restructuring of school organisations is heavily weighted with provocative suggestions for change, sensitive to the general trend of democratisation of social institutions world wide, and centrally premised on assumptions about individual empowerment. In much of this literature bureaucracy is viewed as detrimental to progress arguing for these forms of management practices to be replaced by more community-like social structures (Leithwood & Seashore Louis, 1998; Stoll and Seashore Louis, 2007; DuFour, 1998; Hargreaves and Fink, 2006).

It is also apparent that much of the literature in this area focuses on the design of these 'community-like structures' with limited reference to the conditions that create more adaptive, democratic and networked school environments. For example Holman (2007) argues:

> *Nurturing human connections ensures ongoing generativity, the continual creation of new ideas, projects, and relationships (p.5).*

DuFour (1998) offers a similar proposition when he states:

> *People who engage in collaborative team learning are able to learn from one another, thus creating momentum to fuel continued improvement (p.27).*

Reflecting on statements such as these it may appear that the creation of inquiring, adaptive communities can be achieved simply by bringing people together. I contend that these ideals offer 'false hope' and ignore the quite complex and intricate practices that develop and nurture more participative and collegial organisations. As Farson (1996) argues, human relations are fragile and organisations are built on them. When human relations go wrong the group, team, organisation, or community may suffer and even collapse. Bragg et al. (2005) also point out:

> *It will not necessarily be successful simply because collaboration is seen as a good thing to do' and that success requires considerable investment in other aspects of school leadership such as building trust within the community (p.9).*

This argument is reinforced by political scientists and philosophers who do not see democratic practice as a process of creating consensus, but more about

dealing with difference, agony, and disturbance (Wildemeersch and Vandenabeele, 2007). Furman & Shields (2005) describe 'deep' democracy as:

- respect for the worth and dignity of individuals and their cultural traditions
- reverence for, and the proactive facilitation of, free and open inquiry and critique
- recognition of interdependence in working for the common good
- the responsibility of individuals to participate in free and open inquiry
- the importance of collective choices and actions in the interest of the common good

In this form of communal structure the concept of trust is immensely important, playing a significant role in more democratic frameworks designed to enhance school effectiveness and improvement processes.

Alternative Forms of Social Trust

Bryk and Schneider (2002) argue that the form trust takes depends on the nature of the specific institution in which it is embedded. They go on to define trust in three forms; organic, contractual and relational. Organic trust is predicated on the more or less unquestioning beliefs of individuals in the moral authority of a particular institution. Here trust is characterised by closed, small-scale communities and fundamentalist organisations. Fundamentalist religious schools such as the Plymouth Brethren and those run by certain Baptist sects are examples of the type of organisations that promote this form of trust.

Contractual trust is based on social exchange that is primarily material and instrumental – a contract defines the basic actions to be taken by the parties involved. Virtually all commercial transactions are shaped by this form of trust (Bryk and Schneider, 2004, p.17). The social relations around schooling do not fit well with either of these frameworks. Schools are typically more open

institutions catering for a diverse population and a range of cultural beliefs. The ability of schools to compel consent around values, beliefs and behaviour are limited. They also do not produce a single product, good, or service to be procured. The aims of schools are multiple and interrelated. The specific mechanisms that contribute to the production of a diverse range of student outcomes are complex and diffuse. Schools cannot guarantee a successful outcome for students so the applicability of contractual trust is limited.

Bryk and Schneider (2002) argue that an alternative conceptualization of interpersonal exchange termed 'relational trust' better represents a form of trust that is applicable to the social dynamic that exists in schools. They see relational trust as rooted in the complex cognitive activity of discerning the intentions of others and define it as an organisational property whose elements are socially defined in the reciprocal exchanges between staff and leadership. Bulach & Peterson (1999) offer a similar definition when they describe trust as:

> *An interpersonal condition that exists when interpersonal relationships are characterised by an assured reliance or confident dependence on the character, ability, truthfulness, confidentiality and predictability of others' (p.2).*

Similarly, Coleman (1990) argues that trust is not an attribute of a person, group, organisation or society, but is a relational attribute between people and other people or groups.

Dirks (2006) expands on this describing relational trust from two qualitatively different theoretical perspectives: a *relationship-based* perspective and a *character-based* perspective. From a relationship-based perspective staff see their relationship with their leader as beyond the standard economic contract such that the parties operate on the basis of trust, benevolence and the perception of mutual obligations. The exchange denotes a high-quality relationship, and issues of care and consideration are central to this relationship. In this instance individuals who feel that their leader, has, or will, demonstrate care and consideration will reciprocate this sentiment in the form of desired

behaviours. This form of exchange might be best characterised as 'communal' in nature, whereby individuals provide benefits in response to the needs of the partner as opposed to the focus on what will be received.

In contrast the character-based perspective focuses on the perception of the leader's character and how it impacts a follower's vulnerability in a hierarchical relationship (Mayer et al., 1995). Here trust can occur when individuals conclude that leaders will take their interests into account because they have an interest in maintaining a positive relationship. Here the concept of trust is encapsulated in self-interest and perceptions of the trustworthiness of the leader become important (Elmore, 2005). According to this perspective, trust related concerns about a leader's character are important because the leader may have authority to make decisions that have a significant impact on a follower and the follower's ability to achieve his or her role. This perspective implies that followers make inferences about the leader's characteristics such as integrity, dependability, fairness and ability, and that these inferences have consequences for work behaviour and attitudes. The focus is on what will be received in the exchange and the likelihood of receiving it (Dirks, 2006).

The relationship-based perspective is based on principles of social exchange and deals with employees' willingness to reciprocate care and consideration that a leader expresses in a relationship. In contrast, the character-based perspective focuses on how perceptions of the leader's character impact a follower's vulnerability in a hierarchical relationship. Both appear to play an important role in developing a model of trust where employees believe their leader has integrity, capability or benevolence, and that they can be comfortable in engaging in behaviours and activities that involve a certain level of risk (Mayer et al. 1995). Bryk & Schneider (2002) see relational trust as the key to educational reform stating:

> *A growing body of case studies and narrative accounts about school change direct our attention to the social dynamics of schooling, and*

especially to the engaging but somewhat elusive idea of social trust as foundational for meaningful school improvement (p.8).

If our goal is to build a culture of inquiring professionalism in a democratic and communal form then trust must be based on relationships that model reciprocity and the transfer of agency, promoting a sense of efficacy and reducing the sense of employee vulnerability (Elmore, 2005; Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

Defining Trust

So how do we define trust? Reading through the literature it is apparent that the concept of trust is a complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon. A close analysis of the ways in which the term 'trust' is used in the literature reveals disagreement among scholars about the definition, characteristics, and even the nature of trust. As Khodyakov, (2007) argues:

The multiplicity of meanings of trust creates a measure of conceptual confusion, because confidence, reliability, faith, and trust are often used as synonyms. Moreover, there is no consensus among social scientists about the object of trust. Can we trust only people, or can we also trust institutions, such as schools, businesses, and states? If we can trust both people and institutions, is there any conceptual or empirical difference between interpersonal and institutional trust? (p.116)

The Oxford English Dictionary (2008) provides the following definitions of trust:

- **noun 1** *firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something.* ***2.*** *acceptance of the truth of a statement without evidence or investigation.* ***3.*** *the state of being responsible for someone or something.*

- **verb 1** *have trust in.* ***2.*** *(**trust with**) have the confidence to allow (someone) to have, use, or look after.* ***3.*** *(**trust to**) commit (someone or*

something) to the safekeeping of. ***4.*** *(**trust to**) place reliance on (luck, fate, etc.).* ***5*** *have confidence; hope*

Much of the literature on trust has noted that notions of trust are inseparable from those of risk – the possibility that what is expected will not occur (Daly & Chrispeels, 2008; Beck 1992; Giddens 1990). Luhmann (1988) sees trust as a solution for specific problems of risk in relations between people, because it is an attitude that allows for risk-taking. If actors choose one course of action in preference to alternatives, in spite of the possibility of being disappointed by the action of others, they define the situation as one of trust (Luhmann, 1988, pp. 97-9). Gambetta (1988) defines trust in a similar fashion, but the link between trust and co-operation is made more explicit:

> *….. when we say we trust someone or that someone is trustworthy, we implicitly mean that the probability that he will perform an action that is beneficial or at least not detrimental to us is high enough for us to consider engaging in some form of cooperation with him* (p.217-218).

Sztompka (1999) presents and justifies a simple, general definition of trust similar to that of Gambetta where trust is defined as a gamble about the future contingent actions of others. There are two main components of this definition: belief and commitment. First, a person believes that the trusted person will act in a certain way. The belief alone, however, is not enough to say there is trust. Trust occurs when that belief is used as the foundation for making a commitment to a particular action. In this instance people commit to take the ambiguous path believing that the trusted person will take action that will produce a good outcome.

A critical element in studies of trust behavior is power. Trusting another party when one is compelled to do so is sometimes referred to as reliance. Authors such as Baier (1986) have distinguished between trust and reliance by saying that trust can be betrayed, while reliance can only be disappointed (Baier 1986, 235). For example, we can rely on a watch to tell the time, but we do not feel

betrayed when it breaks. Thus, trust is different from reliance in the sense that we accept the risk of being betrayed. Tschannen-Moran (2004) expands on this theory in her definition of trust:

> *Trust is one's willingness to be vulnerable to another based on the confidence that the other is benevolent, honest, open, reliable, and competent* (p.17).

Researchers such as Daly (2009) and Bryk and Schneider (2002) also define trust in regards to the extent to which one engages in a relationship and is willing to be vulnerable to another (i.e., assume risk) on the basis of the interaction and on the confidence that the latter party will possess certain personal qualities. These qualities carry some common themes across the literature. Daly and Chrispeels (2008) aggregated the work of Mishra (1996), Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2000), and Bryk and Schneider (2002) to define the construct trust as:

> *The extent to which one engages a relationship and is willing to be vulnerable (willingness to risk) to another based on communication and the confidence that the latter party will possess: (a) benevolence, (b) reliability, (c) competence, (d) integrity, (e) openness, and (f) respect* (p.33).

Examining these definitions it is apparent that most researchers view trust as a concept that is developed through the personal qualities and characteristics of the leader. The following section examines the literature pertaining to the different facets of trust focusing on the qualities and characteristics aggregated through Daly and Chrispeels' (2008) research into the predictive relationship between trust and leadership.

Facets of Trust

The first facet is *benevolence* which is seen as the quality of caring. Here the employee or community member has the confidence that one's well-being, or

something one cares about, will be protected by the leader. This is often portrayed as a demonstration of understanding and concern for the employee where the leader is trusted to always act in the best interests and with the best of intentions of the community (Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2000; Daly & Chrispeels, 2008). Tschannen-Moran (2004) describes benevolence as the most essential ingredient and commonly recognised facet of trust (p.19). Bryk and Schneider (2002) chose an alternative term, 'personal regard', to broaden the concept to include actions that extend beyond the professional context - 'the concept reaches beyond what might be thought of in some sense as doing a good job'(p.185). Some also describe benevolence in terms of goodwill, fairness or refraining from behaving opportunistically (McEvily and Zaheer, 2006). The literature highlights that employees are more likely to engage in behaviours that put them at risk and improve performance when they believe their leaders act in a benevolent manner (Mayer et al. 1995; McEvily and Zaheer, 2006). Tschannen-Moran (2004) sees school leaders demonstrating benevolence by:

> *…showing consideration and sensitivity for employees needs and interests, acting in a way that protects employees' rights, and refraining from exploiting others for personal gain* (p.20).

The second facet is *reliability* – when something is required the leader can be counted on to deliver it. Daly and Chrispeels (2008) see this operationalised by the leader following through on tasks, honoring agreements and staying committed to existing goals. McEvily and Zaheer (2006) refer to consistency in intended behaviour and a commitment to follow-through on obligations. Follow-through is defined as the link between what is said and an action that supports the stated intention (Mishra, 1996). The literature suggests that follow-through is pivotal for employees to be able to establish trust in the leader. Researchers argue that leaders face the prospect of rising cynicism and damage to existing trust when new ideas or changes are introduced but there is little follow through with implementation, the provision of resources, time and additional support to support these new initiatives (Nanus 1989; Mishra, 1996; Tschannen-Moran,

2004). Covey & Merrill (2006) highlight the importance of leaders 'keeping their promises' in creating and maintaining an ethical culture and identifies 'not doing what they say' as a the number one trust breaker (p.217). Teachers need to know that in crises, the leader can be counted on and that their trustworthiness will be judged by their reliability and dependability (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Mishra, 1996; Tschannen-Moran, 2004). If a teacher does not know for certain how a leader will respond due to their unpredictability, there is potentially little or no trust in the leader. Reliability in words and actions is therefore an important aspect of trust as are the notions of expectation and predictability (Deutsch, 1958).

Competence in carrying out the responsibilities associated with the leader's role represents the third facet for building trusting relations. Here people have confidence that the leader possesses the skills to execute his/her job and is able to use these skills effectively (Daly and Chrispeels, 2008). Mishra (1996) argues that the ability to make competent decisions is critical to the level of trust that people will have in their leaders. Making accurate and informed judgments regarding the competency of leaders in schools is exceedingly difficult due to the fundamental nature of schooling with its multiple aims, the complex mechanisms needed to advance them, and the lack of good data on actual practice (Bryk and Schneider, 2004). Research in this area highlights the need for school leaders to be honest about their skill level and to engage in professional learning to maintain their skills, to set high standards and establish an accountability system that is fair and reasonable to staff. They also need to establish organisational routines and processes for dealing with student management that are equitable and effective and to maintain positive school-community relations (Bryk and Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran 2004; Barlow 2001).

The fourth facet of trust, *integrity*, is evident when there is consistency between what leaders say and do (Bryk and Schneider, 2008, p.25). Similarly, Daly and Chrispeels (2008) see the hallmark of integrity as congruence between words and behaviours. Duignan (2006) expands on this notion describing integrity as

the ability to apply ethical standards to complex and perplexing situations, to be impelled by core values that are evident in all actions and behaviours, to accept personal consequences of difficult choices and decisions, as well as being respectful to others and open and honest in all dealings (p.150). Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) state:

> *A correspondence between a person's statements and deeds characterises integrity. An acceptance of responsibility for one's actions and avoiding distorting the truth in order to shift blame to another characterises authenticity* (p. 188).

Based on the most recent research, a failure in trust may be forgiven more easily if it is interpreted as a failure of competence rather than a lack of honesty (Dirks, 2006). Tschannen-Moran (2004) suggests that dishonest behaviour may be more damaging to a trusting relationship than any other facet of trust as this dishonesty could be perceived as an 'indictment of a person's character' (p. 23). Dirks (2006) argues along similar lines stating:

> *…a single dishonest act is generally considered to offer a reliable signal of low integrity, given the belief that only persons of low integrity would behave dishonestly* (p.26).

Covey and Merrill (2006) argue that the quality of openness is vital to integrity. Openness is conceptualized as the provision of a safe climate to conduct difficult conversations and openness to discussing feelings and concerns (Daly and Chrispeels, 2008). It reflects the ability of people to listen, share information and consider new ways of looking at things. Here the leader has the humility to acknowledge that there are ideas and principles that they are currently unaware of and a willingness to take a risk to follow this new information. Tschannen-Moran (2004) sees the 'open leader' as someone who engages in open communication, willingly shares important information, delegates, sharing decision-making and power within the organisation. Here the leader willingly places himself/herself in a position of vulnerability by sharing information,

influence and control. There is a confidence in the reliability of others and the delegation of important tasks to them. Tschannen-Moran (2004) argues:

> *Openness initiates a kind of reciprocal trust, signaling a confidence that neither the information nor the individual will be exploited, so that recipients infer that they can feel the same confidence in return (p.25).*

Teachers see leaders as trustworthy when their communication is both accurate and forthcoming (Bryk and Schneider, 2002).

Respect is the sixth of the facets from Daly and Chrispeels' (2008) definition of trust. Covey and Merrill (2006) see the 'intrinsic worth of individuals' as the overarching principle of respect where the leader is able to move beyond compliance and into 'people's minds and hearts' (Covey and Merrill, p.146). Bryk and Schneider (2002) stress that:

> *'in the context of schooling, respect involves recognition of the important role each person plays in a child's education and the mutual dependencies that exist among the various parties involved in this activity'* (p.23).

They highlight the need for 'genuine conversations' where it is evident that each person's ideas have value and that the education of children requires individuals to work together cooperatively. In this instance leaders build a sense of significance and belonging for each member of the community. Building on this definition Duignan (2006) refers to being 'authentically present' and goes on to state that a respected leader:

> *Demonstrates a genuine interest in and concern for people; acts with the good of others, especially those who are vulnerable or in need of assistance, as a primary reference; engages fully with others and is attentive and sensitive to the signals they send out (p. 151).*

In the final coding of Daly and Chrispeels' 2008 research they added two further characteristics of leaders that they considered influential in building relational trust with school communities. They identified these facets as 'communication' and 'risk'.

Daly and Chrispeels (2008) describe the act of *communication* as 'an act of interaction between individuals or groups in which a message is being transmitted.' (p.63). They go on to describe the facet of communication as the ability of the leader to make themselves easily accessible to staff, their capacity to establish norms that support respectful communication and their commitment to maintaining open and effective lines of communication with staff (p.63). The authors acknowledged that there is significant correlation and overlap between communication, openness and respect. They also point out that researchers such as Bryk and Schneider (2002) and Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2003) viewed communication as a separate stand-alone construct and not as a facet of trust. They described trust as a heavily loaded communicative process but did not consider communication a sub-construct of trust.

The last facet of *risk* is defined as the 'degree of confidence one has in a situation of vulnerability' (Daly and Chrispeels, 2008, p.63). This facet involves leaders acknowledging the vulnerabilities of others, encouraging others to continually learn and seek new ideas, acknowledging and sharing their own vulnerabilities and supporting risk taking in others. They see the facet of risk as playing a crucial role in helping staff challenge presuppositions, explain alterative perspectives, transform old ways of understanding, and act on new perspectives. In this context there is a need to uncover the distorted assumptions that may exist by uncovering any hidden incongruence between what staff think they do and what they actually do. To achieve this there is a need for leaders to overcome the defensive routines that individuals in organisations use to remove conditions of embarrassment and threat. As Sparks (2002) argues:

> *It is emotional work to experience the loss of the old ways of doing things. It is emotional work to give up an old habit and to feel incompetent while learning a new habit* (p.143).

Heifetz (1994) argues that the new work of school leaders is honest, vulnerable conversations about practice, questioning the existing paradigm, and attempting to bridge the divide between long held beliefs and practice. It would appear that the facet of risk plays a crucial role if school leaders are to regard failure as informative and not as a final judgment or a device to forestall creativity, risk taking, and hypothesising. As Bryk and Schneider (2002) stress:

> *To be able to talk honestly with colleagues about 'What's working, what's not' means exposing one's ignorance and making oneself vulnerable. Absent trust, genuine conversations of this sort remain unlikely* (p.123).

In their attempt to identify what factors build or undermine trust, scholars have seized on the idea that the most important centre on the behaviour of the leader (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). This is apparent in many of the definitions offered by researchers where we see a strong premise that trust is developed through the personal qualities and characteristics of the leader (Daly and Chrispeels, 2008; Bryk and Schneider 2002; Tschannen-Moran 2004). Here individuals observe leaders' actions and draw inferences about the nature of the relationship with the leader (relationship-based perspective) and/or the character of the leader (character-based perspective). In their attempt to amass and summarise three decades of empirical research on trust in leadership Dirks and Ferrin (2002) suggest that apart from leadership style there are several management practices that may lead to increased trust. They identify practices such as ensuring fair procedures, outcomes and interactional processes, utilising participative decision-making structures and providing organisational support as examples of these management systems (p. 622). They argue that employees' trust in their leaders will also be influenced by:

> *.....the level of perceived fairness or justice in the organisational practices or decisions, because the practices are likely to be seen as a signal of the nature of the relationship with the leader or the character of the leader (p.614).*

Dirks and Ferrin (2002) refer to three types of justice that researchers have identified as relevant to organisational management practices. They are termed distributive justice, which involves the allocation of outcomes; procedural justice, which deals with the processes that lead to decision outcomes; and interactional justice, which refers to the interpersonal treatment people receive as procedures are enacted. Here the allocation of resources (distributive justice), decision-making processes (procedural justice), human resource practices and the communication strategies (interactional justice) employed by the organisation present as antecedents to the development of trust between leaders and employees.

Along similar lines Grey & Carston (2001) see trust as something, which is constructed for and by people in organisations, thereby producing some degree of predictability. Here a trustworthy employee exercises their autonomy in ways which are thought to be responsible and predictable. They see predictability of behaviour within an organisation determined by personal contact and knowledge as well as the management systems evident in the organisation. They argue that it is not possible to understand the operation of systems and structures without reference to individuals who reproduce those structures. Equally, they cannot envisage individuals trusting each other without the contextual apparatus of social systems.

This theory is reflected in the work of Nias (1995) who states that it is impossible to separate the substance of a culture of collaboration from its form: the substance (the interrelationship of group and individual) takes form through interactions, structures, ceremonies, personal behaviours, distributions of power and authority which in turn facilitate and reinforce the substance. The working relationships (form) which exist among staff in schools (and other

organisations) with a culture of collaboration are both the product and the cause of their shared social and moral beliefs (substance) (Nias 1995, p. 311).

Similarly, Uhl-Bien (2006) describes two perspectives of relational leadership: an entity perspective that focuses on describing attributes of individual as they engage in interpersonal relationships, and a relational perspective that views leadership as a process of social construction through which certain understandings of leadership come about and are given privileged ontology. The research argues that traditional studies on leadership have examined behavioural styles that are relationship-oriented (considerate and supportive) or leadership behaviours focused on developing high quality, trusting, work relationships. She offers another view of leadership as one of human social constructions that emanate from the rich connections and interdependencies of organisations and their members (p. 655). In this sense human agency and the structural conditions of our institutions are in relationship with one another, with a concept such as trust created, maintained and changed through individual actions and behaviours that are both independent and interdependent of system or organisational structures.

The Dynamics of Distrust

This literature review has highlighted that trust is a fundamental feature of effective leadership in contemporary organisations (Sztompka, 1999; Tschannen-Moran 2004; Fukuyama, 1995). However, obtaining the benefits from what is deemed a trustworthy approach to leadership appears to be more problematic. A number of researchers maintain that trust is an extremely fragile commodity which provides a variety of dilemmas for leaders in our organisations (Elmore, 2005; Kramer and Gavrieli, 2004; Uslaner, 2002). Kramer (2006) argues that the problem lies with increasing social uncertainty where the leader can never know for certain the intentions or motives that animate another's actions or inactions (p.68). Dirks and Skarlicki (2004) contend that leaders face a number of 'trust' dilemmas due to the many trade-offs involved in maintaining trust in organisations where there are multiple

relationships. For example, leaders might face demands to meet the expectations of one party that may also violate the expectations of another. They may also find themselves managing the perspectives of diverse constituencies, such as students, staff and parents leading them to represent themselves in inconsistent ways. Here the leader is forced to take an action that sustains the trust of one party but breaks the trust of another.

Leaders can also face a high level of scrutiny from participants in the organisation because the outcomes for the participants are dependent on decisions made by the leader (Dirks and Skarlicki, 2004). As a consequence of this scrutiny, members of the community are likely to notice when the leader does not fulfill expectations. Research also highlights the human tendency to place much greater value on negative information when making character judgments about people (Skowronski and Carlston, 1989). Here participants in the community see negative acts such as breaking a promise, failing to follow through on a commitment or not acting in the best interests of certain groups as being highly informative about the leader's character. The perception of trust is also affected by the propensity of the community to discount situational factors as a cause of individual behaviour as compared to dispositional factors. As Dirks and Skarlicki (2004) comment:

> *Individuals may over attribute the behaviour to the leaders disposition – his or her trustworthiness – and not to the dilemma the leader faces* (p.35).

Bryk and Schneider (2002) argue that trust is dependent upon the leader's behaviours and actions being perceived as consistent with the expectations and values of the participants in each school setting. They go on to contend:

> *Relational trust atrophies when individuals perceive that others are not acting in ways that are consistent with their understanding of the other's role obligations. Moreover, the fulfillment of these obligations involves not only doing the right thing, but also doing it*

for what are perceived to be the right reasons and in ways that are viewed as personally respectful (p.51).

The perceived fairness of procedures used to make decisions, interpersonal interactions in the decision-making process, perceived organisational support, the level of participative decision-making and the ability to meet the expectations of participants in the organisation are behaviours that play a significant role in the leader's ability to develop and maintain a sense of trustworthiness (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002). Whitener et al. (1998) proposed five behaviours that impact on trust - behavioural consistency, behavioural integrity, participative decision-making, communication and demonstrating concern. These align to some degree with the work of Daly & Chrispeels (2008) where the qualities of benevolence, reliability, competence, integrity, openness, respect, vulnerability and communication were identified as facets of behaviour that impact on trust. (p.33)

Brewster & Railsback (2003) argue that obstacles to trust are easy to come by in schools where there may be high turnover in school leadership, budget shortfalls, as well as differences of opinion regarding curricula, teaching practices and school policies. They see the most common barriers to developing and maintaining trusting relationships as:

- *Top down decision-making that is perceived as arbitrary, misinformed, or not in the best interests of the particular groups*
- *Ineffective communication*
- *Lack of follow-through and support for school improvement efforts*
- *Unstable or inadequate school funding*
- *Failure to remove teachers or principals who are widely viewed to be ineffective*
- *Frequent turnover in school leadership*
- *High teacher turnover*
- *Teacher isolation*

(Brewster & Railsback, 2003, p. 10)

Mayer and Gavin (2005) suggest that when employees believe their leader cannot be trusted they tend to divert their energy to 'covering their back', detracting from the performance of their work. They will also be less comfortable engaging in behaviours that put them at risk, such as the sharing of ideas, perspectives or other information pertinent to their role in the organisation. Tschannen-Moran (2004) builds on this argument stating that a cycle of distrust in a school can lead to constrained communication, confined decision-making as well as corroded citizenship and commitment (p.80).

Distrust can also lead to a decline in what Tschannen-Moran (2004) refers to as 'organisational citizenship' where the worker spontaneously goes beyond the 'call of duty' spending more time on required and voluntary tasks without expectation of receiving explicit recognition or compensation. According to Kramer and Cook (2004), the leadership actions that damage this form of organisational culture are broken promises, avoidance of conflict, lack of follow-through, disclosure of confidential information, not meeting responsibilities or requirements of the job and taking ownership of other people's ideas and innovations.

Where participants feel they cannot trust their leader it is likely that the goal of communication becomes focused on protecting one's interests which can see information being withheld or the distortion of upward communication (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). Leaders can also damage the organisational culture by pursuing decision-making strategies that appear to encourage collegiality but in reality afford teachers very little real influence over organisational issues that matter to them. In this instance school leaders create a culture where trust is undermined by raising teacher's expectations and creating cynicism when words don't match the actions. These behaviours contribute to the breaking down of trust and in particular to a damaged sense of civic order or the way that things are expected to be done (Brewster & Railsback, 2003; Tschannen-Moran, 2004; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998).

The research also highlights that low trust environments usually promote a proliferation of rules and regulations. The creation of rigid hierarchical systems, centralised top-down decision-making, limited access to information, and the stifling of divergent views are characteristics of organisations where perceived low levels of trust and a greater sense of vulnerability exists (Fukuyama, 2005; Daly, 2009; Barlow, 2001; Tschannen-Moran, 2004). Daly (2009) refers to these as 'threat- rigid responses' that may inhibit innovation, creative responses, and input from a variety of perspectives – the very qualities that are critical for schools to move forward (p.168). Along similar lines Elmore (2004) sees contemporary accountability measures taken by government and education systems as regulatory and not supportive, relying more on mandates and sanctions than on capacity building and reward (p. 117). It appears that these policy levers are frequently used by government and the larger bureaucracies as fallback solutions for complex social issues despite there being little theoretical justification for such high-pressure approaches to reform (Mintrop & Trujillo, 2005). Research in economic policy suggests that requests for cooperation, coupled with threats for compliance, reduce voluntary cooperation and, in fact, build resistance (Daly, 2009).

When too many rules are instituted, organisational effectiveness and trust itself is likely to be compromised (Groundwater-Smith & Sachs, 2002; Zand, 1972). Elmore (2004) argues that our systems currently heavily invest in testing and monitoring school performance and in the administration of sanctions attached to poor performance, while heavily under investing in the development of the knowledge and skill required to rectify the problems that failing schools face. A number of researchers argue that we need to change this mode of school reform to one where power and authority are used to develop more democratic and inquiring forms of internal accountability (Elmore, 2004; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992; Holly, 1987; Little, 1990). In this context a collaborative, professional and supportive ethos exists promoting empowerment for teachers and involvement in solving the problems they face as educators. Elmore (2005) sees trust as an

essential but fragile ingredient in a school reform process that is by nature, collegial and reciprocal. He goes on to state:

> *Higher levels of relational trust, not surprisingly, is a predictor of higher levels of individual and organisational agency, which in turn is a predictor of higher levels of student performance (p.289).*

Conclusion

This literature review has illustrated that schools now exist in very different social and institutional contexts. It appears that not only is the pace of social change much faster than in any prior system, so also is its scope, and the profoundness with which it affects pre-existing social practices and modes of behaviour. Cuban and Usdan (2003) argue that in these new contexts schools need a new and different type of educational leader. As Daly and Chrispeels (2008) comment:

> *In order to close both the achievement and coherence gaps, the next phase of educational leadership will require leaders to question the status quo, facilitate learning in others, and critically examine and support dialogue around long held structures about the nature and substance of schooling* (p.57).

Unfortunately, the dominant policy response to this change has been the opposite of what is needed - it has been too technocratic, undemocratic and utilitarian, seeming to aim for an unachievable certainty. Researchers such as Hopkins (2006) argue that for the most part schools continue to operate in a manner better suited to a bygone era and have not adapted to deliver the educational experiences relevant to more contemporary contexts. The research clearly illustrates a need to rethink these responses and argues for a move to more collegial, democratic and inquiry-based processes and forms, characterised by innovation, creativity, experimentation, error, conceptual

thinking, story-telling and dialogue (Elmore, 2004; Fielding, 1999; Daly and Chrispeels, 2008; Marshall, 2006).

A number of researchers have identified the centrality of trust in leading organisations that operate more effectively in a world where chaos and order seem to exist as partners and where stability is never guaranteed (Bachmann and Zaheer, 2006; Bryk and Schneider 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2004; Covey, 2006;Daly and Chrispeels, 2008). This literature review highlights a number of different qualities and characteristics of leaders that have a perceived impact on trust in organisations. It also draws attention to the possible role of organisational practices in developing trust and the apparent interplay or interdependence between individual action and the structural conditions in our institutions.

Although the concept of trust has emerged as a key element in improving schools (Manion, 1998; Hopkins, 2001; MacBeath et al, 2007), little systematic research exists on the nature of trust and how it is developed in educational communities. This is a point emphasised by Daly & Chrispeels (2008) where they acknowledge:

> *The connections between trust and leadership are areas that are ripe for deeper study (p.30).*

More importantly there is little evidence of Australian based research in this area. It is the intention of this study to deepen my understanding of how trust is developed and nurtured by school leaders. To do this I need to understand how trust is interpreted in a school setting and attempt to identify the behaviours and actions of school leaders that either enhance or diminish the level of trust in a school environment. The next section of this thesis details the structures and processes this study engaged with to unearth and identify how leaders best go about establishing and sustaining trust-based cultures in schools.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The literature review from this study has highlighted that the concept of trust can be viewed from a number of different theoretical perspectives. It is difficult to define and measure in quantitative terms - the issues and characteristics associated with the study of trust are highly subjective and open to interpretation (Bryk, Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2004; Stoll and Louis, 2007). There also appears to be no simple scientific solutions to the problems that low levels of trust engender in any organisation. Consequently, this study does not lend itself to an objective, positivist perspective. Adopting a qualitative approach acknowledges that this is a study of human systems that have a wholeness or integrity to them rather than a loose connection of traits. Mutch (2005) defines qualitative methods as focusing on stories and descriptions of individual experiences that allows the researcher and the readers to form an understanding of particular issues, actions, emotions and situations. Ambert et al. (1995), further explain the qualitative approach as 'seeking to acquire in-depth and intimate information about a smaller group of persons' and 'to learn about how and why people behave, think and make meaning as they do…' (p. 2). Lambert et al., (1995) refer to the 'multiplicity of realities' of qualitative research (p. 2) and that it is the 'richness of the quotes, the clarity of examples, and the depth of the illustrations… that should serve to highlight the most salient features of the data' (p. 5).

This research is an attempt at understanding a group of teachers' perceptions of trust by capturing, 'individual definitions, descriptions and meanings of events' (Burns, 2000, p. 388). Understanding the experiences, actions, intentions and beliefs of the participants is critical to being able to discern quality findings. Therefore using a qualitative research approach in this study will best identify how leaders engender trust in their school community. By working within a qualitative methodology I was able to explore the area of trust to:

> *…obtain the intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional research methods* (Corbin & Strauss, 1998, p. 11).

With the study focusing on one school environment this qualitative research utilised a case study approach. Researcher Robert K. Yin (1984) defines the case study research method as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. For the purpose of this study the 'case' is the staff at Ingle Farm Primary where I was Principal from 2002 to 2008. A case study approach provided the best opportunity to learn how the concept of trust is nurtured by leaders and how it connects with other aspects of leadership in the schooling context.

Grounded theory

For the purpose of this study I have utilised a 'grounded theory' approach for my data analysis. Grounded theory methods consist of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves (Charmaz, 2005). This process offers a set of general principles and heuristic devices rather than formulaic rules (Atkinson, Coffey and Delamon, 2003). Thus data forms the foundation of the theory and the analysis of this data generates the concepts that are constructed. Grounded theory is a method of comparative analysis designed and intended to generate new theory. A theory is a statement, specific to an area of research that establishes an 'explanation about phenomena' (Corbin & Strauss, 1998, p. 22). What most differentiates grounded theory from much other research is that it is explicitly emergent. It does not test a hypothesis. It sets out to find what theory accounts for the research situation as it is. In this respect it is like action research with the aim of gaining a better understanding of the research

situation. The aim, as Glaser in particular states it, is to discover the theory implicit in the data. Glaser & Strauss (1967) cited in Cohen et al. (2000) point out:

> *Theory is emergent and must arise from particular situations; it should be 'grounded' in data generated by the research act. … theory should not precede research, but follow it' (p. 23).*

A theory is much more than just looking at groups of data. As the theory emerged from the data through analysis and reflection it was supported by examples from the data and the theory did not precede the research process but it emerged as a result of the research (Cohen et al., 2000). Identifying connections with things that are not immediately apparent is an important part of this process (Agar, 1980). Here I construe the meaning of the whole by making sense of the parts, and grasp the meaning of the parts by having some sense of the whole (Patton, 2002). The collection of the research data, the analysis of the data and the resulting theory which develops are each a linking and essential part of this research process. The emerging theory will not attempt to cover all aspects of the study in detail but being grounded in the given data; the resulting theory will cover most of the applicable behaviours and perceptions (Charmaz, 2005; Glaser & Strauss, 1999).

For the purpose of this study the 'constant comparative method' (Glaser & Strauss, 1999; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) that sits within a grounded theory approach to data analysis was used to ensure that the continued checking and crosschecking of the data produced accurate findings. Data were gathered through a series of group interviews involving a total of 26 teachers. The interviews were held in a focus group format and conducted by an independent facilitator who asked a series of open-ended questions. As Principal I was aware of the unequal relationships that existed between myself and the staff involved in relation to power and the effect this might have had on my observations and work in this study. Consequently the interviews were facilitated by an independent party. Responses were recorded and analysed. In the first instance

I compared interview to interview and let the theory emerge. Each interview is coded according to the categories that arise and this information is compared with data arising from subsequent interviews. In analysing the data from the first interview I was merely asking myself: What is going on here? What is the situation? What categories are suggested by that sentence? The second interview was then coded with the first interview in mind and subsequent interviews were coded with the emerging theory in mind. In this form there is constant comparison between data sets initially comparing data set to data set and later comparing data set to existing theory. Further information regarding the methods used to code the data can be found in the section entitled 'data analysis'.

The following sections of the proposal describe selection criteria for the school and the participants, a description of the design for the research, producing and analysing data, and a summary of ethical considerations for this study.

Ingle Farm Primary as a Focus for this Study

The introduction to this study has already outlined the complexity and diversity of Ingle Farm Primary and the challenge of delivering an effective educational program in this context. It also highlighted that new parents, visitors to the school, external support agencies and Education Department personnel all commented on the happy and relaxed environment that existed and the 'feeling' of community that pervaded the culture of such a complex school. To illustrate this point I would like to highlight two events. During 2007 Ingle Farm Primary was selected for an Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare audit. Of particular interest to the audit team was an analysis of a DECS Psychological Health Survey undertaken at the end of 2006 involving 55 employees. According to the audit team the results were well above state averages and illustrated a school where there was 'an open and collaborative culture where staff are valued and supported by each other and the leadership team (Dept. Education & Children's Services OHSW Analysis Report. 2007, p. 3).

Also during 2007 the school was allocated additional staffing from the Department for Education and Children's Services (DECS) to investigate how a school characterised by significant disadvantage and complexity could achieve such a substantial decrease in behaviour management issues over a four year period. For example, incidents of violence were reduced by 82% (493 in 2003 to 91 in 2007) and suspensions were reduced by 86% (42 to 6) over the same period. The study was carried out by a Whole School Change Coordinator allocated to the Salisbury and Kumangka Para Districts. Early in this process a number of interviews took place between the Coordinator and staff. During the interviews there were numerous references to the deep level of 'trust' that existed across the site and the importance of this in relation to school change. This is illustrated in the following statement taken from a summative report:

> *Learning involves taking risks. The stronger and wider the safety-net the more likely learners are to take risks and improve their learning. This applies to both children and staff. The greater the sense of attachment, the greater the trust, the more secure the learner the greater the resilience and the greater the chance for improved learning outcomes. Ingle Farm Primary espouses and promotes democratic principles. Students are encouraged to negotiate their learning and are involved in democratic decision-making. Teachers ensure that classroom decisions are made in a democratic manner, are made transparent and that there is a measure of accountability. IFPS promotes resilience, trust and collaboration over power control and punishment.* (Wirth G., Whole School Change Coordinator, 2007)

In an effort to develop a deeper understanding of what was taking place in this school context the information from the interviews conducted by the School Change Coordinator was collated, categorised and presented at a staff meeting. From this study it appeared that the perception of 'trust' in this school setting was associated with the following:

- A shared sense of purpose for their work
- Personal connection and understanding
- Personal regard
- Acknowledgement
- Support
- Competence
- Democracy, moral authority and personal agency
- Support for risk-taking and acceptance of mistakes
- Communication and information flow

This research seeks to further explore and deepen my understanding of the factors that cultivated trust in the midst of significant cultural diversity and economic disadvantage at Ingle Farm Primary. Important questions arise 'around the conditions that are necessary to facilitate the emergence of trust within the societal context of the accountability movement' (Tschannen-Moran, 2004:214). As I stated earlier, it is widely perceived that the dense social relationships that support collaboration and collective effort existed at Ingle Farm Primary. Consequently I saw this as a unique opportunity to identify what school leaders in this context did to engender trust in an educational community.

Selecting Participants

Staff employed at Ingle Farm Primary were invited to participate in the study. In the interest of maintaining a truly democratic working environment this study was inclusive of all stakeholders in the Ingle Farm context. This study focused on the experiences of:

- Members of the leadership team (Deputy Principal, Assistant Principals and Coordinators)
- Teachers
- School Service Officers

- Bilingual School Service Officers

During the study there were 5 members in the leadership team, 50 teaching staff, 18 school service officers and 12 bilingual school service officers. All staff were invited to participate in an informal interview involving 3-4 people. A cross section of teachers from our Mainstream, New Arrivals and Special Education sectors participated as well as cohorts from both school service officer classifications. The school service officers were grouped together to remove any anxiety that could possibly arise from grouping with teachers. Consideration was also given to the length of service at Ingle Farm Primary with a blend of newly appointed and long-term staff to examine and contrast these perspectives. These two groups were likely to present diverse perspectives, with newly appointed staff able to reflect on recent experiences in other school environments. As advised by Silverman (2006), the sample size remained flexible so that potentially significant lines of inquiry could be followed. A more detailed description of the methodology utilised for this study is provided below.

Method of Data Collection: Informal Interviews

My immediate goal was to understand how trust is interpreted by staff and attempt to identify what staff consider school leaders do to engender trust within their educational community. In this case study the interview was the central form of data collection with observations and field-notes playing a supplementary role. Staff were invited to participate in audio-recorded interviews for this project, at mutually convenient times. To address issues associated with my positional authority within the group each interview was conducted by an independent facilitator (see justification under 'Ethical Considerations). Recordings were transcribed for analysis and the data remained confidential (see Ethical Considerations). Interviews for this study were 'informal' (Agars, 1980), and based mainly on open-ended questions. Silverman (2005:117) notes that 'many qualitative researchers favour the open-ended interview' when examining the 'lived experience' of participants. Open

questions encourage participants to reflect on and explain their thoughts and feelings around particular issues.

I have called the interviews 'informal' for a variety of reasons. Each informant received a list of questions on which to reflect (see Appendix A-Questions and Prompts for Informal Interviews) before the interview. The questions were provided as a 'frame' to guide or scaffold the informant's thoughts prior to the interview, presenting an insight and focus for the informal interview. The interviews did not follow a strict line of questioning. Rather, once the interview was underway, there was a focus on drawing out the thoughts and perspectives of the participants as seemed appropriate in each context. The questions were not pre-arranged in some form of linear way, their use depended on where the informant led the conversation. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) propose that qualitative research questions are best formulated in situ and in response to the situations observed. Here the topic is investigated in all its complexity, in the natural context in which it occurs.

Each of the four interview facilitators adopted a participatory and collegial approach during the interviews. The facilitator did not take on the role of interrogator, the informants took the lead with the facilitator listening, reflecting back the informant's statements, making suggestions or drawing on other questioning strategies to illicit the thoughts and perspectives of the informants in relation to the topic for this research. As May (2002) argues:

> *A structure or sequence of questions which is rigid…lacks the flexibility and sensitivity to context and particularity required if we are to listen to our interviewees' ways of interpreting and experiencing the social world' (p. 231).*

The facilitator structured the interviews in a way that minimized their own role, focusing on meaningful discussions for the interviewees, which remained relevant to the research. In each of the interviews, everything was negotiable.

The informants could criticise a question, correct it, point out that it is too sensitive, or answer in any way they wanted to (Agar, 1980).

The interviews were held in a focus group format (Patton, 2002; Green and Hart, 1999) with 3-4 informants in each group with a facilitator. This process was constructed to provide a 'psychological safety net' for informants (Perkins, 2003) and 'to get high-quality data in a social context where people can consider their own views in the context of the views for others' (Patton, 2002: 386).

Data Analysis

Each of the interviews was transcribed and colour coded according to the respondent. Each respondent was attributed a number to facilitate identification. The transcripts were read in their entirety several times. This provided a sense of the interview as a whole. Early data were analysed, sorted and synthesized through a qualitative coding process. This process involved attaching labels to segments of data that depicted common themes. 'Conceptual categories and their conceptual properties' were developed from the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1999, p. 35), by using methodical grouping and coding. This process saw conceptual categories identified which were then divided into themes. These categories were determined from what the informants offered during the interview, they were not imposed from the outside. This process allowed for the number of categories to grow from what informants spoke about during the interviews. Some interview transcripts were revisited as the number of categories increased.

The coding process distilled the data, sorted it, providing a context for making comparisons with other segments of data. By making and coding numerous comparisons patterns in the data began to emerge. Preliminary analytic notes were written about the codes and through a process of studying the data and making comparisons I was able to define the ideas that arose and interpret the data into tentative analytic categories. The analytic categories and the

relationships drawn between them provide a conceptual handle on the studied experience. Through this process the research built levels of abstraction directly from the data and, subsequently, additional data was used to check and refine the emerging analytic categories. The work culminated in a 'grounded theory,' or an abstract theoretical understanding of the studied experience. It was through this process that theory emerged as a result of being able to understand the participants 'interpretation of the world around them' (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 23). Core consistencies and meanings were identified from a volume of qualitative material (Patton 2002). My approach explicitly assumes that any theoretical rendering offers an interpretive portrayal of the studied world, not an exact picture of it. (Charmaz, 1995b, 2000; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Schwandt, 1994). Research participants' implicit meanings, experiential views—and researchers' finished grounded theories—are constructions of reality.

Validity

Tolich and Davidson (1999) argue that validity in any research project is dependent upon:

> *….the extent to which a question or variable accurately reflects the concept the researcher is actually looking for (p. 31).*

Informal interviews were used to collect data for this study and the questions generated for these interviews related directly to the purpose of this study (Appendix 1). Burton & Bartlett (2005) similarly state that:

> *If our methods are at fault, then the findings will be invalid and the research worthless (p. 27).*

Qualitative research is recognizing that 'multiple realities' and 'socially constructed meanings' (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 12), are present and allow us to see the world through the eyes and understandings of the participant. From this

perspective the concept of 'reflexivity' played an important part in this research. 'Reflexivity' in this context means that we always remain part of the social world we are studying, so we can attempt to understand that world only from our daily experience of life (Tolich & Davidson, 1999, p. 37). Being receptive to emerging ideas and being able to recognise new themes assisted in the process of generating theory from the research in which it was grounded. While bringing some prior knowledge and experience to the process of analysis and theory generation I had anticipated that I would be able to:

> *….suspend initial ideas, hunches and hypotheses, and enter the research site willing to learn how any why informants think and/or act as they do (*Tolich & Davidson, 1999, p. 17*).*

The findings of this study are a result of the accurate accounting of the information provided by the participants, which ensure the validity of the findings. The interview transcripts were returned to the participants for checking to ensure that the transcripts were an accurate record of the conversation that had taken place. The validity was also ensured 'through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached' and also through the 'objectivity of the researcher' (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 12). It was the thorough examination and comprehension of the data produced that further ensured validity.

Ethical Considerations for the study

As Principal I was aware of the unequal relationships that existed between myself and the staff involved in relation to power and the effect this might have had on my observations and work in this study. This included staff producing the kinds of opinions that they considered I wanted to hear and staying away from ideas and perspectives that might have challenged or confronted my own thoughts and views. They could have even felt coerced into providing their consent to participate in the project, or manipulated to respond or act in certain ways during the research project (Knobel and Lankshear, 2004). In an effort to

address these issues and ensure open and honest two-way communication in this research project I worked through the following processes:

- The research did not proceed without ethics approval from both the University of South Australia and the South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS). This was granted on 27/8/08.
- The rationale and a detailed process for this research was presented to staff for discussion and feedback.
- As Principal I acknowledged that the research participants would be in a dependent relationship so consent was sought through an agreed neutral party. This person was identified and agreed to by staff (a research coordinator from District Education Office).
- All potential participants were given a chance to consider the proposal and ask questions about the study and informed consent was sought for their involvement in the research process. Informed consent is a process that ensures the participant fully understands the requirements and focus of the study, how the information will be stored, accessed, interpreted and presented. Once the participant has this information they then can choose whether or not they wish to participate, or continue to participate in the research (Tolich & Davidson, 1999; Wilkinson, 2004). An open and transparent research process was an important ethical consideration for this study.
- The informal interviews were facilitated by an independent party agreed to by the group.
- From the beginning of this study I intentionally shared my learning, dilemmas and insights to develop the staff's understanding and awareness of the rationale behind my research and how this could enhance their learning and the educational program at Ingle Farm Primary.
- The information collected and any associated findings were presented back to each group for discussion and analysis before publication outside our school community. As Webb (1984) argues, participants should be assured that information they provide will be treated confidentially and that their

anonymity will be protected if the project details are reported. Acknowledging the potentially sensitive nature of some of this data I was cognizant of using the information in any form that may cause unease or distress for the informants. As Tolich and Davidson (1999) warn I need to be 'careful about publishing information revealed serendipitously in the study' (p.72).

- Confidentiality was assured and all names and personal information were changed or omitted in transcripts and published materials. Tolich and Davidson (1999) define confidentiality as when 'the researcher can identify a certain person's response but promises not to make the connection publicly' (p. 77). Each participant was allocated a pseudonym and a reference code which was used to identify data associated with each individual participant. All personal information and keys to the participant code were kept secure and separate from the data.
- It was made clear that staff had the option to withdraw from the research if they felt uncomfortable or concerned about any area of the project. As a researcher it is my responsibility to be mindful and proactive in relation to ethics at every part of the research journey. Taking this into consideration each participant was informed that they could decline to respond to any question, they could withdraw their data from the interview process or withdraw their consent for their data to be included in the research.
- All data is held securely and access restricted for seven years, as per the Freedom of Information Act. All information which might identify participants was destroyed appropriately after completion of the study.

It is apparent through the literature review that the concept of trust plays a central role in any process of educational reform (Bryk, Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Morgan, 2004; Stoll and Louis, 2007). Throughout the literature terms such as respect, integrity and honesty are used to define the behaviours that engender trust in a school community. Definitions of these characteristics are often descriptive rather than analytical and fail to identify, in any specific form, the underlying environmental and organisational factors and personality

variables that may contribute to the presence or perception of trust in schools. This study aims to identify what leaders in the school did to 'spark and direct relational trust-building efforts in school' (Stoll and Louis, 2007: 95). My belief is that a deeper understanding of the issues associated with the development of trust in educational communities will only enhance any future school improvement processes.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings from this study that reflect the information gathered from several group interviews involving a total of 26 teachers. I have organised the findings from the study in the following way. First the study looks at how the participants defined trust. Second, the study looks carefully at the characteristics of school leaders that the participants considered built trust. Many of the responses closely parallel those found in the literature on leadership and trust (Grey & Carston 2001; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2005; Powell, 1990; Sydow, 1998; Bachman and Zaheer, 2006). Third, the study moves from the analysis of specific behaviours of leaders to examine the effects of structural or organisational practices on trust-based relationships in a school environment. Finally the study considers the behaviours or processes that lead to distrust between leaders and staff.

How do educators define trust?

This question proved to be the most difficult for the respondents and the problematical nature of finding a definition for the concept of trust is best characterized by the following response:

> *I came up with words. It's a feeling, an attitude, belief, manner, tone. I couldn't define it, it is all of those things but I couldn't come up with a definition.*
>
> Respondent 24

Much of the literature highlights the complex and multi-dimensional nature of trust with limited agreement on the definition, characteristics and even the nature of trust (Khodyakov, 2007). Data gathered from the interviews reinforces the multifarious nature of this concept and the difficulty in determining a succinct definition for trust.

Words and phrases such as *honesty, openness, a willingness to listen, non-judgmental, respectful, accepting of different views, humour and humility* were all

used to describe certain elements or conditions for trust. What is apparent is the strong association of risk with a number of the definitions offered. The following comments relating to the definition of trust help illustrate this point.

> *When two or more people have a working or professional relationship where they feel comfortable because they know the other person will do the right thing by them to the best of their ability…*
>
> Respondent 25

> *I can seek support from a variety of others without being judged or criticised, take learning risks, accept challenges, implement new programs and be supported to do so…..*
>
> Respondent 23

Respondents highlighted that in a culture that portrays trust they are not *demeaned, ostracised or 'put down' for holding a certain point of view or belief*, they are not *cut off from relevant communication* and they are not *criticised or castigated for making mistakes.*

Much of the literature argues that in today's society uncertainty is only rarely perceived as an opportunity to take the initiative or assume new responsibilities. Invariably uncertainty is represented as a marker for danger and change is often regarded with dread (Furedi, 2010). In making a risk-assessment we attempt to calculate the probability of different outcomes and take action related to the level of risk involved. From the definitions offered it appears that trust is apparent when people feel confident that 'if things go wrong' they will be supported and the level of personal risk associated with their actions is minimized.

This point is highlighted by Respondent 23 :

> *…..if I know that I'm not going to be told off for the smallest thing then the relationship will be relaxed and allow for individual differences….*

What characteristics of leaders build trust?

Previous research suggests that certain actions or behaviour by school leaders are important determinants of the trust staff will place in their leader. From this study it appears that teachers' perceptions of the social dynamics that facilitate or inhibit the realisation of trust in relationships between staff and leadership can be divided into two main themes. These emerged as:

- the individual behaviours or characteristics of the leader
- the organisational practices developed by the leader

Individual behaviours or characteristics of the leader

Openness In each of the six interviews statements relating to the quality of openness were raised and discussed. In total there were twenty-one comments relating to the importance of openness and these were articulated by forty percent of the participants. As one of the most common responses it suggests that openness is an important feature of building trust in schools. Open communication was identified as being characterised by a range of different qualities or actions. Firstly, the participants acknowledged the necessity of an environment which valued freedom of expression and the opportunity to air concerns. This is illustrated in the following responses to the question of what actions foster trust between leadership and staff:

> *.....that general friendliness and openness that you can ask any silly question, bring up any issues that are concerning you, they've got to have that open door policy.*
>
> Respondent 4

> *The acceptance of ideas, no matter what your idea, it is acknowledged and answering any questions regardless of whether they are obvious or not...*
>
> Respondent 24

> *I talked about the acceptance of all ideas. Like we have got a staff here that's a huge range of staff, where they have come from. And it doesn't matter what background they have come from or what view point they take about how they teach, it's all accepted.*
>
> Respondent 14

There was also a strong sense that this openness needed to be authentic where staff felt that there was a genuine attempt to understand their personal beliefs, perspectives and interests. When this doesn't occur the interactions between staff and leadership are likely to lead to a level of distrust. Respondent 5 commented:

> *I don't trust someone if they don't show professionally, a genuine interest in anything I would bring up as a concern or just an interest; and value in my opinion or my concern with something. If someone was disregarding it or not treating it as a priority it would create an issue with me being able to approach issues with them.*

And similarly Respondent 10 offered:

> *She didn't try to be understanding at all really. You never knew what you were going to get and she wasn't open. I feel like I can trust someone when they are fairly open.*

In regards to the quality of openness those interviewed also saw a strong relationship between trust and the leaders willingness to be open about their own feelings and share information about them self. In this regard the leader is seen to willingly place himself/herself in a position of vulnerability by sharing information about their professional and personal lives. The following responses to the question regarding the leadership qualities that build trust illustrate this point:

They seem open in their conversations; they share things about themselves not just day-to-day nuts and bolts stuff.

Respondent 7

So not only do you know that person and the way that they work but you know a little bit more about who they really are. And getting to know somebody for who they are starts to build trust and respect and honesty and things like that.

Respondent 1

The ability to confide and their willingness to confide in us. Like their ability to share aspects of their family and stuff like that. So its not just I'm here as a person to work. Its' I'm here because I value your friendship and you're a member of staff and I don't just want to talk about work. Its making themselves personable.

Respondent 3

Participants in the study also highlighted the accessibility of the leader as something that built and maintained trusting relationships in the school context. When questioned about the behaviours that build trust there was general agreement that an 'open door' policy played an important role in establishing a sense of trust between staff and the leadership group. This point is highlighted in the following responses to the question regarding the actions of leaders that build trust:

When I get told not to knock on their office door and just to come in.

Respondent 25

The fact that the leader's door is always open regardless of who's in there, what's going on, there is the odd time its closed but that's when they're in a meeting; but generally speaking its open, come in, it doesn't matter if they're on the phone talking to someone they're available to everyone and that's very different.

Respondent 24

Responses from the participants in this study underline the importance of open communication in building and maintaining trusting relationships between staff and leadership. By accepting ideas, showing a genuine interest in others, sharing personal and professional aspects of their lives and placing an emphasis on availability leaders can work towards developing and maintaining trusting relationships with staff. It is also evident that any behaviour from leaders that constrains or inhibits communication can lead to an organisational culture of distrust.

Compassion A theme that emerged consistently amongst participants was that caring and treating staff in a personal and empathetic manner is a critical component in the development of trust. Statements relating to the quality of compassion were raised and discussed in each of the six interviews. In total there were thirteen comments relating to the importance of compassion and these were mentioned by thirty two percent of the participants. The participants in the study felt that a leader exhibited care when they treated each person as distinct and valued members of staff. The following participants emphasise the importance of the leader's genuine interest in not only their work, but also their life out of school:

> *I think that trust is where you have a high degree or interactivity with somebody. So you're talking with them maybe on a daily basis about different events that evolve around not just school events but personal events at the same time. So not only do you know that person and the way that they work but you know a little bit more about who they really are. And getting to know somebody, about who they really are, starts to build trust and respect, honesty, things like that.*
>
> Respondent 1

Respondent 24 further supports this view when asked about qualities that build trust:

> *The concern beyond the school. Asking about the things you do outside the school. It comes back to what you said, the relationship isn't just the professional side of it, it's the whole big picture.*

And similarly from Respondent 23:

> *It's showing interest in the teacher as a person as well as a professional and supporting personal goals.*

From the data collected it was apparent that staff wanted to be seen in a way that acknowledged both their professional and personal being. Respondent 11 related:

> *I remember something here that built the level of trust. At the start of the year you have those two days that staff meet. I remember the principal talking about the hierarchy of things. Saying you need to look after yourself first, then your family comes second and work third. Work isn't considered the be all and end all. Other places aren't like this – they say this is your job stuff, everything else is too bad; if your kids are sick or your mum dies. Here your encouraged to you have that balance between family and career.*

Respondent 23 elaborated on this theme:

> *….something that really gave me trust was that the leader hadn't lost sight about the responsibility of teachers and was quite empathetic to it as well as being supportive of it. Whereas other schools would just be like you do this, you do that and your workload is going up. Whereas here it will be acknowledged and you know you are offered*

release time to help you out and an interest is shown in the teacher as a person as well as a professional and there is support for personal goals.

The participants frequently emphasized the importance of the leader making an authentic attempt to understand and take into account the other person's position and feelings. Being able to understand what the other person wants, and then trying to help them achieve it appears to be a crucial condition for building trust. The following statements highlight this point:

It is very much an understanding that we have personal needs and therefore if it is at all possible they will accommodate those personal needs, even if it makes it a little bit harder for the school. They actually value you as a person and therefore the fact that you have another life as well.

Respondent 4

You get a sense they care about you, work, and other people.

Respondent 7

They're empathetic; they believe that your issues are real to you. They believe they matter to you.

Respondent 2

It appears from the data gathered through the interviews that the respondents placed a great deal of value on the actions and behaviours of leaders that show that they care, understand and have the best interests of the staff at heart. This care, understanding and empathy for people's professional and personal lives play a critical role in building trust based relationships between leaders and staff.

Respect In each of the six interviews statements relating to the attribute of respect were raised and discussed. In total there were seventeen comments

relating to the importance of respect and these were articulated by fifty six percent of the participants. According to a number of participants interpersonal trust deepens as individuals perceive that school leaders value their opinions and ideas. Participants in this study frequently mentioned attentive listening by the leader as trust-building behaviour. In response to the question about how leaders build trust Respondent 4 stated:

> *And also willing to listen and to hear you. Not just listen and wait for the next sentence to jump in. Actually hearing what you are saying.*

And similarly from Respondent 7:

> *Listen to you, when you are talking to them. You get that sense they are listening, they are listening to you.*

The teachers also stressed the importance of seeking out people's opinions and then listening carefully to the response. Respondent 14 explained:

> *The principal said to her 'so what is it about this place that makes it better?' and she said well for a start you asked me what it was. Like you listened, you want to know something that I think. So I know she feels valued by the fact that her opinion counts.*

These comments imply that attentive listening is an important cue in fostering trust building behaviour between staff and leadership in schools. Acting in a non-judgmental manner and allowing staff to voice their opinions or ask questions seems to say to the staff member that she or he is important in the interaction, no matter how brief the encounter.

In building trust between leadership and staff participants also commented on the importance of leaders respecting the knowledge and expertise that the teacher brought to the learning environment, as well as the decisions the teacher makes within that environment. There is a strong emphasis on valuing the

'professional judgment' of teachers as illustrated in the following responses to the question regarding leadership behaviours that build trust.

> *They trust your professional judgment – they are not the higher authority, the power holders, that they trust you to make a judgment call and if it is real or valid to you then they accept that decision.*
>
> Respondent 2

> *The default position is that you're wonderful and talented and that you're a brilliant teacher…….and that sort of inspires you to live into that description.*
>
> Respondent 13

> *The principal said to me, 'I trust that you can teach, I trust that you are a professional and I trust that you can do your job well.' I thought this was great, just gold!*
>
> Respondent 11

> *It's just encouragement and advice but no frowning, no big lectures about what are you going to do….show me your program. Its implicit trust in our professionalism and you know its good because it filters through to the kids as well.*
>
> Respondent 20

The study also emphasised the need for staff to feel that they are accepted, worthy and valued in the trust building process. Respondent 23 used the term 'unconditional positive regard' to describe this characteristic:

> *The principal inspires trust big time. I've had another principal as well who believed in unconditional positive regard for teachers, staff, students and it was something that was talked about across the school and it actually worked*.

Respondent 20 builds further on this point:

> *If you are straight up front treated with respect and professionalism then that leap of faith in leadership is very easy. If you're not, if you immediately go in feeling like you are in an authoritarian environment and you have to cross the T's and dot the I's to get anywhere then that leap of faith is very difficult.*

This study also stressed the importance of leaders maintaining confidentiality in their interactions with staff and the key role this plays in developing respectful and trustworthy relationships. The following statements, made in response to the question regarding trustworthy behaviour by school leaders, illustrate this point.

> *You trust that they are going to keep things confidential - that sense that you are handing over some information and you want them to look after that.*
>
> Respondent 11

> *They can be confidential when you ask them to be.*
>
> Respondent 7

> *You've got to feel that you can trust them with whatever you're giving them – you've got to be able to trust them with that information or knowledge about you.*
>
> Respondent 8

Participants in the interviews also drew attention to the distrust that arises when this confidence is broken.

You can tell someone something in confidence and then find that it has been told to a number of other people. When this happens you tend to rethink your trust in someone.

Respondent 1

You may disclose something and then someone else comes and talks to you about it so you know it has been passed on and it wasn't your intention for it to be passed on.

Respondent 3

This study has shown that respect for teachers' knowledge, skills, beliefs and understandings are fundamental to leaders building trusting relationship with staff. A genuine sense of listening to what each person has to say and actions that acknowledge and recognise other's perspectives and ideas are important attributes for leaders. They signal that each staff member's thoughts have value and that education is a collective responsibility. When members of staff feel valued, accepted, recognised, and treated with dignity, they are more inclined to place trust in their leader.

Acknowledgement and Recognition Participants in the study indicated that they appreciated the leader's efforts to acknowledge them and provide recognition and praise for areas of their work. They indicated that this form of communication helped establish a foundation of trust. Statements relating to the leaders' acknowledging and recognising staff were raised and discussed in each of the six interviews. In total there were twelve comments relating to the importance of this attribute and these were discussed by forty four percent of the participants. It appears that even the simplest acts of greeting and acknowledging people starts to build more trusting relationships. Responding to the question regarding the actions of leaders that build trust Respondent 5 commented:

I think the way that it works here with professional trust is it's just those little moments. To take that time which is just a simple task to say hello, how are you going or a nod or a smile or something like that that breaks that wall down. I think those tiny bits that leadership do here, you know 'how was your weekend?' and general chitchat helps you approach them with trust about work issues or opportunities or things like that.

Similarly Respondent 11 stated:

They also come into your classroom and release you and you also have leaders that say hello in the morning. And the feedback is always so positive and encouraging.

Participants also commented positively on leaders recognising and acknowledging the work of staff. Respondent 14 stated:

Another thing that builds trust that I had down was taking the staff to a cafe at the end of each term. It's just a way of saying thanks for the work you are all doing and you're doing a good job. And that's our way of saying thankyou and when you look at it and see how big the staff is and the money that is really going into that. And you're just kind of like you're actually putting us above other things and when you think about it that money could have gone to readers or other things. It's just something that makes us feel really special. Well it does to me.

Respondent16 made the following comment in regards to a leadership team she trusted:

This is new to me but we get thanked for everything we do. And when children do something we thank them and it is genuine. And you know that little word really makes a difference.

Data from the interviews indicates the importance of acknowledgement and recognition of staff by leaders in the trust building process. There isn't anything surprising about this finding, yet little attention has been given to this area in previous research.

Equity Data gathered from the interviews also highlighted the importance of a reduced reliance on positional authority and an increased focus on collaboration and cooperation as part of leaders work. It was deemed important that leaders' dispositions and actions build equality and inclusivity across the education community. In all but one of the interviews statements relating to the quality of equity were raised and discussed. In total there were eleven comments relating to the importance of equity and these were articulated by thirty two percent of the participants. Responses from participants in the study highlight the value staff place on flatter organisational structures, individual empowerment and a sense of equality when interacting with leaders. When questioned about the actions of leaders that build trust Respondent 5 stated:

Leadership do need to create that level of professional trust by treating everybody equally – even if they don't get along with them personally.

Similarly Respondent 24 commented:

Something else I think it comes into…..is that there is a hierarchy but it's not seen.

And from Respondent 25:

….it doesn't matter in which capacity they are employed at the school. Everyone talks to everybody and treats everyone exactly the same and you know that's what we expect from the kids. It's the best role modeling you can get.

There was also a strong sense that inequitable relationships or favoritism in the manner in which leadership interacted with staff acted to build distrust. Respondent 4 commented:

Favoritism destroys trust. You have one group of people treated in a particular way and another that are treated differently. A detrimental culture that I worked in, leadership played games. They played people off against each other and they'd say one thing to one person and another thing to another person and the result was the entire staff united against the leadership.

The sharing of knowledge in an equitable fashion was also seen to be an important part of trust building behaviour. Respondent 1 stated:

With favoritism there is also the issue of being kept in the dark or being excluded. Knowledge is power. You can tell when you are not valued in this way.

This study has brought to attention an increased desire by teachers to have more control over the decisions and activities that affect their lives and a greater awareness of inequality. Staff appear to be more conscious of the discrepancies of opportunities and outcomes available to them. It is clear from the interviews that a lack of prejudice in the interactions between leaders and staff and a sense of information being shared in a consistent and equitable manner helps shape trusting relationships.

Language of Contribution It was evident from the data collected that trust in leaders is influenced significantly by the leader's actions in situations of

uncertainty or adversity. Statements relating to leaders utilizing a language of contribution and minimising risk were raised and discussed in each of the six interviews. In total there were thirteen comments relating to the importance of this attribute and these were mentioned by thirty two percent of the participants. Data from the interviews highlights the importance of leaders creating a psychologically safe environment for staff where they can initiate and trial new ideas and practices without fear of criticism or retribution. Fostering a language of contribution rather than that of blame appears to be an important part of trust building behaviour. For example Respondent 9 provides the following:

> *So trust is interesting in that it usually develops out of a deficit model – you know something goes horribly wrong in a classroom and one of the leaders comes in to support us and that builds a professional, trusting understanding relationship.*

And in a similar vein Respondent 6 argues that the authenticity of a leaders beliefs and values are not clearly evident until they are asked to respond in a time of crisis.

> *Trust seems to be built not so much when things are going well, but when things are going wrong. That's when you see people's core. You can pretend to behave in a certain type of way when things are going well but when it comes to a crisis you go back to your base behaviour, which is at the core of you – its either trustworthy or not.*

The importance of building trusting relationships through a constructive approach to problem-solving where the dignity and self-efficacy of staff is protected by the actions and behaviour of the leader is presented by Respondent 6:

> *The problem can be that more traditional style of leadership. We have a problem and we need to take control. Does that control look like telling people off for their mistakes, or being very directive rather*

than how are we going to solve this together? You want a constructive resolution. You don't want a modus operandi that is to tell you what you did wrong, belittle you, and tell you you'd better get it right next time.

And in response to the question regarding the actions of leaders that fosters trust Respondent 23 stated:

….staff are prepared to take on new stuff because they feel like they are going to be supported and they are going to be valued and no one is going to knock them down. People are just going to support them, if it works it works - we celebrate if it does and if it doesn't, it doesn't matter.

Respondent 10 also comments:

It helps to build an enormous amount of trust when you are not criticised or castigated for making mistakes.

The data from this study supports the notion that trustworthy leaders create circumstances in which people can make decisions and experiment with new ways of doing things without feeling too exposed or threatened if things don't work out as planned. In times of constant change and increasing complexity school leaders need to acknowledge a need for greater interdependence and create a dialogue that moves their community in this direction. This study has shown that building a low-risk culture where criticism and blame is replaced by conversations characterised by inquiry and contribution is an important part of this process. As Respondent 23 states:

……. we have made that decision and we are going to support that decision as it is right now, good, bad whatever it was, that's fine. Your own decision is accepted, it doesn't matter what it is.

Integrity The Oxford Dictionary defines integrity in terms of adherence to moral principles, decency, honor and honesty. Aligned with this definition a number of participants emphasised the importance of leaders maintaining a consistency between what they say, their espoused values and principles, and the actions or behaviours they engage with. This research supports these findings with the participants highlighting the importance of a match between the leader's values as expressed in words, and the actions the leader takes. In each of the six interviews statements relating to the quality of integrity were raised and discussed. In total there were twenty-two comments relating to the importance of integrity and these were articulated by forty eight percent of the participants. The theme of integrity emerges in the following comments:

> *You build trust when people match their value base and they match it in their actions and what they say. You get distrust when someone professes the same value base but actually behaves in a totally contradictory manner.*
>
> Respondent 6

> *They follow-up on stuff, they do what they say they will do, what you see is what you get. It's really important that they walk the talk; if they say they are going to do it, they do it.*
>
> Respondent 7

In this last remark Respondent 7 has brought to attention the importance of leaders being reliable in following up on issues or concerns that are brought to their attention. This respondent also goes on to highlight the positive impact of leaders acting in the best interests of staff in a proactive manner.

> *There are two parts to that because I said follow up on things if somebody says I'll do that and they remember to do it. You can also have a conversation with someone and from that conversation they*

do something they thought would be useful. You haven't asked them to do anything for you – they've just gone away and done it to help.

And similarly Respondent 6 comments:

They will also show they've been listening by following through on something. It may be a small thing but they'll follow up on it. I can do that for you – it may the most inconsequential thing but it has a big impact.

In building a sense of trust between leadership and staff a high correlation between what leaders are stating, in terms of their values and goals, and those actions that follow are important. This study highlights the need for a synergy between rhetoric and delivery. Leaders need to be able to walk the talk and habitually follow through on undertakings. As Respondent 8 stated, *its about keeping your promises and acting in a way that matches the rhetoric*.

Researchers have argued that integrity is often related to specific moral or ethical behaviours and honesty is viewed as synonymous with integrity (Palanski and Yammarino, 2007). Supporting this theory, participants in the study also placed a great deal of value in the characteristic of honesty - both in the manner in which leaders responded to their queries or concerns, and in the feedback that was offered. The importance staff placed on honest and open responses in the school environment is illustrated in the following statements:

Honesty and trust go hand in hand, if you felt you were trusted you tend to be more honest about what is happening.

Respondent 11

I look at it and think there really has to be a huge element of honesty about what is going on because without that honesty you really are lacking in trust.

Respondent 1

In the following statement the respondent views honesty in terms of being kept up-to-date and involved in the decision-making processes that impact on the structures and systems of the school.

> *This comes under honesty. When we as the staff are kept informed of things within the school, like the finances and the stuff that typically I'm assuming you wouldn't necessarily know about or hear about. Like when positions are going to be advertised and your asked if that's okay. If we put this position up now is that okay with everybody? Has anyone got any questions? Like you're just informed of stuff. Sometimes I think, well why do I need to know this, but then I think well that's a good thing. It's all out there for everybody to be aware of and know.*

Respondent 25

This response also brings to attention the role of organisational systems and processes in building trust-based relationships. The relationship between trust and the organisational practices of the school will be dealt with in more detail later in this chapter (see Integrity in Organisational Practices).

The importance of drawing attention to both the positive aspects of teachers' work as well as areas for growth in an honest and open manner was also highlighted. In response to the question regarding leadership behaviours that build trust Respondent 3 provided the following statement:

> *They were totally honest and you were the first to know. But it is not always the good stuff; it's not always hearing good stuff and this is what he was so good at. If there needed to be something said that wasn't so good he would just come straight out and say it and he would say we could look at it this way and we can do this.*

The attribute of honesty also brought to attention the tension that can arise when honest and open feedback is used to highlight more negative aspects of teachers work and the impact this may have on developing or maintaining trusting relationships. A discussion between Respondent 6 and 7 highlights this point:

> *I think honesty is an interesting area of trust in regards to leadership. You look at how this plays out at times. Some leaders say that they are honest, but at time this can be brutal, they can be brutally honest at times – but to me, a lot of the time leaders are trying to manage an interesting balancing act between the things they can be brutally honest about and other things that may be better discussed in a more compassionate way.*

And in reply from Respondent 7:

> *I didn't mean honest like, I like the shirt you are wearing. Its more about being honest in the things you do that align with the values and beliefs you espouse – faithful about what you do, genuine. I don't think that being upfront and honest with people about some of the work we do isn't always a good thing. The intent needs to be honest.*

This study has already highlighted that an important element of building trust is making people feel safe enough to share new ideas and concerns without fear of retribution. Respondent 6 has highlighted that raw candor is not always the best approach to providing feedback, and that leaders need to apply it in a manner that is underpinned by the values and beliefs of the school that support a greater sense of democracy and collegiality. In this sense honesty needs to be applied with judgment, tact, dignity and care – in fact one could say 'with a great deal of integrity'.

Data from the interviews also suggest that leaders need to create a climate where delicate information can be shared with the confidence. A number of participants in the study highlighted the importance of discretion by the leader in the process of sharing information. As commented by Respondent 3:

> *You were the first to know if it was something about you, you were the first person to know and it was never discussed with any other person unless it impacted on them.*

This point is illustrated in a more negative form with this comment from Respondent 4:

> *There have been times when decisions have been made that impact directly on me, announced at staff meeting, and there had been no attempt to forewarn me or provide me with this information. Rather than discussing something with you, which is going to impact on you, you find out about it in an open forum, or those sorts of things.*

This study indicates that leaders need to exhibit discretion, forethought and prudence in the way they share information. Decisions regarding how or what information to share should take into account the dignity and self-respect of each individual. This is an important characteristic of the trusted leader providing a sense of security and confidence for staff in a more open and transparent organisation.

Integrity in Organisational Practices The data collected from the interviews indicated that trust is also directly linked to the organisational practices the leader develops in the school. Sixteen references were made by thirty six percent of the participants to the impact of school processes, systems or structures on trust building behaviour. It appears that to build and sustain trust the school's organisational practices need to reflect the leader's personal values, daily actions and basic organisational aims. One could say that there is integrity between the dispositions of the leader and the organisational practices in place. A number of responses highlighted areas such as decision-making, resource

allocation processes and the manner in which staff interact as elements of organisational behaviour that assist in the trust building process. In response to the question regarding trust building behaviour by leaders Respondent 14 brings to attention the element of decision-making:

> *Well for example, accelerated literacy is run in the school. People know it well. It is introduced to new staff and the choice is actually given for anyone who's new to automatically join; but if you don't want to the pressures not on you. This is what all the school staff do here, 'maybe you would like to do that in six months time when you feel a bit more comfortable'. So it's always giving people an opportunity to join. Because of the way that they approach it you almost feel like 'yes' you really want to, because they are encouraging you to; but without the pressure of having to. On one hand it's basically telling you we would like you to do it, but without telling you that you have to, the decision ends up being your own*.

The data highlighted the positive impact of genuine shared decision-making where staff have influence over the outcomes of decisions that affect them. Decisions may be initiated by leadership but it is then important that the final decision is driven by debate and emerging consensus from the stakeholders. Respondent 13 comments:

> *And it is accepting the decisions based on your own point of view. We have made that decision and the leadership are going to support that decision as it is right now, good, bad whatever it was, that's fine. Your decision is accepted, it doesn't matter what it is.*

The study also highlighted that decision-making processes need to be highly inclusive as illustrated in this rather succinct reply to the question surrounding trust-building behaviours by leaders:

> *It's collaborative decision-making*.
>
> Respondent 23

It was also apparent that leaders need to establish inclusive decision-making procedures that afford staff real opportunities to raise issues. In a discussion of the actions of leaders that build distrust, Respondent 16 states:

> *They make decisions where we weren't consulted, our ideas weren't valued.*

The nature of the decision taken by leaders was also seen as an indicator of trust as highlighted by Respondent 7:

> *They make moral decisions, respectful to and of others.*

Decisions around the allocation of resources and the perceived fairness of these processes also played a significant role in how staff perceived levels of trust within the organisation. For example Respondent 3 saw trust built through the equal distribution of resources.

> *When I first arrived here there were strong divisions between the three sectors. Just the conversations about the resources, who had access to what, their place in decision-making. Now people feel that things are equally shared and they have a say in how those resources are used.*

When questioned about the signs that trust is present or absent in a school Respondent 14 offered the following:

> *Can I say one thing, which I don't think has come up at all and that is just money and resources……If you need that for a child go and get it. We'll take it out of this budget if we have to. We will do whatever we can do if that needs to happen.*
>
> Respondent 14

This theme is further explored by Respondent 20 in a reply to the question of trust building behaviours by leaders:

> *But there has never been a real question about whether I really should or shouldn't do it. It's just encouragement and advice but no frowning, no big lectures about what are you going to do with it, why are you spending that money, show me your program. It implicates trust in our professionalism and you know its good.*
>
> Respondent 20

The interviews also drew attention to formal and informal structures leaders use to bring people together to develop and sustain a shared sense of purpose and commitment to the organisation. It appears a range of situations that involve dialogue and exchange play a significant role in developing employee trust in the leader and the organisation. Respondent 5 highlights the importance of leaders creating a shared purpose or storyline for change in building relationships based on trust:

> *So it is somehow pulling everyone together so we are on the same page as opposed to different people with different agendas. It's about getting us on board with the same purpose, we all know where we are going and feel we can do this.*
>
> Respondent 5

The importance of designing structures and processes for staff to gain a better understanding of each others' life experiences, values and belief systems was also seen as an important part of leaders' work in the trust building process. Respondent 1 and 13 emphasise this point in the following manner:

> *And getting to know somebody for who they are starts to build trust and respect and honesty and things like that.*
>
> Respondent 1

And the unwritten rules of the school, people really try to cue you in on the things that we do here, and not exclude you. Nobody seems to be competing for anybody's attention or space.

Respondent 13

Respondent 6 elaborates on this argument advocating for increased opportunities for staff to share aspects of their 'life narrative' in order to create a stronger sense of mutual understanding and trust:

What we don't do well is allow people the opportunity to tell their life stories, their narrative, because out of this comes a greater understanding and sense of trust. We should be spending time in our staff meetings doing the relational stuff and then do the reporting, timetabling, curriculum maps.

Respondent 8 continues this theme in a response to the question regarding the actions of leaders that build trust with staff. Here the topic of mutual understanding and the opportunity for staff to articulate their beliefs, values and interests is emphasised once again:

It's important that the leader is interested in your issues, in your beliefs, values, interests – if they show that they are interested in that, then you are more likely to trust them. That they are able to understand you and able to show you that they understand you.

Respondent 8

It was also deemed important that the leader's values matched those of the organisation and these values were explicit and agreed upon by all stakeholders. A shared a set of norms, values, and beliefs that govern relationships and the organisational practices of the school was seen as important as they built trust and predictability. This was evidenced in the following comments:

Can I just go to the next one where it's got the signs that trust is either present or absent in the school. I just thought that trust is evident in a cohesive environment. You walk in here and you get the feeling that's its a really friendly place. The school values are present through visual presentation and the values are keys and all over the place so kids look at them all the time and they can trust that this is what the school values are. This is what every class holds as important and its important that I can show that they are important as well.

Respondent 21

The people that share the same values as you, and beliefs as you and you put trust in them.

Respondent 8

The problems associated with a lack of congruence in the value base of the leader and the broader school community is illustrated in the following statement:

There were a lot of relationship problems as a result of the values of the principal that weren't relevant to the school.

Respondent 23

The importance of celebration and acknowledgement at a group level was also raised as an endeavour that built trust between staff and leadership and amongst all members of the school community. The following two statements made in relation to trust building behaviours help illustrate this point.

To be acknowledged and to be welcomed, I know the first day I was here and I got introduced at the staff meeting and everybody clapped and cheered and I never felt so good in my life. I don't know how sincere everyone was but it sounded quite nice and I thought well I'm going to do that for other new staff. I mean that wasn't a leadership thing that was general staff.

Respondent 18

It was basically the acknowledgement. It's in the newsletters, it's in daily bulletins, and it's written up on the board. There are thankyous everywhere, staff meetings 'you have all done a good job, well done' all the time.

Respondent 13

The data from the interviews points to a relationship between human agency and the structural conditions of the school, with a concept such as trust created, maintained and changed through individual actions and behaviours that are both independent and interdependent of system or organisational practices. This study has highlighted that school leaders need to be cognisant of inconsistent policies and organisational procedures that are likely to breed or perpetuate a lack of trust among students, staff, and parents.

The Fragility of Trust

Many of the actions described by staff that lead to distrust could be depicted as the opposite of those actions they saw building trust. This study has already illustrated how leaders can break trust through actions such as:

A lack of confidentiality:

You may have thought that you wanted something kept in confidence where in fact that's no longer the case and when things like that happen you sort of re-think about it you think I can professionally trust.

Respondent 1

Favouritism:

That same principal was into divide and conquer strategies like I'll look after this group because they do things my way. This other group can survive for themselves. Whatever support went here but none went here. Clicky and very un-professional.

Respondent 23

A lack of consultation:

> *There was a very autocratic style you would do this you would not ask questions this is my policy you follow it do it, if you have something to say I'm not interested you were told what to do, you couldn't challenge anything because then you would lose support so you kind of felt you were being held to ransom and not treated like a professional and basically the kids suffered for it.*
>
> Respondent 23

Dishonesty:

> *I was thinking of the previous leadership here that wasn't so honest. It's probably more honesty than trust. Honesty and trust go hand in hand, if you felt you were trusted you tend to be more honest about what is happening.*
>
> Respondent 11

Criticism of staff:

> *It's now October and we haven't had a bollocking about - you know like its our fault that stuff is going wrong. Often we'd get told off for all the stuff we do wrong, and here we don't deal with that.*
>
> Respondent 13

This study has highlighted the negative impact on trust if leaders are prone to criticising or castigating staff for mistakes. Along similar lines some of the participants in the study touched on the importance of support and belief from leadership, especially in times of adversity. Reference was made to the undermining of this support and how these actions led to a sense of distrust.

> *I wasn't actually believed. The boy was supported by the mother, by the parents, even by staff members and I had no support what so ever. A few years later I was told I'm sorry I didn't actually believe you at*

the time but we have since realized you were right. It ruined the trust. I never felt comfortable there because of it. It was a small thing, a child throwing pamphlets on the floor, and that whole support for what you said wasn't there. No one said, 'yes we believe what you said and we will back you up and give you that support'.

Respondent 24

This study has already highlighted how staff observe their leaders to discern whether it is safe to trust them and the decision whether to trust, or not, is influenced significantly by the leaders actions in situations of uncertainty or adversity. This argument is supported in the statement above and further reinforced by Respondent 25 who describes the reaction of a leader, from a previous school setting, following a complaint:

The leader rang me on my mobile and for 15min interrogated me on what I've been doing, what I've been up to and this kind of stuff…..so you know I think the fact that they didn't trust me when they have never spoken to me, or had to speak to me before. And the way they were speaking to me now and you know it wasn't even in person it was on the phone it was terrible.

The issue of leaders exhibiting some understanding and empathy for their community and the relationship between these behaviours and trust was also raised in the study. In reply to the question regarding behaviours that build distrust the following responses were offered:

Trust broke down for me when the principal didn't get to know the school community.

Respondent 23

It's someone who doesn't show professionally a general interest in anything I would bring up as a concern or just an interest and value either my opinion in something or my concern in something. If someone was disregarding it and didn't put it as a priority that would create a really big issue with me being able to approach issues with them.

Respondent 5

There was also reference to the fact that predictability or consistency in leader's actions or behaviours impacted on the level of trust. Respondent 10 states:

My university lecturer was so unpredictable. Unpredictable in her responses. Sometimes she'd be ultra friendly, everything's wonderful and then all of a sudden it was totally different. She didn't try to be understanding, at all really. You never knew what you were going to get and she wasn't open. I feel like I can trust someone when they are fairly open.

This study has identified some of the factors that lead to distrust amongst staff. It is by no means an exhaustive list but one which pinpoints some of the behaviours and actions that are often costly in terms of individual and organisational health. Respondent 4 best describes the impact of these behaviours.

Trust is a very fragile thing in that we actually trust fairly easily but once trust is broken it takes twice, three times as long to actually build it back up again and that makes it different in a human environment like this where people do make mistakes. You know you can lose trust in a particular person.

This study has sought to further deepen our understanding of how trust is developed and nurtured by leaders in a school setting. The data gathered through the interview process has identified a number of behaviours and

characteristics of school leaders that either enhance or diminish the level of trust in a school environment. The information gathered has highlighted that it is a complex, elusive, fragile and multi-faceted construct that appears to play a pivotal role in creating and sustaining effective school cultures. It is by no means a comprehensive or exhaustive list of the attributes leaders need to possess or utilise in building trust-based relationships within their organisation but it does provide a useful insight into how trust is developed and sustained in the school environment. The next chapter will discuss the findings from this study and consider the implications for school leaders.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

'By their deeds shall you know them.'
Edward Ellis, 1907

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate and identify the behaviours and actions of school leaders that can both enhance or diminish the level of trust in schools. Chapter 5 presents a summary of the purpose and major findings of this research as well as a discussion of the implications and recommendations for further study.

The Rise of Trust as a Central Theme in School Leadership

The literature review for this study highlighted the ever-increasing uncertainty and complexity confronting leaders in contemporary school settings. Currently change is rapid, the amount and sources of information are ever increasing and there are often shifting, ill defined or competing goals. Major social, economic and demographic upheavals and the arrival of new technologies have changed the role of educational leaders considerably (Degenhardt and Duignan, 2010). More traditional approaches to leadership have focused on power and position as sources of authority and knowledge. Researchers point out that these characteristics are less important in a complex and dynamic world where disruptive change is considered normal (Perkins, 2003; Li, 2010; Hargreaves & Fink; 2006, Fielding; 1999). Coopey (1995) argues that leaders in this new paradigm need to develop a 'learning culture', which encourages the development of individuals and organisational growth by:

> *…nurturing a questioning spirit, experimentation, differences, openness and a tolerance of disequilibrium (p.195).*

In this sense there is a need to break down traditional hierarchies to allow new ideas and knowledge to permeate throughout the community and build understanding across all levels of the organisation.

The literature points out that in these new social and organisational dynamics leaders need information moving across and between individuals in a manner that contributes to the overall performance of the school. Learning needs to occur as teachers and support staff exercise autonomy and judgement unencumbered by overly burdensome institutional rules or traditional hierarchies that govern and constrain the flow of information. There is a need for flexible reasoning that generates alternatives, hypotheses, and meaningful courses of action. Dysfunctional power dynamics and overly authoritative leaders constrain the flow of information and promote the idea that knowledge and expertise rests solely in the hierarchy. In times of greater uncertainty and complexity there is a need to challenge traditional forms of power that rest in the positional status of individuals. Authority within organisations needs to rest in the knowledge and expertise of individuals who can best attend to the dilemmas and challenges associated with organisational learning. As MacBeath (2006) argues:

> *The problem is that conceptions of leadership are too easily confused with expert knowledge, role and status, with what people represent rather than what they are or what they do. The confusion is between the idea of authority and the authority of ideas (p.4).*

Coopey (1995) argues that there is a void in the literature concerning the form of government suitable for a more flexible, agile organisation where leadership lies with expertise rather than positional status. The leadership qualities and organisational forms that might facilitate the essential spontaneity of activity and relationship while safeguarding the interests of the organisation's members are not clearly defined (Coopey, 1995, p.195). Herein lies the newfound interest in the concept of trust as expressed by Sydow (1998):

> *…in a world of increasing uncertainty and complexity, flat hierarchies, more participative management styles and increasing professionalism, trust is thought to be a more appropriate mechanism for controlling organisational life….'*(p.31)

The current literature argues that a number of qualities, or trust building attributes, are deeply connected with effective leadership in contemporary institutions or organisations. This research project highlights a number of these qualities but also raises the question of whether the current literature focuses too narrowly on these attributes, ignoring the cultural and institutional aspects of school life that are developed and facilitated by school leaders.

Individual Attributes that Build Trust

This study has identified the leadership attributes of *openness, compassion, respect, integrity, a willingness to acknowledge and recognise others, a dialogue of contribution, and a commitment to treating people equitably* as playing a key role in the trust building process. These attributes align strongly with the research in this area (Mishra 1996; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000; Bryk and Schneider, 2002; Daly and Chrispeels, 2008) and highlight the qualities of leaders that serve as a central resource in creating and sustaining a trust-based culture across their school community.

One of the major themes to arise from this study was the attribute of *openness* which was characterised by leaders exhibiting a genuine interest in others, a willingness to accept others ideas, the leader's availability and a willingness by leaders to share both personal and professional aspects of their lives. This aligns strongly with the work of Tschannen-Moran (2004) who describes the 'open leader' as someone who engages in open communication, willingly shares important information, delegates, sharing decision-making and power within the organisation. There is also a strong link to the facet of communication identified

by Daly and Chrispeels (2008) which they describe as the ability of leaders to make themselves easily accessible to staff, their capacity to establish norms that support respectful communication and their commitment to maintaining open and effective lines of communication with staff (p.63).

Respect for people's knowledge, skills, beliefs and understandings was highlighted throughout the study as fundamental to leaders attempts to build trusting relationships with staff. A genuine sense of listening to what each person has to say and actions that acknowledge and recognise other's perspectives and ideas are important attributes for leaders. They signal that each staff member's thoughts have value and that education is a collective responsibility. The data from this study shows that when members of staff feel valued, accepted, recognised, and treated with dignity, they are more inclined to place trust in their leader. This view is supported by authors such as Kohlrieser (2006) who argue that respect involves leaders seeing and accepting others as separate and unique human beings, with the right to thoughts and feelings that may be independent of our own. Covey and Merrill (2006) see the 'intrinsic worth of individuals' as the overarching principle of respect where the leader is able to move beyond compliance and into 'people's minds and hearts' (Covey and Merrill, p.146). The findings of this study also drew attention to the importance of leaders *maintaining confidentiality* in their interactions with staff and the key role this plays in developing respectful and trustworthy relationships. This aligns with the work of Tschannen-Moran (2004) who argues that a critical element of trustworthy leadership is maintaining strict standards of confidentiality.

The theme of *compassion* emerged in each of the interviews highlighting care and empathy as critical components in the development of trust. Compassion is described in the literature as being caring, attentive to the needs of others and empathetic (Palanski and Yammarino, 2007). Previous research has shown that behaviours expressing a connection with staff, concern for staff, and treating staff as a person rather then just an employee are critical in establishing a trust

relationship (Tschannen-Moran, 2004; Bryk and Schneider, 2002). Daly and Chrispeels' (2008) research in this area highlights the importance of leaders exhibiting a willingness to listen and understand, to act in a caring manner and show concern for others in the trust building process. Research has also shown that empathy with personal issues affecting teachers' lives and an understanding of their desires and intentions assists in the development of authentic and optimal levels of trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2004). This is also an arena for caution as highlighted by Beatty (2007):

> *As I have argued elsewhere, empathy is not enough, and indeed, the notion that one can actually know what another is feeling is fraught with peril. By acknowledging the need to accept asymmetrical reciprocity (Young, 1997) we recognise the dangers of falling into the trap of believing we know what others feel. Only by exploring and confirming empathic hunches can we come close to knowing others' affective experiences (p.366).*

The importance of leaders *acknowledging and recognising* the actions and achievements of staff in both a formal and informal manner was also emphasised in the study. There isn't anything surprising about this finding, yet little attention has been given to this area in previous research. Bryk and Schneider (2002) have highlighted the importance of 'personal regard' in their research referring to positive expressions of care and concern by the leader. Data from this study is consistent with these characteristics but also brings to our attention the importance of recognising and celebrating the work that has been carried out and the positive impact these actions have on levels of trust in the organisation. The role of celebration and recognition is also touched on later in this section of the thesis where the link between trust, leadership and organisational practices is explored.

The study also underlined the importance of leaders treating all members of the school community *equitably* and the mistrust derived from perceived inequities

in relationships between leaders and staff. It was reinforced throughout this research project that leaders who treat their staff fairly and equitably build high trust environments while the potential for mistrust rises with actions that are perceived to favour certain groups or individuals. Displays of favouritism, or even its perception, can destroy relationships, initiative, and trust. Leaders need to work to create an environment where people are valued as individuals and treated with respect and dignity, fairness and equality. It also needs to be acknowledged that a fine line exists between treating all employees exactly the same and showing consistency in the treatment of staff. Members of staff are all individuals with different funds of knowledge, different backgrounds, different values, different goals, different ideas and different motivational factors. The ability to recognise the differences in people and apply an eclectic range of motivational strategies is an important characteristic of effective leadership. That being said, it is extremely important that a leader does not show favouritism and grant preferential treatment to staff. A lack of consistency in the leader's treatment of staff can seriously harm levels of teamwork and trust. Data from this study illustrates that special treatment or privileges for staff is counterproductive to building trust-based relationships unless a special situation warrants it, and everyone understands the rationale behind it. This aligns with the work of Bryk and Schneider (2002) and Tschannen-Moran (2004) who see favouritism as a characteristic that builds suspicion and distrust amongst staff.

The literature on trust and effective leadership in contemporary organisations also argues for a reduced reliance on the use of power as an element of leadership and increased levels of collaboration and cooperation (Senge, 1990; Stoll & Seashore Louis, 2007). Responses from participants in the study closely parallel with these theories and highlight the value staff place on flatter organisational structures, individual empowerment and a sense of equality when interacting with leaders. Aligned with teachers' increased desire to have more control over the decisions and activities that affect their lives is a greater awareness of inequality. It appears from the data gathered that staff are more

conscious of the discrepancies of opportunities and outcomes available to them. It is clear from the interviews that a lack of prejudice in the interactions between leaders and staff and a sense of information being shared in a consistent and equitable manner helps shape a culture of trust.

The attribute of *reliability* is a consistent theme throughout the research and is often defined as the ability to follow through on obligations (McEvily and Zaheer, 2006). This study also identified the importance of leaders following up on issues or concerns that are brought to their attention. In this sense I would argue that these actions align with the attribute of *integrity* where staff are looking for a synergy between rhetoric and delivery. Leaders need to be able to walk the talk and habitually follow through on undertakings. Participants in the study emphasised the importance of leaders maintaining a consistency between what they say will do, and the actions or behaviours they engage with. They brought to attention the importance of leaders being reliable in following up on issues or concerns that are brought to their attention. Current research also suggests that integrity is an important attribute for leaders in developing trust with staff (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy 2000; Bryk and Schneider, 2002; Daly and Chrispeels 2008).

Researchers have also argued that integrity is often related to specific moral or ethical behaviours and *honesty* is viewed as synonymous with integrity (Palanski and Yammarino, 2007). Supporting this theory participants in the study highlighted that honesty and trust obviously bear an important relationship to one another but also pointed out that this can manifest itself in both positive and negative forms. This tension is illustrated in the following comment from the study.

> *I think honesty is an interesting area of trust in regards to leadership. You look at how this plays out at times. Some leaders say that they are honest, but at time this can be brutal, they can be brutally honest at times – but to me, a lot of the time leaders are trying to manage an*

> *interesting balancing act between the things they can be brutally honest about and other things that may be better discussed in a more compassionate way.*
>
> Respondent 8

Raw candor alone can be extremely damaging, and can lead to negative and restrictive behaviour. If teachers fear retribution, then private information will remain hidden and opinion stifled. The withheld information is lost to the organisation, and we tend to see frustration and loss of morale in these contexts. Below the surface there is often unhappiness, anxiety, disappointment, frustration and anger. For leaders to have a lasting positive influence, honesty must be paired with trust, and it is a significant challenge to find more and better ways to do this. As Oestreich (2010) argues:

> *What could we be if we expressed our truth with deep care for those who must hear it,' and also, 'What if we trusted others enough to actively invite their truths, even if it was hard, painful, and embarrassing for us to hear?*

This research has shown that honesty and trust are inextricably linked but in responding honestly leaders must act in a manner that retains the dignity and self-worth of each individual. I would also argue that this is more likely to occur when leadership and staff are committed to something that draws them together in a communal sense — a set of beliefs, values or purpose that provides a sense of security for both leaders and staff in these conversations. Robinson (2009) supports this theory arguing:

> *One of the critical determinants of trust is leaders' ability to deal with difficult issues in respectful ways (p.1).*

Leaders need to be able to engage in discussions where they treat their own views as hypotheses rather than taken for granted truths, listen to others to detect and challenge their own and others' assumptions, treat others engaged in

the conversation with respect and care and foster commitment and ownership through shared and transparent processes (Robinson, 2009). The importance of a genuine commitment to a set of values that guide and inform a leader's conversations and practices is highlighted in the following comment from the study:

> *I didn't mean honest like I like the shirt you are wearing. Its more about being honest in the things you do that align with the values and beliefs you espouse – faithful about what you do, genuine.*
>
> Respondent 7

Along similar lines this study identified the importance of the leader adopting a *language of contribution* as a crucial element in the trust building process. The findings suggest that staff observe their leaders to discern whether it is safe to trust them and the decision whether to trust, or not, is influenced significantly by the leaders actions in situations of uncertainty or adversity. Data from the interviews highlighted the importance of leaders creating a psychologically safe environment for staff where they can initiate and trial new ideas and practices without fear of criticism or retribution. Fostering a language of contribution rather than blame appears to be an important part of the trust building process. This concept runs parallel to the facet of risk identified by Daly and Chrispeels (2008), which they define as:

> *…the degree of confidence one has in a situation of vulnerability (p.63).*

This attribute involves leaders acknowledging the vulnerabilities of others, encouraging others to continually learn and seek new ideas, acknowledging and sharing their own vulnerabilities and supporting risk taking in others. One of the basic findings of research on organisational learning is that collective learning requires a safe place in which people can share their questions, perspectives and understandings without fear of being judged harshly by their leaders (City et al., 2009). Without this 'safety-net' it is likely that staff will suppress important

information about their own practice or about problems they see in the school for fear that speaking honestly will see them ostracised or facing some form of disciplinary action. As Beatty (2007) argues:

> *Leadership for whole school renewal requires emotionally safer places for learning and growing together (p.328).*

It is also apparent from the study that a sense of distrust arises when leaders are seen to blame others for mistakes or failures within the school environment. Leithwood and Beatty (2008) highlight that teachers need an environment where:

> *…their dignity is safe and that they are valued within their organisations (p.74).*

This view is supported by the work of Garrett and Davies (2010) who argue:

> *As a leader you need to take responsibility for failure and celebrate everyone else when there's success (p.33).*

This aligns with the research carried out by Collins (2001) who found that successful leaders were those who demonstrated a compelling modesty, who took responsibility for poor results, never blaming other people, external factors or bad luck. In this sense personal *humility* plays an important part in the trust building process.

It is also apparent that current accountability systems create a tension for leaders as they seek to develop and maintain a psychologically safe environment for staff. Bonnor and Caro (2007) argue that in contemporary society we see governments looking increasingly for quick fixes, creating a culture of blame in which teachers and schools are held responsible for a narrow set of prescribed pupil outcomes. Perry (2007) suggests that such a situation encourages risk-

averse behaviour and risk minimisation strategies within both individuals and organisations. She goes on to state:

> *Innovation, experimentation and daring are hardly likely to be a feature of the educational landscape when people actively avoid any idea or activity which might be seen as risky (p.10).*

In such a culture trust is eroded through the imposition of standards, regulations and forms of public reporting which blame and punish while purporting to show the relative efficiency, or inefficiency, of teachers and school leaders. Groundwater-Smith & Sachs (2002) suggest that we are currently experiencing the 'conditions of an audit society' and go on to argue that the greater the governance by rules the less the practice of trust. Little harmony will exist between this form of accountability and the behaviours and processes this study has identified as prerequisites of a trust-based culture. This view is reinforced by Katz and Quill (2010) who comment:

> *The critical irony of recent accountability policies can be summarized as follows: rather than building morale among educators and restoring trust in the public schools and universities, the accountability movement has often undermined this morale and the accompanying trust quite seriously (p.4).*

Later in this chapter I will argue that there is an opportunity for leaders to develop and maintain systems and processes that create a fertile link between trust and accountability. These systems and processes would seek to move the current conversation beyond compliance to one of individual and organisational integrity. If leaders are seeking to help staff challenge presuppositions, explain alterative perspectives, transform old ways of understanding, and act on new perspectives then a language of contribution aligned with clear norms and processes that reduce the sense of risk and anxiety are going to be important. As Assange (2010) comments:

> *Capable, generous men nurture victims, they do not create them.*

The Concept of Distrust

Researchers usually agree that distrust is related to trust, but they seem to disagree on how they are related. Compared to trust, there is little information or research available in regards to the leadership actions or behaviours that create distrust. Author Piotr Sztompka sees the concept of distrust as the negative mirror image of trust (p.26, 1999). It involves negative expectations about the actions of others and what he terms a 'defensive commitment' where staff avoid or distance themselves from the leader. The data gathered through this study corroborates this view and many of the actions described by staff that lead to distrust could be depicted as the opposite of those actions they saw building trust. These included:

- A lack of confidentiality
- Favouritism
- A lack of consultation
- Dishonesty
- Criticism of staff
- A lack of understanding or empathy for staff and the broader community
- Unpredictable and inconsistent behaviours

Govier (1992) contends that distrust tends to promote feelings of anxiety and insecurity, causing unnecessary energy to be spent on monitoring the behaviour and possible motives of others. The findings from this study have identified a number of factors that lead to distrust amongst staff and these align with research carried out in this area (Brewster & Railsback, 2003; Tschannen-Moran, 2004; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998).. It is by no means an exhaustive list but one, which pinpoints some of the behaviours and actions that are often costly in terms of individual and organisational health.

Organisational Attributes that Build Trust

Significant research has been carried out regarding the individual attributes and qualities of school leaders that build trust across the organisation. Much less

work has been done examining the organisational practices that leaders develop and embed within schools that impact on levels of trust between leadership and staff. The data gathered through this study brings to light a number of systems, processes and structures that appear to play a crucial role in establishing and maintaining a trust-based culture throughout the organisation.

The findings suggest a relationship between human agency and the structural conditions of the school, with a concept such as trust created, maintained and changed through leadership behaviours that are both independent and interdependent of system or organisational practices. It appears that to build and sustain trust the school's organisational practices need to reflect the leader's personal values, daily actions and basic organisational aims.

These findings link strongly with the work of Giddens (1984) on 'structuration' where he argues that social practices within institutions have both a structural and an agency component. He suggests that human agency and the structural conditions of our institutions are in relationship with one another (Giddens, 1984). In this sense a social structure exists, governed by the traditions, moral codes, and established ways of doing things, but this social structure can be changed when people start to ignore, replace, or reproduce elements of this social structure differently. He goes on to argue that structure and action cannot be conceived apart from one another – a concept he terms 'duality of structure'. In this context action and structure cannot be analysed separately. Structures are created, maintained and changed through individual actions, while actions are given meaningful form only through the organisational practices embedded within the institution. The line of causality runs in both directions making it impossible to determine what is changing what.

In one of the few studies in this area Grey and Garsten (2001) argue along similar lines:

> *We do not think that it is possible to understand the operation of systems and structures without reference to the individuals who reproduce those structures. Equally, we cannot envisage individuals trusting each other without the conceptual apparatus of social systems…..To put the matter a less abstract way, the existence of predictability in an organisation will encompass both personal contact and knowledge and anonymous systems. Our interest is in the imbrication of the two, rather than with one or the other (p.231).*

This study strongly aligns with the view that trust between leadership and staff in schools is dependent not only on the attributes and characteristics of the leader but also the structures and processes the leader develops and maintains throughout the organisation. In this sense leaders need to be cognisant of inconsistent policies and organisational procedures that are likely to breed or perpetuate a lack of trust among students, staff, and parents. This view is supported by more recent findings in the organisational literature that suggest trust is linked to the organisational practices leaders develop in the institution (Grey & Garsten, 2001; Dirks and Ferrin, 2002; Uhl-Bien, 2006). It also aligns strongly with the work of Tschannen-Moran (2004) who argues that trust in organisations such as schools is dependent not just on the characteristics of the leader:

> *….but also the institutional mechanisms, such as policies, rules, and regulations that support trust (p.44).*

Leithwood & Beatty (2009) point to a need to redesign our organisations in a manner that builds a culture of collaborative work and highlight the importance of creating and sustaining structures that are consistent with such a culture (p.98). So what are the organisational practices that would develop and enhance such collegiality and collective responsibility? Data from this research project drew attention to the following themes in regards to organisational practices that build trust across the school community. They were:

- structures and processes that bring people together to gain a better understanding of each others' life experiences, values and belief systems
- utilising formal and informal structures to bring people together to develop and sustain a shared sense of purpose and commitment to the organisation
- the development and enactment of agreed values or norms
- shared decision-making
- ceremonies and celebrations that acknowledge and recognise achievement

The findings from this study underlined the value of leaders developing and maintaining *structures and processes that bring people together to enable a better understanding of each others' life experiences, values and belief systems*. As Barlow (2001) argues trust grows through getting to know each other through human interactions. Putnam (2000) refers to this as a 'bridging' form of social capital where the leader seizes opportunities to link people, who do not have strong social ties, to build a sense of community and identity. More recent research in the field of social network theory highlights the importance of developing the social ties between members of the school community. It is argued that the more an organisation provides opportunities for members to enter the stream of social activity, the more likely new ideas are going to be exchanged and practices created (Daly, 2010; Baker-Doyle & Yoon, 2010; Borgatti & Offem, 2010; Leithwood & Beatty, 2008). In a study involving 775 educators across 53 schools Moolenar & Sleegers (2010) found that:

> *….teacher teams characterised by a common-exchange of work-related information and discourse are the cornerstones of organisational climates in which teachers not only trust each other, but also have a 'can-do' attitude toward change and innovation, are willing to try new ideas and collectively develop new knowledge, and are continuously working to improve instructional practice (p.112).*

Also evident from the findings was the importance of leaders *utilising formal and informal structures to bring people together to develop and sustain a shared sense of purpose and commitment to the organisation*. In building a sense of community and identity the leader needs to offer and shape a vision or purpose for the school's mission or ideals that connect with all sections of the community. Information gathered through this study distinguishes trusted leaders as those people who are able to cultivate a shared vision for the future and inspire a sense of hope and possibility across the school community. This links strongly with the work of Leithwood and Beatty (2008) who point out that teacher self-efficacy is positively influenced by processes the Principal engages with, 'to develop a shared and inspiring sense of direction for the school' (p.53). It was also apparent that levels of trust rose where the leader openly shared their hopes, desires and expectations as part of this process. This aligns with the work of researchers such as Bryk and Schneider (2002) who state:

> *The principal's articulation of a compelling vision for 'our school community' and corollary actions that can be interpreted as enlivening that vision, go a long way toward fostering a collective sense of engagement….such behaviour speaks directly to the integrity dimension in teachers' discernments about trusting their principal. (p.29)*

Researchers such as Boisenier and Chatman (2002) have brought to our attention that a strong sense of community and cultural clarity exists where there is a *shared a set of norms, values, and beliefs* that govern relationships and organisational practices within our institutions. They argue that organisations with a strong culture create clear and coherent values and expect that members agree with and care intensely about those values. Agreement refers to the level of consensus among members about organisational values and associated behavioural norms, while intensity refers to members' demonstrated commitment to those values. It seems that successful organisations exist where the normative structure creates a strong overarching culture that allows for

trust and predictability, while promoting information and resource sharing. Clarification of why certain norms or values are agreed upon, and agreement on what processes are required to transform these espoused values into values-in-use is an important part of the trust-building process. Findings from this study substantiate this view and emphasise the importance of developing and enacting an agreed set of values or norms in the trust building process. It was also stressed that there needed to be a level of integrity between the rhetoric and the delivery in regards to the norms and values that underpin the school community.

In building this sense of community and a trust-based culture this study also highlighted the importance of staff seeing themselves *deeply embedded in decision-making processes aligned with their work*. Genuine shared decision-making where staff exert influence over the outcomes of decisions that affect them has a positive impact on levels of trust in the organisation. This aligns with the research in this area that highlights the positive impact of shared decision-making on satisfaction, motivation, morale and self-esteem (Leithwood & Beatty, 2008; Gamage & Antonio, 2006; Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991). Decisions may be initiated by leadership but it is then important that the final decision is driven by debate and emerging consensus from the stakeholders. Organisational practices that support teacher's voice and procedures that afford staff real opportunities to raise issues improves the level of trust between leadership and staff, from the teachers perspective. Troman (2000) argues that organisations with limited participation in decision-making see an increase in anxiety and a decrease in trust. The findings suggest that structures need to be established that provide opportunities for staff to have a say in the organisation's key directions with a strong sense of partnership permeating through the school's decision-making processes. Similarly, Daly (2009) highlights the need for teachers to be involved in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies while Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) argue that the effect of teachers' trust in the leader become less important when decisions are shared and a professional community is present. It seems that a powerful way to build a solid foundation of trust is to make the decision-making processes as transparent and

participatory as possible. An emphasis on shared decision-making processes offers a unique opportunity to develop a stronger sense of community or as Fielding (1999) describes 'a new collegium' within the educational context. A crucial element in developing such a community will be dispositions that encourage democratic and socially just practices.

Any discussion that links leadership with the concept of democratic learning communities also needs to address the issue of power and control and its visibility, or otherwise, in the school community. More contemporary approaches to leadership denote 'powerful leaders' as those prepared to give power away by empowering staff and not using power in a coercive manner (Forster, 2005). The literature review for this study has already highlighted that while schools may seek to reorchestrate power relations, they cannot remove them. Fielding (2001) argues:

> *…even if organisational structures are flatter, segmentalism eroded, teams empowered, status replaced by stature, and information more readily accessible, power remains as interstitial as it ever was in the heyday of archetypical bureaucratic organisations (p.7).*

The danger here is to view power only in a negative sense - that it is destructive in organisations. Researchers such as Grey & Carston (2001) conceptualise power and control as being productive as well as repressive and go on to define 'trust' as a specific form of power. They see trust as a social process through which control is affected in the sense of rendering people and events relatively predictable. This study has shown that this sense of trust in the leader is derived from formal equality, individual rights, public discussion of issues, and authority which is negotiated rather than given by tradition. It implies equality, mutual respect, autonomy, decision-making through communication and freedom from punitive actions.

If trust is dependent upon the creation of a truly democratic learning community then leaders need to be constantly aware of their 'position' in the organisation and their ability to influence and determine what is valued and accepted in the daily life of the school. There is a danger in utilising democratic language to bring people's views and expectations 'into line' with their own plans and ambitions. Due to their positional status leaders can:

> *…shape and fashion what can be said and what must be left unsaid, the types of discourse accepted as true and the mechanisms that make it possible to distinguish between truth and error' (*Popkewitz, 1987, pp.4-5*).*

School leaders are particularly well placed to do this since they operate at nodal points of organisational life where a number of circuits of power intersect. Rather than a true democratic community power lies with those who are able to create what Foucalt (1980) terms 'a regime of truth' describing, 'the type of discourse that society accepts and makes true' (p.131). If staff perceive that their involvement in decision-making has no real impact and they are afforded little real influence over organisational decisions that matter to them then levels of trust will be weakened. As Tschannen–Moran (2004) comments:

> *When principals 'talk the talk' of shared decision-making but simply go through the motions, trust is undermined by raising teacher's expectations and creating cynicism when words don't match actions (*p.80*).*

This study has also illustrated that democratic practice is not solely about creating consensus, but also about how the school deals with difference and diversity. The development of a democratic community in schools needs to:

> *…embrace difference as an important source of practical energy and intellectual activity (*Fielding, 1999, p.24-25*).*

Schools need to be led and managed in such a way as to enable all members of the community to play an active role in shaping and improving the educational program. Authority needs to be centred on expertise rather than position and people within the school community need to feel that all ideas and perspectives are considered and valued in the decision-making process. As Respondent 5 commented:

> *I don't trust someone if they don't show professionally, a genuine interest in anything I would bring up as a concern or just an interest; and value in my opinion or my concern with something. If someone was disregarding it or not treating it as a priority it would create an issue with me being able to approach issues with them.*

And as Fielding (1999) contends:

> *The heart of the democratic project lies in dialogic encounter' based on an equality, both expressive of and contributing to the furtherance of a democratic way of life (*p.25*).*

In this context there is preparedness and a capacity within the school community to be both teachers of, and learners from, each other within the context of a shared set of ideals. At the heart of this democratic project lie the dispositions of the leader as well as processes that ensure shared and transparent decision-making across the school community.

It was apparent through the study that teachers expected distributive fairness in the allocation of resources and comments from staff underlined the importance of leaders developing and maintaining procedures that focused on the *equitable distribution of resources* throughout the organisation. Bryk and Schneider (2002) argue that school leaders exercise considerable authority over the resources that govern major aspects of teachers' work conditions and that the allocative mechanisms they develop for these resources signal the status and personal

regard for individuals and groups within the school. This has a significant impact on the perspective and beliefs of staff that relate directly to the level of trust attributed to the leader. This also aligns with the work of Krafft et al. (2004) who contend that a significant positive relationship exists between distributive justice and interpersonal trust with perceived inequities in the manner in which resources are distributed leading, in all likelihood, to mistrust. This is supported by the findings from this study that stress the importance of leaders embedding organisational processes and structures that build equality and inclusivity across the education community.

The final theme that emerged from this study was the importance of *celebration and acknowledgement* as an endeavour that built trust between staff and leadership and amongst all members of the school community. It appears that regular celebration builds trust, motivation and momentum and this aligns with the limited amount of research in this area (Leithwood & Beatty, 2008; Linberg, 2009; Garrett and Davies, 2010; Colville, 2007). As Colville (2007) states:

> *Principals perceived that celebrating the successes; small and large, both personal and school helped to build trust in a school. This celebrating success was part of the open, benevolent process that built and ensured the positive culture in which trust flourished (p. 45).*

Recognising contributions and offering praise and credit where it is due has powerful symbolic meaning with the findings from this study drawing attention to the positive impact these rituals have on trust. As Garret and Davies (2010) comment:

> *Public recognition and praise for the contribution played by many people in achieving beneficial outcomes for the institution … brings out the very best in people (p.88).*

Leadership & Trust –

A duality between Personal and Organisational Integrity

The findings of this study support the notion that formal organisational practices and policies and informal social structures such as norms and values support the development and sustainability of trustworthiness across the institution. As I have already indicated there is a limited amount of literature and research in this area which certainly merits further investigation. Borgatti and Offem (2010) point out that in traditional social science we tend to use an explanatory mechanism that focuses on the qualities or attributes of leaders to explain differences in the performance of organisations. The leader's success is defined in terms of his or her human capital, which includes things such as education, skills sets, experience, value base and so on. This view fails to take into account the web of relationships in which leaders and the organisation are embedded that both constrain and enhance the work they do. To better explain the leaders performance we need to not only examine the characteristics of the leader, but also the systems and structures they have embedded within the organisation. A small section of the current literature and research provides an interpretation of integrity that addresses this anomily. This interpretation draws together both the individual and organisational elements of leadership, providing a useful framework for interpreting leadership behaviour and actions that develop and sustain a sense of trust across the school community.

Integrity is derived from the Latin term *integer*, meaning wholeness or completeness. The Oxford dictionary defines integrity as:

1 the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles :
a gentleman of complete integrity

2 the state of being whole and undivided:
upholding territorial integrity
the condition of being unified or sound in construction:
the structural integrity of the novel

Some researchers have taken up this theme relating the concept of integrity to wholeness (Palanski and Yammarino, 2007; Worden, 2003). The use of integrity

to indicate wholeness suggests that integrity is multi-faceted, and tends to be an inclusive term that subsumes other aspects. Following this theme Badaracco and Elsworth (1992) describe integrity as consisting of:

> *….a manager's personal values, daily actions, and basic organisational aims* (p.29).

The findings from this study draw attention to a number of personal and organisational attributes that build trust-based relationships between leadership and staff. I would argue that each of these relate to the leader's moral principles and highlight the importance of leaders maintaining a consistency between what they say, their espoused values and principles, and the actions or behaviours they engage with – at both an individual and organisational level. These qualities provide a foundation for leaders to meet the challenges of an increasingly uncertain and complex future where trust is thought to be a more appropriate mechanism for controlling organisational life. Taking into account the findings from this study I would argue that the concept of 'integrity as wholeness' is a useful construct in defining the qualities that are going to best serve our school leaders in building a trust-based culture throughout their community. As Heineman (2008) argues, the building of systems, processes and practices that are shaped around clearly articulated principles, values and beliefs build's a high integrity culture characterised by honesty, fairness, reliability and trustworthiness.

To best illustrate this theory I would like to return to the concept of accountability in schools. The literature review from this study has already highlighted that current accountability systems create a tension for leaders as they seek to develop and maintain trust-based relationships throughout the school community. Trust is seen to be eroded through the imposition of standards, regulations and forms of public reporting which blame and punish while purporting to show the relative efficiency, or inefficiency, of teachers and school leaders. Fullan (2010) refers to this as 'pressure without means' where systems highlight the goals and failures but provide little to no direction on how to get there. Referring to current accountability systems he goes on to state:

> *It omits or gives lip service to capacity building – how to build the individual and collective knowledge, skills, competencies, and motivation necessary to work on the problem (*Fullan, 2010, p. 2*).*

I would argue that a more productive means to discuss and interpret the link between trust and accountability, and the issues surrounding the notion of accountability in schools, could be explored through the notion of integrity as 'wholeness'. A school could be said to be acting with integrity when there is strong alignment between agreements of best practice and what is taking place in the classroom – there is 'synergy between rhetoric and delivery'. In this sense all staff take responsibility for maintaining the norms and committing to the agreements. The leader drives a culture of integrity by bringing the community together to develop collective ownership of a vision for the school and a set of agreed practices that bring that vision to life. An important part of this process would be the opportunity for all members of the school community to surface existing mental models around teaching and learning through discussions that examine unspoken assumptions related to this topic. Weinbaum et al (2004) argue that to learn effectively and help others to learn, we must identify our preconceptions about the world and human relations. These preconceptions help us make 'order out of the chaos' of the ideas, impressions, information, and sensations that we receive every moment of the day (p15). These conversations should provide an opportunity for all sections of the school community to uncover contrasting beliefs about educational programs, pedagogical approaches and student achievement as the school works to align a collective vision with an agreed set of practices.

This process would also bring to light the possibilities for how external performance-based systems of accountability might be balanced and enhanced by internal systems of accountability. This form of accountability would attempt to build coherence between external mandates, stated beliefs about learning and classroom practice by focusing on building the capacity of teachers to meet instructional needs. As Fullan (2010) argues:

> *…stimulating, coordinating, and sustaining coherent development across schools is exceedingly difficult because it requires balancing top-down and bottom-up forces…instructional change is going to require different strategies that help develop and shape collective capacity and shared commitment to engage in continuous improvement (p.295).*

Closely linked to this discussion is the concept of professional judgement and the role this plays in developing a trust-based culture and the school's accountability processes. The participants in the study drew attention to the importance of leaders respecting the knowledge and expertise that the teacher brought to the learning environment, as well as the decisions the teacher makes within that environment. There was a strong emphasis on valuing the 'professional judgment' of teachers with comments such as:

> *They trust your professional judgment – they are not the higher authority, the power holders that they trust you to make a judgement call….*
>
> Respondent 2

and

> *It's implicit trust in our professionalism.*
>
> Respondent 20

The ideology of professionalism is an important one in terms of trust. Professionalism has traditionally been associated with trustworthiness so that a commitment on the part of an employee or leader to doing a professional job offers a basis for trust (Grey & Garston, 2001). Professions are traditionally seen to develop a specialised body of knowledge, a base of clients, a self-regulating system of accountability, and strict guidelines for professional membership (City et al., 2009). These characteristics are an important part of the trust building process and point to a need for teacher's professional judgment to be strongly linked to a strong evidence base around best practice and whole school

agreements regarding what is valued in terms of specialised knowledge and skills. I would argue that these actions would ensure that there is integrity in the professional judgement of teachers and a sense of accountability that builds trust across the community.

Elmore (2005) argues along similar lines stating that a school builds trust between stakeholders when there is strong alignment between agreements of best practice and what is taking place in the classroom. In this sense all staff take responsibility for maintaining the agreed norms of the organisation and committing to collective agreements. Vertical accountability systems remain in place, but these are complemented by network-based mutual and reciprocal accountability systems, more driven by outcomes and common learning tasks than rank or position. A school with high integrity will have moved from a collection of independent practitioners acting in idiosyncratic ways to a staff with a shared set or practices, a body of collective knowledge, and a set of mutual commitments that define professional accountability.

This richer concept of accountability moves the conversation from a focus on prescription and compliance to one centred on building a meaningful purpose for teachers' work that is closely linked to a set of coherent and consistent agreements regarding best practice. As Elmore (2005) states:

> *Avoiding the trap of compliance requires more or less explicit contractual arrangements that emphasise the reciprocity of performance and investments in knowledge and skill. People in schools cannot be expected to do things that they do now know how to do, but they can be expected to learn how to do what is necessary if they operate in an environment in which demands for performance are coupled with reciprocal support for learning (p.299).*

In my view, the public trust in schooling and a greater trust between educators will grow out of a process of thoughtful deliberation and a collective commitment to what is best practice in our classrooms. A process that builds

integrity between what we state is best practice, and what we see taking place in our classrooms.

In Conclusion

In a society characterised by increasing uncertainty and complexity our schools require more participative management styles that focus on building a sense of community and inquiry. The responsibility for cultivating and sustaining this spirit of inquiry rests with our leaders and their ability to develop and maintain a culture that values learning, caring and exploration. Schools with high levels of trust have been found to be more likely to seek new ideas, reach out to the community, and commit to organizational goals (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Studies of trust as a factor in school improvement have begun to illuminate the actions that leaders take which positively alter the culture in a school (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Louis, 2007; Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

This research project has clearly illustrated that a strong foundation for trust-based relationships between leaders and staff can be built around a sense of both a personal and organisational integrity. This integrity is shaped by the individual leader's attributes of:

- Openness
- Compassion
- Respect
- Honesty
- Confidentiality
- A willingness to acknowledge and recognise others
- A commitment to treating people equitably
- A language of contribution
- Consistency between words and actions

The study has also shown that these qualities need to sit alongside a set of organisational practices that build a sense of community and collective responsibility. These include:

- Developing and maintaining structures and processes that bring people together to enable a better understanding of each others' life experiences, values and belief systems
- Utilising formal and informal structures to bring people together to develop and sustain a shared sense of purpose and commitment to the organisation
- Ceremonies and celebrations that acknowledge and recognise achievement
- The collegial development and enactment of agreed norms, processes, expectations and protocols.
- Decision-making processes where staff are deeply embedded in decisions aligned with their work.

Figure 1.1 illustrates this relationship.

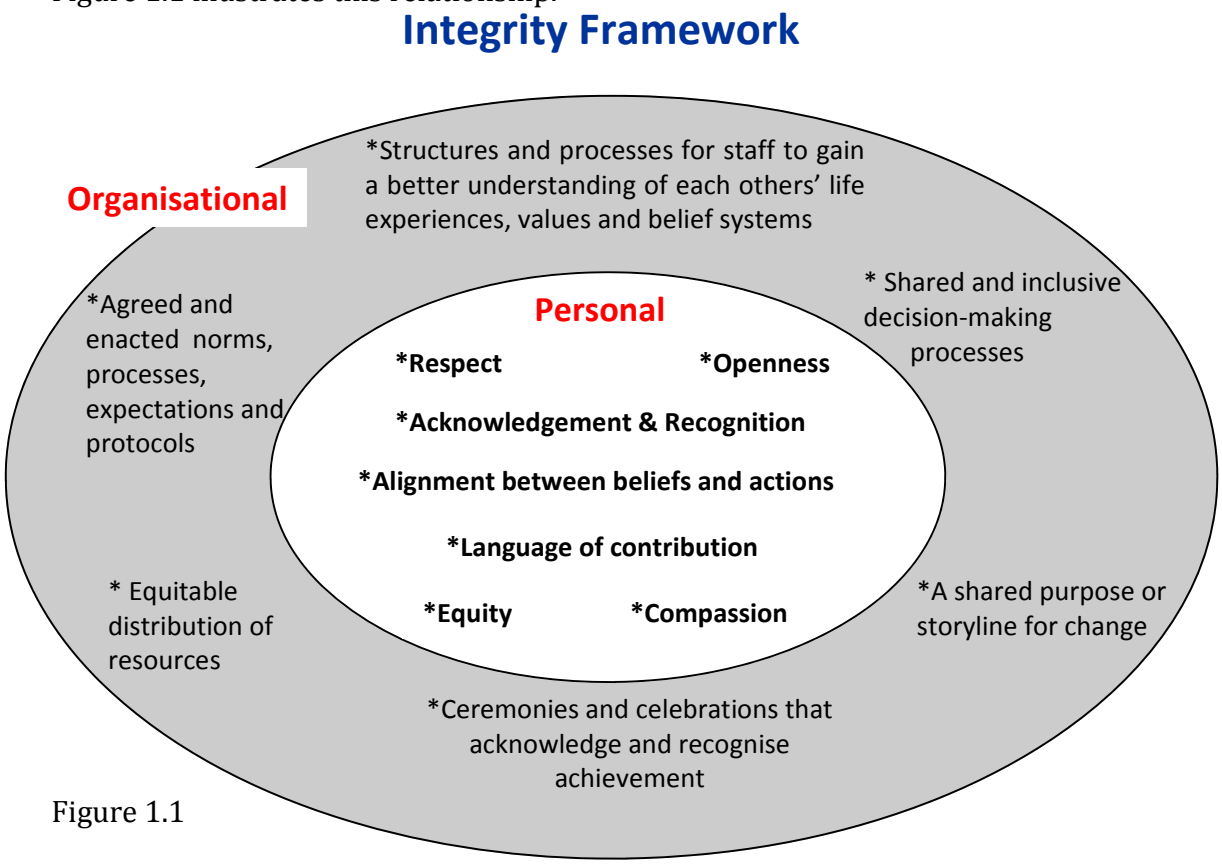

Figure 1.1

Our school leaders play a crucial role in reinventing traditional schooling to reflect the needs and desires of staff, students and the community in a time of rapid social, economic, political and technological change. It is apparent from the literature and the findings from this study that our leaders need a fundamental consistency between personal beliefs, organisational aims and processes, and their day-to-day behaviour as they work to create and sustain a trust-based culture. The intent of this study has been to explore these actions and further develop our understanding of trust in leadership. While I believe the issues raised in this study are important in progressing our understanding of the individual and organisational attributes that work towards creating a trust-based culture in schools, they are by no means exhaustive. The outcomes of this research provide evidence of the need for more in depth and sustained research to identify the attributes and characteristics of school leaders that enhance or diminish the level of trust in schools. It is my belief that establishing and sustaining stronger trust-based cultures within our schools will place leaders in a better position to effect the changes that are required within these institutions. A stronger social bond between leaders and staff will see an enhanced sense of community, increased motivation, a willingness to engage with risk and a greater sense of efficacy among its members. As Beatty (2007) argues:

> *A major challenge for all staff involved in whole school renewal is how to handle the complex emotional meaning-making processes associated with attachment to the status quo that can impede or impel the successful reinvention of a school. Indeed holistic approaches that build inclusive trusting relationships that are sufficiently resilient to tough it out during the inevitable turbulence are the most likely to succeed (p.329).*

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APPENDIX 1: Trust Research Questions

Questions and Prompts for Informal Group Interviews

- Can you talk about an event or situation that illustrates trust in this school? Something that took place that fostered trust?
- Can you talk about an event or situation that was detrimental to developing a trusting culture? Something that caused you to lose trust?
- How would you define the concept of trust?
- Think of a school leader with whom you had/have a high trust relationship. What is it that inspired/inspires confidence in this particular relationship?
- Think of a school leader with whom you had/have a low trust relationship. What is it that did not inspire confidence in this particular relationship?
- What are the signs that trust is either present or absent in a school?

APPENDIX 2: Research Information Sheet

Research Information Sheet

During 2008 I will be carrying out a research project supervised by the University of South Australia looking at how school leaders can build trust within their organisations. I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

Although the concept of trust has emerged in a number of studies as a key element in improving schools little systematic research exits on this topic. This proposed study aims to investigate the behaviours and actions of school leaders that can both increase or diminish the level of trust in schools. The purpose is to identify what school leaders can do to engender trust within the educational community.

The study will involve school leaders, teachers, school service officers and bilingual school service officers working at Ingle Farm Primary. Participants will be invited to talk about their experiences regarding the concept of trust in an interview of about 45-60 minutes. Interviews will be arranged for mutual convenience and involve 3-4 staff in a group interview format. Participation will be purely voluntary and people will be free to leave the study at any time without consequence. All conversations will be confidential and published materials will in no way identify the people involved.

The information collected and any associated findings will be presented back to participants in the research project for discussion and analysis before publication outside our school community. Confidentiality will be assured and all names and personal information will be changed or omitted in transcripts and published materials. Each participant will be allocated a pseudonym and a reference code which will be used to identify data associated with each individual participant. All personal information and keys to the participant code will be kept secure and separate from the data. All information collected as part of the study will be retained for five years in the secured document archives at Ingle Farm Primary.

The final report and any interim publications will be made available to all research participants.

The Executive Officer of the UniSA ethics committee, Vicki Allen, will be available to discuss any ethical concerns about the project or answer questions about the rights of participants. She can be contacted at the University of South Australia (ph.) 83023118. If you have any immediate queries concerning the nature of the proposed study, please contact my supervisor, Professor Alan Reid, on (ph.) 83026431.

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