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Growing great deputies: A mixed methods investigation of the career progression, perceptions and educational leadership practices of deputy principals in secondary schools

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ABSTRACT

Within the extensive body of literature regarding school leadership and leadership preparation, little attention is afforded to deputy principals (DPs). While the influence of leaders on student learning outcomes is now generally acknowledged, and preparation programs for leaders are increasingly offered, attention is focused almost entirely on principals.

This study investigates the career progression and leadership work of deputy principals in secondary schools, as these senior leaders not only form the pipeline for future principals but are assigned significant responsibilities in their current roles. Analysis of the literature in three interrelated areas of inquiry – deputy principals, educational leadership, and preparation and succession – confirms the paucity of research about DPs and implies the need for additional large-scale empirical studies.

This mixed methods study focuses on deputy principals in government secondary schools in New South Wales, Australia, in 2012-2013. It examines their aspirations, preparation for the role, perceptions of and engagement in educational leadership. In a two phase design, data are collected in an online questionnaire followed by semi-structured interviews. The concept of educational leadership is operationalised in a new self-assessment scale, allowing insights into the specific types of activities engaged in by DPs. Results from quantitative and qualitative data analysis are integrated to generate inferences.

Findings suggest that these deputies experienced only ad hoc preparation for their role, requiring no specific formal learning, and that only about half aspired to the principalship. Participants' perceptions of educational leadership were not fully aligned with current literature, and their leadership efforts were largely directed to activities which the research suggests have limited direct impact on student learning.

Recommendations are made for further research into leadership in the secondary context, including the potential contribution of 'career deputies'. Urgent review of leadership preparation, recruitment and development policies is recommended.

STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This thesis has not been submitted for consideration for any other degree from any educational institution. It represents my original work, performed under the guidance and supervision of supervisors at Macquarie University. All instances where the work of others has informed the study or creation of this thesis have been referenced appropriately.

Approval to undertake the study informing this thesis has been provided by Faculty of Human Sciences Ethics under reference number 5201100910.

_____ _____

Wanda Snitch **Date**

Macquarie University Supervisory Panel

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The completion of this study and thesis could not have been achieved without the support of many people within schools, from Macquarie University and among my family and friends.

Firstly, it relied on the willing co-operation and input of many deputy principals in secondary schools, including the Executive of the NSW Secondary Deputy Principals Association. Their support as participants and their feedback as the work progressed made this study not only possible but worthwhile. I trust that the findings of this thesis can repay, in some small way, the time and attention given to me by these busy people.

I wish to acknowledge the support of my supervisors, each of whom contributed in different ways to the successful completion of this thesis. Dr Norman McCulla, as principal supervisor, engaged with my evolving ideas over the length of my candidature and provided true 'grist for the mill' with his incisive comments. Dr John De Nobile's support for my explorations of the 'dark arts' of statistical analysis was invaluable, while Associate Professor Matt Bower brought fresh eyes and a blend of holistic and detailed analysis to bear at critical moments. Thank you all, gentlemen.

The understanding and advice offered by others at Macquarie and elsewhere helped me throughout. To my PhD colleagues, thank you for your support and companionship. Congratulations to those who have already graduated, and best wishes to those continuing. To others who showed interest and offered advice in their own precious time, including Dr Greg Robertson, Dr Mariya Pachman and Grant Beard, your expertise and patience were very much appreciated.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to two strong and influential women in my life, my mother Venus Stiles and my dear auntie, Francie Witchard. Neither had the benefit of formal education, yet both modelled throughout their lives the value of reading, learning and hard work.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACARA	Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
BES	Best Evidence Synthesis (Robinson et al., 2009)
BOSTES	Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards
CELSA	'Contextual Educational Leadership Self-assessment' scale
DEC	Department of Education and Communities (NSW) 2012-2015
DET	Department of Education and Training (NSW) until 2012
DoE	Department of Education (NSW) from 2015
EL	Educational leadership
HT	Head teacher (Secondary, head of subject or department)
IQ	Interview question
KLA	Key Learning Area (group of subjects)
MMR	Mixed methods research
NSW	New South Wales (Australia)
NSWIT	NSW Institute of Teachers (absorbed into BOSTES 2014-2016)
NSWSDPA	NSW Secondary Deputy Principals Association
NSWTF	NSW Teachers Federation, the union representing primary and secondary teachers
QS	Questionnaire section
RQ	Research question
SMT	Senior Management Team

LIST OF APPENDICES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

> The young police constable entered my office gingerly, showing some discomfort when invited to sit opposite me at my deputy principal's desk. Glancing around he observed, 'The last time I was in the deputy's office I was at high school and I was in big trouble. When you saw the deputy, you knew you were in big trouble.'

This research focuses on deputy principals in secondary schools, and the need to investigate their career progression and work particularly in relation to educational leadership. Based on the lack of research attention to secondary deputies, and support from the literature for such analysis, the purpose of the study is established in this chapter. The research questions are presented, and finally the remaining chapters are outlined to explain how the structure of this thesis attends to the research purpose.

BACKGROUND

The links between school leadership and student learning outcomes are of increasing interest in the academic literature and to governments, communities and media, as education is perceived to contribute to national prosperity as well as individual and social benefits (Fink, 2010; Pont, Nusche, & Moorman, 2008; Pounder, 2011). Governments, systems and professional associations currently invest considerable resources into developing leaders, particularly principals, who will provide educational leadership which focuses on and will result in improved student learning outcomes (Barber, Whelan, & Clark, 2010; Cowie & Crawford, 2007; Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, & Orr, 2007; Dempster, Lovett, & Flückiger, 2011).

Of much less prominence is investigation into the potential of the deputy principal (also referred to as DP or deputy in this study), specifically in secondary schools, to contribute to this educational leadership. Research into the role of deputy principals is incomplete and generally dated (Kwan & Walker, 2012), but findings indicate that a majority are primarily engaged in administrative and reactive activities which preclude participation in educational leadership, despite their expressed desire to do so (Harris, Muijs, & Crawford, 2003; Oleszewski, Shoho, & Barnett, 2012). It appears that they may be an underutilised leadership resource at a time when such resources are sorely needed.

Personal motivation for the study

It has been suggested that a 'researchable idea' may arise from everyday life, practical issues, past research or theory (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 61). The impetus for this study can be traced back to significant moments in my professional and academic experience which occurred concurrently with developments in both the theory and practice of school education and leadership. As a school teacher and executive I developed an interest in school improvement, quality assurance and leadership. Additional experience in evaluation projects, membership of professional associations and professional learning led to my completing a Master of Educational Leadership where I developed a particular interest in leadership at levels other than the principal, which seemed to dominate the conversation. In subsequent consultancy and team leadership roles I worked with teachers to support curriculum and pedagogical change, and with middle executives in developing leadership capabilities. Here, I came to question why approaches in these areas were not more closely aligned, by the application of emerging knowledge of school change and leadership development to the issue of improved classroom teaching and student learning outcomes. I also came to the belief that change in the secondary school context was especially difficult, but appeared to receive less attention in the literature.

One group of executives I worked with who appeared to experience great tension between their ideal and real work, or role conflict (Turner & Sykes, 2007), was secondary deputy principals. They expressed particular difficulty in operating as educational leaders, focusing on student and teacher learning, as they were preoccupied with administrative and student management matters. Some deputy principals expressed frustration at the lack of professional development available prior to and within their current role, while others felt that this was not the job they envisaged, nor one which was preparing them for a future principal role. This was particularly concerning at a time when demographic changes in many Western countries were expected to create increasing vacancies for principals (Fink, 2010). There appeared to be limited attention to these issues in the deputy principal role in the literature.

During this period prominent researchers were exploring the challenges of school leadership and developing the concepts of leadership for learning (Dempster, 2009; Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006; Marks & Printy, 2003) and distributed leadership (Hallinger & Heck, 2009; Harris & Spillane, 2008), both of which had implications for secondary DPs. A 2005 keynote presentation entitled '*Putting education back into*

educational leadership' (Robinson, 2005) echoed my own concerns and interests very closely. My developing interest in educational leadership, the professional concerns of DPs and realisation that there was little focused research in the area then coincided with my own appointment to a secondary DP position. There I experienced similar tensions to those described above, and explored these with colleagues at meetings and in conference presentations.

With many systems urgently exploring the preparation of school leaders, but the role of DPs continuing to be under-represented in the literature, there appeared to be a genuine need for further exploration of the role of deputy principals in secondary schools and of preparation for it. It seemed that I was well positioned, as someone with both academic and professional interest in the deputy principal role and in educational leadership, and with established links to a large cohort of practitioners, to undertake research in this seemingly neglected area.

STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

A review of the literature, as evidenced in the sections which follow, reveals that we simply do not know enough about the deputy principal role from a number of perspectives including the expectations of leadership placed on it, the lived experiences within it, the preparation for it, and the succession to leadership beyond it.

The impact of school leaders on the learning outcomes of their students is under continuing scrutiny as nations look to education to support their economic competitiveness in a globalised world (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Tait, 2013). Over the last two decades the previously disparate fields of educational research into school effectiveness (focusing on data about standardised student achievement) and school improvement (describing and developing models of school leadership) have been drawn together in an effort to demonstrate how school leadership can positively influence student learning, a need identified by Stoll & Fink (1996). In response to international interest, the major OECD Improving School Leadership Project (2008) identified policy levers which school systems may adopt to develop leaders ready to improve school outcomes. These included redefining and distributing school leadership, developing leadership skills and knowledge and making school leadership a more attractive profession (Pont et al., 2008).

In this environment, systems and professional associations in Australia and around the globe currently expend considerable resources on research, development of standards, and

professional learning aimed at producing school leaders (generally principals) who are ready to provide this educational leadership (Anderson, Kleinhenz, Mulford, & Gurr, 2008; Huber & Pashiardis, 2008; Lumby, Crow, & Pashiardis, 2008). Despite the very visible and significant responsibilities generally assigned to the deputy principal position, particularly in the secondary school context, there is much less attention devoted to their potential contribution to this leadership. Indeed, Hallinger (2011) notes a paucity of research in the secondary context, particularly around the notions of instructional leadership, over a fifty year period. Perhaps the only relatively current Australian empirical researchers in the area of secondary DP leadership (Cranston, Tromans, & Reugebrink, 2004) refer to them as 'forgotten leaders'. An examination of the existing literature focusing on secondary deputy principals reveals that it is patchy, dated, often anecdotal rather than empirical and can seem to amount to a litany of complaints about the role without offering any solutions. This lack of coverage, currency and methodological strength weakens the knowledge base regarding this important group.

Some trends which may be inferred from this limited base include that DPs have poorly defined roles, and see their daily practice as reactive and managerial rather than proactive and strategic (Hausman, Nebeker, McCreary, & Donaldson, 2002). A reasonably consistent theme is that educational leadership is seen as a small part of their daily reality despite it being an area where they wish to take an active part (Farnham, 2009). A somewhat concerning finding from some studies is that deputies feel they are being poorly prepared to be principals and frequently lack confidence to aspire to the role (Cranston, 2006; James & Whiting, 1998b). The factors hindering or enabling deputies to undertake educational leadership roles have not been coherently outlined, though some studies suggest that either the lack of, or implicit, role definition, unrealistic expectations and relationships with principals bear further investigation (Muijs & Harris, 2003). Unfortunately, across this body of work the construct of educational leadership has rarely been defined to reflect recent understandings, so resultant findings lack consistency and authority. The above tentative themes provide important justification for further research, revealing a need for further large scale, empirical studies which include a strong conceptualisation of the notion of educational leadership.

In addition, there is an increasing realisation that satisfying the need for qualified and prepared leaders in schools will become an urgent priority as the well-recognised demographic pressures continue to create large numbers of vacancies in principal positions (Fink & Brayman, 2006; Gronn & Rawlings-Sanaei, 2003). Growing attention to how school

leaders can best be prepared and developed for educational leadership focusing on student learning has direct implications for future deputies as well as current incumbents who may aspire to the principal role. The preparation of deputies for their overall role or more specifically their contribution to educational leadership is rarely addressed or at best is only implied in the leadership preparation literature.

Deputy principals in secondary schools operating in a diverse range of school situations in the largest school system in the southern hemisphere provided a unique opportunity for investigating the deputy principal role. Such analysis has the potential to enable greater understanding of what conditions need to occur for deputies to operate at optimum capacity to lead learning, both in their current roles and in preparation for the principalship.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In order to address this problem, the purpose of this study is to investigate the role of secondary school deputy principals (DPs) in one large government school system in Australia. It specifically aims to examine what types of factors influence their engagement in educational leadership. To this end, the impact of a number of personal background, school context and leadership preparation factors are explored. To enable the investigation, the study aims to develop a theory-based and methodologically sound tool for assessing educational leadership practice.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this study the following definitions are used for key terms.

Deputy principal (DP). The term secondary deputy principal is used to refer to positions generally perceived as the second level of leadership in the organisational hierarchy after the principal in secondary schools; that is, schools catering for the most part for students between 12 and 18 years of age. The title may vary in different jurisdictions, including terms such as vice principal, deputy head or assistant principal, but the structures are generally recognisable (Leithwood, 2016). There may be several people in a school in this position, answering to the principal and acting in his/her absence when required. While the interpretation of the role may vary between, and sometimes within, school systems, there is generally a recognisable position at this 'second in charge' level. The role and issues of the deputy in the secondary school are considered to be sufficiently different from that in the primary school to warrant separate study.

Educational leadership. The notion of educational leadership is pivotal to this inquiry, but is itself a contested and evolving concept. For the purposes of this study, educational leadership refers to leadership in schools which is focused on teaching and learning, with a view to improving the educational outcomes of students. It embraces leadership which supports the professional development of teachers in order to improve student learning. Importantly, this conceptualisation of educational leadership is not limited to the overall school leader or principal.

Preparation and succession. Preparation and succession refer to any steps taken to prepare individuals to fill current or future leadership vacancies in schools, including but not limited to principals, and to develop them in their roles. It includes policies and procedures applied by a jurisdiction to prepare, select, recruit and support suitably qualified individuals for school leadership positions. Preparation generally refers to steps taken prior to appointment, and succession to support provided while in the role, but there is frequent overlap in the application of these terms.

The NSW government school system has undergone several name changes in the last ten years from the Department of Education and Training (DET) to the Department of Education and Communities (DEC), and more recently to the Department of Education (DoE). The name at the time of the study, and used by participants, was DEC so this term or 'the Department' is generally used throughout this thesis.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Each research question applies to deputy principals in New South Wales (Australia) government secondary schools.

1. Do deputy principals aspire to the role of principal?
2. How have deputy principals been prepared for the responsibilities of this role?
3. How do the perceptions of deputy principals regarding the concept of educational leadership align with those in the literature?
4. To what extent do deputy principals engage in educational leadership?
5. What factors appear to influence the educational leadership practices of deputy principals?

RESEARCH DESIGN

A two-phase mixed methods design was selected, with quantitative and qualitative data being collected and analysis techniques being applied. Phase 1 consisted of an online questionnaire delivered to all NSW government secondary school deputy principals (*N*=769).This consisted of closed items, including a new instrument to self-assess leadership practice, and open items. Phase 2 comprised eight individual semi-structured interviews with purposively selected volunteers from the above cohort. Integrated inferences were drawn from these analyses. It was anticipated that the capture of broad but shallow data through the questionnaire, combined with the richer, more descriptive detail garnered from individual interviews, would generate a more complete picture of the issues in the complex area of leadership for secondary deputy principals.

The conceptual framework in Figure 1.1 demonstrates how insights derived from quantitative and qualitative data from both phases may be combined to build understanding of the complex interplay of factors which potentially influence the aspirations, perceptions and practice of DPs. This is elaborated further in Chapter 4.

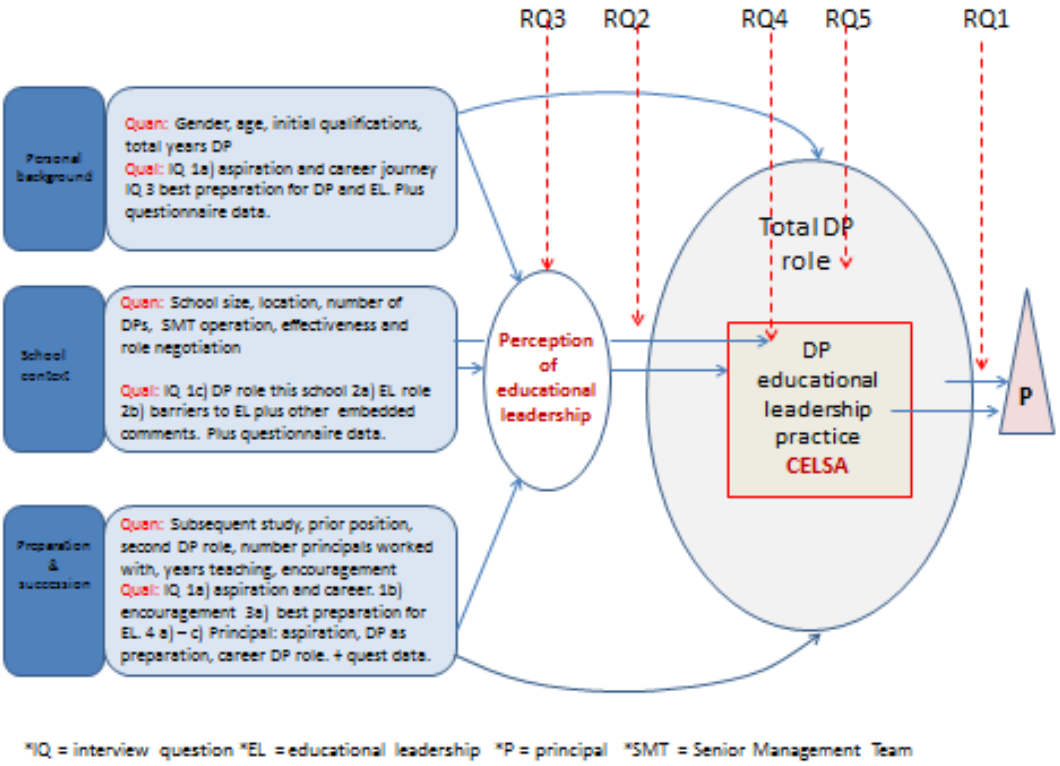

Figure 1.1 Conceptual framework for the study

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research into the role of deputy principals in one large educational jurisdiction is potentially significant for policy, practice and further research. It generates much-needed empirical insights into the aspirations, preparation and practice of deputy principals, and has implications for policy and practice at state, national and international level.

As school education is primarily a state responsibility in Australia, there is scope for this study to inform policy and program development in NSW and other Australian states. It offers insights into the impact of changing environments, including government policy initiatives, on the practice of senior secondary school leaders. There are also potential implications for state preparation programs for school executives other than principal, and fuel for debates about existing recruitment and selection policies which bear close scrutiny when compared with other international jurisdictions (Huber & Pashiardis, 2008).

At Australian national policy level, this research aligns with the 2009 National Partnerships agreements between the Federal and state authorities (Council of Australian Governments, 2009), by explicitly linking school leadership, quality teaching and student achievement. It also brings distinctive insights about leadership in secondary schools, an under-researched area (Bendikson, 2012), that have implications for the work of the *Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership* (AITSL) which is tasked with 'promoting excellence in the profession of teaching and school leadership' (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2014).

Above all, the study makes a contribution to an area that is under-represented in the literature on educational leadership and school improvement. It has significance therefore for research, contributing to the international discourse investigating relationships between the educational achievement of students, quality teaching and school leadership, (Dinham, 2008; Leithwood et al., 2006; Pont et al., 2008). Its potential contribution is significant in that it draws links between theories and international thinking in two critical areas – educational leadership and preparation and development of school leaders – with specific reference to deputy principals.

Finally, the study makes a distinctive contribution to theory-building by the development of a new evidence-based scale for the self-assessment of educational leadership, which has the potential to be adapted for wider application in investigations of this construct.

ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

The overall structure of the thesis takes the form of nine chapters.

Chapter 1 provides a background and rationale for the study and gives an overview of its aims, research questions and significance.

Chapter 2 outlines and critiques the available literature in three key areas of research and theory relevant to the area of inquiry: the role of the secondary deputy principal; leadership in school education; and preparation and succession strategies for school leaders. It identifies significant gaps in the knowledge base and establishes the research problem which will be partially addressed by this research.

Chapter 3 briefly locates the study in its educational context and relevant historical background.

Chapter 4 justifies and outlines the research design (a mixed methods approach) and specifies the methods used for both phases, including participants, data collection, approaches to data analysis and integration. Possible limitations of the study are noted.

Chapter 5 details important findings from initial analysis which underpin subsequent results and discussion: the characteristics of the participants for both phases and the validity of a newly developed self-assessment instrument for educational leadership.

Chapter 6 outlines key findings for Research Questions 1 and 2, focusing on the career progression of DPs.

Chapter 7 elaborates findings for Research Questions 3, 4 and 5, focusing on educational leadership aspects of the DP role.

Chapter 8 draws holistic themes from all findings, discusses implications of these themes and discusses them in relation to previous studies.

Chapter 9, as the final chapter, reiterates the aims and design of the research, key findings and implications of these findings. Contributions of this study to the field are described, and some limitations are noted. It concludes by making some recommendations for further research, policy and practice.

Structuring the thesis in this way aims to clearly and comprehensively address the research questions in order to achieve the purpose of the study identified in this chapter.

CHAPTER 2:
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter explains the theoretical framework for the study, which links three previously loosely coupled areas of inquiry, and appraises key literature within this framework. The discussion of literature is *bounded*, focusing on that which was available up to the initiation of the study's data collection in 2012. For clarity of purpose, subsequent literature after that point is integrated with a discussion of findings later in the thesis.

The study demanded the synthesis of three areas of inquiry which have previously not been investigated within the same study, as shown in Figure 2.1. It required (i) an insight into the role of the secondary deputy principal and issues relating to it; (ii) an understanding of the educational leadership which school leaders are increasingly urged to undertake; and (iii) an exploration of how DPs were prepared for their current and future roles. The intersection of these three areas was explored in developing the theoretical framework for the study. The review of literature demonstrates how consideration of themes and indeed gaps in findings in these areas contributed to the refinement of the research problem and research questions for this study.

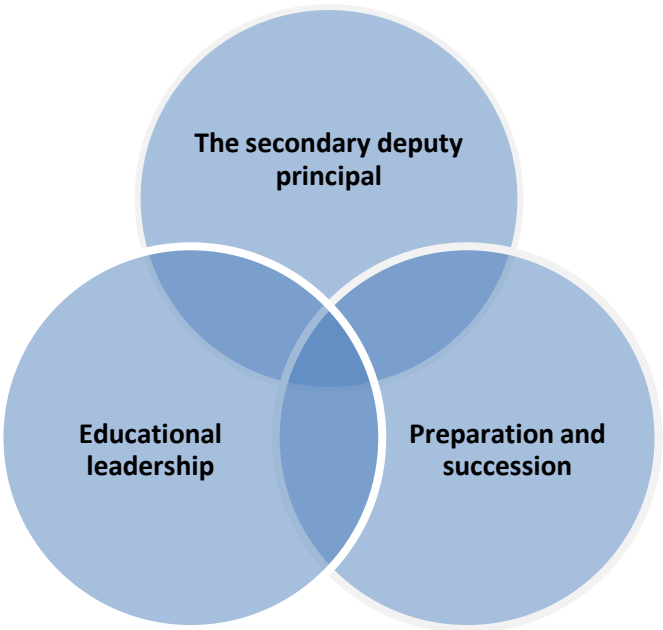

Figure 2.1 Three intersecting areas of inquiry

Much of the literature concerning the role of the deputy principal in the secondary school, a relatively neglected field of interest (Harris, Muijs, & Crawford, 2003), is limited in scope, frequently descriptive, anecdotal, and with few exceptions is based on very small sample sizes. It is also dated, with minimal research published since 2000, so its relevance for the rapidly changing educational landscape may be questioned. An overview of the thinking in this area nevertheless provides important background for the current study, revealing potential themes that would benefit from further investigation and noting significant gaps in attention. There have been calls for broader and more empirical studies to build the knowledge base (Armstrong, 2010; Hausman, Nebeker, McCreary, & Donaldson, 2002; Muijs, 2011) and, as later discussion reveals, the critical need for more quality aspirants to step into school leadership positions is no longer a future threat, it is a real and present fact (Fink, 2010). This study aims to address some of the above significant 'blank spots' in the literature (Wagner, 1993).

In contrast with literature about deputies, there is no shortage of academic discussion about leadership in school education, initially coming from the disparate fields of school effectiveness and school improvement. There is a wealth of theories, studies, and debates. The role of the secondary DP is not prominent in this discussion, which focuses almost exclusively on the principal. For the purposes of this research, a brief overview of relevant historical developments and conceptual approaches was held to be important in leading to a more focused discussion of recent thinking about leadership centred on student learning, which is critical in this study for investigating the capacity of deputies to engage in what is termed educational leadership. The notion of distributed leadership is also canvassed as it has particular relevance for the current and future role of the secondary DP.

The third area of literature relevant to the present research is the preparation and development of school leaders. An assumption is made that this is one factor possibly related to the ability of DPs to lead effectively. Unsurprisingly, much of the discussion in this field again focuses exclusively on the principal, but as the deputy principal position is most often the step prior to the principalship, this research must be assumed to have relevance for them in the absence of more targeted attention. An outline is provided of key international literature regarding policies, practices and issues in the preparation, development and recruitment of school leaders to set the context for exploration of this factor.

It is acknowledged that the literature in these three distinct areas is huge in scope and often steeped in controversy. However, an understanding of the key authors, theories, findings and

debates in these fields situates the current study of deputy principals as an important and possibly unique investigation of the intersection between them.

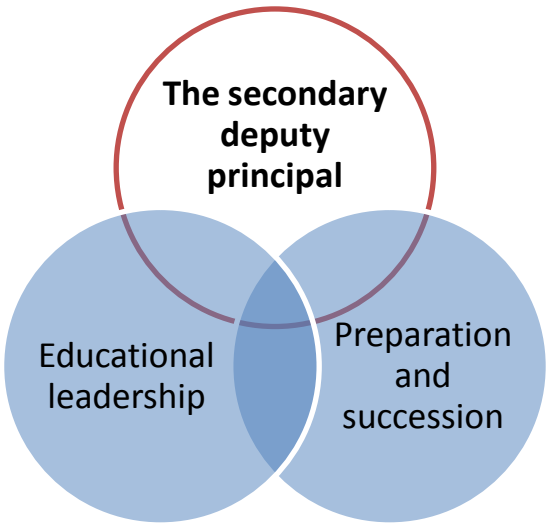

Figure 2.2 The secondary deputy principal

THE SECONDARY DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

Of the relatively limited literature about the deputy principal role, there is very little which confines itself to the secondary context. Many studies, including a recent meta-analysis, (Oleszewski, Shoho, & Barnett, 2012), do not state what level of schools they are discussing, so the reader relies on hints within discussions to judge whether they refer to primary, secondary or both levels. Unless explicitly stated in the title or abstract, it is rarely secondary. There is considerable literature referring to the importance of school context to the type of leadership (Bush & Glover, 2003; Moos, Krejsler, & Kofod, 2008), but generally this literature is silent on the matter of primary/secondary context. This is problematic, as there are structural and cultural differences between primary and secondary schooling which, it can be argued, impact very clearly on overall management and educational leadership (Seashore Louis, Dretzke, & Wahlstrom, 2010). In fact, government primary schools in NSW do not have a DP unless they are quite large (over 800 students), whereas all secondary schools have one or more. Where possible, this study has referenced literature specifically about secondary DPs or findings which relate to them. If the differences between primary and secondary schools' organisation and culture are acknowledged, then it can be argued that preparation for leadership in these different contexts should be differentiated.

Much of the literature regarding the secondary deputy principal has been published in practice-based journals with a limited amount of current, empirical or refereed material available, and is frequently descriptive rather than analytical. This suggests that attention to the DP position has been more prominent among practitioners rather than among the broader professional and academic community. Caution must also be exercised as these studies have taken place in widely varying time frames, contexts and organisational structures. Sporadic attempts have been made to explore the role over the last three decades in a number of jurisdictions, particularly within professional associations in North America such as the National Association for Secondary School Principals (NASSP). However, despite a period of interest in the late 1990s, and many calls for further research into this role, few lines of inquiry have been the subject of sustained investigation, particularly through large scale or empirical studies. Nevertheless, some fairly consistent themes have emerged suggesting interesting lines for further research. The following section explores what we know about the deputy role, and identifies areas which would benefit from further investigation.

Themes from the literature

Themes gleaned from the literature include the deputy's positional role as a member of the senior management team, and how this differs from middle management by having whole-school responsibility and authority, yet often suffers from an apparent lack of a clear role definition. The allocation of time to various types of tasks is outlined, the concept of being a 'go-between' is described, and the issue of whether DPs are satisfied in their role is explored. The final theme noted is the aspirations, or otherwise, of DPs for a future role as principal, and what factors appear to influence these aspirations.

A senior manager

Deputy principal is a position title, and while the title name may vary it is a recognisable position within many school systems, second in the school hierarchy to that of the principal. It is considered to be a 'senior' leadership or management position which is qualitatively different from that of subject heads or heads of departments which are generally considered to be 'middle' leaders in the hierarchical structure of the secondary school (Bennett, Woods, Wise, & Newton, 2007). It is notable that this important distinction is not always considered in academic discussion of secondary leadership positions where it is sometimes deemed to be a 'middle level school leader' position (Cranston, 2007). Analysis of some commentaries on developing school leaders may even suggest that the majority of principals come directly from the ranks of classroom teachers, with little recognition of the intermediate positions

through which most careers currently progress. In fact, as illustrated in later discussions of leadership development frameworks or standards being pursued in some jurisdictions, the issue of middle and senior level executive leadership in schools is frequently unrecognised, with general terms such as 'teacher leader' the only descriptor for roles prior to the principalship. This confusion is one of many surrounding the status of the deputy role.

In practice, the deputy is generally regarded as a member of the senior management team along with the principal and possibly one or two other deputies (Cranston & Ehrich, 2009). While the nature of this team and how it operates is explored more fully in a later discussion of shared or distributed leadership, and is in itself an expression of the culture of a specific school, deputies are generally seen as senior leaders with significant enhanced positional authority and responsibilities, often including supervision of middle managers such as heads of department (as illustrated in Chapter 3).

A whole-school role

An important distinction between senior management and most middle executive roles is the whole school responsibilities that come with this position. The deputy principal is a whole school management position, and is generally the first such position held by an individual, most often after a period as a head of a curriculum-based faculty in the high school context. As a department head an individual has a significant responsibility as a curriculum expert, one who makes decisions regarding teaching and learning on a daily basis (Bendikson, 2012). He or she manages staff, students and teaching programs in a specialised area, and is often required to compete with other faculty heads for scarce resources within the school such as allocated teaching time, budgets for teaching resources, student enrolments or rooming preference, all of which are highly valued by the teachers in the department. Those who have not worked in a high school are often bemused by the competitive pressures of this 'departmentalisation'(Bendikson, 2012, p. 3), which is described as one with 'the subject leader as the advocate of the sectional interests of the department' (Bennett et al., 2007, p. 455). Bennett also suggests that this can lead to tensions not only between departments but between them and the senior school managers, and others claim that middle level leaders can resist and stifle beneficial whole school change (Dimmock & Lee, 2000). The term 'balkanisation' was coined by Hargreaves (1994) for this effect, which he viewed as a potentially unhealthy facet of secondary education that could militate against necessary reform processes by working against collaboration. It is claimed that creating a sense of common purpose among departments and teachers is a critical skill for the secondary

principal (Robinson, Bendikson, & Hattie, 2011), but it could be argued that this capacity is also required at the deputy principal level.

Moving from such a specialist position with its associated competitive pressures to one with whole-school management responsibilities is thus a significant step for new deputy principals, deserving of system support but currently receiving little attention in the literature or in policy or practice (Dowse, 2004; Turner & Sykes, 2007). Letting go of the previous identity associated with teaching and a particular subject area and addressing whole-school strategic goals may present an initial challenge for the DP (Armstrong, 2010) or even for staff who perceive them to have particular subject biases.

An ill-defined role

While the position of deputy principal has been in existence for many years (Glanz, 2004), a clear definition of the role has proved to be more elusive. Some early attempts consisted of lists of duties, focused on student attendance, supervision and discipline (Reed & Himmler, 1985), while others contended that the role was frequently limited by that of the principal, who may see the DP as an extension of themselves and not allow genuine initiative or leadership opportunities (Todd & Dennison, 1980). More recently, explorations of the impact of the principal on the role of the deputy, questioned whether power was genuinely shared or less favourable duties simply delegated (Celikten, 2001; Muijs & Harris, 2003). Clarity of role definition was of particular interest in Celikten's small interview-based study which found that 94% of DP respondents identified 'lacking role description for the position' as the factor having the largest negative impact on their ability to undertake instructional leadership activities (2001, p. 73). He concluded that existing written job descriptions tend to be tokenistic and of little value.

Similarly, a small exploratory study of U.S. high school assistant principals appeared to indicate that their roles were extremely clear and specialised, but on closer examination these roles were assigned by the principal and very much structural and managerial in nature – 'the sum of the duties' was how the assistant principals described the position and what it was about (Mertz, 2000, p. 11). This supports the view that a list of duties assigned by a principal, expected by others and assumed in the absence of boundaries, does not equate with a genuine role statement, especially for one as sophisticated as that of educational leadership. Golanda (1991) contended that the role had historically evolved as an expedient position, basically supporting the principal and without any particular educational justification, and in Australian empirical studies, participants continued to struggle with a reconceptualisation of

the role (Cranston, Tromans, & Reugebrink, 2002). Another small study in Lutheran schools found that not only deputies themselves, but other members of the school community, commented that 'their leadership strengths were in areas other than teaching and learning' (Ruwoldt, 2006, p. 159). There were some early efforts in jurisdictions such as New York to reframe the role from 'administrative assistant to the principal … equivalent of the office manager, comptroller or foreman' to 'staff development and supervision' (Golden, 1997, p. 104) but these later papers suggest that on the whole, little has changed.

The role of deputy in NSW government secondary schools is of particular interest to this researcher. It is noteworthy that the system employer did not at the time of data collection have a specific job description for this or other executive roles apart from the principal. The key document outlining responsibilities for school leaders, *Leading and Managing* reflected the hierarchical nature of the DEC, outlining key accountabilities for the principal alone, as the 'principal occupies the pivotal position in the school', noting only that 'members of the school executive have special responsibilities and duties as determined by the principal' (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2000, p. 1). A survey of NSW secondary deputies conducted by their professional association found that the majority of schools had role statements for executives, though Celikten's earlier caution regarding the token nature of such statements must be borne in mind. The report provides the following definition of the DP role, which once again appears to be framed at an operational level:

> The role of the Deputy Principal in a secondary school includes student welfare and discipline, staff welfare, parent & community communication and school promotion, professional development, curriculum development, educational leadership and management, and teaching. (New South Wales Secondary Deputy Principals Association, 2010, p. 7)

Lacking a recognised or genuinely negotiated role description can be held to leave deputies with few benchmarks against which they can evaluate their performance, and is implicated in the lack of confidence and frustration noted by some commentators (Bezzina, 2012; Kwan, 2009). The language and imagery employed by authors and their study participants to encapsulate attitudes to the role are telling. Terms such as 'custodian' or 'crisis manager' (Koru, 1993); 'neglected', 'invisible' and 'pig in the middle' (Ribbins, 1997); 'hatchet man' (Celikten, 2001) 'forgotten' and 'flight steward rather than co-pilot' (Cranston, 2005; Cranston, Tromans, & Reugebrink, 2004) do not imply a learning-centred and future-oriented leadership role. While some earlier commentators such as Calabrese (1991) were optimistic about the ability of effective deputies to integrate their traditional discipline role

into that of 'co-principal', the bulk of studies quoted above indicate that the secondary deputy principal has not been in a position to carve out his or her role as an educational leader as the influence and expectations of others have a particularly significant bearing on it. The following analysis of the literature regarding what activities DPs spend their time on further supports the somewhat limited picture of the DP role outlined in the above discussion.

Allocation of time

As outlined above, discussion of the role of secondary deputy over at least three decades indicates that it is a demanding one, which is not necessarily within the control of the incumbent to influence. A limited number of studies that attempted to quantify what types of activity take up most time for DPs have produced some insights into how the lives of deputies play out in the reality of the school context. Early studies, based on 'scientific' business time-management models, reflected the prevailing reality that deputies were seen as managers rather than educational leaders. For example, a fourteen segment grid was designed by Ogilvie (1977) to be used by DPs to classify what they were doing in schools with a view to doing it better. The descriptors 'School Management Maintenance Tasks' and 'Routinisation and Authoritarianism' sit alongside 'Classroom Facilitation', giving a flavour of what tasks dominated DPs' time as well as the contemporary business jargon (Ogilvie, 1977, p. 100). It is not surprising that incumbents viewed the role as 'dull administration … the occasional stop-gap head master' (Ricchardson 1973 in Ribbins, 1997, p. 224).

In the 1990s a list of the 20 most common duties of deputies, based on a comprehensive review of 26 papers, rated discipline, attendance and routine administration as the most common tasks (Scoggins & Bishop, 1993). Similarly, Koru's (1993) smaller qualitative study led her to answer the question 'Does the work of the assistant principal prepare one to become a principal?' with a resounding negative. Time spent on reactive tasks such as paperwork, attendance monitoring, property maintenance, discipline and fragmented communication – *urgent* rather than *strategic* tasks – came at the expense of instructional improvement or educational leadership (1993, p. 70). Another small qualitative study found an overwhelming percentage of time was spent on discipline, expressed as having to 'do whatever is needed' to maintain a safe and orderly environment for instruction, which did not allow time to focus on curriculum-related issues (Celikten, 2001, pp. 71, 74). The term *daily operations chief* was coined for the perception of the DP role expressed by many within and beyond the position (Porter, 1996, p. 26).

A later empirical study of over 125 U.S. deputies found that the largest proportion of time continued to be spent on student management, discipline and organisation of activities (Hausman et al., 2002). Despite instructional leadership activities often being included in job descriptions, the actual time undertaking these was very limited. The authors concluded that 'as the educational environment changes, the assistant principal's role remains steeped in student management' (p. 152). This observation appears to be confirmed by a more recent large scale empirical U.S. study which concluded that little has changed since the 1990s, with DPs continuing to spend more time on discipline than instructional leadership tasks (Dowling, 2007). Both students and teachers perceived the role to be one of routine and custodial duties. Similar trends have been found in the Australasian context. Deputies in Queensland government and a small number of NSW non-government schools reported similar time allocations, despite them expressing confidence in and preference for educational leadership activities (Cranston, 2005; Cranston et al., 2004). This trend was confirmed by small scale studies in New Zealand (Cranston, 2007; Farnham, 2009).

While student discipline and other routine tasks continue to dominate the time of DPs, there is evidence that they are increasingly being asked to implement more complex policy agendas. It can be argued that the waves of politicisation, marketisation and decentralisation of responsibility to local schools, outlined in the Context chapter which follows, have intensified the work of principals who have in turn delegated many responsibilities to deputies who have become their 'bureaucratic backstop'. A recent report offered an insight into the continuing impact of government and system initiatives on the work of secondary deputies:

> The workload of the Deputy Principal continues to increase with the introduction of the new policies, procedures and initiatives such as the increasing of the school leaving age to 17, the introduction of the Wellbeing Unit, the rollout of DER (National Digital Education Revolution program rollout) and the large demand for the Principal to be out of the school. Again this will increase in the near future with the introduction of the national curriculum. (New South Wales Secondary Deputy Principals Association, 2010, p. 7)

Clearly, static role statements based on a list of duties are inadequate to the task of describing the potential contribution of DPs as senior leaders. In the absence of clear role statements, they are particularly vulnerable to having more tasks delegated to them as principals experience increasing demands and pressures related to regulatory frameworks for curriculum, assessment and teacher standards as well as the industrial and legal frameworks

with which the school must comply. A clearer understanding of what deputies currently spend their time on is needed, particularly their engagement in educational leadership rather than managerial asks.

Go-between

In addition to understanding what DPs spend their time on, it is useful to appreciate how they perceive the nature of their role. In the absence of a formal or negotiated role statement, many deputies have felt that they play a significant go-between function, subject to the demands and expectations of other groups with varying power and agendas. They report having to negotiate a complex web of relationships – one respondent's image of a 'pig-in-the-middle' (Ribbins, 1997, p. 307) suggests a powerless, reactive role rather than one of authoritative mediation. While demands from principals and dealings with students have been noted, there are expectations to be negotiated with middle executives, teachers, parents, students and system bureaucrats, to name a few. For example, relationships with teachers may cause role conflict as they can include both support and evaluation responsibilities (Glanz, 2004) with the expectation that DPs should 'back' teachers in student management (Hausman et al., 2002, p. 141). Pressure exerted by school stakeholders may be exacerbated for DPs as a result of the lack of role clarity and boundaries for their responsibilities (Armstrong, 2010).

Satisfaction

There is insufficient evidence to generalise about whether most DPs are satisfied in their role, with contrasting findings being reported in a small number of studies. Ribbins' (1997) frequently cited UK study, based on 34 in-depth interviews with principals reflecting on their own previous deputy experiences, revealed a range of views, including that it was the biggest leap in their career path, a most demanding job, and confirmed that the principal had a huge impact on their role and satisfaction. It is of note that the majority of principals in this study, one of few exploring this aspect, expressed little enjoyment of the deputy role, which they perceived as demanding and frustrating: 'the job was absolutely thankless, the worst job on earth' in the words of one principal (p. 307). In other negative findings, several also noted that working with their principals taught them what *not* to do in their own career. Many expressed much greater satisfaction as principals than as deputies, partly due to the ambiguity and lack of control in the role definition.

In contrast, at least in some studies, DPs expressed relative satisfaction in their current position. Sutter's (1996) large U.S. study found that efficacy in the current role, feeling that skills were being utilised, aspiration to and opportunities for advancement all contributed to satisfaction among DPs. Similarly, almost 80% of respondents to a survey of DPs in Queensland government secondary schools expressed satisfaction with their current role, even while noting the intensification of work, long hours and lack of opportunity to undertake strategic leadership (Cranston et al., 2004). The attitude of the principal and particularly relationships within the senior administration team were key factors in this satisfaction. Another small interview-based study suggested that, while the role may not be seen to be ideal, DPs may take satisfaction in doing what they do well in maintaining stability and efficiency (Mertz, 2000), and over 100 respondents to a U.S. survey rated themselves as satisfied or very satisfied (Chen, Blendinger, & McGrath, 2000). Clearly more evidence is required regarding the satisfaction of DPs in relation to their role. An additional implication is that, while it may be desirable for them to express satisfaction in their current position, this can have implications for their aspirations to progress to a principal role, as discussed in the next section. While the issue of satisfaction of deputy principals was not a focus of the present research per se, it was anticipated that it could be reflected in responses to some questionnaire items and particularly in interviews, which would add to the knowledge base in this area.

Aspirations for the principal role

'The deputy principalship should be a preparation for the principalship' (Harvey, 1994, p. 21). This early and apparently logical statement is not necessarily reflected in the feelings and aspirations of DPs in the literature. Many deputies, as studies below (Chen et al., 2000) report, are not planning to become principals for a variety of professional and personal reasons. This is of concern not only as there is a well-documented need for quality candidates in a period of rapid turnover and retirements of principals, but because the nature of the reasons given. Career progression is complex, highly individual and the result of many influences (James & Whiting, 1998b) and studies reveal a wide range of factors influencing the decision whether or not to seek the role of principal (Bezzina, 2012; Hausman et al., 2002). It is interesting that salary is rarely quoted as a major factor in aspiring to leadership, though in one joint German/U.S. study, higher salary was perceived as a symbol of government esteem by German respondents (Muller & Hancock, 2013). It has been suggested that new generation aspirant leaders may be more impatient for leadership

opportunities than previous generations, given that the length of time awaiting promotion in schools compares poorly with other professions (Fink, 2010).

Significant reasons given for *aspiring* to senior leadership roles include a desire to make an impact on learning and shape the vision for a school and making a difference for staff and students (Bezzina, 2012). These are categorised as 'educational drivers' by Cranston (2006). In addition, the impact of early leadership opportunities was cited by focus groups in an English study as encouraging aspirations (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2012). However, a number of studies suggest that for many current leaders, aspiration and planning are less in evidence than chance, with progression towards a senior leadership role often opportunistic or even accidental (Macpherson, 2009a). The discussion of *Preparation and Succession* strategies for leaders in Section 3 of this chapter would suggest that this is a concerning finding.

Considerably more work has explored the *disincentives* for taking up senior leadership roles, particularly the principalship, with the term 'leadership disengagement' being coined for the perceived disinclination among teachers to pursue the principalship and other school-level leadership roles (Gronn & Rawlings-Sanaei, 2003). Factors prominent in the literature and outlined below include the nature of the principal role, lack of confidence and preparedness for its demands, and the impact on family and work-life balance, particularly of changing location. Satisfaction in the DP role is also cited as a reason not to seek further promotion.

'The poisoned chalice'. The well-documented nature of the principal role, with the increasingly onerous expectations of government, the public, the media and students' families, appears to be a strong disincentive for deputies in considering future promotion to the role (Bezzina, 2012; Farley-Ripple, Raffel, & Welch, 2012; Gronn & Lacey, 2004). This is an interesting corollary given Ribbins' (1997) finding cited earlier that the majority of principals relished their roles in comparison with their prior experience as DP. Gronn dubbed this intensification of the principal role 'greedy work' (2003b, p. 285). Respondents in Cranston's (2006) Australian study claimed that school leaders are 'now required to give total and sustained commitment' citing increased accountability, downward pressures, reactive changes, long hours, and lack of real authority in an environment of intrusive bureaucracy. Such comments, repeated in many jurisdictions, contributed to the conclusion of a major study for the OECD that 'making school leadership a more attractive profession' was one of four key levers for improving school leadership (Pont, Nusche, & Moorman, 2008).

Lacking preparation and confidence. Another recurring theme in reasons for *not* aiming to become a principal was that experience as a deputy principal provided insufficient preparation, often leading to a lack of confidence or sense of efficacy. Kwan's (2009) large empirical study in Hong Kong found that DPs 'sense of efficacy was the most influential factor in determining their desire for principalship', and suggested that greater opportunities for participation in school operations as well as continuing professional development were required to address this finding (Kwan, 2009, p. 214). In another study, even participants planning to become principals reported that their current role did not provide sufficient training to engender confidence (Koru, 1993). While confident in their management-oriented capacities as DPs, they realised that these were insufficient for the whole principal role. Other studies (Celikten, 2001; Dowling, 2007; Yu-kwong & Walker, 2010) reported that little leadership training was offered or that time in the DP role did not allow for professional development. In Australia, a survey of DPs reported that:

> In general conversation amongst deputies it is not uncommon to hear comments such as, 'I couldn't go for a Principal's position as I have nothing to put on my CV. All I do is welfare and discipline and administrative stuff to keep the place going. There is no time for leadership things.' (New South Wales Secondary Deputy Principals Association, 2010, p. 6)

This aligns with Harvey's (1994) fear that the focus on administrative skills actually militates against preparing the type of creative and imaginative leadership capabilities required. An investigation which focused on deputies *not* aspiring to become principal found fluctuating levels of confidence about their own proficiency such as 'I'm not sure I could do it' (James & Whiting, 1998b, p. 360), while other studies contended that women and minorities are particularly prone to lack confidence due to insufficient preparation and opportunities (Bezzina, 2012). It was suggested that only proximity to the principal role while as a deputy principal tended to reduce this self-doubt (McLay, 2008), which might be considered somewhat late in a career to be aspiring to leadership.

Impact on family and work-life balance. In addition to the unrelenting demands and stresses seen to be placed on the principal, and a lack of preparation and confidence, prospective principals consider the impact of the time and emotional demands of the role on their families to be a significant disincentive (d'Arbon, Duignan, & Duncan, 2002; Gronn & Lacey, 2006). Lifestyle or work/life balance were cited by over one quarter of respondents in Cranston's (2002) initial study as their reason for not seeking a principal position. DPs perceive that not only they, but also their families may experience negative consequences of

the demands of the job in terms of time, attention, and stress. Service in small schools (less than 200 students) which comprise 45% of Australian primary and secondary schools, can present additional challenges, particularly in rural or remote areas where visibility and expectations may be greater (Drummond & Halsey, 2013; Halsey, 2011; Roberts, 2004). The impact on family of taking up appointments in highly challenging school contexts, extended travel times or uprooting the family to take up a position are seen as strong disincentives, as first reported by James and Whiting (1998a). Fink explored this issue further, citing major studies in North America, reporting that new generation leaders are becoming more strategic about such decisions, prepared to forego promotion in order to live where they and their families are comfortable (2010). He claimed that increasingly, 'shortages of quality leadership are a function of location' (p. 70). The impact on lifestyle and family of moving from deputy to principal is a very strong theme emerging in the literature, and is probed further in this study.

Satisfaction in the current role. It was noted earlier that investigations into satisfaction in the DP role are inconclusive. It is therefore of interest that some studies claim that satisfaction in the role is one factor in the lack of aspiration to become a principal. It appears that some deputies enjoy their success in maintaining a smoothly functioning school (Marshall, 1993) and may consider themselves 'career deputies', that is, those who do not aspire to the principal role and actively plan to remain a deputy as their final career position. Kwan (2009, p. 214) found that DPs experiencing greater 'synchrony' in their role, particularly in relationships, were less likely to aspire to the principalship. Caution, however, must again be exercised before seeing a causal link between satisfaction and lack of aspiration. For example, while over three quarters of respondents in one survey claimed satisfaction in the deputy role, only 2% gave this as their main reason for remaining a DP (Cranston et al., 2002).

The above notion of the career deputy has been raised as a concern by some commentators. Macpherson cautioned about DPs failing to progress and potentially 'retiring on the job' (2010b, p. 238), while another somewhat controversial suggestion was raised by Fink that deputies should 'move either up or out' to 'unblock the pipeline' for aspirant principals (2010, p. 176). This could lead to a perception that all those who remain in the DP role are necessarily frustrated aspirant principals rather than exercising an active choice. This issue of 'career deputies' is pursued in the current study as there is little other exploration of the theme in the literature, and strangely little recognition of the fact that is not numerically possible for all DPs to progress to principal.

Aspiring to the principalship has implications for those DPs remaining in the role, those wishing to progress and for the system as whole. An investigation of this aspect through a large scale and mixed method approach in the current study was seen to be warranted to gain a more current and nuanced understanding of the aspirations of DPs in the contemporary secondary context.

Summary and issues for further consideration

Despite the fact that, to paraphrase Ribbins, it appears that principals are interesting, deputy principals are not (1997, p. 295), some tentative themes have emerged from the available literature. DPs are recognised as senior leaders but often lack clarity about their role. They work across the whole school but frequently operate as a go-between. They spend more time on management than learning-focused leadership. It appears that this role, lacking definition and often reactive to the urgent needs and expectations of others, frequently denies DPs the opportunity to engage in leadership activities which directly support student learning.

Whether secondary deputies are generally satisfied in their work is yet to be clearly established, and it appears that aspirations to become a principal vary widely, reflecting a range of professional and personal considerations. Some calls have been made for changes in policy and practice based on this limited evidence, while frequent recommendations have been made for more research (Harris et al., 2003; Hausman et al., 2002; Oleszewski et al., 2012).

There are significant omissions in the literature, recognition of which could add to our understanding of the DP role and its contribution to leadership in secondary schools. Minimal attention has been devoted, for instance, as to how deputies perceive their roles as educational leaders, consideration of the factors which influence their role definition and functioning in this position, and how they have been prepared for and recruited for their current role. Few writers, and even fewer empirical studies, have explored these issues. The current study aims to contribute to the knowledge base in these areas.

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

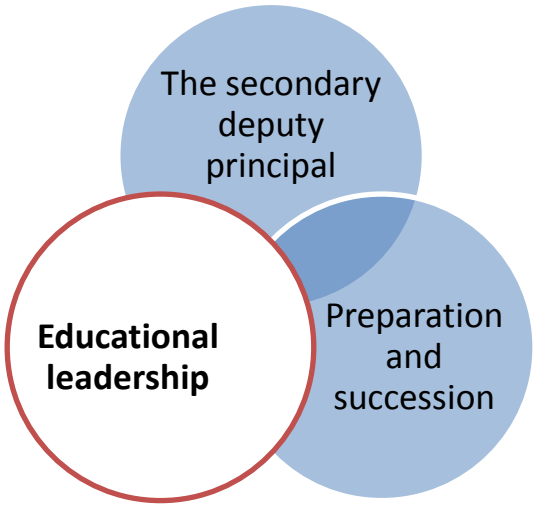

Figure 2.3 Educational leadership

Educational leadership is the second area of inquiry reviewed in this chapter. The notion is situated within a broad, highly contested and evolving field with many sub-domains, so a fully comprehensive analysis of the literature is not within the scope of this review. However, the following overview focuses on works making a significant contribution to the field, seeks to outline key conceptual models and articulates debates of relevance to deputy principals and the study overall. It concludes with a working definition of the term educational leadership for the specific purposes of this research.

Models of leadership in education

Early school reform literature drew from business models of organisational development dating from industrial age 'Taylorist' or scientific models of hierarchical management, focusing on efficiency, time management and adapting these for management of schools (Owens, 1998). Notions such as leadership traits, and conceptions of leadership such as charismatic, transformational, cultural, strategic continued to be drawn from generic organisational theory (Yukl, 1998). In the late twentieth century, leadership theories began to focus on schools as unique organisations, with the emergence of two distinctive paradigms, school effectiveness and school improvement. School effectiveness research was broadly characterised by a focus on student outcomes as judged by standardised results, and emphasised the need to provide an environment in which students can learn, including factors such as strong leadership, high expectations, emphasis on basic skills, orderly environment, frequent evaluation of students and increased time on task (Owens, 1998,

p. 94). It became associated moreover with quantitative methods and a focus on standardised measures of outcomes. School improvement, in contrast, reflected a qualitative paradigm, focusing more on improvement processes, exploring school change, teacher and stakeholder engagement and collaboration (Creemers, Stoll, & Reezigt, 2007). The development of such clearly differentiated fields of inquiry was problematic. It was as if good school leadership and student learning were two unrelated fields. In addition, while the emerging notions of learning communities and lifelong learning suggested that staff, students and the community could all contribute to a positive learning culture, the role of 'lead learner' remained steadfastly that of the principal. Implications for other executives including deputy principals were at best only implied.

In the 1990s there was a move to bring together the previously disparate fields of school improvement and school effectiveness (Creemers et al., 2007; Reynolds, Hopkins, & Stoll, 1993) including in major projects aiming to bring the benefits of both paradigms to improving school education. Models previously developed largely within these paradigms were examined, tested and reviewed, and new conceptions developed in acknowledgement of the strengths and limitations of each. Bush (2007, p. 394) summarises the main models of this period as managerial, participative, transformational, interpersonal, transactional, post-modern, contingency, moral and instructional, taking care to present these as broad compilations of main theories. It is noteworthy that in most cases these models tend to refer only to the principal. While they represent efforts to capture leadership types that are associated with improved schools, Mulford expressed concerns that these 'adjectival leadership' models perpetuate the single leader or 'power of one' images and need to be replaced with a 'post heroic' conversation that acknowledges that 'the task of leading a school is too complex and demanding a job for one person' (2008, p. 43).

Among the many models of school leadership developed in the last twenty to thirty years, those with particular relevance for the current study include instructional and transformational leadership, 'leadership for learning', distributed and contingency approaches to leadership. The main features of each model are outlined below: elements of each have influenced the definition of educational leadership provided after this overview.

Instructional leadership

Two models of leadership dominated thinking about school leadership from the 1980s: instructional and transformational (Hallinger, 2003). By its very name, instructional leadership would appear to be more suited to the school context than models derived from

organisational development. Drawing from effective schools research, this approach is characterised by a sustained focus on the core business of schools, considered to be the learning outcomes of students. Traditionally, instructional leaders are outstanding teachers who are 'hands on', working directly with teachers, often in their classrooms, observing, providing feedback, modelling good practice and mentoring in a very practical sense (Loeb & Horng, 2010). Instructional leadership is associated with a single strong, directive leader. Three dimensions of the instructional leadership construct are suggested by Hallinger: defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school-learning climate (2003, p. 332). The benefits of instructional leadership seem apparent, and indeed some limited empirical research suggested that student outcomes can improve under this approach (Southworth, 2002), particularly in primary schools and in low SES contexts. In secondary contexts, Sammons et al. reported significant but indirect impact on student outcomes through intermediate processes such as school culture, pupil attendance and behaviour (Sammons, Gu, Day, & Ko, 2011). However, this view of leadership has been challenged on many fronts, as outlined below.

A key critique was that instructional leadership focused very strongly on the individual principal as leader, harking back to the 'heroic' model of a superhuman educator, who has all the answers, leading in a top-down manner at a time when this view of leadership was being questioned. Indeed, the expectation that one leader could have the expertise to influence learning across a wide range of ages and subject areas is one which seemed unrealistic to many. In primary schools, generally smaller in numbers, where leaders may be expected to have knowledge across grades and often can be closer to classrooms, it already presents a challenge to what Hallinger calls the 'will and skill' of any one leader (2003, p. 335). This expectation becomes even more unworkable in a large secondary environment where apart from the higher numbers of staff, subject specialisation is an obvious barrier, considering the requirements for expertise in pedagogy and curriculum content across all subjects. We are invited in one study (Loeb & Horng, 2010) for example, to consider the principal who might have the expertise to advise teachers how to engage their students in English literature on the one hand, and to differentiate instruction in chemistry on the other. These criticisms have relevance for the current study which is situated in secondary schools and particularly in considering the role of the DP in relation to the principal.

Critiques of instructional leadership also question the implied neglect of other highly valued outcomes of schooling. Some commentators suggest that student welfare, arts and sports may suffer (Bush, 2007), while others are concerned with its lack of recognition of the

broader ‘moral purpose’ of education: ‘The role of the principal as instructional leader is too narrow … Moral purpose is social responsibility to others and the environment. School leaders with moral purpose seek to make a difference in the lives of students’ (Fullan, 2002, p. 17). Critics posit that there is a danger of narrowing the purposes of schooling and an overemphasis on ‘inauthentic’ measures of academic achievement, risking the neglect of the deeper ethical responsibilities of leadership (Duignan, 2006). It is also suggested that a narrow focus in instructional leadership insufficiently recognises the importance of other critical management functions of principals (Hallinger, 2003). Nevertheless, the focus on learning was seen as an important reaffirmation of the key purpose of education at a time when many educators were weary of taking on the responsibilities of addressing all society's ills, and has constituted an important basis for further development of leadership models focused on student learning.

Transformational leadership

The notion of transformational leadership that gained traction in the 1990s was seen by some authors as a reaction to the top-down, bureaucratic demands of the period and as a necessity in the new self-managed schools environment (Hallinger, 2003). Having its genesis in organisational development literature, when applied to schools transformational leadership was characterised as having a direct impact by establishing a vision, engendering commitment and leading important changes. Early studies in educational contexts (Kirby, Paradise, & King, 1992) emphasised the relationship between leaders and followers and led to the identification of several key components of transformational leadership: idealised influence (such as ‘walking the walk’); inspirational motivation (inspiring and motivating followers); individualised consideration (giving personal attention to followers in order for them to perform well) and intellectual stimulation (challenging to stimulate innovation and creativity). However, this early emphasis on ‘followers’ led to criticisms that this was another leader-centric approach: indeed Kirby originally referred to the leader’s ‘charisma’ as one of the key components (p. 306). While other influential researchers such as Leithwood (1992) quickly envisaged transformational leadership as one which shared power and decision-making, it remained a point of contention in the literature, as he noted some years later that ‘authority and influence associated with this form of leadership are not always allocated to those occupying formal administrative positions although much of the literature adopts their perspectives’(Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999, p. 5). This debate is important for later discussion of models such as distributed leadership, and has clear implications for DPs and their relationships with principals. Various conceptions of

transformational leadership were developed with fairly general agreement that building capacity across the school and commitment to agreed goals were key attributes.

Critiques of this approach included those citing a lack of evidence that it led to improved school outcomes, claims that the model does not reflect all crucial elements of a school leader's role, and others raising the continuing risk of encouraging so called heroic single leaders. While some indications of changed school culture were found in empirical studies, there was a dearth of evidence for greater student engagement let alone improved learning outcomes (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999). Critics such as Bass and Avolio (1999) claimed that transformational leadership alone was insufficient, and that it must be complemented by 'transactional' leadership, a more managerial set of skills which enable the organisation to operate effectively. Bush (2007) outlined concerns that despite attempts to characterise transformational leadership as shared, the danger remains that it could reinforce the power and control of a principal over teaching staff. This approach could further confuse the role of deputy principals, who are perceived to be both senior leaders and 'go-betweens', as they are required to execute the principal's 'vision'. A final issue raised by Bush was that the benefits of this style of leadership will always be limited if the principal is only implementing an imposed agenda from external authorities, as he claimed was the case in England (p. 397).

Both the instructional and transformational models of leadership outlined above were clearly perceived to have strengths and limitations. A number of major studies from 2003 compared the approaches, including their impact on student learning outcomes, and attempts were made to draw them into an integrated model to capitalise on the strengths of each. Hallinger's comparison (2003), adapted for presentation in Table 2.1, acknowledged the conceptual fuzziness of the two terms and noted more similarities than differences between them, but claimed that three criteria helped to distinguish the models:

Table 2.1 Comparison of instructional and transformational leadership

	Approach to school improvement	Target for change	Relationship to staff
Instructional leadership	Top down	First order (direct)	Managerial/transactional
Transformational leadership	Bottom up	Second order (indirect)	Transformational

While this assessment might be perceived to favour a transformational approach, Hallinger cautioned that any model must be proven in practice and suggested that a more sophisticated integrated approach may be needed. Marks and Printy (2003), the same year, noted that studies of instructional leadership to date had neglected to focus on pedagogical quality, and transformational leadership often lacked a specific focus on teaching and learning. Based on their large-scale empirical study which focused on the relationship between leadership, pedagogical quality and student achievement, they proposed a model of integrated leadership, where transformational leadership is coupled with shared instructional leadership (Marks & Printy, 2003, p. 392).

A more recent major analysis compared the impact of transformational and pedagogical leadership (closely related to but not the same as instructional leadership) on student outcomes (Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009). Elements of *transformational* leadership outlined include the principal giving staff a sense of purpose, working on consensus, treating staff as professionals, delegating and being accessible. *Pedagogical* leadership was defined as follows, based on three major reviews of instructional leadership research:

> The common core is close involvement by leadership in establishing an academic mission, monitoring and providing feedback on teaching and learning, and promoting professional development. (Robinson et al., 2009)

The study reported that pedagogical leadership had almost four times the impact of transformational leadership on student learning, and concluded that 'the power of transformational leadership lies more in the creation of a collaborative staff culture than in higher social and academic outcomes for students' (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 88). The discussion acknowledged that the abstract theories of leadership being compared were constantly evolving and growing closer together. Robinson also noted that studies of instructional leadership often worked on the assumption that the principal alone should provide this leadership, a view of the role which Hallinger had previously claimed could lead to feelings of inadequacy or guilt (2005). Despite these acknowledged limitations, the findings of this study regarding the impact of leadership focusing on learning were persuasive, and strongly influenced elements of the current study.

Leadership for learning

The term 'leadership for learning' was coined as researchers around the globe sought to distil key elements of some of the above models and to construct frameworks which could be

empirically tested (Townsend & MacBeath, 2011). A strong example is Dempster's (2009) *Leading Learning* framework, generated from a synthesis of five major international and national meta-analyses of educational leadership research. This framework was based on eight statements about leaders who best affect student learning outcomes:

- they have an agreed and shared *moral purpose*
- there is *disciplined dialogue* about learning in the school
- they plan, monitor and take account using a strong *evidence base*
- they are *active professional learners* with their teachers
- they attend to enhancing the *conditions for learning*
- they coordinate, manage and monitor the *curriculum and teaching*
- they use *distributive leadership* as the norm
- they understand the context of their work and connect with *parent and wider community support* for learning.

(Dempster, 2009, p. 1).

It can be seen that key elements of instructional and transformational approaches are included in this framework and, importantly, it addresses the growing recognition that the notion of a single leader was no longer sufficient for current and future schooling, as outlined in the following section. This approach reflects the gradual shift from binary debates about instructional vs transformational leadership to more integrated approaches, with the term 'leadership for learning' gaining currency in scholarly works as well as amongst practitioners.

Distributed leadership

In recent years a parallel discussion has developed, moving from models or types of leadership towards considering *how* and *by whom* leadership is enacted. An early theorist, Gronn (2002) is credited with focusing on distributed leadership within a school as the *unit of analysis* for leadership (rather than an individual or a team) in order to reflect changing divisions of labour and workplace interdependencies. He also recognised increasing resistance to the traditional notions of leaders and their 'followers' and indeed called for the term leadership itself to be abandoned in discussing school operations (Gronn, 2003a). Gronn proposed a framework for analysing leadership activity in schools, suggesting that in

many effective schools leadership was in fact spread across a number of positional and informal leaders. Citing Yukl's 1999 statement that 'the leadership actions of any individual leader are much less important than the collective leadership provided by members of the organisation', he proposed terms such as *concertive action* to describe shared leadership which produced new synergies rather than just combining effort (p. 429). This distribution of leadership could come about in different ways: *spontaneously*, where brief projects benefited from bursts of synergy; *intuitively*, where trusting relationships developed to capitalise on different strengths and gaps in skills or in an *institutionalised* manner, where formal structures underpin the distribution. This element of Gronn's work has particular implications for analysing how DPs work with principals and other staff, offering models of *how* roles can be shared in a conscious and systematic manner.

At a similar time Spillane et al. (2001) conceptualised leadership as an interaction of *leaders, followers and situation*, strongly recognising the importance of both the context of a school and the role of 'other leaders' in enacting leadership. This approach focused on leadership *tasks* and how these are often distributed, noting that 'macro' (strategic) leadership tasks need to be broken down into more practical 'micro' tasks (Spillane et al., 2001). The concept of activity being *stretched* over a number of leaders was introduced. This work recognised informal as well as positional leaders who 'mobilise and guide' their followers, and identified inter-dependent tasks which required communication and coordination among several leaders to achieve a major function (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004, p. 17). Thus both Gronn and Spillane brought new analytical lenses and language to the task of recognising how leadership is actually enacted in schools by more than one individual. As Spillane noted:

> Distributed leadership is a perspective – a conceptual or diagnostic tool for thinking about leadership. It is not a blueprint for effective leadership nor a prescription for how school leadership should be practiced. (Spillane, 2005, p. 149)

While these conceptual models brought important issues into the spotlight, distributed leadership discussions have been characterised by confusion in terminology and concerns regarding its value. An early major review of the literature identified that the field was already fragmented, with terms such as dispersed, democratic and delegated confusing the discussion (Bennett, Wise, Woods, & Harvey, 2003) and since then variations such as shared, team, parallel, democratic and collective leadership have entered the discussion, frequently used interchangeably with the term distributed leadership, which obscures

important theoretical differences and assumptions (Fitzsimons, James, & Denyer, 2011). In the eyes of such commentators, this has made theory building and empirical work difficult; others are less concerned as they believe it is 'not a monolithic construct … merely an emerging set of ideas that frequently diverge from one another.' (Spillane, 2005, p. 144). In addition, while the above theoretical frameworks for distributed leadership were initially devised to assist with *analysis* of leadership activity, they were at times oversimplified to be interpreted as calls for democracy, or alternatively were used to justify 'misguided delegation' (Harris, 2004, p. 20), a practice of which DPs appear to be keenly aware.

A number of related issues were canvassed. Harris noted that while 'distributed leadership is currently in vogue'(2004, p. 15) there continued to be a requirement for formal leaders to be responsible for the overall performance of the organisation, and that leader commitment was necessary for distributed leadership to occur; the formal leader must give impetus for, nurture and foster distributed leadership. Based on major studies of 'improving schools' in the UK, she observed that distributed leadership was not necessarily appropriate during all cycles of school development, with more directive approaches being employed during periods of difficulty. Harris also outlined various structural and cultural barriers to distributed leadership being implemented in schools, reiterating a concern expressed by Spillane that the hierarchical and 'egg-carton' structure of schools worked against it (2004, p. 26). This has particular relevance for secondary schools as discussed earlier. Other commentators noted that external pressures such as 'runaway reform demands' and budget cuts could undermine efforts to distribute leadership (Fink & Brayman, 2006, p. 84). Importantly, Harris noted that, at least in 2004, there was a dearth of evidence that distributed leadership resulted in improved student learning outcomes.

The lack of robust research linking distributed leadership to improved student learning outcomes, and in fact some early research suggesting a negative impact, was partly addressed by publication of major research in the U.S. and England. Leithwood and others preferred the term 'collective leadership', broadly defined as encompassing the influence on decision-making by principals, other administrators, teachers, parents and students, and found that 'collective leadership explained a significant proportion of variation in student achievement across schools' (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008, p. 529). Importantly, this appeared to be mediated through teacher effects such as motivation, work settings and to a lesser extent, teacher capacity. Leithwood also noted that teacher perceptions of the *degree* of influence ascribed to various leaders appeared to demonstrate a distributed but still hierarchical model, which he proposed might be labelled 'intelligent hierarchy' (p. 550).

Day et al. (in Harris, 2009, p. 13) also reported that 'substantial leadership distribution was very important to a school's success in improving student outcomes' with once again, the formal leader taking a strong role in coordinating this distribution and the link between distributed leadership and student outcomes being indirectly but positively linked. While models have been refined and debates continue, Harris suggested that more general agreement had been achieved around key elements of distributed leadership: emphasis on *interaction* between staff rather than individual capacities; the notion of *interdependence*; a focus on *expertise* rather than *role* for leadership and recognition of *informal* as well as *formal* leaders; the need for *trust* and acknowledgement that *power* relations will shift; and finally a recognition that no one model of distributed leadership is a panacea with the *context* of a school exerting great influence on the type of leadership and how it can be distributed (Harris, 2009).

The discussion around distributed leadership has particular resonance for the deputy principal role. Of particular interest is the relationship between DPs and principals in any distribution, whether there is a genuine sharing of power or continuation of what is currently seen in the literature to be mere delegation of management tasks. Clearly, there will be tensions between the traditional hierarchical model of schools where line management and ultimate accountability by the principal are the norm, and any new version of shared leadership. Deputy principals, among others, may find challenges in the expectation that they share additional responsibilities as well as opportunities in this model of school leadership.

A thoughtful analysis of how senior management teams (SMTs) might operate most effectively used a micropolitical lens (Cranston & Ehrich, 2009) and addressed some key issues regarding distributed leadership. This paper suggested five key considerations for how such teams might work. Interestingly, clear role definitions were seen to be essential, along with ensuring competency and commitment of all members, developing a shared culture and effective teamwork, ensuring communication with other staff and engaging in joint ongoing learning. Clearly there is much ground to be covered in considering how distributed leadership might play out, including its implications for DPs, and limited evidence that it is being enacted in schools (Huber & Pashiardis, 2008). Nevertheless positive assessments of its value have led to the OECD recommending it as one of the four main policy levers to drive improve educational outcomes for students (Pont et al., 2008).

Contingency approach to leadership

A further approach to leadership which has particular relevance for the current study is a contingency approach, which recognises that no one single model of leadership can be applied in a 'one size fits all' manner, acknowledging that different school contexts call for very different leadership responses (Bush, 2007). Context can vary in many ways: the culture of the overall system (centralised vs decentralised); the socio-economic status and homogeneity/diversity of the community; the 'history' of the school which may include staff stability and experience and community engagement (Braun, Ball, Maguire, & Hoskins, 2011); and the place of the school in a cycle of renewal are just a few of the multitude of ways in which schools can vary in their contexts and need for appropriate leadership. For example, proponents of distributed leadership acknowledge that all of the above factors could impact on whether it is an appropriate model for a school to engage in. A contingent approach suggests that a leader requires a wide knowledge of leadership approaches and flexible skills from which to select in order to suit the needs of a particular school context, which indeed will change over time (Hallinger, 2003). In the current study, a strong acknowledgement of the importance of school context is embedded in the investigation of how DPs operate, with the influence of school context factors on their educational leadership practice being closely analysed.

Dimensions of educational leadership

The tensions between the rapidly changing and demanding context in which school leaders work and the need for leadership focused on learning was further acknowledged by Robinson (2006). She urged a strengthening of evidence-based theory-making and a move from generic leadership models to those focused on improving learning, with a shift to a tighter coupling between leadership and teaching (p. 58). Her call to 'redirect research on educational leadership so that it makes stronger links with curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and student learning' strengthened an international shift to address what she described as a 'paucity of empirical evidence about the impact of leadership on the core business of schooling' (2006, p. 63). An influential report of the same year for the UK National College for School Leadership, *Seven Strong Claims about successful school leadership,* confidently stated a key finding that 'school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning' (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006, p. 4).

In another significant step to fill this gap, Robinson led a meta-analysis of international studies which linked different types of school leadership activity with student outcomes,

School leadership and student outcomes: identifying what works and why: best evidence synthesis iteration (BES) (Robinson et al., 2009). This report has been acknowledged internationally as a robust, seminal work particularly as it generated 'effect sizes' for the impact of learning practices on student outcomes (Dempster, 2009, p. 4). On the basis of this evidence the BES claimed that 'school leaders can indeed make a difference to student achievement and wellbeing' (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 35). As this report was influential for the current study both in establishing a working definition of the construct educational leadership and also in the development of items for both phases, it warrants particular attention in this review of literature.

The BES examined the direct evidence of the impact of leadership dimensions on student outcomes, derived from survey items in multiple studies and descriptions of constructs in others. The five dimensions identified were described as 'broad sets of leadership practices … make it clearer what leaders should focus on to make a difference to student learning' (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 94). Table 2.2 shows the effect sizes which were reported for each dimension (p. 39).

Table 2.2 Effect sizes of educational leadership dimensions

Educational leadership dimension	Effect size
1. Establishing goals and expectations	0.42
2. Resourcing strategically	0.31
3. Planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum	0.42
4. Promoting and participating in teacher learning and development	0.84
5. Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment	0.27

It can be seen that effect sizes vary greatly, ranging from the small effects reported for Dimensions 2 and 5, to a large effect for Dimension 4 *Promoting and participating in teacher learning and development.* This evidence-based finding that close involvement in teacher learning and development has a strong effect on student learning outcomes has been highly influential on the field of educational leadership. These dimensions, and components within them, were utilised in the current study to develop items for the questionnaire, as described in Chapter 4.

While the BES has been influential for the current study, the following limitations are noted. Firstly, as discussed earlier, the field of educational leadership is a fluid and highly contested

one with many views of how this construct should be viewed. It is accepted that some commentators may dispute whether such a meta-analysis based on empirical studies captures the essence of leadership or validly measures how it impacts on student learning outcomes. Robinson acknowledges this view. Nevertheless the findings offer important insights for consideration and a basis for analysing leadership practice based on peer-reviewed international studies.

The number of studies included in the BES and their relevance to secondary DPs are also open to critique. It may be considered that the number of international studies used for the *forward mapping* strategy (that is, starting with a measure of leadership and then tracing its link to student outcomes) is relatively small (27 comments). However, this is unfortunately a reflection of the paucity of empirical studies noted earlier and, as noted by Robinson, the remainder of the 134 studies provided rich qualitative evidence of aspects of leadership. Questions may also be raised regarding the relevance of this report for secondary DPs, as most of the studies analysed assumed that the principal was the sole leader, and the majority were conducted in primary schools. Robinson acknowledges that more research is needed in secondary contexts, as well as attention to leaders other than principals (see also Hallinger, 2011). The report states however that 'the insights it brings are often applicable to department and faculty heads and members of senior management' (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 51) and that 'there is no obvious reason why the findings from these studies should not also be applicable to other school leaders and to secondary school' (p. 100).

While such comments perhaps understate the importance of these factors and the differences between primary and secondary contexts, there are no similarly comprehensive studies available that reflect a secondary context more strongly and almost none focusing on the DP. (It can be noted that several New Zealand secondary principal associations including the *National Association of Secondary Deputy Principal and Assistant Principals* strongly endorsed the BES and in particular, its affirmation of distributing leadership more broadly.) The current study was designed to contribute to the additional research recommended, to test the relevance of the five dimensions as judged by a large sample of secondary deputy principals. Indeed, among the intended audiences of the BES are 'educational practitioners … including senior and middle managers' (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 48).

In a final comment, it is noted that the BES generated an additional six dimensions for which there was indirect evidence, using *backward mapping* from positive student outcomes to inferences drawn from descriptive evidence about leadership style. These were developed

with particular reference to the New Zealand context. A decision was made to limit the current study to use of the five dimensions based on direct evidence, as they were (i) more relevant to the international context; and (ii) quantified using effect sizes, so they could be used for comparisons with other measures. Thus, while the above limitations of the BES are acknowledged, its overall quality, utility and applicability for the current study were considered to outweigh these.

Summary and issues for further consideration

The evolution of theories which build on and refer to each other over a protracted period and reflect conceptual development, empirical studies and practical application is complex, and it is inevitable that in such a broad brush overview of educational leadership literature there may be cause for disagreement with points of detail and interpretation. Some commentators perceive the plethora of models and attention as positive and a sign of a 'golden age' for school leadership (Day & Leithwood, 2007, p. 1), while others view the field as 'in crisis' and lacking a coherent theoretical base (Grant, 2014, p. 89). Certainly, the slipperiness of definitions and overlap between models, which may be viewed in some instances as 'first cousins' (Hallinger, 2011, p. 283) makes defining educational leadership a less than exact science. Nevertheless this overview has situated this element of the current study in its field, briefly outlining those models of particular relevance: instructional and transformational leadership, leadership for learning, distributed and contingency approaches and dimensions of educational leadership. In doing so, the dearth of attention in leadership theories to the role of leaders other than the principal, except for that implied within the distributed leadership discussion, has been confirmed.

The position of deputy principal is indeed invisible in most discussions of leadership. Yet there are many potential implications for the role of 'next in command' to the leader at a time when leadership is increasingly being reframed as focusing on student learning and envisaged as distributed rather than invested in a single leader. The position of DP in what remains a hierarchical institution, situated between subject heads who are perceived to be curriculum and teaching experts, and principals, seen as leaders who require educational leadership skills, experiences unique pressures. The present study aimed to explore some of these implications for DPs and their potential to make a greater contribution to educational leadership.

The literature review has also provided background for the specific definition of the term *educational leadership* as it is employed in the research questions in the current study, as defined in Chapter 1. This definition incorporates elements of several conceptualisations of school leadership discussed in this chapter, such as instructional and transformational leadership, and recognises organisational practices which explicitly and directly support learning. Finally, it is closely based on the definition provided by the BES. If DPs are to be more strongly engaged in educational leadership, it could be argued that they would benefit from thorough and targeted preparation. Yet many international calls for better preparation for school leaders do not appear to sufficiently recognise the importance of this or other leadership roles other than the principal, as is revealed in the following section.

PREPARATION AND SUCCESSION

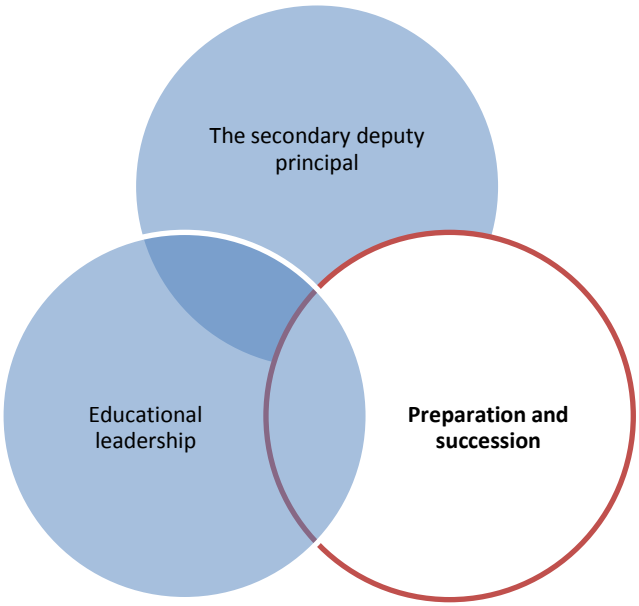

Figure 2.4 Preparation and succession

The third section of this literature review focuses on preparation and succession strategies for school leaders. Hargreaves (in his Foreword to Fink, 2010, pp. xvi, xi) claims that 'improving succession is one of the biggest steps that can be and should be taken in securing lasting improvement for our students and our schools' but cautions 'fewer things in education succeed less than leadership succession'. Nevertheless, there appears to be growing confidence that good leadership skills can be acquired with appropriate support and motivation through quality preparation and succession provision (Anderson, Kleinhenz, Mulford, & Gurr, 2008; Barber, Whelan, & Clark, 2010; Scott & Webber, 2008).

It has been established earlier that many educational jurisdictions have two related concerns about school leadership: looming school leadership vacancies due to demographic changes and the availability of sufficient suitably qualified individuals to fill these demanding roles (Anderson et al, 2007). In response to these concerns there has been growing international interest in preparation and succession planning for school leaders, mostly focusing on principals, and their potential contribution to improved student outcomes. This led to the previously mentioned OECD *Improving School Leadership Project* (2008) which identified four main policy levers for school systems aiming to improve school outcomes: (i) (re)defining school leadership; (ii) distributing school leadership; (iii) developing the knowledge and skills for effective leadership; and (iv) making school leadership a more attractive profession. This study has relevance for each of these four levers, while focusing particularly on potential implications of the preparation, or lack of preparation, of deputy principals.

As well as the increasing urgency for leadership preparation based on well-documented demographic changes, some additional policy and practical imperatives have been noted. These include the impact of the devolution of leadership from centralised authorities to local management (Huber & Pashiardis, 2008), and issues of competency and confidence among principals. If indeed school leaders can have a significant impact on student achievement, the recent decentralisation of authority from systems to local schools, albeit within more prescriptive regulatory frameworks, most notably in England and New Zealand, places additional responsibility for learning onto principals (Barber et al., 2010). This implies that preparation for this new emphasis on educational leadership is required (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, & Orr, 2007). Indeed, some commentators fear that acceleration through leadership ranks without sufficient preparation and support may lead to 'serial incompetence' at each level up to and including the principalship (Macpherson, 2009b, p. 146). Recent evidence from both Australia and New Zealand that large percentages of newly appointed principals report commencing their posts without sufficient background to begin their work with confidence is concerning (Halsey, 2011; Macpherson, 2010b). Prominent researchers (Barber et al., 2010; Huber & Pashiardis, 2008) also note that once principals are appointed, it is extremely difficult to remove them if they prove to be unsuitable, particularly in systems with lifetime tenure, thus few systems remove low performers. The combination of these factors has led to many jurisdictions acting on the belief that leaving the preparation of such leaders to serendipity or chance is no longer a viable option (Cowie & Crawford, 2007; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2012).

Some authors see a clear distinction between *preparation*: 'to improve aspirants' capacities prior to appointment in order to achieve basic competency' and *succession*: 'developmental strategies to improve role-specific capacities after appointment to ensure ongoing success' (Macpherson, 2010b, p. 210). However there is considerable overlap and variation in the use of such terms across the literature. A key reference uses the terms 'preparation and development', acknowledging that 'learning to be a school leader is not a one-time process but a career-long process' and recognising that some jurisdictions emphasise one element more than the other (Crow, Lumby, & Pashiardis, 2008, p.3). Another prominent author prefers the distinctive term 'succession management' from the National Academy of Public Administration:

> … a deliberate and systemic effort to project leadership requirements, identify a pool of high potential candidates, develop leadership competencies in those candidates through intentional learning experiences, and then select leaders from the pool of potential leaders. (Fink, 2010, p. 145)

In this study, while preparation of deputy principals prior to their appointment is a major focus, succession strategies are also discussed as they are so closely related in theoretical discussions, policy and practice. Thus, preparation and succession are considered to include all formal and informal processes for preparing and supporting leaders.

As noted in Section One above, the scholarship devoted to secondary deputy principals is scant, and attention to their preparation, along with primary DPs, is even scarcer (Harris et al., 2003; Oleszewski et al., 2012). Therefore, while the focus of this study is secondary deputy principals, it is necessary to broaden the scope from those strategies employed specifically to prepare this designated group. References to 'leadership preparation' on closer examination frequently refer to preparation for becoming a school leader or principal (Crow, Lumby, & Pashiardis, 2008). In some jurisdictions DPs complete the same study requirements as principals with the assumption that one or more appointments as a DP will generally precede progression to a principal position (OPC, 2013). Other large scale preparation programs in the U.S. (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007) include aspirants from both primary and secondary settings. Therefore generic leadership preparation and succession approaches are outlined as this is the path available to most secondary DPs.

Assumptions and approaches

Before outlining key concepts, findings and issues arising from the literature in this area, it is important to acknowledge that there continue to be very different sets of assumptions about

progression to school leadership. These are broadly referred to in this study as *individual career* approaches and systemic *proactive* approaches. Importantly, systemic approaches reflect the history, culture and politics of the school system and the society itself (Moos et al., 2008).

Assumptions of the individual career approach include that progression to school leadership, generally from the ranks of classroom teachers, is similar to many other careers. Individuals enter the profession as a novice, gain skills and experience in the field, and at some point in their career may or may not aspire to become a middle level or senior leader. Self-identification is a key element of this approach (Barber et al., 2010). Such aspiration may be expressed as a concrete plan or may result from a combination of 'on-the-job' experiences, relationships and opportunities that arise. It may also include accessing training that is available but non-mandatory. The elements of timing and luck are acknowledged in these assumptions. Alternatively, a proactive approach may be adopted by jurisdictions ranging from districts to nations on the assumption that they have responsibility for capacity building to fill these vacancies (Barber et al., 2010). These systems incorporate a range of strategies for identifying, preparing and appointing leaders. Leadership development approaches could be seen therefore as varying in their placement along a continuum ranging from individual choice and action to a systemic proactive approach, with a mix of structures and individual opportunities (Clarke, Wildy, & Slater, 2007).

In reality, progression to school leadership reflects a complex interplay between personal career trajectories and the needs of individual schools and whole systems (Macpherson, 2009b). The movement from a potential to an actively aspiring leader may be impacted by personal factors such as a sense of efficacy, family and location constraints, requirements for progression, and voluntary professional learning and mentoring arrangements (Bezzina, 2012).

Systemic, proactive approaches

While there is great variation around the world, it could be said that in recent years there has been a global shift from a more individual career approach to a systemic proactive approach (Barber et al., 2010; Huber & Pashiardis, 2008). While each school system is different, notable features of such an approach, sometimes termed *professionalisation* (Macpherson, 2010b) may include the development of leadership standards, a whole of career approach, requirements for qualifications or certification, early identification of potential leaders,

mentoring or coaching support, lateral support such as networks or cohorts, and development opportunities. Recruitment policies and procedures are also included as they strongly reflect systemic or individual career approaches. These elements of proactive approaches are described in the following sections with comparisons being drawn to more individual approaches where relevant.

Standards

A number of countries have produced national standards or frameworks for school leaders in recent years, to make explicit the expected capabilities of school leaders as part of their professionalisation. These include England (National College for School Leadership), the U.S. (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008) and Australia (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2014), as well as New Zealand and some provinces in Canada. It is notable that few key researchers and commentators refer to the importance of such standards for preparation and succession management, and some characterise them as unhelpful, as outlined below.

One report which claims some benefits from standards, a prominent U.S. report on leadership preparation programs, noted that while aligning them to the national standards was common, there was variation in how they were used and limited evidence given of their impact (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, p. 148). The usefulness of the standards was seen to be positive in legitimising and structuring the programs. In contrast, Dempster et al.'s (2011) review of several recently developed frameworks notes many limitations including that they are too generic and fail to address what is needed to prepare leaders for future challenges. Others warn that standards can give 'a spurious impression of rationality and precision in defining what competent is and who is certified as competent' (Cowie & Crawford, 2007, p. 139). Most other researchers are silent on the matter of standards, and a number of highly regarded jurisdictions have consciously eschewed this path (Hong Kong Institute of Education, 2010; Ministry of Education, 2010), which suggests that they are not necessarily perceived to be a critical factor in preparing leaders. Indeed, several commentators claim that standards are an inadequate representation of the nuances of the leadership role and can in fact act as an inhibitor to aspiration. Eacott's fervent rejection of standards (2011b) asserts that the complexity and ambiguity of school leadership cannot be captured in neat frameworks, and that they reflect and reinforce an increasingly anti-intellectual and managerial approach to education and leadership. Along with such a critical theorist stance, Fink claims that in practice such standards frameworks are not only 'relatively useless' but

may in fact discourage potential aspirants by creating unrealistic demands which 'intimidate and demotivate' potential leaders (2010, p. 164).

Whole of career approach

Proactive approaches generally view leadership development through a whole of career lens rather than one-off courses just prior to or after appointment. The concepts of breadth, depth, variety and sustained development are prominent in both theoretical discussions and empirical studies. For example, Scott and Webbers' conceptual framework based on an overview of three major international studies and scholarly literature concluded that development approaches need to be 'multidimensional … a continuum of formal and informal learning' where a consistent high standard of the structures and content of the learning must be evident (pp. 766-772). They emphasised that skills should be acquired before appointment, with flexible opportunities provided at critical career stages as needs change and 'teachable moments' arise. This approach would require high-level coordination of broader system policy-makers in areas such as training, human resources and finance.

Systems often cited as applying proactive approaches include Ontario, England and Singapore (Barber et al., 2010). The large Canadian province of Ontario requires each school district to have a leadership succession and development plan. The district of York claims, 'Our organization's best leaders are not just acquired, they are actively grown' (p. 10) and requires each school to have a talent-development plan, to identify potential leaders and set them on a leadership track. Thus all three levels of administration are committed to growing the next generation of leaders. In England, with a more decentralised approach, local authorities work with schools on local succession planning processes, supported by the National College of School Leadership, with the reported result that more teachers are expressing interest in leadership and fewer schools are experiencing difficulty in recruiting leaders (p. 11) Singapore, a populous but geographically small nation-state, has a highly coordinated approach developed by its Ministry of Education's *Educational Leadership Development Centre* which provides career-long preparation and ongoing support for leadership. For example, separate programs are offered for selected potential leaders, with a structured and sustained range of programs for leaders at all levels up to superintendents. Postgraduate study is encouraged, and ongoing support is provided through clusters managed by principals and supported by superintendents (Ministry of Education, 2010). Each of these examples has developed differently to reflect its context, but all demonstrate a proactive approach to preparation and succession which expects all levels of the organisation to be

engaged in developing leaders throughout their career, not just at the point of seeking a school leadership role.

Of particular relevance to the current study concerning deputy principals are Barber et al's (2010) claims that there is good evidence that those systems investing in the development of leaders at head of department and deputy principal level are building leadership capacity, creating a larger talent pool and contributing positively to succession planning. Importantly, this approach also supports a distributed leadership perspective as it not only prepares next generation principals but builds capacity at all levels.

Qualifications and certification

A key feature of an increasing number of proactive systemic approaches to professionalisation is a prerequisite for completing postgraduate study or training programs prior to promotion (Huber & Pashiardis, 2008). A major study of exemplary preparation programs in the U.S., where certification is generally an expectation, established a number of essential elements of the most effective programs: research-based content, curricular coherence, high quality field-based internships, a cohort structure to provide mutual support, and mentoring or coaching (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, p. 65). The report emphasised that universities and school districts needed to collaborate in delivery, and that sustainable funding sources were essential. Another strong finding was that the most effective programs applied adult learning principles and integrated theory and practice 'considering theory in the light of practice, and practice in the light of theory' (p. 69). Darling-Hammond noted that training programs are one essential part of a broader mix of strategies, and that completion of a training course must be followed by ongoing support networks and mentoring for best effect (Preface).

Apart from many U.S. jurisdictions, examples of systems now applying certification or study prerequisites before appointment as a principal include Ontario, Hong Kong and Singapore. Stringent requirements in Ontario include a Master's degree or combination of half a Master's and specialist qualifications, five years successful teaching, qualification in at least three levels of schooling and completion of the *Principal Qualifications Program*, generally part-time over two years (OPC, 2013). Singapore now requires a Master's degree and completion of 'milestone programs' including an intensive six month *Leaders in Education* program which includes a work-based project and an overseas visit (Ministry of Education, 2010). In Hong Kong aspirants must complete the *Certificate for Principalship*, which has a currency of five years (Hong Kong Institute of Education, 2010). Interestingly, a survey of

successful graduates of this program two years after completion revealed that the learning and teaching facets of this program were perceived to be the least relevant to the real leadership role (Ng & Chan, 2014). Other jurisdictions with mandatory qualifications include England and New York.

There are significant criticisms of many preparation programs (Dempster et al., 2011) in terms of their lack of attention to leading learning, their focus on principals to the neglect of other leaders, their tendency to focus on current rather than future challenges and a lack of attention to leaders' personal characteristics. Dempster concludes, however, that there are moral and pragmatic reasons for preparing leaders systematically, and the above evidence suggests that many jurisdictions are developing processes for this preparation. It should be noted that many systems are yet to establish such requirements. This may be for historical or economic reasons, or possibly as these requirements could be perceived as a barrier for some potential leaders which may be difficult to implement in times of recruitment challenges.

Identification of potential leaders

A proactive approach to leadership preparation often includes the early identification of promising leaders and provision of targeted opportunities for their long-term development. This is in strong contrast to an individual career approach where self-identification and grooming for an immediate vacancy is more likely. The statement 'Who is allowed into educational leadership positions is indeed of fundamental importance for educational systems around the world' (Crow et al., 2008, p. 13) reflects a renewed emphasis on the quality of leadership aspirants. This is in contrast with the 'warm body' approach, a term coined by Fink (2010, p. 2) for a focus on having sufficient candidates rather than their quality, or a focus on management skills rather than educational leadership. Concerns that 'self-promotion is rarely a reliable predictor of future performance' underpins many proactive approaches (Huber & Pashiardis, 2008, p. 16).

Examples of systems employing a variety of early identification models include Singapore, Ontario, a number of preparation programs in the U.S., England and Hong Kong, each reflecting its own context. The policy in Singapore applies from first appointment as a teacher. Each year teachers are ranked by their supervisors for their teaching competence, which impacts on salary progression, and also for their *Currently Estimated Potential* for leadership in three areas. These comprise intellectual capacity, ability to work with others, and drive, stamina and resilience. This approach would seem to lessen over-reliance on the assumption, questioned by Huber and Pashiardis, that 'a good teacher automatically becomes

a good leader' and the 'risk of losing a good teacher whilst not necessarily gaining a good school leader' (2008, p. 21). Promising candidates are further assessed, and selected individuals supported through three leadership tracks towards a role as a senior teacher, head of department or principal or specialist in the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, 2010). Thus the emphasis in Singapore is on recognition and identification of potential leaders by school-based leaders and then provision of an integrated development program by the system.

In Ontario, models such as the York Regional Plan cited by Barber et al. (2010) include nomination by superintendents in consultation with principals, before entry into a leadership track, developing a plan and undertaking integrated programs of training, mentoring and local networks. An additional benefit of identification by senior leaders was noted in a report on U.S. leadership programs, which suggested that self-recruitment into programs has failed to recruit many talented educators. A key recommendation was that entry to such training opportunities should be selective, noting that in the most effective models:

> None of these districts were continuing to rely on self-selected applicants coming to them already trained. They had all become more purposeful in seeking out recruits and figuring out how to develop them. (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, p. 149)

This was reflected in the quality of the programs themselves, with twice as many graduates of exemplary programs having been referred or recommended by their districts (p. 65). Some other perhaps unexpected outcomes of district nomination of high quality candidates were also noted. These included a broader representation of the diversity in the teaching force in terms of gender and minority groups, and also a change in the type of expertise and experience they brought, shifting from sporting to instructional leadership experience (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). It may be speculated that groups traditionally less confident in self-promotion are now being recognised and included in leadership preparation, and it could be argued that this greater diversity in aspirant leaders is important at a time when many systems are no longer preparing for homogenous societies (Crow et al., 2008). Benefits of early identification reported in other research include the impact on aspirations: over three quarters of respondents in an international project reported that having been identified and being given leadership responsibilities early in their career was a main reason for becoming a principal (Barber et al., 2010).

Large studies in England's more decentralised system revealed that identification of leaders is seen as important at both school and Local Education Area (LEA) level. Focusing on retention of talent within the same school as an alternative to hiring externally, they suggested that heads (principals) should be more proactive in identifying leadership talent (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2012), while the role of LEAs was seen to be more that of providing leadership training and possibly identifying some potential talented leaders through this means. While many staff at different levels felt that 'self-disclosure' of leadership aspiration was useful, some senior leaders were cautious that self-identification was not always accompanied by talent (Rhodes, Brundrett, & Nevill, 2008). An alternative suggestion that instruments be available for aspirants to self-assess their own cognitive competencies, attributes and traits presents another consideration, perhaps filtering out those who are not suited before they aspire to a leadership role (Huber & Pashiardis, 2008).

Identification of promising candidates for leadership, whether early in a career or closer to appointment, appears to have the potential to influence the quality of individuals entering leadership positions and perhaps support their aspirations. Importantly, it is generally seen as one of a suite of proactive strategies, along with other opportunities for development.

Development opportunities

Throughout the research and analysis in this field, the notion of providing a range of practical development opportunities throughout a potential leader's career is prominent. The following types are strongly represented: workplace leadership opportunities including structured internships, mentoring and coaching, and lateral support such as cohorts or networks. Practical workplace learning opportunities are valued by teachers and often included in programs, though a number of cautions are expressed relating to the quality and planned nature of these opportunities, as well as regarding the balance between 'practical' and 'theoretical' elements of preparation. What Fink terms 'intentional learning experiences' (2010, p. 145) can be contrasted with fortuitous 'on the job' learning which may or may not occur during a career. Teachers and aspiring leaders value having early involvement in projects and the chance to undertake some leadership roles (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2012): proactive approaches tend not to leave this important element to chance. Structured internships are seen to be highly effective in Darling-Hammond's (2007) findings as a complement to the theory elements of certification programs in the U.S., and significant in-school projects are included in the Singapore model described earlier. Teachers are often quoted as preferring experiential learning to theoretical coursework (Muijs, 2011) but several

authors perceive a danger in over-reliance on practical preparation for leadership which may be subject to 'faddism … under-theorised rhetoric and appeals to common sense' (Eacott, 2011b, p. 44). Ideally such opposing concerns are addressed in proactive approaches by balancing both well-researched theory and school based experiences in their integrated programs.

Mentoring and to some extent coaching are seen as important support for aspiring and new leaders. Barber (2010) claims that in England mentoring of new principals has led to better performance while others recommend that that it should occur at all levels and not just when entering the principalship (Bezzina, 2012; Macpherson, 2009b). Respondents in two studies expressed a desire for mentoring for role-modelling and problem-solving during the preparation phase (Cranston, 2006; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007) while incumbents in several smaller studies suggested it was an important factor in their leadership aspirations and would help to combat professional isolation (Wildy & Clarke, 2008). However, there are important considerations which need to be addressed to prevent mentoring reverting to 'perpetuating the status quo' (Fink, 2010, p. 128) or having other unintended consequences. Some coordination is required rather than depending on serendipitous arrangements, and the identification, selection, training, and matching of expert mentors is seen to be critical so that high performing leaders are engaged (Crow et al., 2008). Several authors caution that selection of mentors is critical: those who demonstrate realistic work-life balance should be chosen in order not to discourage potential aspirants (Bezzina, 2012) and those who demonstrate 'reactive, compliant, managerial' styles should be avoided as they may serve to deter younger potential leaders (Fink, 2010, p. 96). Therefore while recommendations for mentoring are frequent, the issues around such strategies must be carefully taken into account. In addition, while the practices of mentoring (and coaching and shadowing) are sometimes mentioned in preparation and succession literature, they are frequently not clearly defined or differentiated, thus recommendations for such processes need to be considered with caution.

A related type of development strategy, termed 'lateral support', may apply in preparation or succession phases. It recognises the strength of peer relationships through structures such as cohorts, networks and professional learning circles, and is being increasingly employed by proactive systems. Darling-Hammond (2007) reports that the creation of cohorts for pre-service training groups, and collegial learning networks, study groups and peer coaching for in-service programs has a positive impact on the confidence and effectiveness of leaders. Other systems also view these lateral supports as highly effective. New York reports that

programs delivered by networks have made 'schools … the engines for building talent' (Barber et al., 2010, p. 19) and Singapore principals believe that their clusters are their greatest source of learning and support (Ministry of Education, 2010). However, as with mentoring, there are dangers in lateral support if it just leads to the 'recycling of bad practice' (Barber et al., 2010, p. 17) and it is recommended that outside expert input is also sought. One commentator recommends that involvement of professional associations in running networks could help allay this concern (Macpherson, 2010a).

A consistent thread in discussion of these development opportunities is that they do not stand alone but are valuable elements of an integrated approach which includes well-researched theory, practice in a supported environment prior to appointment, with ongoing development after appointment. Preparation of leaders, however, should be matched to well-considered recruitment procedures if these leaders are to fulfil their potential.

Recruitment

It is clear from the above outline of proactive preparation and succession strategies that many jurisdictions are committing major resources to the professionalisation of leaders. Recruitment of these leaders however, continues to cause concern: 'it is common at present for more attention to be paid to leadership development than to selection procedures' (Muijs, 2011, p. 46). Recruitment approaches may be expected to vary according to their national, historical and cultural context, and are subject to complex influences, such as their centralised/decentralised organisational focus (recruitment may operate at school, whole system or local level) and the nature and size of the jurisdiction. At the same time, they ideally should address new expectations and conceptions of school leadership (Huber & Pashiardis, 2008). Indeed, 'vigorous, carefully targeted recruitment and selection processes that proactively bring expert teachers with potential for leadership into the principalship' are seen to be more necessary than ever (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, p. 144). In addition to these system needs, the professional needs of aspirants for transparency and fairness must also be considered. Finally, recruitment systems are often deeply embedded in bureaucratic and industrial procedures and resistant to change. It is unsurprising that no system claims to have addressed all the above considerations.

The literature describes recruitment processes with the following features. Individuals may be recruited into preparation *programs* as in the U.S. (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007), to a *pool* of qualified applicants ready to be appointed to a suitable vacancy as in Ontario or Singapore (Barber et al., 2010) or *directly into a school* leadership position as in England

and most Australian government systems, though by very different methods. Procedures may consist of a single application, as in NSW DEC, or a multi-phase assessment process as in New York (Barber et al., 2010). They may be conducted by an individual local leader, a school-level panel or school board (as in New Zealand). Each approach has reported strengths and areas of concern, briefly summarised as follows. England's emphasis on local school selection to grow and retain leaders has assisted retention within schools, but has tended to create competition between schools. Some reports also suggest that attempts to retain talent can be perceived to block individual's career paths, and involvement by local authorities to support beneficial movement between schools can be resisted (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2012). U.S. states and districts vary in how they recruit to their preparation programs, the pathway to principalship, with exemplary programs being highly selective but many others continuing to rely on self-selection, which Darling-Hammond's review suggests may miss diverse potential talent and lead to weaker outcomes in terms of principal performance (2007). Singapore and Ontario approaches are seen as highly effective for system needs (Barber et al., 2010), but the prospect of being appointed at the system's discretion and of regular rotation between schools is also reported as a disincentive for some aspirants (Fink, 2010; Ministry of Education, 2010). One interviewee in Ontario commented that although regular rotation was an expectation, embodied by the saying 'when you join the army they ship you out', it did act as a significant deterrent to some excellent potential leaders (Personal communication with professional association representative, 2013). New Zealand's decentralised model of selection by local school boards is seen to empower local communities, but can disadvantage schools in more isolated areas. The need for boards to be trained in selection has been highlighted (Macpherson, 2009b), especially in the absence of mandatory training or qualifications for candidates (Macpherson, 2009a).

The single stage recruitment process of merit selection, generally applied at the school level but coordinated centrally, is used widely in Australia and some other jurisdictions. It has attracted considerable attention in the literature, much of it negative, as outlined below. It has relevance for DPs in this study who have experienced some form of merit selection to achieve their current position, and expect to undergo similar procedures if they wish to progress to a principal role. A project spanning three Australian states reported that school-based appointment and selection was the most frequently cited blocker for potential leaders: 'the depth and extent of aspirants' concerns' about written applications, interviews and feedback constituted a major and unexpected finding (Gronn & Lacey, 2006, p. 106). Respondents cited the stressful nature and time pressure of selection procedures and the fear of and consequences of failure. There was widespread cynicism regarding the ostensible

focus on 'merit', with potential aspirants seeing the process as a lottery or game which many chose not to play. Failure in the 'selection game', often to a candidate from within the school, was seen to generate frustration and disappointment. As noted by the authors, 'thwarted aspirations, it would appear, breed cynicism' (p. 112). Cranston's (2006) survey of Queensland aspirants yielded similar concerns, with merit selection being perceived as unclear, unfair, subjective and inconsistent, while the potential negative impact of an unsuccessful internal applicant for a deputy position remaining in a school were also noted in England (Turner & Sykes, 2007).

More comprehensive, multi-step selection strategies employed by other systems may include academic achievement, independent Assessment Centres, presentations by applicants, psychological profiles, performance appraisals and classroom observations. However, many systems continue to rely, at least in part, on personal interviews despite evidence that they seem to be particularly prone to mistakes (Huber & Pashiardis, 2008).

This discussion of recruitment practices cannot conclude without reference to the element of *power,* which is inherent in all these approaches but rarely mentioned overtly. It is clear from the above analysis that the power to select school leaders, particularly principals, varies widely from local communities to senior system leaders, and has the potential to strongly influence school cultures and operations (Blackmore et al, 2006). One of few researchers who draw this critical element to our attention, Fink (2010) notes that selection of principals is a source of political power not lightly conceded by authorities. He is also alone in acknowledging the implications for deputy principals, as their selection is an area where principals desire to have influence. Who holds the power, as well as the nature of selection processes for recruiting leaders, has a strong bearing on becoming a deputy principal as well as progressing to principal.

Implications of individual career and proactive approaches

Proactive approaches are claimed to bring considerable benefits to school systems, including better quality leadership and outcomes, status of the profession and attractiveness of the role (Macpherson, 2010b). It is argued that they remove the element of luck and may over time lead to principals more truly reflecting the communities they serve (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). However, there are important caveats and indeed critiques to be considered. Such claims need to be supported by rigorous qualitative and quantitative evaluation as the evidence is far from conclusive, and the commitment of resources to extensive programs should be subjected to cost-benefit analysis (Cowie & Crawford, 2007; Huber & Pashiardis,

2008; Muijs, 2011). Even if we do know 'what works', the requirements of successful programs are clearly complex and hugely expensive (Darling-Hammond et al, 2007, p.99-118). While it may be claimed that preparing good leaders is a worthwhile long-term investment given the consequences of ad-hoc succession, funding the breadth of recommended programs is beyond wealthy countries let alone developing nations (Bush, 2007). Indeed, a number of key writers question whether findings from one jurisdiction can be applied to another, noting that cultural differences as well as broad policy issues such as school autonomy would make this highly problematic (Muijs, 2011). Barber et al. (2010), after reviewing eight major systems and asserting that 'what works' appears to be surprisingly consistent, nevertheless caution against the expectation that there are proven, transferable practices to be extracted, rather seeing comparisons as an opportunity to gain insight and ideas.

Concerns are also expressed about individual elements of proactive approaches. Early identification, for example, may overlook potential leaders who do not 'fit the mould' and is contingent on the judgement of supervisors. Harris (2009) also suggests that influencing the practices of multiple leaders may be more productive than identification and intensive training of individuals at a time when distributed approaches are gaining credence, a concern echoed by Dempster (2011). Broader concerns about the assumptions underlying many programs and their vulnerability to political pressures are also worth considering. While some researchers express confidence in the capacity of programs to develop principals who can successfully lead schools (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007), theorists such as Eacott (2011b) question the very assumptions about effective schools and leaders which he claims are based on over-simplified league tables and leadership frameworks, products of a 'managerialist' view of education (p. 50). For example, one could question who decides who is a 'high-performing' principal and on what basis. Similarly, if governments resource proactive preparation programs based on standards, or work closely with universities in course design, it can be argued, there is the concomitant risk of politicisation of education (Cowie & Crawford, 2007; Macpherson, 2010b). Fink and Brayman (2006, p. 62) suggest, on the basis of the longitudinal *Change Over Time* project in north America, that under such influences principals risk becoming 'managers of system agendas'.

While acknowledging the above critiques of proactive whole-system approaches, it is also important to recall the potential limitations of allowing an individual career approach to persist. This approach risks not meeting system needs, with undersupply or oversupply of aspirants impacting on both schools and individuals. Self-identification of leaders and

reliance on serendipitous experience have been identified as less than satisfactory methods for developing well-prepared leaders, and leaving quality to chance is a risky strategy for systems. The consequences for individuals are also not often widely recognised. Chances to gain early leadership experiences are not available on an equitable basis in all settings or to all groups, a sense of self-efficacy is not encouraged by an ad hoc approach to development, and good leaders may be missed if confidence to self-nominate is presumed.

Summary and issues for further consideration

The preparation of school leaders is clearly attracting great international attention and resources, and while approaches vary around the globe there are some consistent themes. While some jurisdictions continue to operate with an individual career approach, proactive systemic models are becoming more widespread. Within these, some prominent examples base their models on leadership standards, while other major characteristics are whole of career approaches, qualification or certification requirements, active identification of potential leaders, an array of development opportunities and a broad range of recruitment practices. Of great significance to this study, as evidenced by both the literature focused on deputy principals and educational leadership, is that while systems have expended great efforts to prepare principals, the concomitant effort is not there for deputies. As noted in Olesewski et al's (2012) review of the literature regarding equivalent roles in U.S. primary and secondary contexts:

> There are few professional development programs designed for this group of administrators … specific training targeted at assistant principals is meaningful and necessary. While this sounds commonsensical, assistant principals are rarely afforded the breadth of professional development opportunities that teachers and principals receive. (2012, p. 267)

While it is argued that individual career approaches seldom prepare aspirants adequately before they are appointed as a leader, proactive approaches vary in quality and comprehensiveness, and questions remain as to how findings from one context can be applied in others. Furthermore, despite continuing interest in distributed leadership, the preparation literature continues to focus largely on individual *principal* preparation. The current empirical investigation of how DPs are prepared in one large Australian government system, and their views of what methods might best prepare them, offers much needed insights regarding the preparation of this relatively neglected group of senior leaders.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS ARISING FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of the available literature above has focused on three interrelated areas, each of which is integral to this investigation. Section 1 suggested that while some themes about secondary DP work are emerging from the limited literature, there is still much to be learned about how DPs perceive and engage in educational leadership. Section 2 reviewed key models of school leadership relevant to the DP role, and suggested the need for further examination of the potential contribution of DPs to school senior leadership teams. Finally, Section 3 outlined different ways of preparing school leaders, contrasting individual career and pro-active system approaches, noting that these mostly focus on principals. The review builds a strong case for an empirical study to contribute to the knowledge base about secondary DPs, their leadership and how they are prepared for this important role.

Following consideration and synthesis of the literature in these three related areas, the following research questions have been developed to shed light on the research problem, addressing two main conceptual areas, career progression and educational leadership. RQ 1 and 2 explore the *career progression* of DP up to and possibly beyond their current role, while RQ 3, 4 and 5 examine issues related to *educational leadership*. Each question applies to deputy principals in New South Wales (Australia) government secondary schools.

1. Do deputy principals aspire to the role of principal?
2. How have deputy principals been prepared for the responsibilities of this role?
3. How do the perceptions of deputy principals regarding the concept of *educational leadership* align with those in the literature?
4. To what extent do deputy principals engage in educational leadership?
5. What factors appear to influence the educational leadership practices of deputy principals?

Many of these questions beg the question 'Why?'. Possible explanations for findings are addressed in the results and discussion chapters (Chapters 6 – 9).

Following this wide-ranging review of literature, the brief chapter to follow now narrows the focus to provide key contextual information about the setting of the study, the NSW government school education system.

CHAPTER 3:
CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe elements of context relevant to deputy principals in NSW government secondary schools at the time of data collection. Significant changes which have occurred since this time are mentioned where relevant.

SCHOOL EDUCATION: A STATE RESPONSIBILITY WITHIN A FEDERAL SYSTEM

It is important to note that school education is a state responsibility within the Australian Federal (or Commonwealth) system, thus the following information refers to the state of NSW. Shown in Figure 3.1, NSW is the most populous of the six states and two territories in Australia and established its first schooling system.

Figure 3.1 The state of New South Wales, Australia

Compulsory, free and secular schooling for primary (elementary) aged students has been provided by the NSW government since the *Public Instruction Act* (1880), with limited focus on secondary education until the mid-twentieth century (Hughes & Brock, 2008, p. 11).

This system was originally closely modelled on the English school system. In addition, the Catholic Education system and some other church schools catered for those with religious preferences, and a relatively small number of independent schools existed. The major provider of school education in NSW, along with the other states and territories, has always been the government system, known at the time of the study as the Department of Education and Communities (DEC).

A major growth in secondary schooling occurred in the late 1960s with the introduction of the *Wyndham Scheme* which aimed to provide 'comprehensive' secondary schooling for the huge numbers of post-war baby boomer children. This model catered for all ability levels in local high schools, though the bulk of students left school at about age 16, with a small minority progressing to senior years and university preparation. In the 1990s there was another major shift, with a new focus on 'choice' for parents who were now able to send their children to the school of their preference, including more government high schools identified as specialist in areas such as sport or performing arts (Macpherson, 2015, p. 291). A larger proportion of students completed six years of high school, and changed Federal funding arrangements encouraged the rapid expansion of private school education enrolments from about 25% in 1961 to 34% in 2011 (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2012, p. 40). Nevertheless, as the largest system in Australia with a sizeable bureaucracy and support system for schools, the DEC continued to exert great influence on school education in Australia. At the time of the study it held approximately 66% of total enrolments and 61% of secondary enrolments (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2012, p. 40).

A broader set of developments that have affected the work of school leaders including deputy principals are now briefly mentioned, that is the impact of rapid and unpredictable social, economic and political change on schools across the globe in the latter decades of the 20th Century and into this century. Detailed analysis is beyond the remit of this study but these issues have been comprehensively addressed by many commentators internationally (Fink & Brayman, 2006; Fullan, 2002; Hargreaves, 1994) and in Australia (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Tait, 2013). In short, these authors have convincingly argued that the pressures of globalisation, politicisation, marketisation and technological change have made school leadership more intense, complex and accountable. In addition, growing devolution of responsibility from the centre to schools (Hughes & Brock, 2008) has led to increased local management responsibilities for principals and, it is argued by some (Cranston, Tromans, &

Reugebrink, 2004), downward pressure of administrative responsibilities to deputy principals.

NSW policy bodies

Two overarching government bodies had responsibility for major policy across all three sectors of schooling in NSW: Government, Catholic and Independent. The *Board of Studies* (BOS), established 1990 (Hughes & Brock, 2008, p. 149), was responsible for setting the curriculum for all schools K-12, managing the Higher School Certificate exit credential, registering and accrediting non-government schools and advising on assessment. *The NSW Institute of Teachers*, established in 2004, was responsible for teaching and leadership standards, and registration and accreditation of teachers. These two bodies, answerable to the state Minister for Education and Training, liaised with school systems, peak representative bodies and the Commonwealth government. Implications of more recent developments that occurred during the study are discussed in Chapter 8.

Government school organisation

Government secondary schools, the focus of the study, were administered by the DEC. All major policy, financial, staffing and administration decisions were made at state level, along with support for curriculum implementation and professional learning through various state directorates. The state was divided into ten geographic regions as shown in Figure 3.2 (NSW Department of Education and Communities, 2012).

Regional Directors managed 2,231 government schools through local School Education Directors, each of whom was responsible for about 30 schools, including recruitment of principals when vacancies arose. Particularly noteworthy is the concentration of population and hence schools along the coastline and around the capital city of Sydney, with much of the state being administered by just three DEC regions due to small and scattered enrolments.

Grades were generally organised into primary schools (years Kindergarten-6) and secondary schools (years 7-12), though a small number of secondary schools were separated into colleges with senior and junior campuses. In 2012, there were 398 DEC secondary schools and 67 Central/Community schools (in rural areas) where DPs were appointed. Total DEC enrolments were 745,540 with 306,893 being secondary students (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2012).

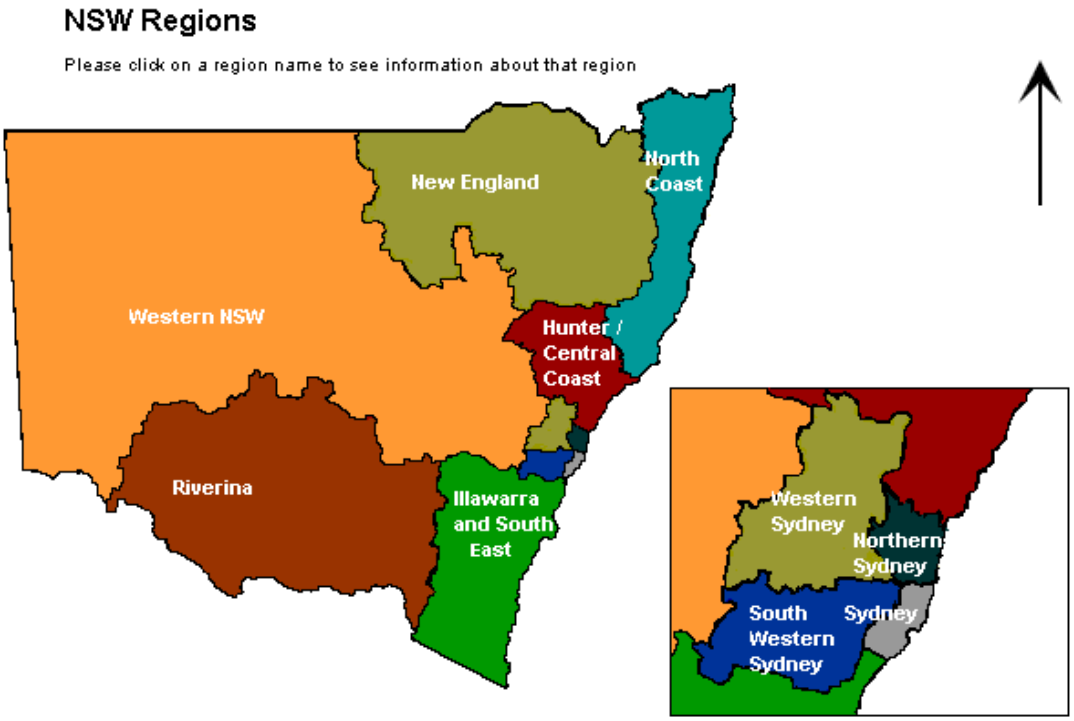

Figure 3.2 Regions in NSW DEC, 2012

Secondary school structures.

The centralised education system described above was mirrored by hierarchical arrangements in secondary schools. These were managed by one principal, usually between 1-3 deputy principals depending on school size and need, and a number of head teachers who coordinated teachers and possibly non-teaching support staff. The organisational structure may be portrayed diagrammatically as in Figure 3.3.

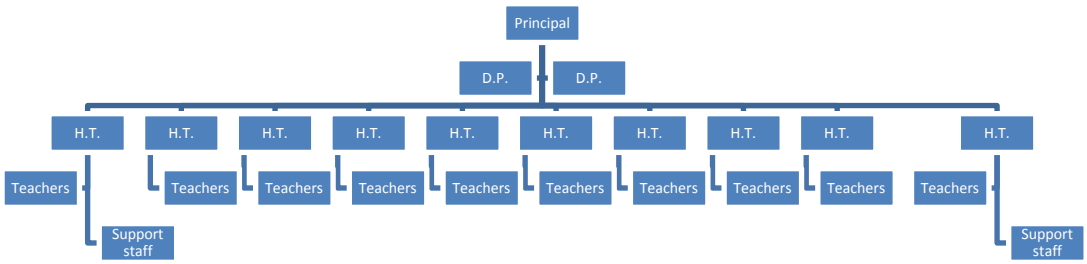

Figure 3.3 Typical structure of a DEC secondary school

DEC POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

State-wide staffing and merit selection

Staffing and promotion procedures have an important influence on the career decisions of teachers and leaders, including DPs. A centralised, state-wide approach has historically applied to staffing and promotion in the NSW government system, with the intention of ensuring that every school could have equal access to qualified teachers and executives, regardless of geographical location. Teachers and executives were appointed across the state into permanent positions. Teachers could apply after three years to transfer to another equivalent position, but executive level moves were subject to merit selection procedures. There were some provisions to assist with attracting and retaining staff for 'harder to staff' areas, and for special circumstances.

For the purposes of the study, it is important to understand how the majority of those who attained deputy leadership positions came to do so. Two main pathways to leadership roles in place during the last 40 years have relevance for the careers of sample DPs. Until 1990, promotion was gained by applying for a Department Inspector to 'inspect' teachers in their own school and classroom context, after which successful applicants were placed on a promotion list at various levels (Lists 2-4 in secondary schools) (Macpherson, 2015, p. 248). This list then operated on the basis of seniority, as aspirants waited (in order) until a position for which they applied arose and they were made an offer. This could take some years. DPs would progress through two such inspections and appointments as head teacher (HT) and then DP. In 1990, as part of a broader suite of major reforms through the *Education Reform Act*, this system was replaced by the *Merit Selection Policy* (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2005) which in theory provided a level playing field for all aspiring executives across the state and was focused on 'merit' rather than 'seniority'. All school promotion vacancies were advertised and aspirants could apply for a particular position of their choice. The merit selection process comprised a written application (with strict guidelines and standard criteria), an interview, and oral support from referees (including the current principal). Selection was conducted by a panel at the prospective school, convened by the principal and including representatives of the *NSW Teachers Federation* (union of government school teachers) and parent body. Principals were similarly selected by a panel convened by the local Superintendent/School Education Director. All procedures were monitored and final appointments made by the state Staffing Directorate.

Two features of the *Merit Selection Policy* which have substantial influence on the career pathways of DPs are noted. Firstly, appointments were permanent so successful candidates could potentially stay in the position for the remainder of their careers. Secondly, unlike some other systems, there were no school boards with authority over the principal or staff, or with any role in selecting staff. This system, with minor modifications, has remained in place for over 25 years, and is of interest as it has implications for DPs in progressing through their careers, and importantly for their aspirations to the principalship.

Leadership preparation

As may be inferred from the description of the selection processes above, at the time of the study there were few formal prerequisites for a promotion position (other than a teaching degree and some subject requirements for head teacher positions). No additional leadership training or qualifications were required for deputy principal or principal roles. Also, while the applicant's current principal was required to be the 'first referee', there was no requirement for aspiring leaders to be nominated by a principal or other leader before applying. Self-identification was very much part of the culture of seeking promotion although informal arrangements could be made.

A range of non-mandatory leadership development opportunities were offered by various DEC directorates over the years. In more recent years programs were coordinated within a framework such as the *Leadership Development Framework*, but it must be said that they tended to be offered for several years then be replaced with a different model, particularly when departmental restructures occurred, often after a change of state government. Some programs blended workshop attendance and related school-based projects, and leadership theory was generally included. One-off seminars with well-known speakers, on-line modules and a variety of locally developed programs were also available. It was notable that most programs were generic in that any aspiring executive, at any level in the primary, secondary or special education areas could choose to participate. Most were conducted during school hours, generally funded through school professional learning funds, with some after school sessions. This brief overview gives just a flavour of DEC professional learning provisions available to current DPs over the years prior to their appointment.

Perhaps the key point to be noted is that participation in all courses was voluntary and frequently relied on self-nomination, and although other voluntary professional associations such as the NSW Secondary Deputy Principals Association (NSWSDPA) also provided

some training opportunities, there was no overarching accreditation or mandatory requirement for preparation for school leadership.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The state body referred to above, the *NSW Institute of Teachers,* implemented *Teacher Professional Standards* for new teachers from 2004. Just prior to this study, a new national body, *The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership* (AITSL) was established and developed *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* and later the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* with the intention of supporting the development and accreditation of teachers and leaders across Australia (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2014). At the time of data collection for this study a transitional phase was in place, with the lower level standards (Graduate and Proficient) impacting on teachers entering the profession, but not on existing teachers or leaders. The higher level standards relating to leadership (Highly Accomplished and Lead) were not used for merit selection purposes in DEC schools and were yet to gain wide recognition amongst practitioners.

In summary, it can be argued that secondary DPs in this study operated in the context of a centralised, hierarchical system and in schools that were experiencing considerable external pressures that impacted heavily on their role. Their preparation for leadership lacked mandatory requirements, and the system of recruitment could be perceived as encouraging an individual career approach to entering a leadership role. The following chapter outlines how the study of DPs working within this system was designed and conducted.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The overall aim of this study was to investigate the work and educational leadership role of deputy principals in the context of NSW government secondary schools. It sought to explore and explain what factors impacted on DP perceptions, practice and aspirations. This chapter explains the research design and methods employed to answer the research questions which were framed and justified in Chapters 1 and 2. The first section describes and provides a rationale for the research design, a mixed methods approach, and the second section outlines how this was translated into a set of rigorous methods. Throughout the chapter, potential limitations are addressed as they arise within the research design and methods.

RESEARCH DESIGN

It is claimed that research design involves the intersection of philosophy (assumptions, world view), strategies of inquiry and specific methods (Creswell, 2014, p. 5). This section provides a definition of a mixed methods research (MMR) design and outlines key characteristics relevant to the purposes of this study as well as potential pitfalls. It then delineates the specific type of design used, provides a diagrammatic representation and offers a rationale for using this MMR approach for a study of this nature.

Definition and characteristics of a mixed methods research

As mixed methods research is a relatively new and continually evolving approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007), a definition is provided, and then aspects relevant to the purposes of the current study are outlined. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007) reviewed 17 definitions of mixed methods, contributed by then leaders in the field, to arrive at a composite definition:

> Mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration. (Johnson et al., 2007, p. 123)

In recent years key characteristics of MMR have been generally, if not unanimously, agreed upon. Creswell (2015, p.3) summarises these as follows:

- collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data within a specific MMR design through the
- use of rigorous qualitative and quantitative methods for the purpose of
- combining the two forms of data (integration), and then
- interpreting their meaning (inferences), often using
- philosophical assumptions and theories.

Advantages of a MMR approach

A MMR research design was chosen as the methodological approach for this study as it has key advantages which are applicable to investigation of the research problem. Some key general advantages explained below include the notions of 'complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses' (Johnson & Onwuegbuzi, 2004, p. 18), triangulation, and the recognition of research question/s as a critical driver of methodological decisions. In addition, the potential for mixed methods approaches to lend greater credibility to findings for various audiences is considered to be potentially beneficial for this study.

One key advantage of MMR is claimed to be that the benefits and limitations of quantitative and qualitative methods could be balanced against each other for enhanced outcomes (Creswell, 2014, p. 218). It is claimed that rather than emphasising the stereotyped differences between them 'We can very often increase the scope, depth and power of our research by combining the two approaches' (Punch, 2009, p. 295). The complex research problem addressed by this study lends itself to a flexible combination of quantitative and qualitative procedures, exploiting the strengths of each approach, while acknowledging potential weaknesses. For example, gathering quantitative data from a large scale questionnaire addresses one of the gaps in the literature relating to deputy principals' perceptions, practices and aspirations, though such data can be criticised for lack of depth and credibility. Similarly, the potential of more contextualised stories being gathered through interviews, to reveal the variety and complexity of experiences, is balanced against the reality that findings from a small number of interviews cannot always be generalised with confidence.

The related concept of triangulation**,** corroborating findings about a phenomenon from one method with a different type, was seen as an important benefit in early discussions of MMR (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). It is acknowledged that triangulation is now seen as a less distinctive and critical element of MMR, with terms such as convergence or merging of data

seen as more appropriate (Creswell & Fetters, 2014). Nevertheless, the opportunity to both confirm and expand on themes using both types of data was seen as one key benefit of MMR for the current study.

The notion of the primacy of research question/s as a critical driver of decisions regarding overall research design, applied to mixed methods by Plano Clark et al. (2010), is fundamental to this study. While these authors confirmed that researchers are free to choose 'the best tools to suit the question', they also emphasised that congruence between research questions and overall design was critical, and proposed that research questions may also be dynamic, undergoing refinement as results emerge from each phase (p. 280). 'Centrality' is the term used in Maxwell & Loomis' interactive model for the importance of research questions for design coherence (2003, p. 245) in which 'five components of design – purpose, conceptual framework, research questions, methods and validity – are linked in a web of relationships with the research questions being central'. Evidence of this overarching influence of the research question on all elements of this study's research design is demonstrated throughout, from the conceptual framework, alignment of all questionnaire and interview items, to the structuring of results chapters according to these questions.

A final relevant characteristic of a mixed method approach is that confidence in the findings and inferences may be increased by analysis of both large scale data and personal experiences. It is suggested that the MMR approach, with its balance of 'numbers' and 'words' may gain credibility with different audiences such as policy makers and practitioners (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 441). It was thus considered highly appropriate for the current study which has relevance for both practitioners (DPs and aspiring DPs) and policy makers (employers, including NSW DEC, and national institutions such as AITSL) both of whom may find the combined analysis of large scale data with fine grained personal insights more credible and persuasive than a single source.

Potential challenges of MMR

A MMR approach is not without potential challenges, whether conceptual, methodological or practical. In this section, concerns relating to conceptual clarity raised in early debates are acknowledged, while more recent responses to these issues are adapted for the current study. The impossibility of combining competing world views (quantitative and qualitative methods, generally associated with positivist and constructivist paradigms) in a single study was an early concern. It was suggested that that philosophical differences in epistemology (beliefs about the nature of knowledge), ontology (beliefs about the nature of reality) and

axiology (beliefs about the role of values and ethics in conducting research) were incompatible (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010, p. 4). MMR proponents such as Howe (1988) disputed these assertions and there is now broader acceptance that a pluralistic or 'compatibilist' attitude is more productive (Howe, 1988, p. 11).

While alert to the potential risks of ignoring complex differences in world views, the researcher has been influenced by alternative approaches which recognise these tensions but dispute such a binary view. For example, Bazeley (2013a, p. 2) argues that 'quantitative and qualitative are seen to describe poles on a multidimensional continuum rather than as distinct entities' and cites Greene's description of a resolution of this tension:

> The core meaning of mixing methods in social inquiry is to invite multiple mental models into the same inquiry space, for purposes of respectful conversation, dialogue and learning one from the other toward a collective generation of better understanding of the phenomena being studied. (Greene, 2007, p. 17, cited in Bazeley, 2013a, p. 3)

Johnson and Onwuegbuzi's (2004, pp. 16-17) adaptation of the concept of pragmatism, based on earlier Deweyian thinking, as a philosophical basis for MMR was also influential. Creswell summarises this as 'what works' to answer the research questions is sufficient justification for using mixed methods:

> … thus for the mixed method researcher, pragmatism opens the door to multiple methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions, as well as different forms of data collection and analysis. (2014, p. 11)

For the purposes of this study, an approach similar to the notion of 'paradigm pluralism' which urges practitioners to respect different world views and be free to choose the most appropriate tools to answer real world research questions, (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010, p. 804) has been adopted.

It is important to note that notwithstanding this position, cautions expressed by these authors were also heeded. That is, while a range of philosophical positions are available to researchers, the primary considerations are the design quality at all three stages (inputs, processes and inferences) and the generation of meaningful meta-inferences from the integrated findings (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010, p. 812). This study applied the quality standards and indeed the nomenclature expected by each methodological approach in order

to ensure rigorous defensible inferences, as detailed in the methods section later in this chapter.

Methodological issues such as the priority given to each approach and the sequence of collection and analysis, raised by prominent theorists, were also considered in the current design. The suggestion that the researcher should give priority to one core 'drive' (deductive or inductive), keep the processes separate and maintain quality criteria true to the paradigm until the moment of 'analytical interface' (Morse, 2010, p. 342) has not been adopted in this study, which allocates equal priority to quantitative and qualitative data sources. Similarly, the recommended framing of separate quantitative and qualitative research questions has been avoided, as all questions in this study benefited from and indeed required both approaches. The alternative stance (advocated by Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010) that MMR should be judged by its own unique criteria and not be seen just as separate quantitative and qualitative elements was preferred. This view, that keeping approaches separate might appear to be a neat solution but is not appropriate for MMR as it fails to take advantage of its necessarily 'dynamic and complex' potential, was accepted. The model of 'methodological eclecticism' (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010, p. 9) describing the freedom of researchers to mix quantitative and qualitative approaches at any stage in the design and implementation of a study was thus exploited in the current study.

In selecting a MMR approach, practical considerations raised by prominent authors were also taken into account. For example, Creswell's list of challenges posed by the MMR approach for a single researcher, including the requirements for extensive data collection, additional time, and expertise in both qualitative and quantitative methods (2014) was considered and balanced against the potential benefits. The MMR approach was selected as it was suited to practice-based research where real world issues were to be explored and which had potential implications for policy and practice as well as theory. In addition, it matched the author's 'paradigm pluralist' stance described earlier (influenced by Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010), and fitted 'a person who enjoys both the structure of quantitative research and the flexibility of qualitative inquiry' (Creswell, 2014, p. 21).

In framing the current study, the above characteristics of a mixed methods approach were considered relevant. The following sections outline the design of the study and a detailed rationale for employing the advantageous characteristics of MMR.

Advanced explanatory sequential design

A simplified representation of the design of this project is offered, though it is recognised that more sophisticated and complex typologies of MMR continue to be developed (Nastasi, Hitchcock, & Brown, 2010).

[QUAN + qual] → QUAL

Based on the notation designed by Morse (1991) and widely used in MMR to date, it indicates that Phase 1 consists of both quantitative and qualitative elements (a mixed questionnaire), but with more *emphasis* given to the quantitative component (indicated by the use of upper case QUAN). Both components of the Phase 1 questionnaire informed the development of Phase 2 semi-structured interviews, which were also given significant emphasis. Analysis of all elements from both phases contributed to the interpretation and generation of inferences.

This type of approach would initially appear to align fairly closely with the 'explanatory sequential' model of MMR described by Creswell (2014, pp. 15-16) where the second qualitative phase brings insights to help explain the findings of the first quantitative phase. However, this project contained a significant exploratory element, with the embedding of a newly developed instrument (CELSA) within the Phase 1 Questionnaire. This is outlined in the sections which follow. Thus it may be seen as a variation of the 'advanced explanatory sequential' design in Creswell's typology (Creswell & Fetters, 2014, p. 36). It also applied a more iterative approach to analysis, constantly noting and recording trends and divergent cases and revisiting data, a less linear approach than the basic model would imply. It therefore exploits the acknowledgement in MMR that real world research problems may require flexible thinking and constant refinement and development of the research design.

Rationale for use of MMR design in this study

A mixed methods approach was deemed to be, on balance, the most appropriate design for the research problem addressed in this study. Collection, analysis and integration of findings from both quantitative and qualitative sources afforded a breadth and depth of information rarely, if at all, evident in previous studies. The collection of quantitative data generated from the questionnaire offered a number of benefits. Firstly, one gap in the literature identified in Chapter 2 was the lack of large empirical studies. Having access to a large group working under relatively homogenous employment conditions, that is, deputy

principals in NSW government secondary schools, offered an opportunity to test some of these themes across a large population. This exploited a key strength of questionnaires, reflecting 'the people's voice rather than a person's voice' (Morse, 2014). Although collecting 'shallow' and somewhat limited data through closed items, it is generally acknowledged that quantitative instruments are less vulnerable to researcher bias in the actual collection phase, and potentially more easily replicable by future researchers (Johnson & Onwuegbuzi, 2004).

Secondly, analysis of these data offered an opportunity to examine possible relationships between variables of interest, as indicated in the conceptual model in Chapter 1. After analysis of sample size and characteristics, generalisations about such relationships could potentially be made across the target population. A third advantage of the advanced explanatory sequential design was the embedding a new statistical instrument in Phase 1 to measure DPs engagement in educational leadership. The quality and novelty of these data, and the potential for comparison with qualitative responses, was considered worthwhile although this element added to the complexity of the project. The two-phase design also allowed both quantitative and qualitative data from open-ended items from Phase 1 to be utilised in the design of Phase 2. As detailed later in this chapter, quantitative data informed the purposive selection of interviewees, and qualitative data were used to develop coding schemes and refine interview questions.

The semi-structured interviews in Phase 2 offered the complementary strengths of a qualitative approach, having the potential to get closer to individuals' lived experience, an 'insider's perspective' in a range of different contexts (Punch, 2009, p. 294). This more personal in-depth data from a small number of individuals was better suited to explaining some of the complexities not visible in closed survey items, and provided an opportunity to explore some interesting or unexpected findings from the questionnaire. It was acknowledged that the interview process is often considered to be more vulnerable to researcher influence, and steps were taken to address this risk as outlined in the Phase 2 *Interview: data collection* section later in this chapter.

The research design for this study, employing a MMR approach to collect and iteratively analyse both types of data sets, was therefore seen as justifiable in terms of its suitability for the research problem and the significant benefits of a two phase model. While the challenges for a sole researcher became evident, the benefits of gaining both broad and deep knowledge of the experiences and perceptions of the somewhat neglected group of professionals,

secondary deputy principals, more than vindicated this approach. The following Methods section outlines how this research design was translated into a rigorous set of methods which address the quality criteria for both quantitative and qualitative approaches, and demonstrates an iterative approach to integration throughout the study.

METHODS

An overview of the methods applied across the two phases of the study is provided in Table 4.1. Information is then provided in separate sections for Phase 1 and Phase 2 to explain, justify and describe the decisions and processes which reflect the conceptualisation of the research questions. For each phase the specific methods and procedures employed for participant selection, data collection, analysis and interpretation are detailed. An explanation is then provided for how integration was achieved at each stage in the project, and potential limitations addressed. Throughout this section, and indeed this thesis, various types of 'visualisation' or 'display' are provided such as tables, matrices, charts, and word clouds. This is recommended in a mixed methods approach (Guetterman et al, 2015) in order to show relationships between elements of the research questions, data collection and analysis and particularly to display results (Greene, 2008). Overall, these methods reflect the author's view that the quality standards required by both quantitative and qualitative approaches should apply for each step. The overview in Table 4.1 illustrates the balanced approach taken for each element of the methods across the two phases.

Table 4.1 Overview of Methods for Phase 1 and Phase 2

Phase	Participants	Data collection			Approach to data analysis	
		Instrument development/pilot	Content	Procedures	Techniques	Integration
Phase 1: Questionnaire	Population (NSW) Government secondary school DPs (*N = 769)* Sample boundaries Sample (*n* = 233)	Questionnaire Evolution Design Pilot Final version (Appendix 1)	**Questionnaire** – Sections and data sources: Table 4.2 – Sections and research questions: Table 4.3 – Sections and explanatory notes: Table 4.4 – Educational leadership – Development of CELSA scale – Open-ended items	**Data collection and management** – online questionnaire – anonymity	**Quantitative** Data processing and documentation First stage descriptive analysis to summarise and display Second staged descriptive analysis – Factor analysis of CELSA scale relating to educational leadership practice – Multiple Linear Regression: test for relationships between factors and variables of interest. Inferential analysis **Qualitative** Data processing Analysis: counts, content analysis and coding	Phase 1 analysis used to identify Phase 2 interviewees and refine interview questions. Phase 1 analysis used to develop a priori codes for qual analysis After Phase 2, re-analysis of Phase 1 quantitative and qualitative data. Qualitative data from both phases integrated in NVivo coding, nodes and analysis. Questionnaire quantitative data included in NVivo analysis and queries. Quantisizing of qualitative data from both phases Joint display tables used to aggregate data sources and findings Merging of quantitative and qualitative analyses to generate inferences.
Phase 2: Interviews	8 individuals Volunteers from Phase 1 Purposive sampling criteria: gender, location, CELSA score: Table 4.6	Semi-structured interviews Interview questions. Links between R Q and interview questions (IV): Table 4.7 Development and pilot	Links to literature and Phase 1 findings	Face to face interviews Anonymity and confidentiality Trustworthiness	Transcription Initial coding: (Excel), first impression theme summary for member checking Deeper analysis: NVivo recoding (with Phase 1 qual data): nodes, memoing, counts, relationships, queries	

Table 4.2 provides a broad overview of the data collected for each research question in each phase, demonstrating how the methods were influenced by the nature of the research questions. Further details are provided in the elaboration of Phase 1 and Phase 2 instrument development later in this chapter.

Table 4.2 Data sources for each research question – Phase 1 and Phase 2

Research Question 1-5	Overview of data sources	
	Phase 1: Questionnaire Section (QS) number plus item number	**Phase 2: Interview Question (IQ) number plus probe**
1. Do deputy principals aspire to the role of principal?	QS 7.5 – Interest in future principal role QS 7.13 – DP preparation for principal	IQ 4 a) Interest in becoming a principal IQ 3 b) DP role as preparation IQ 4 b) 'Career DP' role
2. How have deputy principals been prepared for the responsibilities of this role?	QS 5 – Items, i.e. additional study, courses, encouragement QS 5 – Open-ended items 10-16 re preparation experienced and recommended	IQ 1a) Career to DP IQ 3 b) DP role as preparation for principal
3. How do the perceptions of deputy principals regarding the concept of educational leadership align with those in the literature?	QS 6 – 5 Leadership dimensions in IDEAL DP role	IQ 2 a) Educational leadership role as DP
4. To what extent do deputy principals engage in educational leadership?	QS 3 – Time spent on leadership tasks QS 4 – 1-18 Frequency of educational leadership activities QS 6 – REAL current role according to 5 Dimensions QS 7 – 1-14 Senior Management Team operation, role definition, work allocation	IQ 1 c) current overall DP role IQ 2 a) Educational leadership role as DP
5. What factors appear to influence the educational leadership practices of deputy principals?	QS 1 – Personal background: Age, gender, initial and subsequent training QS 2 – Contextual factors: School size, location, type, number of DPs QS 5 – Preparation and succession factors: Experience, recruitment, number of principals, leadership training, encouragement	IQ 1 b) Career overview, encouragement IQ 2 c) Barriers to educational leadership
All Research Questions	Final open-ended item – any further comments.	Comments embedded in any IQ response

Phase 1: Questionnaire

A questionnaire was used in Phase 1 (Appendix 1) to gather descriptive and biographical data from the target population described below. Having access to quantitative data from a large-scale questionnaire was considered of particular value in this study due to the preponderance of anecdotal and small scale qualitative studies in prior research. Data collected from a large sample could explore emergent themes from earlier studies, give confidence in the validity of the findings and support their generalisability. Some limitations of questionnaires, such as the potential for questions to be misinterpreted and the limited scope for responses, especially in closed items, were addressed by piloting and the inclusion of open-ended items to allow for a broader range of responses, as outlined below.

Participants

Boundaries

The target population for the Phase 1 questionnaire was all deputy principals in NSW government (DEC) secondary schools in Term 1 2012 ($N = 769$). At this time, the DEC held 61% of secondary student enrolments in NSW. A decision was made to limit the study to deputy principals in DEC schools only, as this group shared certain characteristics which could not be assumed of deputies in other systems or independent schools. As employees of this system they were recruited through the same state-wide staffing procedures, with the same job title, earning identical salaries, represented by the same industrial association (the NSW Teachers Federation) and subject to the same state-wide working conditions. Thus some key factors in their role and preparation could be assumed to be similar. In non-government schools those individuals in the role titled deputy principal or at a similar senior leadership level may have had very different experiences of all of the above factors and very diverse roles. It was decided to set the above boundaries for this study with a view to the possibility of future research further exploring the role in other sectors and jurisdictions. A final reason was that, of the very limited range of empirical work in this area, there were more studies in government systems than other sectors, potentially offering more capacity to compare and contrast findings between studies.

Only DPs in ‘substantive’ (permanently appointed) positions were included as they were operating under similar recruitment and employment conditions. Therefore, items were included in the questionnaire to identify those who may have been holding the role temporarily in a ‘relieving’ or ‘acting’ capacity while the substantive incumbent was absent or themselves undertaking higher duties. These respondents were excluded from the analysis.

Also, where a respondent held an additional deputy position funded by particular programs (such as the *Priority Schools Program* in low SES communities) these were identified, allowing decisions to made at the data analysis stage as to whether this group should be included. After consideration of items relating to 'additional positions', these responses were included in analysis on the basis that they were generally selected through a form of merit selection and appointed for up to three years. Details of the final sample are included in Chapter 5.

DPs working in Schools for Specific Purposes (SSPs) catering for students with severe and/or multiple disabilities were not included in the study for the following reasons. Often with specialist qualifications, these executives were not selected by the same criteria and did not work under the same conditions as secondary DPs. As they worked with primary and secondary aged students, in schools with very specific contextual issues, their roles and range of responsibilities were considered to be qualitatively different. They were considered to be a separate designation by their employer, reflected in the fact that they comprised a separate email group for communication purposes.

Data collection

Questionnaire development and pilot

The questionnaire utilised in Phase 1 to collect both quantitative and qualitative data was developed for this study as no suitable instrument based on recent research was available to collect data for the research questions. It evolved in several stages, with revisions based on further reading and feedback. Initially, a briefer paper draft, generated from trends emerging from the literature as well as from considerable anecdotal evidence (noted in Chapter 1), was used to accompany a workshop presentation delivered by the author at the state conference of the *NSW Secondary Deputy Principals Association* (NSWSDPA).

Written and verbal feedback about the design and items in the draft questionnaire resulted in some additional item development and procedural decisions. It became clear that identification of DPs operating in different ways or levels of leadership would be necessary, thus a scale to assess educational leadership practice was designed. Participants also expressed a preference for online delivery over a paper version. Minor item design modifications were also made: the direction of all scales was made consistent for scoring (negative on left to positive on right) and some instructions were clarified. A final draft paper version was developed and trialled with several current and relieving deputies leading

to further minor clarifications of wording. The questionnaire, accompanied by a letter of support from the NSWSDPA, was submitted as part of the University Ethics approval process and approved (Appendix 2 and Appendix 3).

Use of an online questionnaire was confirmed as a time and cost-effective option to deliver a rather lengthy instrument to deputies all over the state including many remote locations. In addition the NSWSDPA had a current and approved email list of personnel and had agreed to deliver the link for the survey via email and encourage their members to participate. A paper-based option was considered earlier, but the universal access and experience of DPs with electronic forms made this unnecessary. It was also noted that there can be the potential for variation in responses if both paper and electronic surveys are used to collect the same data (Bäckström & Nilsson, 2002).

The Qualtrics online survey platform was selected as it was relatively user-friendly, allowed anonymous delivery and completion, and had the necessary tools for downloading and analysis as well as integration with software packages such as SPSS and NVivo. The online version of the questionnaire was piloted (using different web browsers) with several colleagues with experience of data collection and online tools. After some minor technical adjustments the final version was delivered to the President of NSWDPA for emailing to all deputies.

The design of items was informed by Johnson's 15 principles of questionnaire design (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, pp. 172-190). For example, design of the categories for age range in Section 2 reflected Principle 9 (mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories); the design of the fully anchored five-point rating scales for Sections 4 and 7 reflected Principle 10 (response categories for closed-ended items); and all items observed Principles 5 and 6 (avoiding loaded questions and double-barrelled questions). Table 4.3 provides an overview of the type of data collected in the seven sections in the questionnaire, organised under the relevant research question. Cautions about the limitations of Likert scales were noted especially in relation to measuring attitudes (as in Section 7) as they are not true interval scales (Cooksey & McDonald, 2001, p. 429). However, these scales are commonly used in surveys and it was considered that the benefits outweighed these concerns, especially as in this study where such data could be compared with qualitative data.

Table 4.3 Matrix of questionnaire sections and research questions

Questionnaire section	RQ 1 Do deputy principals aspire to the role of principal?	RQ 2 How have deputy principals been prepared for the responsibilities of this role?	RQ 3 How do secondary deputy principals' perceptions of the concept of EL compare with the literature?	RQ 4 To what extent do deputy principals engage in educational leadership?	RQ 5 What factors appear to influence the educational leadership practices of deputy principals?
1. Current school context					School size; location; type; number of DPs
2. Personal background information		Initial and subsequent training			Gender; age; initial and subsequent training
3. Time spent				Time spent on different leadership categories	
4. CELSA scale				Frequency of engagement in 18 specific EL activities	
5. Becoming a deputy principal		Experience as teacher and DP; Open items: Leadership training, other preparation, encouragement			Teaching experience; prior role; different Ps
6. Five leadership dimensions in the DP role – IDEAL vs REAL			Importance of five Educational Leadership Dimensions in DP role (IDEAL)	Practice of five Educational Leadership Dimensions in DP role (REAL)	
7. Perceptions of the DP role	Interest in principalship; DP role as preparation for principal			Focus on teaching and learning; strategic EL	
8. Final comments	Data used to answer any relevant research question				

Content

Data were gathered in seven sections, detailed in Table 4.4. These collected background and contextual data of respondents, their experience, work, attitudes to a range of matters raised in earlier studies, and importantly, their perceptions of educational leadership theory and practice. The questionnaire contained closed and open items to suit both explanatory and exploratory purposes (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Further details of the questionnaire design are provided in Appendix 4.

Table 4.4 Questionnaire sections and explanatory notes

QS	Focus	Example of data collected and comments
	Information and consent form	As required for Macquarie University Ethics Approval. 'Click to agree and proceed'.
1	Current school context	School size, type, location, number of DPs. Context is seen as an important factor impacting on leadership practice: Lit. Rev. Section 2 Educational Leadership.
2	Respondent background information	Demographics (gender, age range), initial and subsequent training.
3	Time spent	Replicated item from Australian research (Cranston, Tromans, & Reugebrink, 2002, p. 14). Time spent on seven categories of leadership activity.
4	Frequency of 18 types of leadership activity	A self-assessment scale (18 items) based closely on dimensions of educational leadership (Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009).
5	Becoming a deputy principal	Additional study/leadership training, experience, encouragement. Drawn from research outlined in Lit. Rev. Section 3 Preparation and Succession.
6	Five leadership dimensions in the DP role – REAL vs IDEAL	Direct question for DPs to apply five broad leadership dimensions (Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009) to their perceptions of the IDEAL vs their REAL DP role.
7	Operating as DP in school context	Senior Management Team operation, role definition, etc. From research outlined in Lit. Rev. Section 1 The role of the DP in the secondary school.
	A final 'any other comments' opportunity	Free text section with extended character length was included to encourage any additional remarks which had not been addressed by the questions.
	Option to provide contact details	Name, email, phone for follow up interview.

Four sections of closed items collected data on work and educational leadership (EL): Sections 3, 4, 6 and 7. These required respondents to consider their own perceptions of and engagement in educational leadership in response to items based on the literature. One

strength of a mixed methods approach, that 'data can be based on participants' own categories of meaning' (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 442) was therefore exploited in this approach. An Australian perspective was provided by closely mirroring a data collection instrument used in Queensland (Cranston, Tromans, & Reugebrink, 2004) in Section 3. An empirical international perspective, (Robinson et al., 2009) focusing on specific aspects of educational leadership, was reflected in Sections 4 (detailed below) and 6. Finally, holistic statements about the DP role, based on themes gleaned from the somewhat limited literature base, formed Section 7.

Section 4: CELSA scale development. An instrument was required for DPs to assess their own educational leadership practice. As evidenced in the literature review, there are many interpretations of the concept of educational leadership. It is acknowledged that such an abstract term can be difficult to explain and measure, therefore 'the researcher must make use of the available knowledge and measures of the construct he or she is investigating and identify the specific way in which a construct will be represented in the study' (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 272). In Chapter 1 a literature-based definition of educational leadership was provided for the purposes of this study:

> … leadership in schools which is focused on teaching and learning, with a view to improving the educational outcomes of students. It embraces leadership which supports the professional development of teachers in order to improve student learning. (Chapter 1 Introduction, p. 8)

While variations of scales such as the *Principal Instructional Management Scale* (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) and *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire* (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999) were available, existing leadership measures do not always measure the specific constructs of interest, and modifications can be clumsy and inefficient (Dowling, 2007). It was therefore decided to develop an instrument for the current study, based on the five leadership dimensions identified in the BES meta-analysis (Robinson et al., 2009).

Questionnaire Section 4, the *Contextual Educational Leadership Self-Assessment* (CELSA) scale, a bank of 18 items describing leadership practices, operationalised the key construct of educational leadership in order to gather valuable data about respondents' perceived engagement in specific EL activities. Potential issues relating to the design of self-report instruments (Cooksey & McDonald, 2011, p. 335) were addressed. For example, recommendations to encourage completion of instruments, such as layout clarity and readability, addressing researcher credibility, and the need for piloting were heeded in the

design of the overall questionnaire. Issues such as transparency of development, operational definition and content validity are addressed below. Matters of validity and reliability of the scale and relevant findings regarding factors are outlined in Chapter 5.

To address the issue of content validity, that is 'the degree to which the items … on a test adequately represent the construct domain of interest' (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 152), this bank was developed directly from Robinson's elaboration of the five leadership dimensions (2009, p. 42) as detailed in Chapter 2. Each 'I' statement incorporated a response on a five point frequency scale (*Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Frequently,* and *Very frequently*). The 18 items in the CELSA scale, linked to the appropriate BES Dimensions from which they were derived, are outlined in Appendix 5. The order of the items was randomised in the scale to separate elements of the five dimensions.

An important and distinctive characteristic of this scale is that these statements required respondents to assess their own *practice* in their *current school context*, rather than make holistic judgements about their educational leadership capacity or indeed have other people make judgements about them. It is of interest that, concurrently with the development of the CELSA scale for this study and unknown to the author, the New Zealand school education system developed an instrument, the *Educational Leadership Practices* survey (ELP) based on the BES as a 'practical tool' for use in its principal professional development programs (Avenell, 2015; Burgon, 2012, p. 16). However, the ELP was used by teachers to rate overall school leadership, whereas the CELSA scale was developed as a self-assessment tool for DPs.

Open-ended items. Open-ended items were included in the questionnaire to collect opinions and suggestions, capture new information and ideas, and to allow recent developments and personal experiences in the role to be recorded. Most of these questions (Items 5.9 to 5.15) related to the preparation DPs had experienced for their current role. As there were, at the time of the study, no particular study or training prerequisites for entry to this position, these open items aimed to capture new information about the types of preparation experienced and the value ascribed to them by respondents. The final open-ended question provided an opportunity for DPs to raise additional issues, add details or make more holistic comments. Text entry of between two and 20 lines was allowed depending on the question to encourage elaboration of experiences and views. As well as adding richness to the data, it was anticipated that information gathered in the open text responses would lead to refinement of the Phase 2 interview questions.

Procedures

Data collection and management. The online questionnaire was delivered as an embedded link in an email (Appendix 6) delivered to an official DEC account and was available for approximately three weeks in March 2012. It could be completed over several sessions, an advantage for busy school executives. At all times it was possible to monitor the number of responses, which came in steadily and then tapered off. After two weeks a reminder was sent and there was a spike in completions, then after three weeks the questionnaire was locked. A total of 237 responses were completed in the 22 day time frame.

Anonymity. Those participants who provided contact details for possible interview also allowed viewing of their completed questionnaires, which were therefore no longer anonymous. (This was flagged at all levels of approval including in the Proposal, Ethics application, and in the questionnaire itself.) Collecting contact details was necessary in order to purposively select interviewees based on demographic data and some questionnaire responses, as detailed later in this chapter. This issue was checked with a number of individuals approached for subsequent interview and none expressed any reservations about their responses being 'visible' as they we only too happy to discuss their experiences and views. In fact they were overwhelmingly positive about the opportunity to share their experiences. All other volunteer responses were deidentified after final selection of interviewees, so that they were completely anonymous.

Approach to data analysis: Questionnaires

Data analysis for the Phase 1 Questionnaire required both quantitative and qualitative techniques to interrogate the data generated from closed and open text items. Although these techniques are described separately it must be remembered that the results were frequently compared throughout the analysis process, as elaborated in the Integration section at the conclusion of this chapter.

Quantitative data: Techniques for analysis

Data processing

Prior to statistical analysis, the requirements for missing data, data entry and checking, and documentation were addressed in accordance with Griffin (2012). (Initial steps below also applied to qualitative data within the questionnaires.)

Missing data. The Qualtrics system clearly identified completed and incomplete responses. As all closed items were 'forced response', and open ended items were optional, incomplete responses represented only those respondents who chose to exit the questionnaire without completing it. Initial analysis was based on these 237 (of a possible 769) complete responses, a 30.82% response rate.

Data entry and checking. Many potential issues regarding data entry were automatically addressed in the online survey design (as outlined above in Instrument Development and Pilot), for example respondents were guided to complete all items and the software did not allow scoring beyond the given range. Scanning of responses for logical consistency between variables was undertaken where possible for major items (e.g. age and years teaching).

Documentation. The Qualtrics software enabled generation and storage of simple analysis reports (frequency tables, graphs) within the program. Report data were also downloaded to Excel, Word and SPSS files, clearly labelled and securely stored for further analysis. Another level of documentation was the labelling, description and type (e.g. continuous, categorical) of each variable for which quantitative data was collected.

Quantitative data analysis techniques were applied to the numerical data collected in the Phase 1 questionnaire, which can be defined as a 'correlational survey' (Punch, 2009, p. 223) as relationships between variables were of interest particularly in answering RQ 1 *Do DPs aspire to the role of principal?* and RQ 5 *What factors appear to influence the educational leadership practices of DPs?*. Three stages of analysis are elaborated below: first stage descriptive analysis, second stage analysis of relationships among variables, and the third stage of application of inferential statistics.

First stage descriptive analysis

This was undertaken to summarise and display the data, to describe its main characteristics and make it more interpretable (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 465). Firstly an overall understanding of responses to all items was acquired by calculating measures of central tendency (mean = M, standard deviation = SD) and displaying frequency distributions to provide a broad visual overview of the data. For example, age, gender and location data were quickly scanned to establish the representativeness of the sample compared with target population parameters. These graphs and tables were valuable for early discussions with colleagues and also in presentations of interim findings at conferences for audiences

including deputy principals at the state conference for their professional association (NSWSDPA).

Boundaries for the sample were confirmed at this stage, as described in the previous Participants section. Four responses submitted by relieving DPs were thus excluded. A total of 233 responses were confirmed for analysis, for a final response rate of 30.30%.

Second stage descriptive analysis

In order to investigate relationships among variables of interest, questionnaire sample data (n =233) were exported to the SPSS program v. 23 for application of two statistical techniques: factor analysis and multiple regression analysis.

Factor analysis. The CELSA scale, developed to assist in gauging the educational leadership practices of DPs, was subjected to factor analysis for the purposes of data reduction 'to reduce the number of variables … without losing the information the original variables provide … by finding common factors between them' (Punch, 2009, p. 278). Not only did the extracted factors represent a higher level of abstraction than the original variables, but reducing the number of variables before testing was more efficient and reduced the risk of making incorrect statistical inferences.

In this exploratory element of the study, an approach suitable to the early development of a theory or explanation, this analysis assessed whether these scales measured one distinct construct (unidimensional) or measured various aspects of that construct (multidimensional) in a way that matched up with theory. For example, although the CELSA scale was based closely on the BES study (Robinson et al., 2009), there was no guarantee that transforming the five Dimensions into a five-point agreement scale using 18 'I' statements would yield one or more factors which accounted for the variance in scores. This was important for Research Questions 5 where statistical relationships between independent variables and the dependent variable 'educational leadership practice' were to be investigated.

The 18 items that comprised the CELSA were factor analysed to identify any underlying structure, which could then be compared to the dimensions of the BES. Reliability of the factors comprising the structure could then be estimated using the Cronbach's α statistic (Field, 2013, p. 209). Thus theory was used to design the scale and empirical results were used to make decisions about its integrity. Prior to testing, suitability of the data in the scale for analysis was assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure (KMO) for sample

adequacy, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity for the probability of factors emerging. Detailed explanations of these analyses and results are provided in Chapter 5.

Multiple regression. This technique was used to test relationships in RQ 1 and RQ 5. The 'enter' method was selected for these regressions as there were no strong theoretical predictions about independent variables from which to organise a stepwise procedure (Field, 2013, p. 322; Gray & Kinnear, 2012, p. 474). For RQ 1, relationships between the dependent variable 'aspiration' and key independent variables were tested. For RQ 5, scores on the main CELSA factor (Factor 1, as described in Chapter 5) were used as a proxy for educational leadership, and relationships between these and independent variables of interest were investigated. This tested whether any variable or combination of variables was able to predict variance in the educational leadership practice of DPs.

Inferential analysis techniques. Inferential analysis techniques were utilised to test whether the findings regarding relationships between variables for this sample (i.e. the 233 completed questionnaire respondents) were likely to be the result of chance or to be statistically generalizable to the target population (i.e. the 769 substantive deputy principals in NSW government secondary schools at the time of the questionnaire) (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Analysis of sample size and representativeness, essential for making these inferences, are reported in Chapter 5.

Qualitative data: Techniques for analysis

Data processing

All qualitative data processing and analysis was conducted by the researcher. As noted earlier, questionnaires were initially handled as holistic responses, that is, decisions about sample boundaries, incomplete responses, and documentation were applied to whole responses (both quantitative and qualitative data). As well as the numeric data, a significant amount of qualitative text (string data) was collected from the 233 questionnaires. Options for '*Other, please specify'* for some categorical questions created small amounts of text requiring interpretation. A greater volume of qualitative data was generated from open-ended questions addressing more complex issues, particularly in regard to the preparation for the DP role experienced by respondents.

All qualitative data were downloaded from the Qualtrics software and a separate Excel spreadsheet generated for each item requiring a text response. This created 14 files

consisting of between 15 and 200 lines of raw data suitable for initial content analysis. Although the majority of responses were anonymous, providing each person's response with a unique identifier ensured that it was possible to track comments of particular interest back to individual whole responses to check demographics and, importantly, to see each segment in the context of a whole response (Bazeley, 2013b).

Analysis

Preliminary analysis of text data included visual scanning and cleaning. Scanning of data in spreadsheets commenced almost immediately for items of particular interest. It also exposed the collection of extraneous detail, and allowed this to be cleaned immediately: for example, one item inadvertently 'forced' a response to an open question resulting in many unnecessary 'no' responses.

After initial scanning of all 14 sheets, data collected from five 'Please specify' items representing demographic and contextual information were put aside for later analysis and calculation of *counts*. As these data were expressed in participants' own words they required interpretation in order to develop counts of categories for later comparison purposes. Commentary and summary tables of analysis of specific 'please specify' questions have been included in Appendix 7, and reported where relevant in results in Chapters 6 and 7.

Content analysis was begun as the design of this study required that Phase 1 qualitative data undergo analysis prior to Phase 2 interviews, in order for any emerging themes of interest to be explored further. In a precoding approach (Saldana, 2009), lines of data were scanned, memos of initial impressions and questions arising were recorded, and highlighting was used to identify phrases of interest. Rough word counts were undertaken for recurring terms within and between questions as one measure of a term's potential prominence.

Coding was undertaken to capture the essential content of each 'meaningful analytic unit' or segment, and to establish emerging patterns (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 534; Saldana, 2009, p. 5). While most responses were quite brief (except for the final open question), they often contained more than one unit of meaning, for example the nomination of 'relieving in the position, network meetings' as *Other types of preparation* (item 5.11) was treated as two segments. Thus segmenting and coding often occurred simultaneously.

As patterns of similar terms were noted, descriptive or conceptual categories were developed and defined. For example, the frequently occurring terms 'relieving' 'acting in the role' and

‘sitting in the chair’ were subsumed into the descriptive category ‘on the job training’ defined as ‘preparation: practise in aspects of role before appointment’. This provided an *a priori* code for later analysis of interview data and also prompted refinement of two interview questions, as outlined in the *Interview protocol development and pilot* section of this chapter. Such observations, which began the process of moving from codes to categories and towards higher order or more abstract themes, were recorded in memos.

It was understood throughout the coding process that recoding and re-categorising might be expected later in the analysis. It is accepted in qualitative analysis that ‘qualitative data evolve; later accounts round out, qualify, put in perspective, and disqualify the earlier ones’ (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014, p. 113).

In the iterative data analysis model, detailed in the Integration section later in the chapter, these data were re-examined on a number of occasions for different purposes and using a variety of strategies. For example, responses to open-ended and closed questions exploring related content were compared in a simple triangulation strategy recommended to address potential response pattern bias (Cooksey & McDonald, 2011). For example, closed ‘subsequent training’ data were compared with open responses regarding ‘best preparation for leadership’.

It is evident from the above descriptions of quantitative and qualitative approaches to analysis of Phase 1 data that they both influenced the development and analysis of Phase 2. The next section outlines in detail all methods for Phase 2 interviews.

Phase 2: Semi-structured interviews

This phase applied a more qualitative, constructivist approach to data collection and analysis. The interviews offered deeper, more personal and contextualised insights than those gained through closed or even open questionnaire items, and analysis was more focused on the meanings of individual experiences and views. Interviews were semi-structured in that questions were designed to capture valued data, but were covered in a natural order in a fairly conversational approach. This allowed for emergent side issues to be followed up, but required vigilance to ensure that key topics were covered (Cooksey & McDonald, 2011).

Participants

Phase 2 data collection consisted of eight semi-structured interviews with individual deputy principals who were purposively selected to reflect a range of experiences and contexts. The final item of the Phase 1 questionnaire invited respondents to provide their contact details if they were prepared to be interviewed. Of the sample surveys, (n=233) 111 or nearly half the respondents completed this section. A review of these volunteers revealed that a small number had subsequently been promoted to principal or to a non-school administrative promotion, and several had left the system. Two DPs well known to the author were removed from the list in order to address potential perceived interviewer or interviewee bias. Thus 99 potential interviewees remained. Those who fulfilled the criteria for purposive sampling, described below (n=29), were invited by individual email (Appendix 8) to reconfirm their willingness to be considered for interview and almost all responded positively.

Purposive sampling criteria

A purposive approach was used to select participants that met selected criteria within this wider group. This approach 'helps the researcher to choose cases that provide richer insights through critical, typical and in-depth information to the investigation' (Minichiello, Aroni, & Hays, 2008). Eight interviewees were selected in a 'stratified purposeful' strategy (Punch, 2009, p. 163). This approach contrasted with the comprehensive sample sought in the Phase 1 questionnaire, as this phase was intended to delve deeper into personal and contextualised experiences of individuals to complement the broad trends emerging from the much larger sample accessed in the first phase.

It was also hoped that many deputy principals, one target audience for this study, would be able to identify with at least some characteristics of the selected interviewees. Although no claims are made about the representativeness of these individuals of all deputy principals, the rationale for these sampling criteria was to ensure:

- equal representation of males and females
- equal representation from metropolitan and regional/rural areas (although not all 10 regions of DEC, as described in Chapter 2, could be accommodated)
- deputies were included from a range of school sizes and types including comprehensive, single sex, large and small schools, low SES and high multicultural enrolments. Not every category (e.g. selective schools) could be included due to the small number of interviewees.

- equal numbers of deputies who scored in the higher and lower range on the raw CELSA scale.

The first three criteria above, i.e. gender, location and school type were used to ensure that key sectors of the population demographics were represented. The final criterion was intended to reflect the experience of DPs engaging in a range of leadership practices. A simple total of each individual's score 1-5 on the 18 items of the CELSA scale (1 = Never, 5 = Very frequently) yielded a score /90. This raw score was used to identify individuals within the volunteer group who could be classified as scoring in the 'higher' or 'lower' ranges. Four higher and four lower scorers on this measure were included in the sample. Details of this selection are provided in Chapter 5.

It is important to note that no particular value judgements were associated with high or low raw scores on this CELSA scale, especially as reflected work in a particular context. Indeed, identifying 'good educational leaders' whether at principal or deputy principal level would seem to be fraught with methodological, philosophical, and political pitfalls and such a process is clearly beyond the purpose and scope of this study. The decisions above were taken in order to select interviewees who might reflect a wide range of experiences, practices and opinions.

A matrix was used (Table 4.5) to record eligible volunteers for each category, who could be approached and confirmed for interview. The criteria were sufficiently flexible to ensure that there were enough candidates for each group. A number of volunteers were contacted via phone and email until one was confirmed for each cell in the matrix.

Table 4.5 Matrix – Criteria for interviewee eligibility

	Male		Female	
	Higher score	**Lower score**	**Higher score**	**Lower score**
Rural/Regional	1	1	1	1
Metropolitan	1	1	1	1

Table 4.6 Interview questions aligned with research question focus

Interview questions (IQ) and possible probes	RQ 1 Aspiration to principal	RQ 2 Preparation for DP role	RQ 3 Perceptions of EL	RQ 4 Engagement in EL	RQ 5 Factors impacting on EL
1. Would you like to begin by outlining the way you came to be a deputy principal? a) When was it that you first aspired to a formal position of leadership? b) Did you receive any encouragement to take on a leadership role? c) Can you briefly describe your role as a DP?	X	X		X	X
2. Can you outline ways in which you feel that you are able to act as an educational leader in your current school? a) What is your role with regards to the 'leadership of learning' at your school? b) Are there any barriers which you feel prevent your involvement in the leadership of learning at your school?			X	X	X
3. Preparation a) Was there anything in particular in your background that helped to prepare you for this part of your role (e.g. professional learning, early targeting, study, induction)? b) Do you have any suggestions for preparation for future deputy principals (to lead learning)?		X		X	X
4. Have you considered your future as a leader in schools? a) Do you think you might be interested in becoming a principal at some time in the future? b) Do you feel that your role as a DP has been good preparation for becoming a principal? c) Do you think there is a place for the 'career deputy', i.e. those who do not aspire to becoming a principal but continue long term as a deputy?	X			X	

Data Collection

Development of semi-structured interview questions

Four main questions with possible probes were generated for the interviews. Table 4.6 summarises the interview questions and probes, and their contribution to answering the five research questions. It should be remembered, however, that due to the semi-structured approach described above, material relevant to different questions could be gleaned from any part of the interview.

The themes to be addressed in interview questions (IQ) were developed from an extensive review of the literature as outlined in Chapter 2, and also reflect some issues raised by professionals, as described in Chapter 1. After analysis of Phase 1 questionnaire data, several additional questions and probes were added.

Content

Interview questions 1 and 4 encouraged a reflective overview of career progression, the nature of the DP role and possible aspirations. These questions reflected themes arising from the predominantly small-scale material canvassed in the Chapter 2 (Celikten, 2001; Koru, 1993; Ribbins, 1997). Probes also allowed broad discussion of themes emerging from literature such as encouragement received and the notion of the career deputy. Questions were tested in pilot interviews with several retired or current DPs, resulting in the addition of a probe to IQ 1, that is '*Can you briefly describe your role as a DP?*' to ensure these important data were captured.

Educational leadership was the focus of IQ 2a) and 2b), the wording of which was replicated from a small study of secondary deputy principals in New Zealand (Farnham, 2009) for comparison purposes, as it is one of the few recent studies focusing on this element of DP work. Finally, early analysis of Phase 1 questionnaires led to further refinement. In relation to RQ 1 and 2, relating to career progression, the wide variation in responses to the closed items *I am actively interested in becoming a principal in future* and *My role as a DP is good preparation for becoming a principal* led to the inclusion of follow up IQ 4a, 4b and 4c. Also, the somewhat narrow range of responses to open-ended questionnaire items regarding preparation for the DP role led to the addition of IQ 3b *Do you have any suggestions for preparation for future deputy principals*? Overall, the interview questions allowed for in-depth and personal responses from eight quite different participants to flesh out the glimpses of DP perceptions revealed in questionnaire responses.

Procedures

Following the sampling process described in the Participants section above, selected volunteers were contacted by email (Appendix 8) and phone and arrangements confirmed for interview times and venues. Those not required for interview were advised by email and thanked for their willingness to participate (Appendix 8). One volunteer withdrew and was replaced by another with similar characteristics.

Face to face interviews. All interviews were conducted face to face by the researcher over a six week period, requiring some travel around the city of Sydney and to regional/rural areas. Although telephone, Skype or video-conferencing emails are common in educational research, the decision was made to travel to each interviewee's local area in order for the conditions of interview to be as similar as possible yet also responsive to individual contexts. While the impact of telephone vs face-to-face interviews is inconclusive (Irvine, Drew, & Sainsbury, 2013) it was decided to meet the participants personally in recognition of their participation, especially as numbers were small. Personal visits also offered some insights into contextual factors such as isolation, city congestion and school appearance.

All interviews were undertaken at a location chosen by the interviewee, out of school hours and in most cases in the deputy's office. It was anticipated that interviews would last for approximately one hour, though several were extended beyond this by mutual agreement. Copies of the *Information and Consent Form* (Appendix 9) were sent prior to the date for perusal, and at the commencement of the interview two copies were signed by both parties and a copy retained by each. Permission was confirmed for the conversations to be recorded by both note-taking and also using the *MicPro* iPad app which allowed discreet but clear recording which was easily downloaded to a secure location for transcription and analysis.

The focus of this study on educational leadership was not flagged to interviewees to avoid social desirability bias in their responses (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 186). Similarly, no reference was made to scores on the CELSA tool which was an exploratory instrument and very dependent on school context Interviewees remained anonymous at all stages, as detailed below, and the identification of individuals as 'higher' or 'lower' scorers is known only to the researcher.

Anonymity and confidentiality. Guaranteeing anonymity of interviewees was a priority. Participant coding was undertaken early in the collection and analysis process to allow identifying details to be removed. Codes were as follows:

- Location: M=metro, R=rural/regional
- Gender: m/f
- Score: h=high, l=low
- Date (e.g. 27 Aug= 278)
- School size: L=large, S=small
- School type: C (comprehensive) Mult (multicultural;) single sex (B) and for some schools socio-economic status (H)).

Thus a rural-based high scoring female (see matrix in Participants section) interviewed on 27 Aug would appear as Rfh278, instantly recognisable to the researcher but not to other readers. Other details were retained for possible analysis. Care was taken at all times (and continues) not to inadvertently identify participants through reference to particular localities, events or other personnel. When visiting schools in metropolitan or rural/regional areas, travel destinations were not disclosed to anyone. Electronic file copies were stored securely in password protected sites and hand written notes stored in a locked filing cabinet.

Trustworthiness. The positivist notion of validity of data is not necessarily appropriate for a qualitative data collection instrument such as the interview. However in order for findings from such a study to be considered legitimate the issue of trustworthiness, (sometimes including the terms authenticity or credibility) needs to be addressed (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 29; Saldana, 2009). As words and representation of meanings are critical to this phase, and vulnerable to interpretation, the following strategies were established in Phase 2 to ensure that the findings and conclusions could be trusted as a true reflection of participants' input.

Triangulation was used as **r**elated questions, gradually narrowing in focus, were asked in some areas of interest, (e.g. IQ 1 c and 2a). This addressed the potential for interviewee social desirability bias (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 186) particularly as participants became aware of the specific focus of the interview. As well as within the interviews, related questions were asked in the Phase 1 questionnaire to allow triangulation across methods.

Member checking was undertaken. After all interviews were completed, transcribed and first analysis undertaken, a narrative summary of the findings, organised as themes relating to each interview question, was sent to all participants for checking within two months (Appendix 10). Interviewees were able to see their thoughts and possibly quotes (non-

identifying) in the context of their colleagues' views. Most participants responded to this summary, expressing their interest in the range of responses and also recognition of their own voice. This suggested that the meaning of interviewees' responses had been captured authentically (Bazeley, 2013b, p. 89).

*Setting description*s for participants are considered to be a critical element of some forms of qualitative inquiry and is of course a possible factor influencing the practice of DPs, as addressed in RQ 5: *What factors appear to influence the educational leadership practices of DPs?* Detailed descriptions of individual participants' natural settings were not suited to the stated purposes of this study, however participant coding was visible at all stages of analysis so that the respondent could be identified by the researcher. Key demographic and contextual data such as gender, age range, location and school type were therefore available for inclusion in analysis and with quotes where this was deemed relevant and could be done without compromising anonymity and confidentiality.

Discrepant information was considered. Where most interviewees were in alignment on a particular theme, discrepant or contrary views were particularly noted to ensure that the researchers' own bias did not exclude divergent responses and in order to generate further questions for analysis. As noted by Bazeley, alternative viewpoints 'warrant exploration and demand explanation' (2013b, p. 407).

Peer debriefing was undertaken, with emerging findings regularly being discussed with supervisors and trusted colleagues not connected with the study, in order to expose any assumptions or conclusions not based on evidence.

External auditing took the form of discussions with experts at meetings and conferences, leading to some useful critiques requiring justification of interpretations. One example was the questioning by a senior colleague of the researcher's reading of comments regarding aspirations, which was satisfactorily answered by close reference to coded text.

Researcher bias is an acknowledged risk in qualitative inquiry, and can be exacerbated when there is pre-existing experience or relationships with participants. This can influence the data collection itself and the interpretation of its meaning. The researcher's prior relationship with DPs and their professional association was advantageous in many respects, but the risk of researcher bias was also acknowledged and addressed as a limitation. As well as the use of multiple data collection methods, triangulation and keeping descriptions close to the

participants' own words, the strategy of 'reflexivity' (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 275) was employed to engage in regular self-reflection, constantly monitoring assumptions and looking for alternative explanations. In addition, interview volunteers known to the researcher were removed from the eligibility list as noted in the Participants section. Every effort was made to report the participants' views rather than the researcher's, in accordance with cautions expressed by Cooksey and McDonald (2011).

Approach to data analysis: Interviews

The approach to analysing interview data reflected a more constructivist paradigm and more flexible collection process. Nevertheless, parallels may be drawn with the quantitative data analysis approach used for closed items in the questionnaire. As observed by Neuman (2006, p. 457), quantitative and qualitative analysis can be equally 'systematic and logically rigorous' though in different ways. In the quantitative data, individual items contributed to variables which were then subject to analysis as possible factors which could be compared and examined for relationships through analysis of variance. In the qualitative data analysis the process involved coding individual segments of meaning, moving to second level categories which could then be compared and examined for relationships through constant comparison. This approach was strongly influenced by Miles and Huberman (1994) as summarised by Punch (2009) and further developed by Bazeley (2013b). First stage analysis processes were similar to those employed in analysis of qualitative data from questionnaires, though modified due to the volume of material and also as themes within the data began to crystallise.

Initial handling of interview data was in simple text documents and spreadsheets, in accordance with recommendations to focus on the content before dealing with the technological challenges of more sophisticated approaches (Saldana, 2009). At a later stage all qualitative data, including from open-ended questionnaire items, were imported into the NVivo software, and analysed as described in the section headed *Analysis of combined qualitative data from both phases.* While these processes required some double-handling they were accepted as steps in cyclical analysis where recoding helps to build a more comprehensive understanding of emerging themes (Neuman, 2007; Saldana, 2009).

Steps in preliminary analysis

Although described as if discrete and sequential, the steps described below were iterative and overlapping in practice. Analysis featured an overall inductive approach, gradually drawing

higher level themes or concepts from individual responses, though deductive processes were utilised in later stages when scanning for confirmatory examples (Neuman, 2006). These abstract concepts were then compared and connections between them sought in order to generate inferences. The following methods of recording, sorting and analysing data were adapted from that used by the researcher in previous evaluation projects and further informed by the above authors.

First impressions and memoing. During the several weeks it took to complete the eight interviews, the author regularly reflected and engaged in peer debriefing with colleagues and supervisors regarding first impressions. Possible patterns in responses were discussed, some of which became strong themes (such as the continued references to 'relieving' as preparation), while others petered out (such as an early indication of gendered differences in aspiration). Throughout the entire analysis process, memos were recorded by writing notes in margins, on sticky notes and in electronic form. While sometimes seemingly inconsequential, these memos were invaluable for recording analysis 'on the fly' as the process of drawing clusters of concrete 'indicators' into higher level more abstract concepts progressed (Bazeley, 2013b, p. 103; Punch, 2009, p. 181).

Transcribing. The eight electronic MP3 files of interviews were transcribed by the researcher onto separate *Record of Interview* sheets in Word format, and deidentified using classifying codes described above. Some precoding strategies (Saldana, 2009) were undertaken at this stage, highlighting particularly interesting words or phrases.

Segmenting data. The text of each interview was then 'segmented' into units of meaning whenever a topic or sub-topic appeared to change (Saldana, 2009, p. 16) and entered as numbered lines in an Excel spreadsheet. This process was similar to that described for Phase 1 qualitative data. At all times participant classifying codes were retained as well as the question number (this was an important distinction especially in IQ 1c and 2a in relation to educational leadership). These steps ensured that any comment or quote could be tracked back to an individual, a specific question or probe, reducing the risk of dislocating material and losing its meaning (Bazeley, 2013b, p. 144). Data could be sorted for various purposes throughout the entire analysis and interpretation process.

Content analysis. The term content analysis is used for the following description of coding, categorising and developing themes, as it is widely accepted and inclusive of computer-assisted processes (Bazeley, 2013b). Segmented responses were initially sorted by question

and probe number, although due to the semi-structured nature of the interviews, material from any question was later used to answer any research question. Hard copies as well as electronic files were used for initial scanning and coding.

Coding for meaning was undertaken by the researcher, so inter-coder reliability was not an issue (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Repeated terms were noted, and patterns of like responses as well as different responses were ascribed code labels (Neuman, 2006). Many initial codes were descriptive, for example the phrase 'student discipline', though some more analytical codes were identified early such as the notion of 'reactive work'. Codes were recorded in a separate column. Segmenting and coding were clearly interrelated, as locating segments as units of meaning and then labelling those segments went hand in hand (Johnson & Christensen, 2008).

Both deductive or *a priori* codes and inductive codes were applied. Some codes were anticipated (*a priori* or predetermined) arising from the literature and the Phase 1 data. As noted by Bazeley, this can 'assist in ensuring that your coding links with important research questions and can be done without inhibiting you from capturing fresh ideas' (2013b, p. 170). Examples of *a priori* codes arising from the literature included 'role definition' and 'relationship with senior management team'. Terms derived from Phase 1 qualitative responses also served as potential *a priori* codes, including regularly repeated or 'emic' terms clearly carrying meaning within this group (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 404) such as the phrase 'nuts and bolts' for the operational matters which take up so much of a DPs time. As other unanticipated codes emerged from the interview data, such as the role of 'luck' in careers, they were added to the master list, with definitions attached. For many items two or more codes were assigned in different columns in co-occurrence or overlap coding (Saldana, 2009).

Gradually more abstract categories were generated to capture a range of related codes, for example the codes 'boundaries', 'lack of clarity' and 'ambiguity' were subsumed under the category 'role definition'. As categories became established, possible relationships between them were identified, with the gradual development of more abstract and higher level themes. This was seen as an important step in moving from descriptive to interpretive analysis and potentially towards developing theory (Bazeley, 2013b).

Analysis of combined qualitative data from both phases

Computer-assisted analysis. All qualitative data from Phase 1 questionnaires and Phase 2 interviews were imported into the NVivo Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) software. Significant advantages of using such software at this stage of analysis included the capacity to manage the larger data set, instantly retrieve the source and context of any datum, query the data, explore patterns and relationships, and create displays and reports (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). Quantitative data were also imported, and used in matrix coding queries as described below.

As part of the mixing strategy, described in detail in the Integration section to follow, the qualitative data from both phases were analysed jointly. As noted in the first section of this chapter, the research design allowed for considerable overlap between the questions asked in each phase for the purposes of triangulation and elaboration, so it was useful to explore the research questions by combining insights from these different lenses (Bazeley, 2010). While there was a time gap of some months between completion of questionnaires and interviews, the nature of the questions relating to whole-of-career practice and overall perceptions was not time-sensitive, so the benefits of combining sources were considered to be sufficient to outweigh any minor risks associated with this non-concurrent data collection.

Nodes and coding. All data were re-segmented and stored in NVivo 'nodes'. These are compared to physical hanging files (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013), and hold one concept only. Nodes were created, and related text segments coded and stored within them. For example, the comment '3 Terms as relieving DP' in response to a questionnaire item about preparation for the DP role, was stored in basic level node (child node) coded 'relieving'. A tree structure was then created which sorted nodes with common properties into broad categories (Hutchinson, Johnston, & Breckon, 2010, p. 290). In a similar process to the previous manual approach to content analysis, related child nodes were gradually combined into 'parent nodes', in this case 'experience'. Descriptive codes were also assigned, such as 'positive' and 'negative', to allow later comparison of views, for example those relating to DEC leadership training.

This recoding, a commonly occurring practice on second or third viewing of data, (Neuman, 2006; Saldana, 2009) was aided and refined by prior knowledge of both the original material and prior codes, though new codes were regularly encountered. As recoding progressed, the researcher began to perceive general themes (patterns or concepts) among this larger set of data. Saldana (2009, p. 13) suggests that such themes are 'an outcome of coding,

categorisation and analytical reflection'. An emerging theme relating to this area of interest was the apparent distrust by DPs of theoretical learning and reliance on hands-on experience.

Connections and patterns. While identifying these themes was a key outcome of the analysis, exploring connections between them was essential for drawing broader inferences and potentially generating explanatory models. Several NVivo functions were used for this exploratory purpose, including coding stripes, coding queries and matrix coding queries. Coloured *coding stripes* were used in a *coding query*, to visualise nodes which had multiple codes (coding density), to explore patterns in relationships, such as between lack of aspiration and negative perceptions of merit selection. The *matrix query* function was used to check associations between nodes and demographic groups. For example, in a comparative query (Bazeley, 2010, p. 444) the demographic 'attribute' of gender, was compared with qualitative data about types of educational leadership reported (see Chapter 7). The capacity to generate matrices and charts to visualise these comparisons was complemented by the ability in NVivo to double click on any number to retrieve the actual text responses and their sources (individual interviewee or survey response) to check who had said what and how often. The danger of over-emphasising the volume of responses without examining their origin was thus considered and averted.

The above steps in qualitative analysis, undertaken in an iterative and overlapping fashion, resulted in the development of higher level concepts, connections and the generation of inferences in relation to the research questions. These were constantly compared with findings from quantitative analysis in an integrated approach. The next section summarises the integration process.

INTEGRATION

As noted in the Research Design section, this study integrated quantitative and qualitative data and analysis throughout the study in order to address the research problem most thoroughly:

> It is critical that the sources are combined before and during writing, rather than being separately reported (the latter no longer constitutes mixed methods), and any opportunities for combining data sources earlier in the process should be taken. (Bazeley & Kemp (2012), cited in Bazeley, 2013b)

This distinctive element of a mixed methods approach, emphasised in recent years, was highly beneficial in identifying trends in the data as they arose, suggesting new ways of looking at emerging trends and prompting fresh questions for analysis. All five research questions required collection and analysis of both forms of data, and as analysis progressed there were frequent opportunities to compare data from both closed and open questionnaire items, and interview data. Being a single researcher it was possible to move between data sources and results in a fluid manner to follow emerging trends, searching for convergent data and also dissonant data, to prompt further analysis. Throughout the description of methods, examples have been given of this iterative approach:

- preliminary analysis of Phase 1 questionnaire quantitative data using tables and charts
- early comparison of quantitative and qualitative data from the questionnaire
- use of demographic and raw CELSA score data gained from questionnaire analysis to refine interview questions and to purposively select interviewees – as described in Phase 2 Participants section above
- scanning of qualitative data in questionnaire for possible *a priori* codes for content analysis of both phases
- preliminary content analysis (including above *a priori* codes) of interview data for member checking purposes and further development of content codes
- quantisizing of data from both questionnaires and interviews (i.e. counts of mentions of key terms)
- combining of qualitative data from both Phase 1 questionnaires and Phase 2 interviews for coding and further analysis using Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) software NVivo
- use of joint display tables in Results chapters to aggregate data sources and findings
- merging of findings from quantitative and qualitative analysis to generate inferences

These integration strategies have assisted in accomplishing a core aim of the study, to build a 'comprehensive and nuanced understanding' (Creswell, 2014, p. 151) of DP perceptions, practice and aspirations.

LIMITATIONS

Throughout this chapter, the steps taken to address a number of potential limitations pertaining to the research design and methods have been threaded through the explanations and descriptions. Possible challenges of the mixed methods approach were considered in the research design section. Issues in the quantitative and qualitative strands of its

implementation, such as questions of validity and reliability, trustworthiness and the role of the researcher, were addressed as they arose in data collection and analysis sections.

In addition, the following measures were taken to give confidence in the dependability of the findings and inferences. A research database stored all relevant source material and records of analysis (questionnaire responses, recordings and transcripts of interviews, statistical analysis output files, qualitative analysis summaries). An audit trail of key methodological decisions was also maintained through the chain of evidence from research questions, through procedures and analysis, with citations from sources of evidence, to results and warranted inferences. Finally, the issue of transferability, or the potential generalisability of findings, is addressed in the *Sample Characteristics* section of the following chapter.

SUMMARY

This chapter has explained and justified the choice of a mixed methods approach and outlined the key elements of the design of the study. A detailed elaboration followed of the methods employed to collect and analyse data from the two phase design with embedded instrument development. Limitations have generally been addressed as they arose within these explanations. The following chapter presents key findings from initial analyses that underpin the results for all research questions posed by the study.

CHAPTER 5:
ANALYSIS – SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS AND THE CELSA SCALE

This chapter presents results from two sets of initial analysis which are critical in establishing confidence in the results presented in later chapters. Section 1 describes the characteristics of the participants for both Phase 1 questionnaires (n=233) and Phase 2 interviews (eight), including demographic and school contextual data. Section 2 then reports in detail on the analysis of a newly-developed self-assessment scale relating to the work of DPs: the *Contextual Educational Leadership Self-Assessment* (CELSA) scale.

SECTION 1: SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

The following characteristics are reported in terms of the representativeness of the sample of Phase 1 questionnaire respondents and recognition of different voices in the Phase 2 interviews. Further raw data and analysis is provided in Appendix 7.

Phase 1 Questionnaire respondents.

Demographics and contextual variables.

At the time of the data collection, March 2012, statistics provided by the NSWSDPA indicated that 769 deputy principals were appointed in substantive positions in 465 secondary schools. Of these, 233 completed responses were analysed, a response rate of 30.3%. This first section reports on the sample of DPs who responded to the Phase 1 questionnaire in terms of the demographics of age and gender, and key contextual variables including the location, size, and type of school and the number of DPs. Comparisons are made with the target population of DPs in NSW government secondary schools, allowing a reasonable judgement as to the representativeness of the sample. Further information about the sample DPs is then provided, such as their initial training, the length of their experience as a teacher and DP, and indications of breadth of experience including whether this is their first DP role and how many principals they have worked with while at this level. These quantitative data were available for further statistical analysis as detailed in Chapter 4.

Age

Figure 5.1 indicates that nearly three quarters of DPs in the sample (72%) were aged 45 or more, with one third (34%) aged 55 or more.

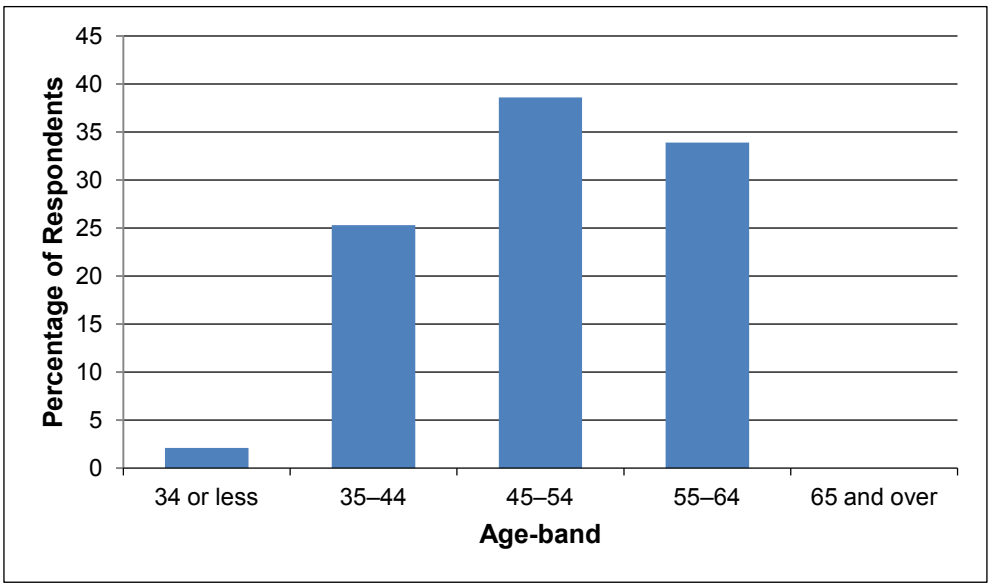

Figure 5.1 Questionnaire respondents: Age range

Comparison was made with figures supplied by DEC Workforce Planning Directorate but not available for publication (email exchange with Senior Officer, November 2012). This comparison showed that the proportion of sample respondents in each age band was extremely close to those for the target population of all NSW government secondary school DPs – all five age bands were within 3% of the total DEC proportion, with four of the bands within 1%. The age profile of these DPs is of some concern as it appears that many are in the same age range as principals (Marks, 2013) and are likely to retire in a similar time period. The government system may not be able to depend on sufficient DPs being available to fill vacancies created by retiring prinicipals.

Gender

As can be seen in Table 5.2, males outnumber females in the sample, comprising 57% of respondents. This proportion is once again very close to the overall population figures provided by the DEC, with less than 2.5% difference in proportions, suggesting that the sample is representative of the target population of all deputies in government secondary schools in terms of gender. The overrepresentation of males when there are more female than

male teachers is noted (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2015), though it must be said these proportions have become closer in recent years.

Table 5.1 Sample by gender (%)

Gender	% of sample
Male	56.96
Female	43.04

School location

Using secondary school enrolments (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2012) to calculate the percentage of DPs located in metropolitan or rural/regional areas, the proportion of responses from deputies in these categories is shown in Figure 5.2.

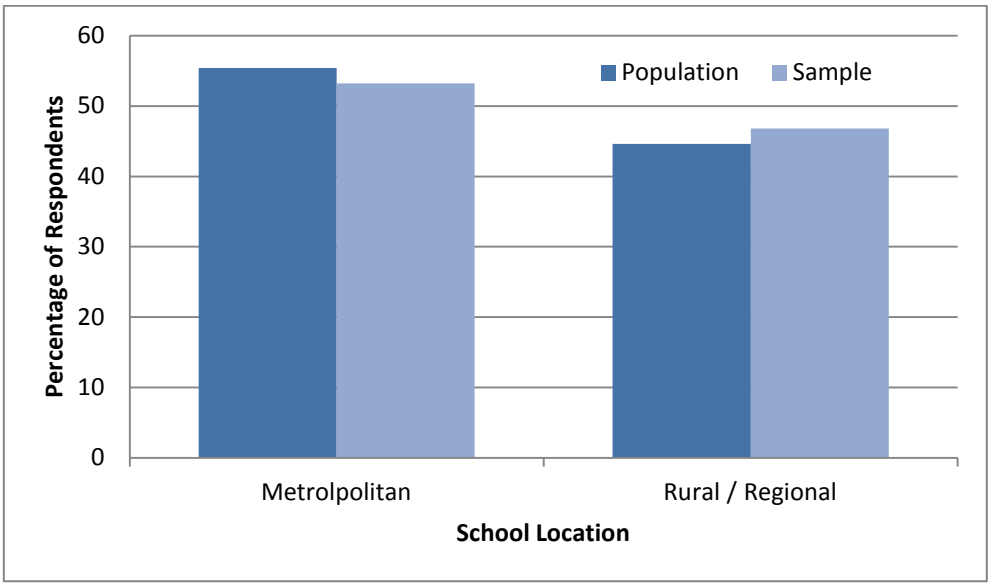

Figure 5.2 DPs in metropolitan vs rural/regional areas: Population vs sample (%)

The percentage of DP respondents in each category is very close to expectations for the population. Prior studies suggest that the location of a school has a significant impact on the experience of students and staff (Collins, Kenway, & McLeod, 2000; Lock et al., 2009; Roberts, 2004; Roberts & Green, 2013), though there is less analysis of the impact on secondary schools, so these data were valuable for exploring any relationships between this and other variables. This sample demographic information is important as it suggests that the current study includes the voices and experiences of groups in very different contexts.

School size

Figure 5.3 demonstrates that the percentage of NSW government secondary schools in each size category is closely reflected in the schools of sample respondents.

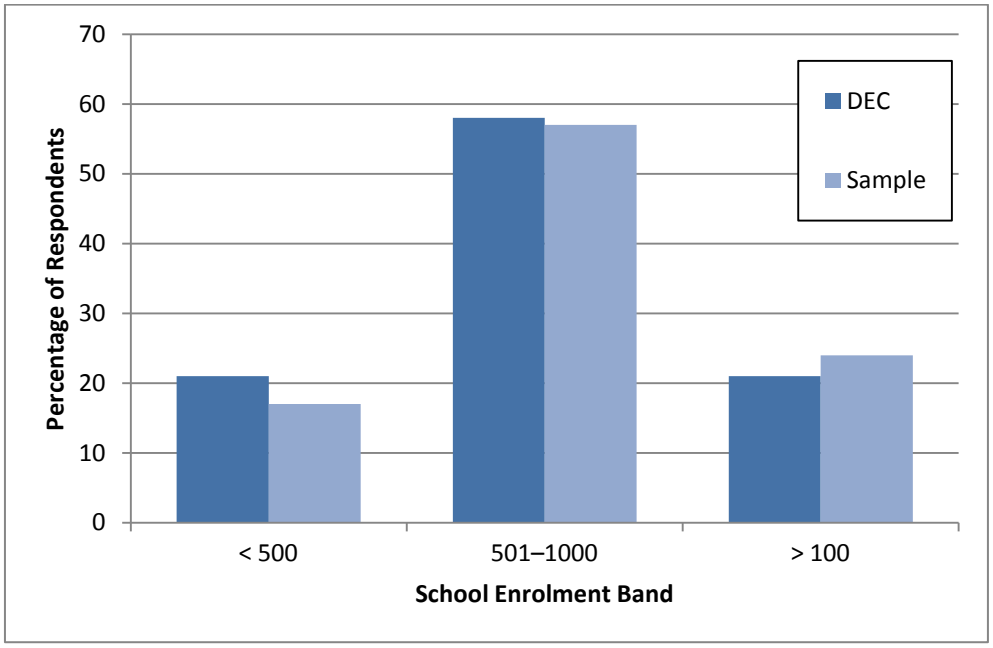

Figure 5.3 Sample school size: Population vs sample (%)

Over half of DEC secondary schools lie in the 500-1000 student enrolment range, and this proportion is reproduced in the sample. It is important, however, that deputies from larger and smaller schools are also well represented in the sample as school size may reasonably be expected to have an effect on their work. In addition, smaller schools are more often located in rural/regional areas (Roberts, 2004), and very large schools are mostly situated in rapidly growing metropolitan areas, thus reflecting very different contexts. The closely matched representation of larger and smaller schools is thus an important characteristic of the study's sample.

Number of DPs in the school

Table 5.2 indicates that about three quarters of schools in the sample had two DPs, with 15% having one in the position and 12% three or more.

Table 5.2 Total number of DPs in school

Number of DPs	Sample responses	% of sample
1	34	15
2	170	73
3	28	12
> 3	1	0
Total	233	100%

These proportions reflect the trend across the DET at the time of data collection (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2012). The number of DPs reflects not only the size of a school, as indicated in Chapter 1, but at times 'priority' schools in low socio-economic communities were entitled to an additional position. Collection of this data were considered important in order to assess the impact of working as the only DP in a school (a 'single DP'), and also whether there was evidence that relationships among the senior management team were affected by the number of members.

School type

Figure 5.4 indicates that 83% of respondents reported working in comprehensive schools, which comprised the bulk of government secondary schools (76%) (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2012, p. 6). A small percentage of respondents from senior and junior campuses are included (5.5%) reflecting the experiences of DPs in the 30 campuses of the 12 colleges in NSW. DPs in Central Schools (K-10 rural schools) are also represented.

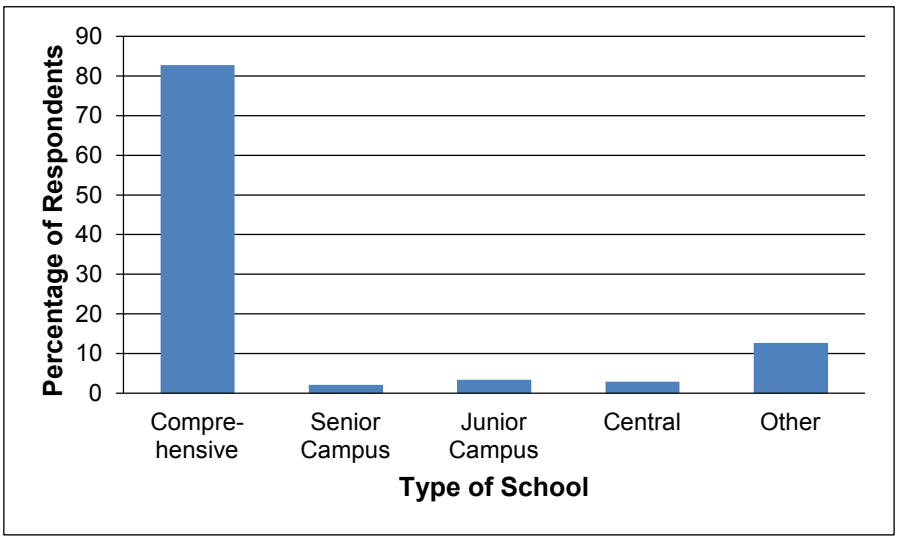

Figure 5.4 Types of schools that sample DPs work in (%)

The representation of 'other' types of schools nominated by respondents is shown in Table 5.6. These figures compare reasonably with DEC statistics (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2012).

Table 5.3 DPs in 'other' school types – Population vs sample (%)

	Selective	Partially selective	Distance education (partial)	Performing/ creative arts	Boys	Girls
Raw number in sample	10	7	5	3	3	3
% of sample $n = 233$	4.3%	3.0%	2.2%	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%
% of DET schools	4.5%	5.5%	Not available	2.0%	4.5%	5.1%

The parity between response rates and population proportions indicates that the views of DPs operating in the main categories of secondary schools are fairly well represented in the sample, with at least several of each type being included.

In summary, the response rate for the questionnaire (30.3%), combined with the quite strongly representative nature of the sample with regard to age, gender, school location and type, suggest that the findings from this questionnaire may be generalised to the population of DPs in NSW government secondary schools with reasonable confidence.

Overall experience of DPs

New findings are now reported about the experience of sample DPs including their initial teacher training, number of years in teaching and as DP, number of DP positions, and number of principals worked with as DP. These quantitative data were explored to assess their suitability for analysis of relationships in RQ 5.

Initial teacher training

Data were collected on where initial training was undertaken. A somewhat unexpected finding shown in Figure 5.5 was that 97% of sample DPs were trained in NSW, with only six individuals having been trained in another Australian state and two trained overseas.

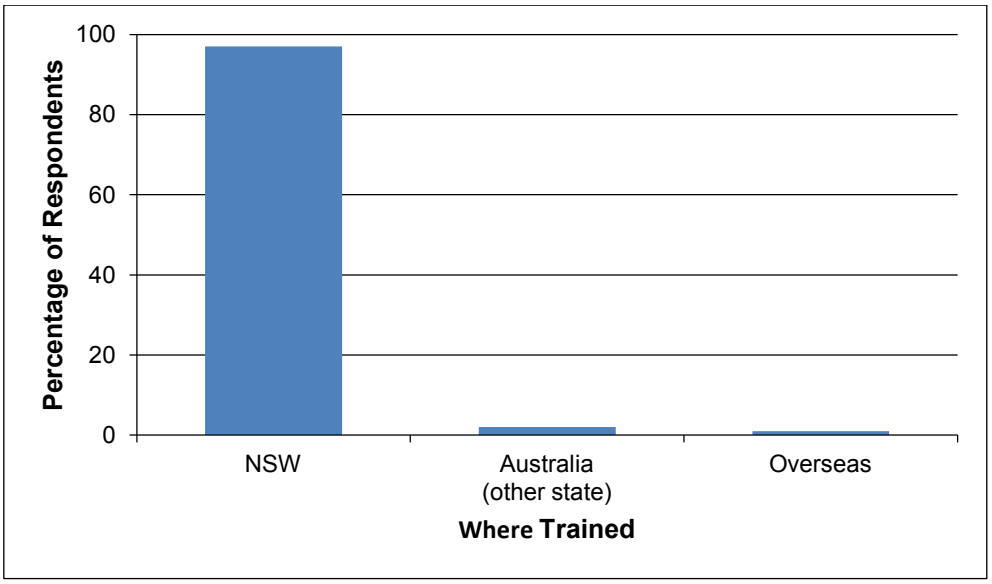

Figure 5.5 Where sample DPs undertook initial teacher training (%)

This lack of diversity in training background is worthy of further investigation in terms of the proportion of overall teachers and head teachers who were trained in other jurisdictions. The implications for reflecting the diversity of the overall teaching population at DP level, and the possible impact of career development strategies, including merit selection procedures, on who progresses through the ranks in NSW government secondary schools was not a focus of this study but definitely bears further scrutiny. It could also be interpreted as suggesting that the DEC was a 'closed' system with not very permeable boundaries.

Length and type of initial training

This aspect showed considerable variation, as shown in Figure 5.6. This reflects the differences in age and experience of respondents and changing requirements for teacher qualification, with training ranging from two to five years duration, from earlier certificate level to five year Master of Teaching qualifications being completed.

The large majority of survey respondents had completed a four year degree plus diploma or equivalent as their initial teacher training (Appendix 7, Section 2.3). However, 16% completed only three or even two years training. Remembering that those DPs (55%) with 25 years' experience were trained before 1987 and others even earlier, this statistic should not be surprising given that a degree was not necessarily required for some secondary teaching positions at that time. Also, a few of these individuals completed their initial training in other

jurisdictions. Discussion in results for RQ 2 indicates that many of these DPs had since upgraded their initial training.

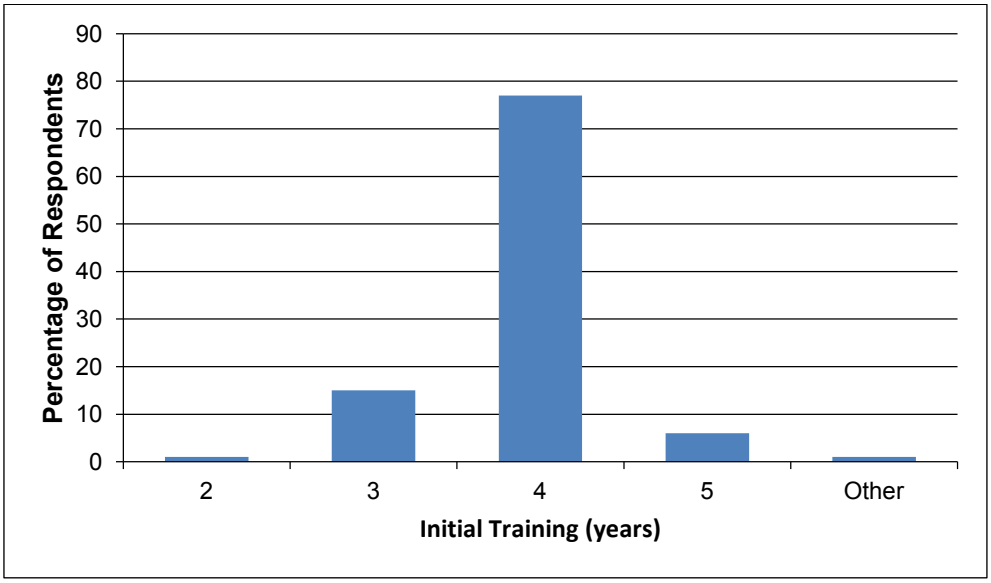

Figure 5.6 Length of initial teacher training (%)

Length of experience teaching and as a DP

Looking firstly at length of teaching experience, as shown in Table 5.4, it is clear that most DPs have very significant experience: three quarters have 20 years or more experience, and almost half have 30 years or more.

Table 5.4 Total years teaching including as DP

Years teaching experience (including as DP)	% of sample –*n* = 233
20 years +	75%
25 years +	55%
30 years +	43%
35 years +	10%

This result must be borne in mind when considering findings for the current study. The depth of educational experience amongst the respondents is recognised, however it should also be remembered that over the last 25-35 years, huge societal and educational changes have occurred. The requirements for entering teaching have changed dramatically, as indicated in

Chapter 1, but at the time of the study, requirements for remaining as a teacher or progressing to a leadership role such as deputy principal had not changed to the same extent.

Years of experience as a DP

A comparison with the number of years' experience as a DP in Table 5.5 reveals a somewhat different picture, with the mean number of years as a DP being fewer than six years. 'Years in current school' reflects the minority (22%) who had held more than one DP position. This general low level of experience as a DP across the sample was somewhat unexpected.

Table 5.5 Deputy principal experience

	Min Value	Max Value	Average Value	Standard Deviation	Responses
TOTAL years as DP	0.00	21.00	5.54	4.11	233
Years in CURRENT school as DP	0.00	21.00	4.32	3.35	233

The range of experience as a DP from 0-21 years is perhaps within expectations, but the low mean does indicate that this sample, while highly experienced educators, generally have relatively few years' experience in the DP role. The data suggest that many DPs had entered the role fairly late in their career. This raises the question as to their motivation for applying to become a principal at this stage in their career. It also may colour what they value as preparation (e.g. one might expect length of service to be highly valued), and how they view prospective leadership aspirants (as needing to have extensive experience before aspiring to lead).

Breadth of experience: Different DP roles and different principals

Given the fairly limited years of experience of many respondents, it is not surprising that about three quarters (74%) were in their first appointment as DP (Appendix 7, Section 5.6 and 5.7). Similarly, nearly half of the sample (42%) had worked with only one principal while a DP, even though this had a narrow definition of 2 terms' duration as a minimum.

These results suggest that this cohort had a limited *breadth* of experience as a DP compared to their *length* of school experience generally, remembering that 43% of the sample had been in teaching for 30 years or more. The combination of limited years of DP experience in one school only, and predominantly with one or possibly two principals, could be seen as a

concerning trend. If DPs achieve this level relatively late in their careers, and experience a limited range of senior management team models and school contexts throughout their DP service, this may limit the scope of experience and strategies they bring to their role, whether as a career deputy or as a principal.

Phase 2 Interviewees

Demographics and contextual variables

Equal numbers of male and female, metropolitan and rural/regional participants were purposively selected for Phase 2 interviews, along with equal numbers of higher and lower scorers on the CELSA raw total /90. No claim is made as to the representativeness of all DPs of the eight interviewees, indeed this is not necessarily appropriate for this qualitative phase. However, the aim of this 'nested' approach (Johnson & Christensen, 2008) to selecting interviewees and adopting a purposive selection model, was to include deputies from some key demographics so their stories and views would reflect diverse backgrounds and experiences. Analysis of two further participant categories is provided below: participant age and school size and type.

Age

While no attempt was made to select interviewees from particular age groups as there were so many other considerations, Table 5.6 shows that the final group of eight were from the following age groups, compared with the age ranges of the total sample.

Table 5.6 Age bands – Sample vs interviewees (%)

Age band	% of sample (*n* = 233)	No. of interviewees
< 34	2%	1
35–44	25%	1
45–54	39%	3
55–64	34%	3

Fortuitously, the representation of age groups among interviewees is relatively close to the expected proportion of questionnaire respondents: about 75% of interviewees are aged over 45 compared with 72% of the questionnaire respondents. This in turn reflects the proportion of DPs in those age groups across DEC as reported earlier. The inclusion of an interviewee

in the youngest age range had the potential to provide useful insights as one focus of this study is the future role of DPs.

School type and size

The most general criteria, different types and sizes of schools, were also not included in the matrix for selecting candidates for interview described in Chapter 3. However, in the selection process it was possible to include representatives from large and small comprehensive schools, a single–sex school and a site considered to be low SES (socio-economic status) with high multicultural enrolments. Not all small categories such as collegiate campuses or central schools could be included or 'other' types such as selective schools, due to the small numbers of interviewees. Overall, however, it can be claimed that the purposive selection of the interviewees has resulted in the collection of data from a broad range of backgrounds and contexts.

This analysis of sample characteristics for both phases lends confidence to the results of the study, which combine findings from an arguably representative large sample of questionnaire respondents with insights from a small group of purposefully selected interviewees.

SECTION 2: SCALE ANALYSIS

The newly-developed CELSA scale developed for the Phase 1 questionnaire (detailed in Chapter 3) provided a new lens to capture educational leadership practice of DPs. Items in each scale were subjected to exploratory factor analysis, as outlined in Chapter 3. This section details the results of this analysis.

Factor analysis of CELSA scale

In addition to broader quantitative measures of DP work in the questionnaire, the CELSA scale attempted to quantify the frequency of engagement in *specific leadership activities* identified in the literature (Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009) as impacting differentially on student learning. The 18 items of the scale were subjected to exploratory factor analysis so that underlying data structures could be identified (Yong & Pearce, 2013). Principal component analysis was applied, employing an oblimin rotation as there was a reasonable expectation of some intercorrelation between factors. The data satisfied the criteria for analysis, with the sample size being assessed as 'meritorious' with a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of .901, and a Bartlett's significance score of .000 indicating the likelihood of

factors emerging. The number of factors to retain was judged using eigenvalues greater than 1.00 in conjunction with examination of the scree plot and interpretability of the new factors.

A four-factor solution accounting for 59.4% of the total variance was arrived at; the scree plot suggested that a four-factor solution was reasonable and alpha reliabilities were calculated for the resultant item clusters. The factor solution for educational leadership items, including factor loadings and alpha reliabilities, is presented in Table 5.7. Further elaboration of each factor follows.

Table 5.7 Factor solution for CELSA scale

Item no.	Factor (Reliability coefficient)	Loading
	F1 Active engagement with teaching/learning (α = 0.84) ActivTL	
4.8	I work directly with teachers or executives to plan, coordinate and evaluate teachers and teaching.	.76
4.2	I observe classroom teaching and give useful feedback to teachers.	.68
4.15	I actively oversee and coordinate teaching programs.	.66
4.10	As a result of my involvement in professional learning with teachers, I make adjustments to support sustained improvements in student learning.	.64
4.13	I ensure systematic monitoring of student progress and use student assessment data for programming improvement.	.56
4.5	I provide useful advice about how to solve teaching problems.	.55
4.7	I am actively involved, as a leader or learner, in professional learning with staff.	.54
4.11	I ensure an intense focus on the teaching and learning relationship.	.47
	F2 Managing difficult behaviours (α = 0.57) DiffBeh	
4.1	I ensure consistent discipline routines.	.85
4.6	I identify and resolve conflict quickly and effectively.	.76
	F3 Resource provision (α = 0.71) ResProv	
4.17	I protect the teaching time of teachers and students.	.76
4.16	I ensure sustained funding for pedagogical purposes, including provision of staff expertise.	.55
4.9	I use clear criteria aligned to teaching and learning priorities to allocate resources.	.48
	F4 Shared goals and responsibility (α = 0.83) SharResp	
4.4	I promote collective responsibility and accountability for student achievement and wellbeing.	.75
4.3	I establish the importance of whole school shared goals (teaching/learning, philosophical/moral).	.75
4.12	I ensure that whole school goals are clear for all staff.	.60
4.18	I develop staff commitment to whole school goals.	.41
4.14	I promote collegial discussion of teaching and learning and their impact on student learning.	.57

The **first factor** (Factor 1) had an eigenvalue of 6.93 and accounted for 38.5% of the variance. It was labelled *Active engagement with teaching and learning* (ActivTL) as all eight items related not only to leadership focused on teaching and learning, but active participation in and support of the learning of students and teachers. No items in Factor 1 cross loaded on other factors. Importantly, this factor shares five common items (4.5, 4.7, 4.8, 4.10 and 4.11) with Robinson's Dimension 4, *Promoting and participating in teacher learning and development* (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 42), which was reported to have a very significant effect size for impact on student learning outcomes. The three additional items in Factor 1 (4.2, 4.13 and 4.15) particularly illustrate close engagement with teachers and classrooms, including lesson observation, useful advice about teaching issues and intense focus on teaching and learning. As leadership Dimension 4 is claimed by Robinson to make the greatest difference to student learning (0.84) it is interesting that this closely related factor is responsible for over 38% of variance in scores for this self-assessment by DPs of their educational leadership practice.

The **second factor** (Factor 2) had an eigenvalue of 1.45 and explained 8.05% of the variance. It was labelled *Managing difficult behaviours (*DiffBeh*)* as its two items were directly concerned with dealing with the less positive behaviours of others, whether student *discipline* or *conflict* in general. They did not cross-load with any other items, as they were apparently perceived to reflect a different aspect of the work of DPs. It is notable that in the BES study the item 'I protect the teaching time of teachers and students' was associated with these two items in Dimension 5 *Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment* (with a low effect size of 0.27), but was separated by participants in this study from behaviour and conflict management. This factor appears to support the notion that DPs spend a disproportionate amount of their time managing conflict and behaviour issues compared with the leaders most prominent in the BES, principals.

The **third factor** (Factor 3) had an eigenvalue of 1.29 and explained 7.17% of the variance. It was labelled *Resource provision* (ResProv) as the three items seem to relate directly to providing the prerequisites for effective learning to take place, including funding, resources and teaching time. The first two of these items relate to Robinson's Dimension 2 *Using Resources Strategically* (effect size 0.31) while the third relates to Dimension 5 *Ensuring and orderly and supportive environment* (effect size 0.27) as detailed in Chapter 3. In this study, DPs appear to perceive the protection of teaching time as related to other preconditions for effective teaching and learning, and an aspect which their leadership can

influence. It is notable that all three items in this factor relate to the Dimensions identified by Robinson as having the *least* direct impact on student learning.

Two items cross-loaded on Factor 1 *Active engagement with teaching/learning*: Item 4.16 'I ensure sustained funding for pedagogical purposes, including provision of staff expertise' and 4.9 'I use clear criteria aligned to teaching and learning priorities to allocate resources' both loaded .46 and .43 respectively. It is understandable that the references in these items to *pedagogical priorities* and *teaching and learning priorities* were also perceived to relate conceptually to the first factor, as other items in that factor referred directly to teaching and learning.

The **fourth and final factor** (Factor 4) had an eigenvalue of 1.02 and accounted for 5.67% of the variance. It was named *Shared goals and responsibility* (SharResp) as all five items refer to leading collaborative effort such as whole school shared goals, collective responsibility and collegial discussion. This concept was not as highly recognised in the BES Dimensions, where these four items were spread across Dimensions 1, 3 and 4. The DPs in this study may have perceived the leadership of *shared* goals across the school to be a significant element of their role, rather than leadership of individuals or possibly those units such as subject or specialist teams led by middle leaders. This apparent focus on a whole-school or shared approach may be more relevant in a secondary context where division into sub-groups is more structural than in the primary context, where head teachers are seen as leaders of their small teams and where departmentalisation into inward-looking, competitive units has been recognised as an issue (Bendikson, Robinson, & Hattie, 2012; Hargreaves, 1994; Turner & Sykes, 2007). As discussed in Chapter 2, the DP role is often the first level of secondary school leadership to require a whole-school perspective and the ability to generate school-wide commitment to shared understandings or action.

One item cross-loaded onto Factor 1: 'I promote collegial discussion of teaching and learning and their impact on student learning'. Once again, this is understandable given the language in the item referring to student learning, showing some conceptual consistency with other items in Factor 1.

In summary, these four factors accounted for 59.4% of the variance in CELSA scale scores, with Alpha reliabilities ranging from 0.84 to 0.57. Two of these factors closely correspond with the dimensions of educational leadership proposed by Robinson in the BES. Factor 1 *ActivTL* shares five items with BES Dimension 1 *Promoting and participating in teacher*

learning and development, which are henceforth described in this report as 'high impact' EL activities as they have the greatest effect size for impact on student outcomes. Factor 4 *DiffBeh* shares two items with Dimension 5 *Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment* which are considered to have very low impact on student achievement. Participants in this study seemed to conceive of these clusters of activities as quite separate aspects of their work as senior leaders. The remaining Factors 2 and 3 appear to apply slightly different lenses for conceptualising work for DPs to that of the BES, based on ensuring the preconditions for learning (F2) and leading collaborative effort (F3).

The four new CELSA factors have been demonstrated to show internal coherence, thus this factor structure found was, overall, satisfactory with respect to the aims of this research. The differences noted between the sample DPs' views of educational leadership and the BES findings are important as they may be interpreted as reflecting the unique elements of the secondary DP role rather than the generic leadership levels and contexts represented in that broad meta-analysis. The CELSA scale therefore contributes important new understandings about how DPs perceive their educational leadership role, hitherto not well represented in the literature.

Analysis of the CELSA scale confirmed that it can be considered valid and reliable for the purposes of this research. It provides a new empirical lens for examining the frequency of specific leadership activities undertaken by DPs. Factor 1 *Active engagement in teaching and learning*, was a useful proxy for educational leadership, available for testing relationships with other variables of interest, as visualised in the conceptual framework in Chapter 1.

SUMMARY

The analysis presented in Section 1 of this chapter gives confidence that the questionnaire sample is representative of the population of DPs in NSW government secondary schools in key characteristics, allowing for reasonable confidence in generalising findings from the data. The purposively selected interviewees also represent key voices among this group. Section 2 provides evidence that the CELSA scale is valid and useful for this study. The results provided in the following two chapters are therefore presented with confidence that they are based on solid foundations. These two chapters (6 and 7) report results for the two major themes of career progression and educational leadership. Following this, Chapter 8 (Discussion) draws together possible explanations for and implications of these results.

CHAPTER 6:
RESULTS – CAREER PROGRESSION

This chapter presents the results for the first two research questions which shed light on two aspects of the career progression of DPs: their aspirations for the principalship and how they have been prepared for their current role.

RQ 1 DO DEPUTY PRINCIPALS ASPIRE TO THE ROLE OF PRINCIPAL?

As outlined in Chapter 2, while attention to secondary DPs in the literature is generally scant, one area which receives some attention is that of their aspirations, or lack of aspirations, to progress to the role of principal. Findings for this question, summarised in Table 6.1, show that sample DPs displayed three main attitudes to aspiration, with a complex array of reasons for and against progression to the principalship and the notion of the 'career deputy'.

Table 6.1 RQ 1 Joint display

RQ 1: Do deputy principals aspire to the role of principal? **JOINT DISPLAY: Summary**	
Quantitative results: Questionnaire data	**Qualitative findings: Interview and open-ended questionnaire data**
Attitudes to aspiration 49% agree/strongly agree: *I am actively interested in becoming a principal.* **DP as preparation for principal** 60% agree/strongly agree: *My DP role is good preparation for becoming a principal.* **Factors associated with aspiration** **Multiple regression:** d.v. *Aspiration* was regressed against 8 independent variables. A moderate significant predictive relationship was found with age, with increasing age associated with decreasing aspiration.	Reasons for: **Aspiration** • Mostly reflected feeling prepared (30) • Positive motivators (11) • Some felt the role of the principal was preferable to the DP role (2) **Reluctance** • Satisfaction as DP (22) • Merit selection issues (19) • Location (16) • Negative perceptions of the principal role (13) • Impact on family (11) • Own age or health (11) • DEC lack of succession planning (9) • Not fully prepared (6) **Ambivalence** • Tendency to balance positive and negative aspects but often undecided • Focus on specific principal positions rather than desire to be a principal **The notion of the 'career deputy'** • Supported as a valid role • Caveats expressed

Results from quantitative analysis

Attitudes towards aspiration

A broad range of responses to the statement 'I am actively interested in becoming a principal in the future' are revealed in Figure 6. 1.

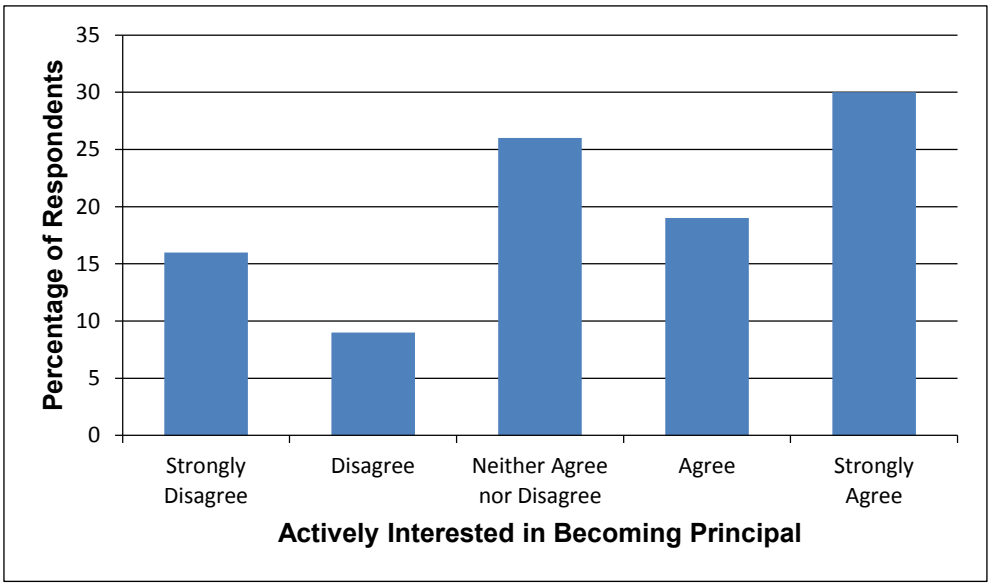

Figure 6.1 Active aspiration to principalship (%)

Attitudes fell into three main types: about half of the sample (49%) reported actively aspiring, a quarter (25%) clearly were not aspiring, and about a quarter (26%) appeared to be ambivalent. No assumption is made that these attitudes, collected in a particular time and context, are fixed. Given earlier discussion in Chapter 2, these proportions are not unexpected. Nevertheless, the fact that only half of respondents reported being actively interested is concerning considering the expected vacancy rates for principal positions in NSW in coming years (Marks, 2013).

Feeling prepared

The literature suggests that one key factor in whether DPs aspire to become a principal lies in feeling prepared by the work done in their current role (Bezzina, 2012; Cranston, 2006). Results reported in Figure 6.2 indicate that the majority (60%) of sample DPs believed that their role was not preparing them well, although about 40% were ambivalent or disagree, resulting in the mean score of 3.36.

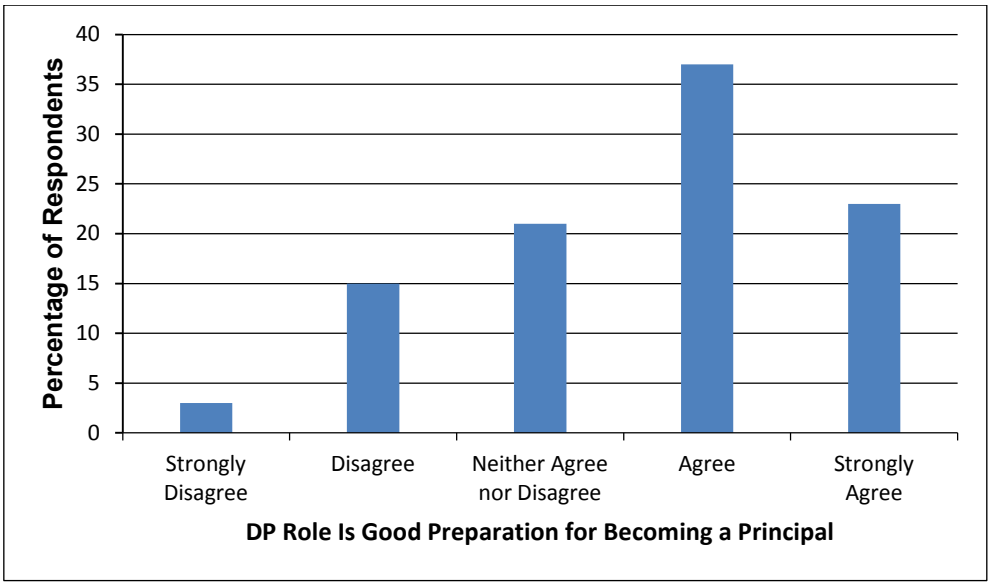

Figure 6.2 DP role as preparation for principalship (%)

Factors associated with aspiration

Any relationship between aspiration to the principalship and key variables from the three clusters outlined in the conceptual framework (personal background, school context and preparation and succession) was of interest, especially in the context of increasing leadership 'disengagement' (Gronn & Rawlings-Sanaei, 2003). Further analysis was conducted in which aspiration was regressed on the following variables relating to personal background (gender, age, total years DP) school context (school size, school location, number of DPs) and preparation (subsequent study, Masters study).

In the model ($F_{8,213}$=6.589, r^2=0.198) shown in Table 6.2, inspection of the standardised regression coefficients suggested that the only significant variable adjusted for all else was age. This exhibited a moderate effect (β= -0.39, p=<.001) with DPs showing less aspiration as age increased. Interestingly, years' experience as a DP appeared to be unrelated to aspiration.

The combination of these three quantitative results gives rise to further questions as to why DPs aspire or not, why age appears to impact on aspiration and which aspects of the principalship they feel inadequately prepared for. Analysis of qualitative data in the following findings offers important insights into these issues.

Table 6.2 Predictors for aspiration to the principalship

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std Error	Beta		
1 ***(Constant)***	5.46	.68		8.09	.000
School size 1. <500 2. 500-750 3. 751-1000 4 >1000	–.00	.09	–.00	–.01	.993
School location 1. metro 2. rural/regional	.17	.18	.06	.94	.349
Number DPs 1, 2, 3, 3+	–.29	.19	–.11	–1.59	.130
Gender 1. male 2. female	.09	.18	.03	.50	.615
Age range 1. <34 2. 35–44 3. 45–54 4. 55–e64 5. 65+	–.67	.11	**–.39**	–5.89	**.000**
SubStud	.11	.08	.13	1.41	.160
Masters	.047	.301	.014	.15	.877
YrsDPband	–.095	.106	–.060	–.90	.371

a. Dependent Variable: I am actively interested in becoming a principal in the future.

Findings from qualitative analysis

Qualitative data relevant to aspiration were captured from interview questions IQ 4 a), b) and c), comments embedded in responses to other interview questions and all open-ended questionnaire items. Three main types of attitudes towards aspiration drawn from these data were categorised as *aspiration*, *reluctance* or *ambivalence*. It should be noted that individual respondents do not necessarily fall tidily into these groups, as some interviewees made comments relevant to more than one category.

Aspiration

Comments regarding positive aspiration were mostly made in interviews, and were considerably fewer in number than negative comments, mirroring findings from previous literature (Bezzina, 2012). The main categories reflected feeling prepared, various motivators for aspiration and, to a lesser extent, a belief that the principal role was preferable to the DP role.

Feeling prepared. All interviewees except one early career DP expressed reasonable confidence that their DP role was preparing them for becoming a principal, though this was tempered by reservations about gaps in this preparation. Five participants were extremely confident that they were prepared – one had recently been appointed as a principal, one had decided not to pursue it after some disappointments, and another felt ready to apply for a position if a suitable one arose. 'I feel I have been very well prepared … absolutely 150% … It would certainly not be lack of training that would stop me from applying' summarised this interviewee's attitude. Another noted, 'It was the sudden realisation that I did have the capabilities, and I guess I've been DP now for [X] years, I know that I can do the job', while another felt prepared by having had experience as HT and DP in several schools. A large element of feeling prepared was having relieved as principal, which several interviewees noted was an integral part of their DP role. Two respondents referred to the deliberate strategy of their principal to offer the full range of opportunities to assist them in preparation. One survey respondent noted, 'The Principal decided our DP roles based on our strengths, but aspects of these will change each year so that I cover all aspects of school leadership and management as I prepare to become a Principal.'

Reservations were expressed by some that their role was not complete preparation. One interviewee noted, 'But you have to go to another tier – have to go to another level, be a leader not a manager,' while a survey respondent noted, 'I have relieved for three terms as principal. Being a DP does not prepare you for the differences in the roles between DP and principal.' It appears that overall, comments reflected a reasonable sense of preparedness, and while some gaps were noted, these did not seem to be a strong deterrent to aspiration. This was rather more positive than suggested in some earlier studies cited in Chapter 2.

A limited range of positive motivators were mentioned. Ambition was cited by few respondents. One interviewee saw the potential for a principal to 'set the tone' and 'to put your stamp on a learning community' as a reason to aspire, and a survey respondent cited a desire 'to be an effective Principal and a future leader within NSW Public Education' in the

long term. The notion of being invigorated by new challenges was noted by one other who believed that 'going to a new role would be stimulating'. Altruistic reasons were claimed by an interviewee who was prepared to move to a hard-to-staff area: 'in the autumn of my career … [I'd like to] give back to rural kids'. A final category of aspiration related to the perception that the principal role may be preferable to the DP. Two survey respondents claimed that 'deputies work very hard and seem to be asked to do everything. A principal can delegate, usually to a deputy' and 'I have been relieving principal for extended periods of time and it is easier as it is more contained as a job'. These last statements support the views expressed by principals in Ribbins' early work (1997) that the DP position offered few rewards and was best moved through quickly.

Reluctance

Qualitative data, once again mostly from interviews (97 references) but including ten survey comments, elaborated the reasons why a quarter of respondents disagreed with the statement 'I am actively interested in becoming a principal in future'. Complex and interrelated explanations were offered. Main themes included satisfactions in the current DP job, merit selection issues, limitations of location and negative perceptions of the principal role. Significant concerns also related to the potential impact on family, respondents' own age or health, a perceived lack of system planning and support and feeling unprepared.

More than twenty references were made to satisfying elements of the current DP role or 'satisfiers' (Dinham & Scott, 1998, p. 364) being reasons not to aspire at the moment. Four interviewees stated very positive summations of this role such as 'I love my job. I will aspire to being a principal one day, but right now I'm really happy doing what I am doing'; and 'now I'm happy with my lot'. Various characteristics of the job were commented upon, for example, one interviewee stated, 'I like not being ultimately responsible for every decision in the school. I like being the second in charge.' Others mentioned positive aspects such as working closely with people all day, including students and staff, and being a conduit between principal and staff. It was suggested by one interviewee that the role suited certain personalities, who gain great satisfaction from 'doing a job that you think you can do at that level', people 'who emotionally need to work for people and to win their approval and get support'. Others suggested that 'the job is endlessly interesting' and 'you can make a stamp as a DP too'.

DPs who were given genuine opportunities to influence major school developments felt reluctant to move on, as did those in schools where exciting developments were in hand. One

participant noted that being DP in a 'top comprehensive school' with few major difficulties made promotion less attractive, while another believed that giving up teaching a class would be difficult: 'I couldn't bear not doing it'. Feeling satisfied with the DP role was the most cited and most positive reason for not aspiring to become a principal, in contradiction of Sutter's (1996) finding that satisfied DPs are more likely to aspire. Other stated reasons for not aspiring were rather more negative.

The impact of merit selection recruitment procedures was seen as a deterrent by more than half the interviewees, with some citing the laborious application and interview processes and others concerned about the effects on unsuccessful applicants. Even those who had positive experiences to date alluded to the prospect of working as a principal with unsuccessful applicants for that position, and the potential for being undermined. The impact on frustrated applicants who 'turn into nasty people, hold grudges' was recognised in several comments. Lack of transparency and trust in the process was also an issue – one participant noted that he did not know why he had failed in previous attempts and succeeded in one despite having received feedback. A survey respondent also observed, 'I would like to move but why put my hat in the ring when it costs me a lot of time and unnecessary stress?'

The majority of interviewees in rural areas, where an applicant for any principal position would be assessed by the same senior district official, perceived merit selection procedures as highly problematic. Having 'ruffled the feathers' of local departmental officers led one rural interviewee to believe that they were 'not viewed positively by district office staff' and had limited chances of success, while a second participant believed the implementation of the procedures was so poor that it was not worth applying, even after extensive successful relieving as a principal. A rural survey respondent seemed resigned to this negative aspect of merit selection by saying 'I have applied for a number of principals positions and have come to the realisation that unless I wish to move to another region this will not happen for me'. These concerns mirror those reported in other literature about merit selection as a recruitment process detailed in Chapter 2, particularly the influence of power, and clearly have a significant deterrent effect on aspiration.

Reluctance to aspire due to issues of location was cited by all rural interviewees, though some different aspects were also mentioned by metropolitan participants. In rural areas where schools are more widely spread, the number of opportunities, particularly at principal level is necessarily more limited. Aspirants in these areas often expect to move to gain promotion, but three interviewees specifically noted that they had relocated at least once and

were not prepared to do so again. One female rural DP felt well prepared to become a principal but observed, 'I've relocated my family for my position in [X] and my position in [Y], so I'm not going to do it again.' In addition, factors such as isolation, the impact of travel times on professional development and networking, and limited opportunities for relieving were cited as militating against feeling competitive to apply. Metropolitan interviewees faced different challenges relating to location. Principal vacancies in favourable areas were highly competitive and travel times within Sydney had begun to limit realistic areas for applying. Closely related to the issue of location was the general impact on family life and lifestyle of becoming a principal. As one young male DP noted about the impact of the time demands on his own children, 'I had kids to see them!' while a female DP observed, 'When you're in the business of young people, you've got to put your own young people first.' The fact that the majority of DPs saw location and family issues as key factors in their reluctance to aspire appears to confirm Fink's (2010) assertion that the new generation of potential principals are choosing quality of life for themselves and family over promotion at any cost.

A major factor in reluctance to become a principal was negative perceptions of the principal role itself by these DPs who had a close up view of it in action, some over many years and a number of individuals. These findings confirm earlier suggestions that the principal role itself is perceived as a major disincentive to aspiration (Bezzina, 2012). Principals were seen to be extremely hard working over long hours in a lonely job, 'sitting in an office all day' dealing with major issues from which DPs and HTs were insulated. One interviewee commented on the hours worked by his principal, observing 'I don't know if I can sustain that' while another claimed, 'It can eat people's lives.' The pressure of the role was also highlighted in comments such as, 'The demands on principals are extraordinary … the toll it takes' and an observation that groups of principals looked 'stressed, overweight and unhealthy … like heart attacks on legs'.

Respondents also referred to their own proximity to retirement and health as factors in reluctance to apply. Three of the eight interviewees and one survey respondent cited approaching retirement as a factor in 'no longer' aspiring, rather than never having aspired. In combination with the association between age and aspiration revealed by the regression reported earlier, this gives rise to two issues. Firstly, it was closeness to expected retirement rather than age itself that was generally commented on, for example, 'Had there been about four years left I would have had a shot at being a principal.' The nature of the superannuation system implied by these comments encouraged retirement at particular ages

for women and men, as articulated by Marks (2013), rather than viewing work and retirement choices as factors of competence, efficacy or enjoyment. Indeed, Marks claimed that 'superannuation drives retirement' (p. 3). It may be that this system was a deterrent for DPs who might otherwise progress to the principal role rather than give up on this aspiration due to a perceived end point of their career. Secondly, there appear to be cultural expectations about how many years one should stay as a principal to be 'fair' to a school. DPs seem to have a self-limiting notion about how many years this might be. One interviewee observed, 'At most I've got two years to go and I'd be of no use to anybody taking a promotions position … I haven't even looked at the job applications for a couple of years.' These comments suggest that even three or four years as a principal is not considered sufficient commitment to be fair to a school, which is ironic given that some jurisdictions such as Singapore and Ontario rotate principals between schools at similar intervals (Fink, 2010; Ministry of Education, 2010). Related to age were health concerns cited by two female interviewees as deterrents against aspiration, one of whom observed that 'we need to look after ourselves'.

Two final issues deterring some DPs from aspiring were the interconnected factors of lack of system support for succession planning and feeling underprepared for progressing to a principal role. Unsolicited comments from two survey respondents made this clear: 'I do not believe DEC is taking upskilling of people seriously' and [the system needs to] 'support and encourage aspiring principals as they move through this role'. An interviewee offered practical suggestions such as, 'I believe DEC should be providing courses for people – like the Canadian model of 3 week vacation courses … so you would have a credential that would help you to the next level.' Another cited succession planning models from other careers and claimed there was 'no stewardship of leaders and leadership with DEC that I can see'. While sample DPs seemed to generally accept the personal career approach to progression in the NSW government system, those who looked beyond it to other systems or even careers believed that the system itself bore some responsibility for preparing leaders better and that the lack of this was a deterrent for aspiration. Hence it was not surprising that a number of respondents cited feeling unprepared for the full breadth of the principal role as contributing to their reluctance. Perhaps representing some of the 40% of questionnaire respondents who indicated their DP role did not prepare them for the principal role, two interviewees suggested that while they knew 'how schools work', management responsibilities prevented adequate preparation for the essentially creative, leadership elements of a principal role.

Reluctance or lack of interest in progressing to the principal role therefore appears to be related to a number of interrelated factors. Satisfaction in the current DP position, negative impressions of the principal role and the impact of relocating on family were prominent, as were merit selection concerns and a desire for greater succession planning by the system so aspirants could be better prepared. Approaching retirement was also mentioned as a contributing factor. Many individuals appeared to be undecided about whether they aspired or not, as outlined in the following section.

Ambivalence

As noted earlier, a quarter of questionnaire respondents were neutral about aspiring to become a principal. This ambivalence was certainly reflected in interviews where half the participants expressed indecision in terms such as 'I don't know … I just haven't made that decision yet' and 'That answer chops and changes all the time. I think the proper answer would be I am toying with the idea'. Much of this prevarication appeared to reflect a balancing up of the factors discussed above as affecting aspiration or reluctance. However, another important underlying consideration was not necessarily stated in response to this particular interview question, but arose in other embedded comments. Aspiration appeared to be closely related to the availability of particular principal positions rather than generic aspiration to be 'a principal'. Interviewees were clearly selective about where they would be prepared to apply, based on criteria such as travel time and in some cases, type of school or community. The prospect of rapid promotion in less favourable areas was raised by two participants, and one had been advised to consider this route, but as noted by one interviewee who admitted to being 'choosy', working in 'different [challenging] schools is totally different … it's a different career' and not one that appeals to all DPs. This reflects important aspects of the NSW government system's *personal career* approach to career progression, as detailed in Chapter 2. This approach may be characterised as depending on leadership aspirants choosing from advertised positions rather than preparing for the principalship in a career-long developmental strategy.

Whatever the reasons for aspiration, reluctance or ambivalence expressed by participants, it appears that many sample DPs will not progress to becoming a principal. The next section explores the notion of remaining as a 'career deputy'.

The notion of the 'career deputy'

One interviewee wryly observed, 'there are only so many principal positions' so it is likely that, regardless of their aspirations, a number DPs may remain in the role for extended periods or as their 'terminal career position' (Macpherson, 2009a, p. 51). As noted in Chapter 2, one somewhat controversial suggestion was that DPs not intending to progress to the principalship should 'either move up or out' (Fink, 2010, p. 176) and unblock the pipeline for others more ambitious. An alternative view is that of the 'career DP' who is seen as making an active choice to remain in the role rather than failing to be promoted, and who makes a worthwhile contribution. Qualitative data were collected to address this notion directly in interview question 4c) which asked 'Do you think there is a place for the 'career deputy' i.e. those who do not aspire to principal but continue long term as a deputy?'

All interviewees believed that the career deputy was a valid role, though there was some scepticism that it was necessarily a deliberate choice, with some suggesting that it may rather be the result of circumstances. Four claimed that they might classify themselves as a career deputy: 'Absolutely because I suspect I might be one' and 'Yes, because that might be me'; 'I suppose I could put myself in that category'; and 'I'm thinking I don't necessarily want to be a P and I'd be quite happy to be a DP for quite some time'. Interestingly these comments were voiced by speakers from both genders, different locations and age groups. Three other respondents commented positively on the general concept for example 'Yes if that is what you aspire to be – no need to aspire to principal position' or cited well known examples of successful long-term DPs who contributed to their professional association. This overwhelming support for the position was a somewhat unexpected finding given the list of frustrations with the role quoted from the literature in Chapter 2.

Several interviewees who had previously aspired now claimed to be content and positive while another frustrated principal aspirant declared a decision 'to contain myself within my own school and focus my interests here'. One interviewee openly queried whether it would have started out that way or if individuals had settled for this as a second preference, and indeed in some instances this appears to have been the case based on comments discussed earlier. Other reasons for remaining a career DP reflected the reality that opportunities for preparation and advancement are not equitable, for example, access to professional learning and relieving opportunities may be limited, or that for some DPs the next step to showing whole school leadership may be difficult.

While the idea of the career deputy was broadly supported, some important caveats were expressed about this option. The intensity of the DP role was highlighted by three interviewees in terms of the demanding work, long hours and the negativity experienced on a daily basis. Concerns were expressed particularly for those who came into the position at a relatively young age, with one statement that 'I wouldn't like to see people do it ad nauseum' and another noting that 'maintaining professional engagement, competency and balance of life' over such a long period would be challenging. Interviewees universally raised the risk of becoming stale, 'going into cruise control' and the need to 'stay fresh' for the sake of both individuals and the school communities. Suggestions for doing so included taking on new and challenging roles within the school, moving to another school, 'reinventing yourself' and generally avoiding doing the same familiar things year after year. It was noted by one survey respondent that transferring between schools was a good strategy to 'keep current DPs invigorated', but this had become more difficult in recent years with all positions now going to merit selection. One very experienced interviewee reflected that he may have been perceived to have lost the 'fire' at one time but had been rejuvenated by taking a major reform role in the school. Only two interviewees envisioned possibilities for taking a career break or moving into a non-school role for some time as alternatives for maintaining freshness – others tended to see options only as progressing to principal or staying as a DP. The two with broader horizons had both worked in a different career or extended periods out of schools. This might appear to confirm an earlier suggestion relating to prior roles that having background beyond the traditional career trajectory from classroom to the DP office can bring advantages of breadth of experience.

The career journeys described by interviewees suggest that in some schools stability is enhanced by the longevity of at least one DP, but that this needs to be negotiated with the principal. Notions of power struggles were mentioned tangentially in one comment that 'you can be very, very competent, you can not threaten the principal at all, which is important sometimes' and another by a participant who reassured a new principal by saying, 'I've been a DP for [x number of] years … Did I apply for the job and am I going to undermine you? No I'm not.'

Summary

Results for Research Question 1 'Do deputy principals aspire to the role of principal?' based on analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data from this large cohort bring important new understandings to this question. The finding that only about half of the sample actively

aspired to becoming a principal has been elaborated with analysis of a complex array of reasons for *aspiration,* for *reluctance* and for *ambivalence* regarding this issue. The association between age and aspiration was reported, with aspiration tending to decrease as DP age increases. In addition, the value ascribed to the position of career deputy and how it might be nurtured and sustained has been detailed. In the words of one interviewee regarding the principalship, 'It's appealing, in thought. In practicality, maybe not so much.'

Importantly, these results strongly indicate that viewing secondary DPs only as potential principals, as this study argues has frequently been the case, implies a narrow conceptualisation of their role and its importance. This senior leadership role is of inherent interest and is deserving of greater attention. Whether they become principals, stay on as career deputies or indeed take their skills into other related areas, a much greater understanding is required of how DPs have been prepared for their current role, how they operate as educational leaders and what factors appear to influence this work. The following research question explores how deputies have been prepared in this employing authority and jurisdiction.

RQ 2 HOW HAVE DEPUTY PRINCIPALS BEEN PREPARED FOR THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THIS ROLE?

It was argued in Chapter 2 that while there has been a huge focus on the preparation of principals in the literature in recent years, the application of this preparation specifically for DPs has attracted little attention (Harris, Muijs, & Crawford, 2003; Oleszewski, Shoho, & Barnett, 2012). The personal career approach to preparing school leaders in the NSW DEC means that, unlike many other jurisdictions, there is little 'hard data' to be collected about aspiring DPs such as completion of required certification training, postgraduate study or formal targeting by senior officers for a 'leadership track'. In the absence of such data, available information regarding the career journeys and selection processes for becoming a DP were of particular interest. Data about indirect elements of preparation such as previous positions, recruitment processes, non-mandated additional study and encouragement received were collected in an exploratory approach. Descriptive statistics are reported for these quantitative elements. In addition, seven open-ended questions were included in the Phase 1 questionnaire relating to types of preparation experienced, valued and recommended (Appendix 1, Section 5). These qualitative data were analysed jointly with responses to interview questions 3a and 3b as well as comments embedded in other interview questions.

Table 6.3 RQ 2: Joint Display

RQ 2: How have deputy principals been prepared for the responsibilities of this role? **JOINT DISPLAY: Summary**	
Quantitative results: Questionnaire data	**Qualitative findings: Interview and open-ended questionnaire data**
Immediate background 94% HT prior position (81% of those were head of a curriculum department) 94% recruited via merit selection (100% via state-wide staffing process) **Subsequent study completed** 10% 3-4 year Conversion course 12% Postgraduate certificate 21% Postgraduate diploma 25% Master's degree **Encouragement** 82% were particularly encouraged to consider leadership by someone in their career.	**Main themes:** **Preparation experienced and/or valued** **EXPERIENCE** Relieving Variety of roles or contexts Whole school initiatives 'On the job' after appointment HT or teaching experience **LEARNING** DEC programs Study Networks, professional associations Non-DEC training Reading School-based leadership learning **ENCOURAGEMENT** Mentoring: Formal and informal Nomination to relieve Whole school opportunities Support for applications **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES** Personal characteristics vs preparation Role of chance or luck Feeling unprepared Merit selection concerns

Results from quantitative analysis

Prior roles and recruitment methods

Two sources of data relating to immediate background variables showed that sample DPs were quite homogenous in respect to their immediate prior role and how they were recruited into the DP position. Firstly, as indicated in Figure 6.3, 94% of respondents were in head teacher (HT) roles before becoming a DP.

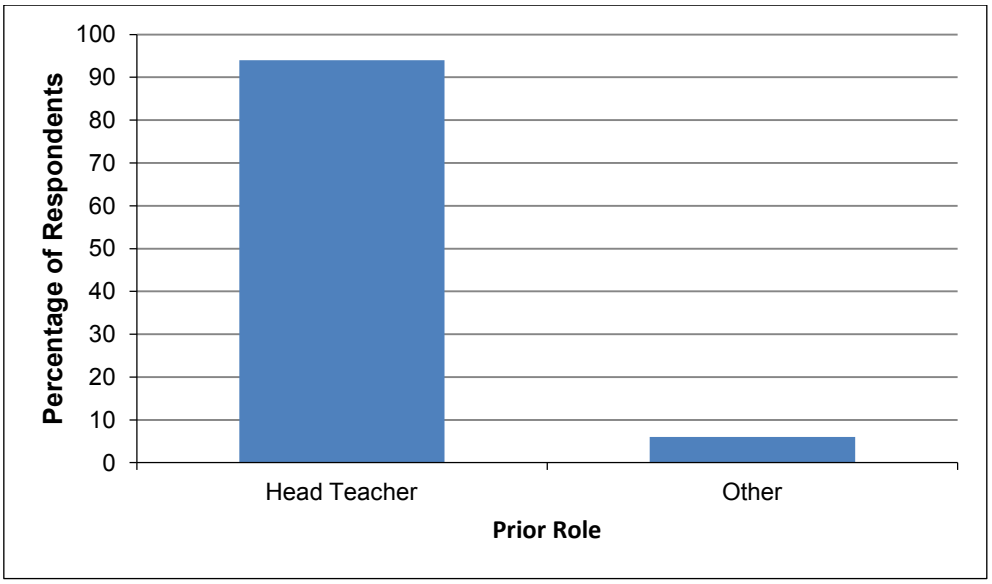

Figure 6.3 Role prior to DP (%)

The 6% who were not HT prior to their appointment (14 individuals) had previously been in District or Regional Consultant roles (and possibly HT before this), which were considered equivalent to or higher level positions than HT, while others were principals of rural Central schools (with students up to Year 10) or classroom teachers with leadership responsibilities for faculties. There was no formal requirement for deputies to have head teacher experience, but these data confirm that apart from a few notable exceptions, in practice this was generally seen to be a prerequisite for consideration for the role, suggesting that the traditional career path from classroom teacher, head teacher to DP remained the norm. Data about the specific type of HT role held indicate that 81% of DPs were previously head teachers of curriculum or subject units as shown in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4 HT subject area prior to DP (%)

Head Teacher: Subject (Key Learning Area)	% of sample – *n* = 233
Science	16.5%
Human Sciences in the Environment (HSIE)	12.5%
Technology and Applied Sciences (TAS)	12.0%
Mathematics	12.0%
English	11.0%
Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE)	11.0%
Creative, Performing Arts (CAPA)	4.5%
Languages	1.5%
TOTAL	81.0%

The subject areas which these DPs headed prior to their promotion include a wide range of backgrounds, with compulsory subjects with larger faculties being represented more strongly. These proportions certainly do not support the claim, heard anecdotally among some mathematics and science head teachers (and one interviewee), that head teachers from humanities backgrounds are more likely to be promoted. The remaining 19% held head teacher positions with a range of titles. Some of these suggested whole school roles, such as Administration (6.5%), Welfare (5.5%) and, Teaching and Learning (2.5%), while other titles such as Special Education, Curriculum, Secondary Studies, Mentor, Vocational Education and College were less clear. Given the concerns expressed about the relations between middle and senior leaders explored in the literature (Bennett, Woods, Wise, & Newton, 2007), possible implications of these prior positions as preparation for DP work are explored further in Chapter 8.

Almost all respondents were recruited to their first DP position by Merit Selection procedures (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2005), as shown in Figure 6.4. The circumstances detailed by the 6% reporting 'other' such as returning to school from a Consultancy or Central School role were covered by the state-wide staffing procedures. No DPs had been appointed through the previous 'list system' described in Chapter 1, though two interviewees recalled being on the cusp of this system when becoming a head teacher.

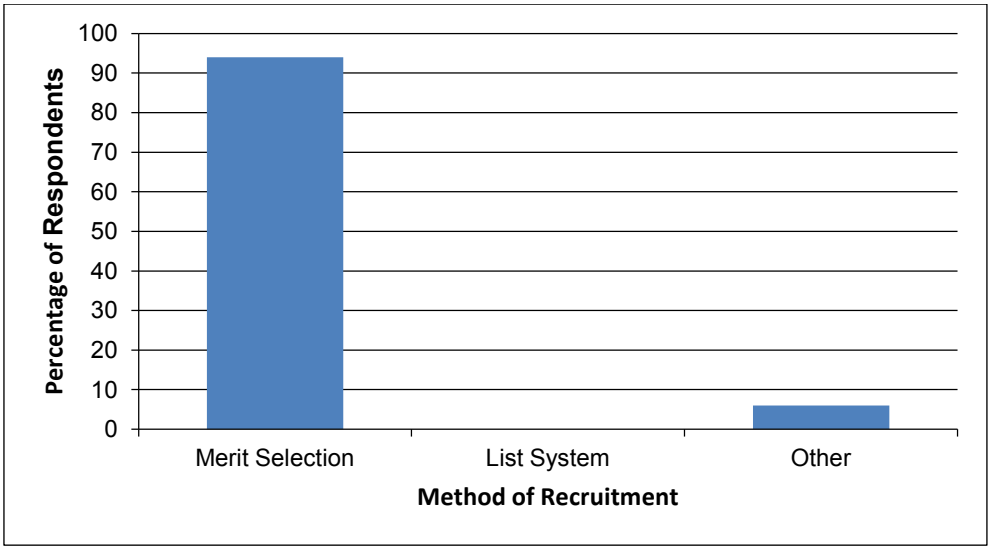

Figure 6.4 Method of recruitment to DP (%)

While it is recognised that this cohort of DPs had been appointed between 21 years and 1 year prior to the study, so were subject to slightly different versions of the and merit

selection policy, the basic elements of a written application, interview by a principal-led panel and oral referrals remained the same for appointment to a permanent (tenured) position. Implications of the merit selection system for preparation are further outlined under the issues discussed below.

Subsequent study

Results in Table 6.5 indicate that many DPs had, over their career, undertaken further study at different levels.

Table 6.5 Type of subsequent study completed (%)

Type of subsequent study	%
3–4 year conversion course	10
Postgraduate CERTIFICATE	12
Postgraduate DIPLOMA	21
MASTERS	25

As reported in Chapter 5, a number of DPs were initially trained in an era, jurisdiction or subject where a degree was not required. Data indicates that 10% of sample DPs had updated their qualifications from three to four year 'status' ensuring a higher pay scale. Completion rates for postgraduate certificates were fairly low at 12%, while almost one quarter of respondents had completed additional diplomas and/or Masters degrees. (Some participants had undertaken study in several categories.) Analysis of these data (Appendix 7, Section 2) indicates specific teaching subjects tended to be the focus of postgraduate certificates, with broader education subjects and management attracting few mentions. At the next level, postgraduate diplomas, there was more emphasis on education and educational leadership or administration with computer education also scoring several mentions. Diplomas in individual teaching areas were still undertaken, but broader studies seem to dominate at this level.

Table 6.6 is of particular interest as completion of a Master's degree has been required for aspiring leaders in other jurisdictions such as states in the U.S. for many years (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, & Orr, 2007) and is now required in Singapore (Ministry of Education, 2010). There is also pressure for leaders to undertake Master's level study in the New Zealand context (Macpherson, 2010c). It was an unexpected finding that despite there being no requirement for such study, 25% of sample DPs had completed a Master's degree.

Table 6.6 Master's degree subjects: % of total Master's completed

Subject	*n*	% of Master's
Education, Educational Studies	22	38
Educational Leadership or Administration	15	27
Computing, Computer Education, IT	6	10
Special Education	6	10
Single other: Human Resource Management, Letters, Counselling, Training and Development, Politics	5	9
Specific teaching subject: Science, Mathematics, English Literature, Arts	4	7
Total	58	100%

This result reveals that many respondents had completed Master's degrees in areas of their own choosing, including educational leadership and administration. It suggests a level of initiative in maintaining currency with educational and leadership developments, though whether this was in anticipation of a leadership role is unclear. The completion of a Master's degree as a potential factor influencing DP educational leadership practice is further explored in RQ 5.

Encouragement

The review of literature in Chapter 2 suggested that encouragement to lead may be in itself a form of preparation or stimulus for leadership, particularly in early career stages (Barber, Whelan, & Clark, 2010).

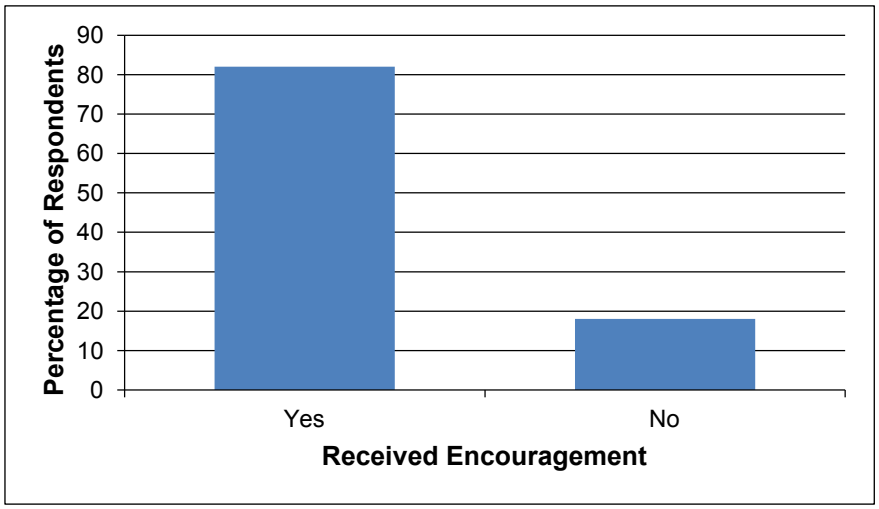

Figure 6.5 Particular encouragement to consider leadership (%)

Figure 6.5 indicates that four fifths (82%) of respondents reported being particularly encouraged to consider leadership by someone in their career. This does beg the question as to whether the remaining 18% did not receive encouragement or consider it relevant, and if so, the implications of proceeding to seek leadership roles without specific encouragement.

Counts of who provided this encouragement, calculated from a specific open-ended item and references embedded in other open responses, are shown in Table 6.7. These encouragers were overwhelmingly principals, followed by DPs and professional colleagues. SMT members provided a total of 74% of encouragement. This may be seen as a positive finding in that senior leaders were encouraging talent in a succession planning approach, as recommended in much of the literature (Barber et al., 2010).

Table 6.7 Encouraged by whom: All survey responses (%)

Encouragement by	Survey count *n*	% total mentions inopen items (274)
Principal	126	46
DP	67	24
Professional colleagues	37	14
Head Teacher (positive)	21	8
Senior management team (general)	11	4
Senior officers	10	4
Family or friends	2	1
Total	274	100

Only 8% of respondents mentioned being encouraged by a head teacher, which accords with the finding shown in Table 6.8 that more recall this encouragement occuring when they were a head teacher than as a classroom teacher, and in fact some felt active discouragement from their HTs. These results regarding encouragement are further delineated by substantial qualitative data analysis later in this section.

Table 6.8 Encouraged at what stage in career: % responses

Encouraged at what stage in career	Survey count *n*	% total mentions inopen items (274)
Classroom teacher	40	41
Head Teacher	58	59
Total	98	100

Findings from qualitative analysis

This section elaborates the three main themes drawn from open-ended questionnaire items and interview questions regarding preparation for the DP role: the importance of *experience*, *encouragement* and *learning*. A number of significant issues raised by respondents regarding preparation are then outlined. As noted in Chapter 3, data from open-ended questionnaire comments and interview responses have generally been merged for this analysis, but where the number or sources of references are of relevance these are noted.

Experience

It is clear that DPs value practical experience as the most effective preparation for the role. As is evident below, the necessity for 'relieving' in the DP role prior to appointment was overwhelmingly cited as the most common and best preparation for the role. In addition, working in a variety of roles or contexts, previous teaching and head teacher experience, 'on the job' learning and experience with whole school operations received numerous mentions as valued preparation.

Relieving in the role (for an absent DP) or acting (in a vacant role) received over 200 references in questionnaire responses and was mentioned by all interviewees. Many respondents cited 'relieving' or 'acting' as their only nominated preparation strategy. Several referred to having relieved for long or regular periods, such as in 'Relieving in the position for an extended period of time was invaluable' or even 'Relieving in the position for a number of years'. While there is no specific requirement for aspiring DPs to have undertaken extensive relieving before applying, it is apparent that this is an expectation and that few have progressed to the role without such experience. Many respondents cited relieving as the *best* preparation for the role they had experienced and also strongly recommended it for preparation of future aspirants. Clearly, it is perceived to be the most highly valued form of preparation by a large majority of sample DPs. This emphasis on practising the role before appointment is not without merit, but it does beg the question of how individuals are afforded such opportunities and whether they are available on an equitable basis to all aspirants.

A second form of valued experience which attracted over 50 comments, about half from questionnaire respondents, was working in a variety of roles or contexts. Questionnaire respondents cited a range of experiences beyond their substantive school role as providing important broader insights and skills. These included Board of Studies work as curriculum

committee member, an HSC coordinator or marker; participating in regional networks, projects or sporting organisation; or contributing to DEC projects. Working in a consultancy role was noted by one interviewee as particularly good preparation for the pressures of the DP role as 'You got used to tight timeframes on projects and challenges that you had no warning about and that you needed to remain calm, focused and systematic about'.

Two respondents remarked on the benefits of working in more than one school as a head teacher, and several interviewees mentioned their early experience in other school systems (Catholic systemic, independent schools). Leadership of regional events, participation in subject associations and overseas exchange or conferences were all seen as beneficial, while one interviewee cited becoming a local 'expert' in an area outside the normal expectations of his subject area. Moving between schools, including to an outback setting, was quoted as providing a breadth of experience not always available in a single school 'otherwise [there is a danger of] becoming an expert on the school not necessarily the job … you get more confidence when you've been to other schools because you know … it can be done very successfully another way'. It is notable that while these experiences were mentioned as types of preparation, none of them were identified as best preparation, so it may be interpreted that practical experience in one school is perceived by most sample DPs to be more valuable than breadth across different contexts.

Experience with whole school responsibilities was a third category, cited by over 40 respondents mostly in response to open questionnaire items. As well as holistic comments such as 'Participating in all school systems and processes that would assist me in preparing for the position' respondents cited teaching and learning projects, welfare initiatives, timetabling, committee membership or leadership and sport coordination. These comments appear to reflect recognition of the need to prepare for the critically different aspect of the DP role discussed in Chapter 2, that is, being responsible for managing whole school operations. One interviewee stated, 'You need to have led whole school things, could be welfare, school organisation, timetable, otherwise you will struggle.'

A smaller but not insignificant fourth category relating to experience was labelled 'on the job learning' (over 20 instances). These comments, mentioned separately from relieving, suggested that you could only learn by 'actively experiencing the job'. They referred to learning *after appointment* as in 'I've kind of been thrown in the deep end a lot of times … you just pick up a sense of what you should be doing as a DP. I don't think anyone can tell you what to do.' One interviewee recalled, 'The best preparation for the job is the principal

and the other DP – the principal worked through issues with me as they arose – did not overwhelm me when I arrived.' Questionnaire comments such as 'learn on your feet', 'doing the job' and 'learning as I go!' also suggest that coming to grips with the job after appointment is considered to be a common and possibly recommended approach among sample DPs.

Experience gained as a head teacher or teacher was mentioned in over 20 comments, about a third of which were by interviewees. While most questionnaire responses were generic references to 'experience' or comments such as 'all my accumulated years in the system', a few explicit observations were made regarding the benefits of prior head teacher experience, particularly if in administration or of a large complex faculty, such as 'as HT Admin I was making the school function day to day'. Extensive experience as a teacher was seen as essential preparation by some including one interviewee who declared 'I have got those [20+] years of being a 'grunt', a classroom teacher. I do get where they are coming from'. A final form of experience referred to more than twenty times was the benefits of shadowing, which was particularly recommended as a strategy for preparing future DPs although only two individuals claimed to have experienced it themselves. It can be seen that practical experience was perceived by participants in this study to be critical and often the only relevant preparation for their DP role. The next section outlines the importance of receiving encouragement.

Encouragement

Analysis of qualitative data provides insights into how encouragement was perceived as a critical form of preparation for the DP role, and the various forms that it took. Mentoring, being nominated to take on relieving roles, and explicit support for applying for higher roles were all seen as important and interrelated forms of encouragement.

The value of mentoring, well recognised in the literature (Clayton, Sanzo, & Myran, 2013), as a major form of encouragement in preparing for the DP role was evident, with over 100 references being made, the largest proportion in response to questionnaire items. Both formal and informal arrangements were favoured, for example 'mentoring programs were invaluable' '[I had] excellent guiding and mentoring from principals and other DPs'. Principals and DPs from within and beyond the school were seen as appropriate mentors, with one caution that they should 'not necessarily be their current supervisors'. Further input from the DEC was desired by some in terms of flexibility, funding, or locally organised programs with one comment being 'More mentoring. I found my own; the Department did

not provide it.' Several respondents acknowledged or nominated the NSWSDPA (DP professional association) as having a key responsibility for organising mentoring relationships both before and after appointment. Mentoring was clearly perceived by questionnaire respondents to be a key form of encouragement, and was often mentioned in conjunction with other activities, such as a recommendation for mentoring while in a relieving position: 'It makes the job less defeating if you have people to guide you.' Once again, in several cases it was deemed to be appropriate preparation *after* appointment as in 'I also thought the idea of having a mentor was a great one – particularly for new-to-the-job DPs'.

Although not specifically asked, almost all interviewees gave instances of how mentors had encouraged and supported them when describing their career journey. For some it was a crucial step in sparking their aspiration when they lacked confidence in their abilities. One female DP stated, '[The new principal] said to me, "You would be a great DP," and I just laughed because I had never acted as a HT.' Unsurprisingly she stated, 'Mentoring has been very important for me.' Others cited a principal 'clearly grooming me to be ready for the relieving role [through] quite a deliberate and careful process' or 'he started to look at me as a person he would mentor'. As well as principals, DPs were mentioned as mentors, for example having identified opportunities for whole school involvement on the basis that 'this would be good for you'. One rural interviewee recognised that mentoring does not always need to be top own, noting that 'a DP can be mentored by HTs as well … you could have quite an experienced HT who is in the position … and they have some good advice and organisational ability'. Mentoring seemed to be viewed by sample DPs as a combination of being recognised, directed to opportunities by 'someone who has the faith in you and the trust that you are going to do things' and being provided with ongoing advice and support while trying out new responsibilities. It was clearly one of the most highly valued forms of encouragement which prepared them for becoming a DP.

Those providing mentoring were identified most often as principals and DPs – overall 140 references were made to principals and 75 to DPs. Combined with the quantitative data reported earlier in this section, it is clear that members of senior management teams have contributed greatly to the preparation of DPs by providing encouragement and specific mentor support. Few references were made to Head Teachers as mentors, similar to the lack of reference to them as providing encouragement. Various reasons were proposed by interviewees, such as 'I'm a decent teacher and a good worker and they [HTs] were quite happy. They weren't going to encourage me to go anywhere because I was getting things

done' and more negatively as in 'she told me she didn't consider I was a fit person to do [relieve as HT] and she didn't think much of me … it was the opposite of encouragement … That really galvanised me'.

Other ways of providing encouragement, frequently overlapping with mentoring, are outlined below. Questionnaire responses clearly indicated a strong correlation between the concept of encouragement and being asked to undertake relieving roles. Being asked to relieve in a higher position appeared to be perceived more broadly as identification as a potential leader, as demonstrated in the following references where principals or DPs 'ensured that I had frequent opportunities to relieve as DP', 'nominated me for a relieving role' or 'encouraged me to accept a relieving DP role'. Most interviewees similarly equated encouragement with relieving: 'He really encouraged me to put up my hand to be acting HT which I did', 'I was asked to relieve, so I guess I was tapped on the shoulder from within the school'. As well as specific relieving roles, some respondents referred to being offered broader options to develop or demonstrate leadership skills, such as '[he] offered many opportunities to extend my skills and knowledge of the role', 'I was targeted early and given opportunities' and 'my former principal gave me responsibility early in my career and one thing led to another'. These opportunities were nearly always offered at school level, though some were suggested by leaders of associations or district officials.

The persistence of senior leaders in converting 'potential' leaders to become 'aspirant' leaders (Macpherson, 2009b, p. 50) was seen to be necessary in some cases. Three interviewees and a questionnaire respondent (all female) claimed to have resisted being drafted into a relieving role and having to be 'pushed' into it: 'my principal (at a new school) tapped me and pushed me!', 'I resisted for a while, then he insisted that I act in the position' while another, being satisfied in her current role, would not have aspired to a higher position if not specifically encouraged: 'I would have very cheerfully stayed where I was, looking after my faculty for a lot longer.' It is apparent that some potential leaders, perhaps more often female than male, require persistent encouragement to conceive of themselves as having leadership potential.

Explicit support for applying for higher positions in and beyond the current school was cited by a number of respondents in the following comments: 'the senior executive in my school actively encouraged and supported my application', and '[he] encouraged to look for a DP job and provided whole school opportunities'. The overt and sometimes quite detailed support recounted by several interviewees suggests once again that some senior school

leaders are taking responsibility for preparing new generation leaders as part of their role. Finally, however, it should be noted that as well as principals and DPs who provided the lion's share of encouragement and were in a position to offer opportunities, professional colleagues were also nominated as influences who provided positive feedback and confidence to individuals to consider their potential as leaders. There is apparently a role for peers in identifying and encouraging potential leaders.

Learning

The third main theme about preparing to become a DP was labelled learning. Caution must be applied to assigning importance to the volume of comments regarding this theme (over 300) as this count reflects the inclusion of several specific questions in the questionnaire. Respondents were asked if they had participated in any DEC leadership programs or other specific leadership programs or study. Numerous references were made to various DEC preparation programs, with other smaller categories of leadership learning including study, networks, reading, non-DEC leadership training, and school-based learning.

Responses regarding DEC leadership programs (over 200) reflected not only the length of service of some sample DPs, but the diversity and complexity of offerings by the employer over time. This resulted in an assortment of responses in terms of recency, accuracy and detail. While numerous references were made to specific programs or courses, some completed many years ago, there were also some quite dismissive or negative remarks. Despite the complexity of this material some useful threads were drawn out. The largest number of references (22) was to the DP Induction course, a one day program run at the state centre in Sydney each year for newly appointed primary and secondary deputies. This attracted a range of evaluative remarks, from 'essential for all new DPs' and 'I have found [it] really useful' to 'great, fantastic … but … it's not situationally relevant'. Once again, this most highly valued DEC preparation occurred *after* beginning in the role, usually several months after appointment. Nevertheless it is apparent that this induction program is recalled by most DPs as generally useful.

The second most frequently mentioned DEC program was the Executive Leadership Development Program (ELDP) which attracted about 20 comments. The target audience for this program, run from the early 2000s, was 'executives' in primary and secondary schools, attracting mostly incumbent and aspiring head teachers in secondary schools and assistant principals in primary schools. It is unclear whether DPs attended these programs while in previous positions, with a number stating that they attended as presenters or mentors rather

than as participants. The number of references, however, suggests that the model of preparation in this program, combining expert input and theory with school-based projects and support from a more experienced colleague was perceived to be good preparation for middle level leadership, if not specifically for the DP role.

A trio of other DEC programs which were provided since about 2000 attracted about 10 references each. The *Principal Preparation Program*, clearly targeting those aspiring to the principalship, and the *Team Leadership* course for aspiring middle level leaders were mentioned but attracted no evaluative comments. More recent training in Covey's *7 Habits of Highly Effective People,* supported by DEC but provided by a commercial provider, was found interesting and helpful by two respondents. A smaller number of references were made to DP conferences, probably those run by the NSWSDPA, and training in mentoring. DP conferences were one of few references to learning which was specific to the designated DP role, as all other learning appearing to be generic in application.

A large but rather poorly differentiated category (over 30 items) included single references to many DEC courses identified by acronyms (SLPP, ISLG, TLDP, SLDP, FLEC, CTRT, CSLM), as well as courses run at regional level for aspiring or new head teachers or DPs, and online courses. It is difficult to draw valid inferences from these data, but it appears fair to say that while DEC provision of courses in leadership has been extensive, it has been delivered and taken up in a patchy and uncoordinated fashion over time. It should also be noted that several responses to the item about DEC leadership preparation were general, negative or dated, suggesting a lack of relevance or possibly frustration, for example 'A regional initiative in 2003 when HT. I can't remember what it was called and can't remember much about it.' 'Yes, over 20 years ago', 'Yes. Not worthwhile' and 'NO – NONE AT ALL [sic]'. In contrast to the questionnaire, interview schedules did not include specific questions about DEC preparation courses, and very few references were made to them. Positive references were made by one participant to the DP Induction course and the Covey training, while in contrast another declared in passing 'To be honest, I don't have a high opinion of formal professional learning.' The fact that no other interviewees mentioned DEC leadership preparation at all is perhaps in itself a reflection on its perceived relevance and worth.

Similarly, the undertaking of additional study after initial training was not mentioned frequently or rated highly as preparation in questionnaires. Having completed a Master's degree in Educational Leadership or Administration (15 respondents) was not generally reported when asked what other leadership preparation had been undertaken, with only one

positive comment about the usefulness of such study. Completion of single relevant subjects such as mentoring and staff development was reported. Interviewee data regarding formal study are also sparse. In the absence of a specific question, only one interviewee mentioned his Master's degree as relevant as it 'helped give me an understanding of how to deal with people, manage change and consider emotional intelligence …' Others stated that they had 'no formal study … very little formal preparation, I'm self-taught' or suggested a lack of confidence in university preparation generally. In summary, references to study as preparation for leadership were limited and only when specifically requested, perhaps suggesting that it is not regarded as relevant preparation for the 'real work' of the DP. Limited references (six) were made to preparation through other non-DEC sources, two of which were to Army or Army Reserve training, three to specific university or commercial leadership training programs, and an exchange program. While this area was not explored in depth, it may suggest that many DPs were reliant on training provided by the DEC rather than seeking alternative or broader opportunities.

An alternative form of helpful preparation recalled by DPs was networking. Described as a form of 'lateral support' in Chapter 2, this encompassed head teacher networks and also NSWDPA networks and regional events. Several respondents cited participation in local head teacher network meetings as useful preparation, where they were 'kept abreast of trends in education'. Many positive remarks were also made regarding the role of the NSWSDPA in preparation, through local networks or regional conferences. It appears that participating in association activities while in a relieving capacity was highly advantageous 'to get to know other DPs, build up relationships for support, and to know what crucial things are going on in the DPs job'. Collegial advice and support through networks was evidently seen as a strong form of preparation, particularly for the more urgent and management aspects of the role which may realistically interest those 'sitting in the chair' for the first time.

Types of learning which attracted a small number of comments included personal reading and school-based learning. One interviewee claimed 'it is old fashioned and not very sexy but there is no substitute for reading about the job' and several questionnaire respondents mentioned their own reading regarding leadership and managing people. While small in number (12 references) these comments suggest that reading is still valued as preparation by some DPs. Similarly, school-based learning about leadership was mentioned as preparation by a few respondents. Several DPs in schools with additional funding and training from equity programs (such as National Partnerships, Priority Schools) had experienced valued

leadership development at school level, while executive meetings or conferences were acknowledged by others as helping to prepare them while HTs.

Issues relating to preparation

In addition to the above forms of *experience*, *encouragement* and *learning* as types of preparation for the DP role, participants raised a number of issues about their journey to becoming a DP which warrant attention. Some issues, such as the importance assigned to personal characteristics and a belief in chance or luck rather than planned progression, implied that preparation was *not* perceived to be a significant factor prior to becoming a DP. Numerous concerns were expressed about the place of merit selection in preparation, while a less prominent theme was feeling unprepared for the job.

Many comments (over 60) implied that personal characteristics and choices were of more relevance than any particular preparation. A number of survey respondents cited their own initiative as being best preparation. 'The fact I was prepared to stand up and do additional duties and roles. At no time was there any real support from the system'; 'Getting your hands dirty … trying to improve the quality of your school, regardless of the position you hold' and 'Volunteering to take on some DP type roles as a HT to gain experience' were all offered as evidence of personal initiative and clearly related to the valuing of practical experience. Most interviewees also cited examples of being proactive such as being 'involved in things, when things were being offered', taking on roles seen to be 'onerous' such as timetabling or relieving in the HT Administration role, and being happy to participate in projects 'whereas other people weren't'. It appears that these personal characteristics were seen a type of natural behaviour, which, even if they were not particularly ambitious, set individuals up for being offered relieving positions and other encouragement as described earlier.

The specific attribute of ambition must be mentioned in relation to preparation for the DP role, having been raised by a number of questionnaire respondents and all interviewees (over 40 comments). Some survey respondents clearly became DPs despite lacking ambition as evidenced by 'I have never sought promotion' and 'I resisted for many years', while in contrast another believed the 'drive of individuals who want promotion' was a key factor. Among interviewees, only two (male) participants acknowledged having ambitions to lead from early in their career as in 'I think I was always ambitious … I was always keen to get involved in things around the school' and 'I thought 'I can do that, there is nothing to stop me becoming a leader within a school'', while two (females) stated clearly that they had not aspired until particularly encouraged by a senior leader or for a specific relieving role.

Ambition was also tempered for several interviewees at different career phases, with one stating 'at that stage I just wasn't open to that' when first encouraged. Six interviewees (three female and three male) referred to their marriage or having young children affecting their ambitions at specific times. Further, several comments suggested that being perceived to be ambitious, particularly in the context of merit selection, was subject to disapproval from colleagues and 'professional jealousy' within the school, because 'people act like you don't actually deserve it'.

Other personal qualities, either innate or as a result of personal background were perceived to be critical in the DP role rather than particular preparation. Two survey respondents cited interpersonal skills 'which you don't learn leadership at inservices … some people are leaders, others are not.' Interviewees referred to personal qualities such as their patience and empathy as a result of being a parent, ability to engage with all sorts of people due to their upbringing, and the ability to 'get on with people, motivate people, both kids and adults'. The capacity for hard work, commitment and drive were all mentioned, as were 'faith in my own intellectual abilities' and having 'a very good educational brain'. At times there was little separation in comments between what was considered to be good preparation and what personal characteristics were needed for the role, despite the intent of the question, suggesting that at least some respondents saw themselves as being naturally suited rather than particularly prepared for the role.

A further issue regarding preparation of DPs is the apparent belief among many study participants (over 50 references) that their career trajectory was the result of good luck or good timing rather than any planned preparation. Some comments suggested they became a DP due to serendipity, while others claimed an element of luck even after working hard and being successful in gaining a promotion. Several questionnaire respondents volunteered comments such as 'I did not plan for promotion … it just happened', while one interviewee suggested that 'a lot of people have fallen into these positions'. Others supported this notion, saying 'I came to it [leadership] very recently and by accident', 'I'm a bit of an accidental deputy' and 'I fell into it [first leadership role] in some ways'. Good timing and luck examples related to 'being in the right place at the right time' for relieving opportunities, the arrival of an important mentor, positions becoming available 'out of the blue' and 'why was I the lucky one being tapped on the shoulder?'. Success in gaining positions was regularly seen as lucky rather than due to preparation, with one interviewee stating 'I was surprised to be successful in my merit selection' while another said 'I couldn't believe it – it's the first interview I have ever been to outside my own school so I was very, very, very lucky'. In fact

one participant used the term 'luck' five times in a few sentences describing his career progression, perceiving each step as a fortuitous opportunity. Even the chance to relieve in the place of someone who was not particularly effective in the role was seen to be a lucky break. While DPs may not be the only professionals who ascribe some of their progress to chance (Pryor & Bright, 2011), the preponderance of these references to good luck and good timing could be seen to reflect the fact that, apart from working hard and volunteering for extra responsibilities, there was no perceptible preparation pathway for these DPs. These respondents were perhaps conscious that, in the words of one colleague, 'sometimes people don't get the same opportunities'.

A major issue raised by respondents is the impact of recruitment by merit selection. Prominent writers in the field of school leadership preparation state that a key question is 'do we have policies and strategies that ensure that qualified individuals are recruited?' (Huber & Pashiardis, 2008, p. 10). It was reported in RQ 1 that merit selection procedures appeared to have a negative impact on aspiration for the principalship. In this section perceptions of DPs are detailed which indicate that the policy also has major implications for the preparation of deputies. As no formal preparation requirements were in place for these DPs, and informal requirements often seemed largely reliant on relieving experience, it appears that the process of merit selection, a critical step in the pathway for all DPs, had assumed considerable prominence in the minds of aspirants. It could be claimed that preparation for successful *selection for specific positions* may have attracted more attention than *preparation for leadership*.

A few sample DPs cited successful merit selection experiences and expressed confidence in the system, but many more raised concerns. Numerous references were made to the manipulation of merit selection procedures, the perceptions of other school personnel and the impact on participants. Despite the policy and procedures (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2005) technically being transparent and monitored by state officers, numerous questionnaire respondents and most interviewees viewed them as a 'game', where success was achieved due to a combination of learning to 'play the game', having inside knowledge and luck. For example, although vacancies were open to any suitable candidate, interviewees reported 'they advised me not to move, that I would have a job,' having been 'invited to apply', and having 'kept in touch' with principals in favoured schools.

The number of internal candidates appointed to DP positions was a sore point, viewed variously as highly frustrating or highly advantageous depending on personal experiences.

One interviewee related, ‘There were a lot of DP positions where the incumbent had been in the job for 3-5-6-9 months, I got interviewed. Feedback would be: “You did well, interviewed well”, but I came second [to the relieving DP],’ while a successful internal applicant commented, ‘There is definitely an advantage being in your own school because you know the school so intimately that you can talk about all the things that you are working on that you are trying to fix.’ A common complaint from external candidates regarding advertised positions is exemplified by ‘Principals are looking for specifics not expressed in the ad, and often the criteria of the panel … are not really communicated to the candidate’. A strong theme in questionnaire comments was that school panels, particularly parent or other community representatives, often favoured local candidates who were known to them, and did not value the broader experience of external candidates. These comments suggest that the claims that merit selection finds the best person for the job in a fair manner is widely disputed.

Broader implications of the merit selection procedures for people who were preparing to become a DP were proposed, echoing comments made regarding aspiring for principal roles in RQ 1. As a highly individual and competitive approach it did not suit all personalities. The time needed to train in resume writing and interview techniques, and to prepare individual applications was seen as onerous, and number of efforts required and the impact of failure led one interviewee to suggest ‘I think that people are really defeated by the merit selection process at times’.

All DPs in this study had successfully negotiated merit selection in order to get to their current position. It is telling therefore, that when asked to recommend ways of preparing or recruiting future DPs, many nominated other strategies which imply that this policy was not wholly successful. Of over 40 references, only 16 saw the current system as appropriate as it is, with many modifications or alternatives being suggested. These included a requirement for a preparation course, meeting professional standards, a qualifying period as a HT, observation by an external officer or a peer review. (Two actually recommended reinstating the ‘old’ system or the ‘list system’ which had not been in place since about 1990.) It was also recommended that panels have fewer school based representatives or include an independent DP. Finally, two comments were made that ‘it’s not a job for everyone’, that not all HTs should naturally expect to automatically aspire to the DP role, and one recommendation was made for vocational testing to ensure that only candidates who are ‘temperamentally suitable’ are encouraged to progress.

Finally, it was noted by several interviewees that they were not really prepared when they entered the DP role, with three suggesting that progression from HT to DP was the most difficult step in their career, echoing statements cited in Chapter 2 (Ribbins, 1997). Claims included: 'You know what a HT does because you are in the staffroom with them, but doing that next step you have no idea' and 'it is like jumping up three positions from managing a faculty to being able to manage anything that happens in school as DP'. Being left to 'sink or swim' and just hoping 'it would not come back and bite me' summarised the lack of preparedness felt by two new DPs, while one questionnaire respondent claimed their preparation was 'basically none prior to commencing'.

Summary

This section showed that there was significant homogeneity amongst the prior experiences of participants, with almost all respondents progressing to their role directly from a head teacher position by merit selection. Most had worked in only one DP role, and nearly half with only one principal while a DP. Most but not all reported having received encouragement to lead. Several themes were drawn from qualitative data on preparation experiences. These included the value ascribed to 'hands-on' experience versus theory as useful preparation, and the forms of explicit or tacit encouragement received including mentoring, being nominated to take on relieving roles, and explicit support for applying for higher roles. The beliefs of some sample DPs about the impact of personal characteristics and luck rather than professional preparation were reported, while key issues were raised about the impact of merit selection as a recruitment method and lack of readiness for the DP position.

It may be argued that the type of preparation experienced by DPs has a bearing on their views of the concept of educational leadership and its place in their role. The following chapter reports results for RQ 3, RQ 4 and RQ 5, focusing on educational leadership as it pertains to the DP role.

CHAPTER 7: RESULTS – EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

This chapter presents the results for research questions 3, 4 and 5 which shed light on how educational leadership is perceived by DPs, how it is enacted in their roles, and what factors appear to influence their engagement in it.

RQ 3 HOW DO THE PERCEPTIONS OF SECONDARY DEPUTY PRINCIPALS REGARDING THE CONCEPT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP ALIGN WITH THOSE IN THE LITERATURE?

Previous studies have reported that DPs rarely have the opportunity to engage in educational leadership but there has been little analysis of how they view this concept. This section reports results of several different explorations of their perceptions, as summarised in Table 7.1. The term *educational leadership* itself is a multi-faceted and contested one, as discussed in Chapter 2, thus a literature-based definition has been provided for the purposes of this investigation:

> … leadership in schools which is focused on teaching and learning, with a view to improving the educational outcomes of students. It embraces leadership which supports the professional development of teachers in order to improve student learning.

Educational leadership was operationalised in the CELSA scale (Chapter 4), which required respondents to judge the frequency of their engagement in 18 types of educational leadership activities. While the BES (Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009) has been a strong influence, other major overviews were also considered in this question (Dempster, 2009; Jacobson, 2011; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Sammons, Gu, Day, & Ko, 2011). Key characteristics of current definitions of educational leadership compared with earlier understandings can be summarised as having a focus on student learning, and an understanding that setting up the conditions for learning has less influence (lower impact) than working closely with teachers on their professional learning (high impact). These terms are used for the purposes of brevity and clarity in later discussions.

Table 7.1 RQ 3: Joint Display

RQ 3: How do the perceptions of secondary deputy principals regarding the concept of educational leadership align with those in the literature? **JOINT DISPLAY: Summary**	
Quantitative results: Questionnaire data	**Qualitative findings: Interview and open-ended questionnaire data**
Importance of BES dimensions in the DP role • All EL dimensions derived from the literature were seen as important in the ideal DP role (means > 4 on a 5 point scale). • Respondents ranked Dim 5 most important rather than least, and saw Dim 4, the key dimension, as less important. **Overall views of DP role: Tensions and contradictions** Scores on five 5 point scale items about their overall DP role suggest possible tensions and contradictions in perceptions of EL: • 80% believe they make a difference to teaching and learning in the school: mean = 3.94 • 77% believe they operate as EL in schools: mean = 3.88 • 71% believe that a key focus of their role is T&L: mean = 3.79 • BUT 78% believe they spend the bulk of their time on student welfare and behaviour: mean = 4.13 • AND 69% believe that their role is to manage the school so that others can focus on learning: mean = 3.8	**General focus on learning** No specific open-ended question regarding EL – 19 comments were embedded in other items. References included EL congruent with literature: • Educational programs • Assessment and curriculum • Leading professional learning • Learning support Most respondents who volunteered this information were in 'targeted' positions. **Acting as an educational leader in the DP role** **IQ 2:** *Can you outline ways in which you feel that you are able to act as an educational leader in your current school?* Main categories of activities mentioned (number of references): • Professional learning with staff • Modelling or actively supporting quality classroom teaching • Working with and through executives • Developing a culture of engagement and change • Leading/developing learning-related teams • Leading innovative curriculum change • Leading data, assessment and reporting

Results from quantitative analysis

Importance of leadership dimensions from the literature

A key literature-based questionnaire section (Appendix 1, Section 6) required respondents to reflect on the *importance* of the 5 Dimensions of educational leadership established by the literature (Robinson et al., 2009) in their IDEAL conception of the DP role. Figure 7.1 indicates that the great majority of respondents, approximately 80%, agreed or strongly agreed on a 5 point Likert scale that all five EL dimensions were important in their IDEAL DP role.

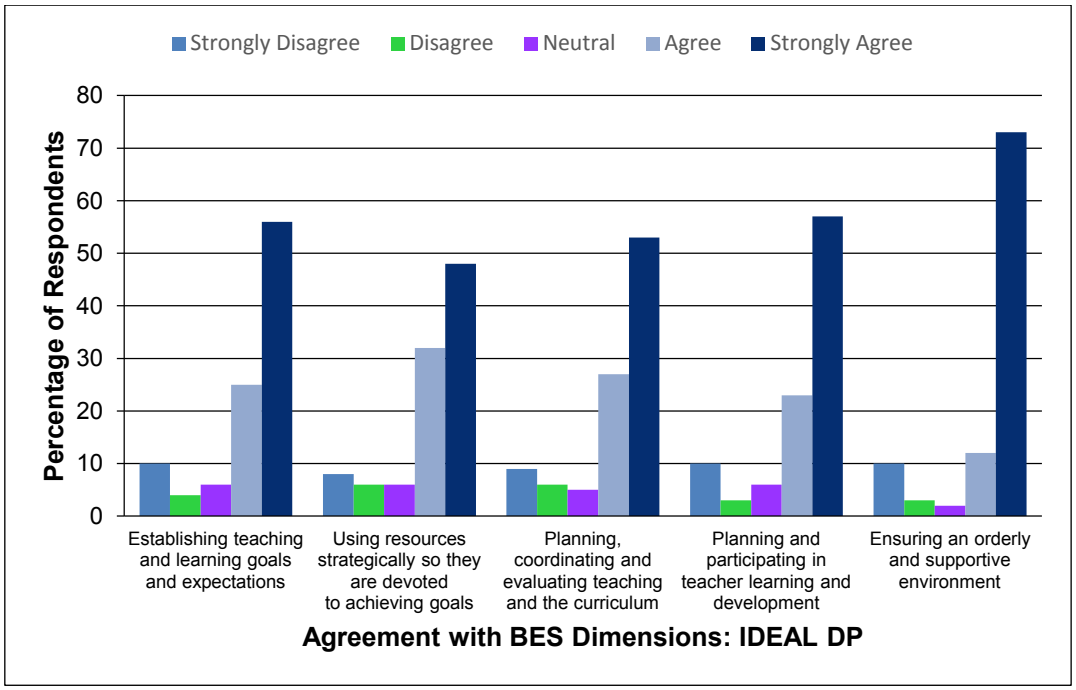

Figure 7.1 Agreement that Dimensions are important in IDEAL DP role (%)

Thus means for all dimensions were greater than 4 out of 5 on the agreement scale, as shown in Figure 7.2.

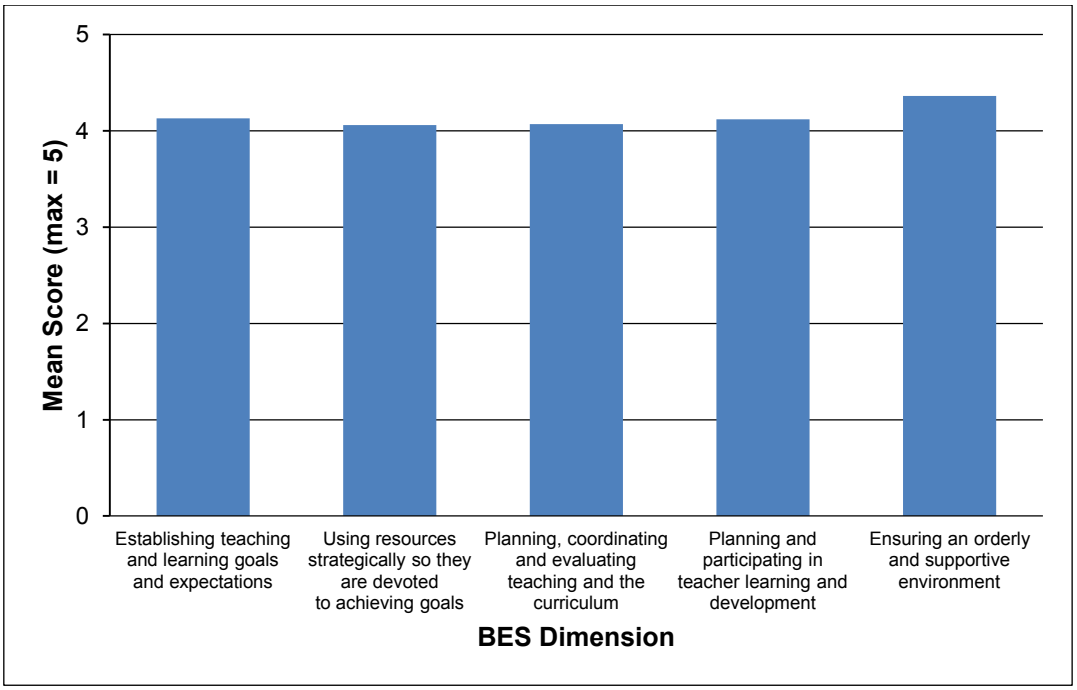

Figure 7.2 Means for agreement that BES Dimensions are important in IDEAL DP role

Considered in combination with the evidence that DPs frequently claim to want to engage further in educational leadership (Cranston, Tromans, & Reugebrink, 2004), these data suggest that DPs are in broad agreement with current understandings about what leadership activities make a difference to student learning.

On closer examination however, it is interesting to note how important DPs believe each of these dimensions are in their IDEAL role, and to compare this with the impact each has on student learning according to the BES (Robinson et al., 2009). As shown in Figure 7.2, the mean score of DPs on the 5 point scale for Dimension 5, *Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment* scale is 4.36, the highest average. However, Figure 7.3 shows that the BES reported this dimension as having the least impact on student learning, with a low effect size of 0.27. Similarly, only 57% of DPs strongly agreed on the importance of Dimension 4, *Planning and participating in teacher learning and development* in their ideal role, resulting in a lower mean score of 4.12. This dimension was reported in the BES to have by far the greatest effect on student outcomes (effect size of 0.84). DPs views of the importance of these two dimensions, even in their IDEAL DP role, appear opposite to the BES findings in terms of their impact on student learning.

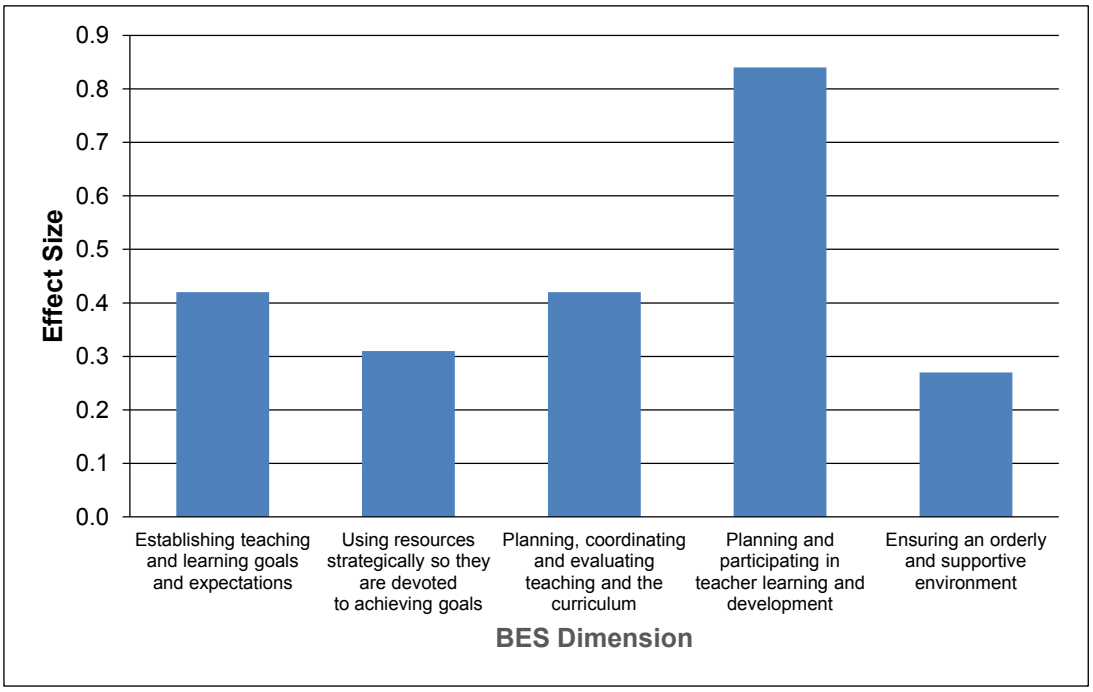

Figure 7.3 Claimed effect sizes of BES Dimensions on student learning

This finding suggests, tentatively, that in comparison with understandings in the current literature, DPs, when considering their own roles, may tend to overestimate the importance of setting up the conditions for learning (Dimension 5) and greatly underestimate the importance of actually working with teachers in their professional learning directly related to student achievement (Dimension 4).

Some potential methodological issues which may be raised are now addressed. Firstly, it is acknowledged that these measurements use different scales and are not directly comparable, having been designed for different purposes. While recognising these concerns, it may be considered that linking of the BES dimensions, gained from a meta-analysis of real-world research, to the real-world issue of educational leadership in DP roles can be appropriate in such an applied field, particularly if the different scales are acknowledged. In fact, it could be argued that such an approach makes an important linkage between research and practice (Marzano, 2003) for a group rarely represented in the literature. Another issue is that it may also be argued that BES findings are not relevant to secondary DPs, as the bulk of studies included in the meta-analysis were focused on primary schools and generally on principals. This issue was addressed in Chapter 2. Significantly, sample DPs overwhelmingly agreed that all BES dimensions were important/very important in their roles, only transposing these two in terms of importance. This suggests that despite being under-represented in the BES studies, DPs generally found the report's conclusions to be relevant to their role.

Application of these literature-based educational leadership dimensions to the DP role provides an insight not previously seen in the literature: the suggestion that DPs may have different perceptions of the *relative importance* of these key EL activities even in an ideal scenario. While clearly not definitive, this finding is an important first response to RQ 3. The following quantitative result appears to confirm such differences in perspective.

Perceived educational leadership in the DP role

As detailed in Chapter 3, Section 7 of the questionnaire (Appendix 1) required participants to rank 14 statements about their overall DP role on a 5 point agreement scale. Five of these items offered insights into the views of DPs regarding educational leadership. Descriptive analysis of these items is presented as evidence that there are some apparent internal tensions in these perceptions.

Preliminary analysis for the first three items is shown in Table 7.2. Combining agree/strongly agree scores indicates that between 70-80% agree with these positive

sentiments regarding their student learning focus, with mean scores reflecting high general agreement. These findings suggest that the majority of sample DPs (n = 233) consider themselves, overall, to be educational leaders.

Table 7.2 Summary of DP role item scores: Educational leadership

QS Item	Statement	% (Agree/ strongly agree)	Mean score on 5 point scale
7.3	I make a difference to teaching and learning in the school.	80	3.94
7.7	I operate as an educational leader in my current role.	77	3.88
7.9	A key focus of my role is on student learning outcomes.	71	3.79

However, Table 7.3 displaying agreement for two further items is suggestive of a contrasting picture.

Table 7.3 Summary of DP role item scores: Management focus

QS Item	Statement	% (Agree/ strongly agree)	Mean score on 5 point scale
7.10	I spend the bulk of my time on student behaviour and welfare.	78	4.13
7.12	My role is to manage the school so that others can focus on learning.	69	3.87

By far the highest mean score for all items (mean = 4.13) and the second highest percentage relate to reactive work with students, and the final item (mean = 3.87) reflects a view of DP leadership as creating the conditions for learning without direct involvement. These items may reflect the reality of many DPs' daily work, but nearly three quarters of respondents agree with item 7.12 which seems to characterise this as the *purpose* of their role. This interpretation certainly does not align with the current views of impactful educational leadership described in the BES or other current literature (Dempster, 2009). The apparent large overlap of respondents between the two sets of items above suggests possible tensions and contradictions among DPs' perceptions of EL, with many grounded in a somewhat dated

and incomplete understanding of what educational leadership means in terms of impact on student learning.

It is commonly claimed that study participants' stated values are not always reflected in their behaviour. The above findings are of particular interest, however, as these items were co-located within the same instrument and appear to demonstrate quite incompatible overall role perceptions among the group as a whole. Indeed, two items answered in immediate succession: 7.9 *A key focus of my role is on student learning outcomes* and 7.10 *I spend the bulk of my time on student behaviour and welfare* both achieved very high agreement scores.

The perceptions of DPs regarding the concept of educational leadership, while in broad agreement with the literature, have shown important inconsistencies and lack of alignment in critical areas. It is appears that the crucial, relatively recent understanding that leading and engaging with staff in their professional learning has a highly significant impact on student learning outcomes may not have filtered through to many sample DPs. Similarly, the view that being an efficient manager and keeping the school running so that others can get on with teaching has not been recognised as a 'necessary but insufficient' conceptualisation of educational leadership, which the literature suggests has a very low impact on student learning. Discussion of potential reasons for and implications of these findings is elaborated in Chapter 8.

This is an important finding as the limited literature regarding the engagement, or otherwise, of DPs in the leadership of learning has tended to define the concept more narrowly or not at all. Some studies have investigated the notion of participation in *instructional leadership* (Celikten, 2001; Dowling, 2007), which may be viewed as not reflecting key recent understandings, or may not be an appropriate interpretation for secondary schools (see Chapter 2). Other studies have claimed to investigate the perceptions of DPs regarding educational leadership, at times bemoaning their lack of engagement in it, without actually defining what this means (Farnham, 2009). Yet others have asked DPs what they spend their time on, but not defined the suggested categories, including educational leadership (Cranston et al., 2004). This finding therefore provides more current and literature-based understandings of DPs' perceptions.

Findings from qualitative analysis

General focus on learning

In this section qualitative sources (from Phase 1 questionnaires and Phase 2 interviews) are presented separately as IQ questions 1c and 2a required separate analysis for comparison purposes, as presented in RQ 4. No open-ended questions in the questionnaire directly referred to perceptions of educational leadership, however 19 comments embedded in responses to other open ended questions were coded as 'focus on learning'. Eight of these observations actually commented on the lack of ability to engage in EL, as discussed further in RQ 4. By citing a frustrated desire to support staff in the classroom, to focus on teaching and learning, leadership of learning and curriculum, these comments did demonstrate an understanding of EL which appears to be congruent with recent literature.

Two other categories of responses seemed to indicate a reasonably current understanding of EL. Five responses, including some very detailed 'laundry lists', referred to positive EL responsibilities. It should be noted however that two of the five were in specially targeted and funded DP positions specifically aimed at EL, and one was in a designated Curriculum DP position. Another stated baldly 'I am focused on education in my role – thankfully I am not involved in daily organisation, properties etc'. These responses appeared to demonstrate an understanding of EL. A third category (four references) included recognisable EL activities undertaken whilst under the pressure to perform other major managerial roles as in 'My daily operation is to manage students in Years 7, 9 and 11. I am also Leader of the Professional Learning Team'. As a generalisation, the above categories of responses appear to demonstrate a fairly congruent and current view of educational leadership. It is worth remembering however, that eight responses were negative and most positive responses came from specially targeted positions.

These qualitative comments from the Phase 1 questionnaires, in response to an open question about the DP role, are seen as particularly valuable as they were volunteered without any prompting about EL, suggesting some prominence is attached to these concepts. Two short responses to another fairly open question in Section 3 '*Please add any other types of activities which take up a significant proportion of your time and which are not reflected above*' were also noted: 'professional learning of staff' and 'teacher professional learning'. While few in number, all these comments suggest that those respondents who chose to volunteer them had understandings of EL that were in fair alignment with current literature. The fact that only 19 references were made to EL in 233 questionnaire responses does not

permit any overall conclusions about DP perceptions but could give rise to concerns about its lack of prominence.

Of interest, when coding these responses as a set, it became obvious that nearly all responses were from female DPs, with only two of the 19 comments being offered by male respondents. No explanation is offered for this observation, but it is noted that respondents reflected a range of age ranges and metropolitan and rural/regional locations. Further findings regarding gender in relation to educational leadership are presented in RQ 5.

Acting as an educational leader in the DP role

In contrast to the questionnaire, Phase 2 semi-structured interviews included specific questions relating to educational leadership including IQ 2: *Can you outline ways in which you feel that you are able to act as an educational leader in your current school?*' Coding of responses helped to capture what activities interviewees defined as 'educational leadership'. Counts for the main categories after coding are as shown in Table 7.4.

Table 7.4 Categories of educational leadership activity after coding

Category	Comments/Sources
Professional learning with staff	(12/5)
Modelling or supporting quality classroom teaching	(7/4)
Working with and through executives	(6/4)
Developing a culture of engagement and change	(5/4)
Leading/developing learning-related teams	(4/2)
Leading innovative curriculum change	(3/2)
Leading data analysis, assessment and reporting	(3/2)

In addition, one source made several references to providing back-up support for learning, another to building professional networks, and a third regretfully commented that his current input to EL was now only incidental. Examples of references from the main categories cited above are provided as evidence that the interviewees, in response to this specific question, generally demonstrated perceptions of educational leadership which were in alignment with the literature.

Instances of *professional learning with staff* ranged from leading a professional learning approach which 'can meet teacher professional learning needs and how can we marry up

with what … with kids really need', presenting regularly at school development days and staff meetings, 'looking at how we teach, what we are teaching, relevance, significance … rich tasks, integration of IT' to participating as a team member and allowing others to lead learning. *Modelling and direct support for classroom teachers* included comments from two DPs who saw themselves as passionate subject specialists, one of whom aimed to 'lead from the front in terms of being a teacher' modelling excellent practice, and a non-teaching DP who stated, 'I like to share my expertise with the head teacher, with lots of young teachers … I'm happy to help and even do guest spots.' Another noted, 'I quite often liaise with HTs to make sure that … I'm able to go and observe classes, give input on that and indeed … they will often come in and see how I operate in the classroom.' These comments reflect a view of EL that is grounded in modelling or sharing teaching expertise, which aligns with the literature as an element of educational leadership.

Examples were given by three interviewees of *working with and through executives*. This included 'prodding executive' to regularly share effective learning strategies; focused discussions with Head Teachers of 'how they are managing the teaching and learning programs in their faculty, and being able to give suggestions and overviews and perspectives'; and 'I see my classroom as being the Head Teachers basically, trying to help them as best I can, so that they can then pass that on to their teachers'. These models of EL seem to reflect differences from earlier instructional leadership models (Hallinger, 2003; Southworth, 2002) where hands-on work occurs with teachers and in classrooms. It is perhaps a reflection of the hierarchical and more tightly structured nature of secondary schools that these DPs see their EL role as being filtered through middle executives (Robinson, Bendikson, & Hattie, 2011). References coded as leading learning-related teams included one interviewee's claim that 'I think as an educational leader I'm pretty good at building a team … we have revamped our learning support team … [to] become a really important team in the school' while another cited a rejuvenated team that has engaged in innovative strategies resulting in a more positive culture of professional learning.

Developing a culture of engagement and change could be seen to reflect a more generic or transformational leadership approach (Kirby, Paradise, & King, 1992; Leithwood, 1992). However, the examples quoted in this study were closely linked to learning, for example 'I think my role is to set up the preconditions so there is that atmosphere of trust and respect' referred to staff learning from each other, and 'the culture that I've been able to build up, or help build up … we've had a fairly solid base of staff who are quite willing to try anything [curriculum innovation] as long as they see the good in it'. Finally, *leading innovative*

curriculum change was represented by comments such as 'I think I'm an educational leader so what I try to do is innovate as regards the way in which the curriculum can be delivered' in order to meet the changing learning needs of students.

This summary of the examples of educational leadership activity offered by interviewees would support the contention that these DPs are familiar with the main thrust of current EL literature, perhaps with the exception of the comment regarding 'providing back-up support for learning' being 'the main role of the DP'. Ironically, the interviewee who claimed not to engage directly in EL in his current context appeared to demonstrate perhaps the greatest in-depth understanding of the concept.

It could be claimed that those questionnaire respondents offering to be interviewed may be a non-representative sample, perhaps constituting a sub-set of those who felt confident that they understood the aims of the research and felt equipped to discuss them. This possibility could be considered a commonly arising one in such a research design and indeed could be the case. However, 111 deputies, or almost half the questionnaire respondents, volunteered for interview, so it is unlikely that the purposively-selected sample were particularly well-versed. This suggests that when specifically asked to focus on educational leadership activity, the perceptions of DPs are generally in alignment with current research. Having said that, no specific knowledge of particular research was evident. No references to literature were made or comments offered pertaining to the main BES finding regarding the impact of Dimension 4, *Promoting and participating in teacher learning and development,* which was a current topic of discussion in leadership circles (Fullan, 2015). Nevertheless, this result supports the contention that in general terms, DPs perceptions of educational leadership were aligned with current research.

Summary

The results suggest that while the perceptions of secondary deputy principals align generally with current conceptions of educational leadership in the literature, these views do not always reflect some of the most recent key understandings about what makes the most difference to student learning. Some evidence indicates that a significant percentage of DPs continue to view their rightful contribution to EL to be expressed through administration, managing student behaviour, and keeping the school running smoothly, rather than engaging in any direct learning-related matters. The following section, in response to RQ 4, reports on how much and what types of educational leadership DPs in the study actually undertook.

RQ 4 TO WHAT EXTENT DO DEPUTY PRINCIPALS ENGAGE IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP?

A key feature of this research question is that it requires analysis of DPs' engagement in educational leadership practices through two lenses, their own general perceptions as well as specifically in terms of the literature.

Table 7.5 RQ 4 Joint display

RQ 4: To what extent do deputy principals engage in educational leadership? **JOINT DISPLAY: Summary**	
Quantitative results: Questionnaire data	**Qualitative findings: Interview and open-ended questionnaire data**
Time spent on leadership: means /3 • Least time on S*trategic Leadership* 1.78 and *Ed/curriculum Leadership* 1.85 • Most time on *Student Issues* 2.82 and *Management/Administration* 2.91 **CELSA scale** **Factors:** Mean frequency scores /5 • Dealing with difficult behaviours 4.43 • Shared responsibility 3.80 • Resource provision 3.65 • Active teaching and learning 3.46 **Individual items**: Mean frequency scores /5, % • Highest scores: discipline (4.55, 91%), conflict (4.31, 90%) • Lowest scores: observing (2.47, 6%), planning and evaluating teachers and teaching (3.12, 30%) **REAL work:** 5 BES dimensions 86% agree/strongly agree: *Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment* describes their current role (mean 4.33/5) **Overall DP role statements**: % agree/strongly agree, mean /5 72% believed they were reactive, responsive to others: mean = 3.86 83% said their main focus was to make schools run smoothly: mean = 4.06 78% claimed they spent the bulk of their time on student behaviour and welfare: mean = 4.13 66% believed their role was to manage the school so that others could focus on learning: mean = 3.87	**EL recognised, but not as integral to DP role** • Of comments embedded in open-ended questionnaire responses, 8 were negative in that little EL was achieved. • Comparison between responses to **IQ 2a** *Can you outline ways in which you feel that you are able to act as an educational leader in your current school?* and **IQ 1c**: *Can you briefly describe your role as a DP?* Question 1c elicited very broad, much more reactive and managerial activities. EL activities attracted virtually no mentions.

As noted in RQ 3 results, an understanding of current EL literature might be demonstrated by references to a focus on teaching and learning, and engagement with teachers in their professional learning. These may be referred to as 'high impact' EL activities. References to administration, student behaviour and management, while an important part of the DP role for many, would be considered 'low impact' in terms of EL. As discussed in Chapter 4 a new literature-based scale CELSA was included in the questionnaire to capture specific aspects of educational leadership practice of DPs. Qualitative data from questionnaires and interviews offer additional details and contextual understandings.

Results from quantitative analysis

Time spent on leadership activities

This instrument collected DPs' impressions of the amount of *time* they spent on seven categories of activities (after Cranston, Tromans, & Reugebrink, 2002). Analysis of individual items as shown in Figure 7.4 demonstrates unambiguously how little time was spent on EL compared with other activities.

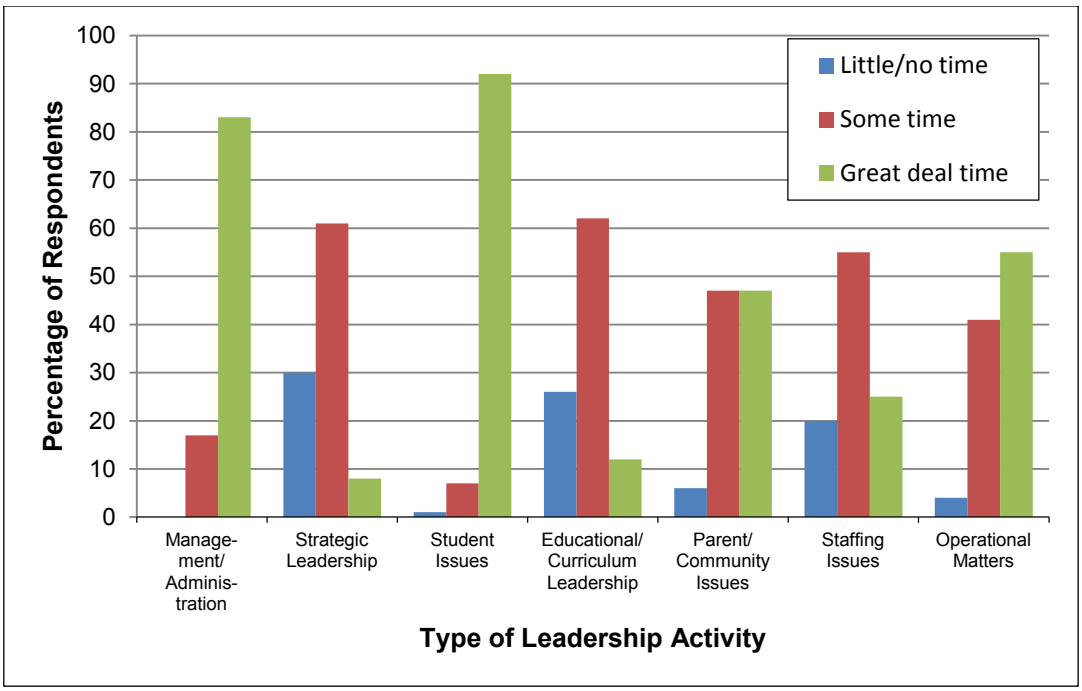

Figure 7.4 Time spent on types of leadership: Little, some, great deal (% respondents)

Only 12% of the sample reported spending 'a great deal of time' on educational/curriculum leadership, with 26% of sample DPs reporting spending 'little or no time' on such activities. Given that the middle option 'some time' was available, this signals a clear message from

over one quarter of DPs regarding their lack of engagement with educational leadership. The bulk of respondents, 62%, reported spending 'some time' on educational /curriculum leadership, resulting in a mean score of 1.85 out of 3.00, as shown in Table 7.6. This was the second lowest mean score, with only strategic leadership scoring a lower mean of 1.78.

Table 7.6 Mean scores/5 for time spent on leadership

Statistic	Management/ administration	Strategic leadership	Student issues	Educational/ curriculum leadership	Parent/ community issues	Staffing issues	Operational matters
Mean	2.82	1.78	2.91	1.85	2.41	2.06	2.51
S.D.	0.39	0.58	0.32	0.60	0.60	0.67	0.57

Comparison with the highest scoring means is revealing, with 92% of respondents claiming to spend a great deal of time on student issues (mean score 2.91) and 83% saying the same about management and administration (mean 2.82). These results, closely mirroring those found by Cranston (2004), clearly indicate that DPs continue to spend very little of *time* on EL. The following result identifies more closely what *specific types* of educational leadership activities they participated in as described in the literature.

Frequency of specific types of educational leadership activities (CELSA)

When investigating to what extent DPs engage in educational leadership, the CELSA scale provided a more nuanced analysis which distinguished between EL activities claimed to have varying impacts on student learning. The reduction from 18 to four conceptually consistent factors by factor analysis (detailed in Chapter 5) aided initial interpretation. Table 7.7 shows overall mean scores /5 on the frequency scale for these four factors in rank order.

Table 7.7 Mean scores/5 frequency of engagement in CELSA factors for EL

Factor no.	CELSA factor label	Mean frequency of engagement/5
2	Dealing with difficult behaviours	4.43
4	Shared responsibility	3.80
3	Resource provision	3.65
1	Active teaching & learning	3.46

This result strongly reiterates that the types of activities shown to have *least* impact on student learning (F2) are much more frequently engaged in by DPs, with a very high mean of 4.43. The clearly most effective or high impact activities for improving student outcomes (F1), which are strongly aligned with the BES Dimension 4 (Robinson et al., 2009), are engaged in far less frequently.

Analysis of *individual* CELSA item scores shown in Figure 7.5.shows that mean scores for the 18 items range quite considerably from 2.47 to 4.55 on the five point scale.

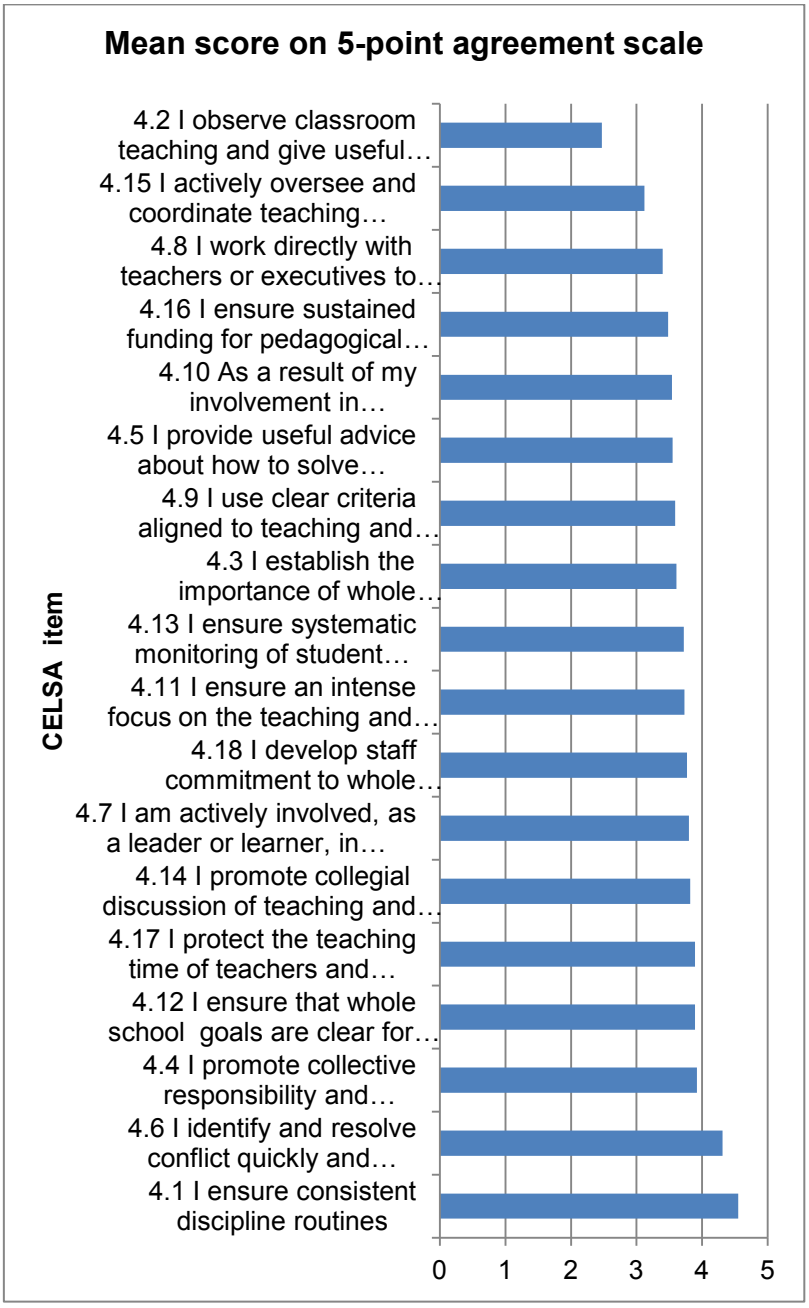

Figure 7.5 Mean agreement scores for individual CELSA items

It is notable that that the two specific activities in which DPs engage *most frequently* relate to discipline (item 4.1, mean = 4.55) and resolving conflict (item 4.6, mean = 4.31), the only mean scores above 4 out of 5. These items align closely with the very high mean score for 'student issues' in the previous result, which could suggest that lack of involvement in learning may be the result of pressure of time and priorities rather than a matter of choice. The activities which DPs report engaging in *least often* relate to close engagement with classroom teaching and learning, that is observing classroom teaching (item 4.2, mean = 2.47) and actively overseeing teaching programs (item 4.15, mean = 3.12). The notion of working 'through executives', cited by interviewees as EL activity and possibly reflecting a secondary school context, also does not score highly on this instrument, with item 4.8 scoring the third lowest mean of 3.40.

It can be seen that these results using the newly developed CELSA scale permit analysis of DP leadership activity against evidence-based research to provide a more nuanced interpretation, identifying that specific EL activities identified as high impact are engaged in least often.

Applying BES dimensions to the REAL DP role

A third set of quantitative results relates to scores on Questionnaire Section 6. Here respondents were presented with the 5 Dimensions of Educational Leadership from the BES (Robinson et al., 2009), and asked to rate the importance of these dimensions in their IDEAL conception of the DP role, and how they were actually enacted in their REAL current role (Appendix 1, Section 6). Results for IDEAL perceptions were discussed for RQ 3. This side-by-side item stated overtly for the first time that these were educational leadership dimensions, and allowed DPs to consider their role in a holistic manner. Respondents thus had every opportunity to consider their practice in relation to the literature, and also to compare how they were scoring this with their IDEAL scores. Figure 7.6 graphically portrays this result.

In considering the importance of these dimensions in their current REAL role, a total of 86% of sample DPs agreed/strongly agreed with Dimension 5 *Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment.* This result clearly establishes that the large majority of DPs saw this dimension (reported to have the least impact on student learning) as the predominant descriptor for their current role. In contrast, Dimension 4 *Planning and participating in teacher learning and development,* representing high impact activities, was far less prominent in their REAL role with a total of 52% agreeing/strongly agreeing.

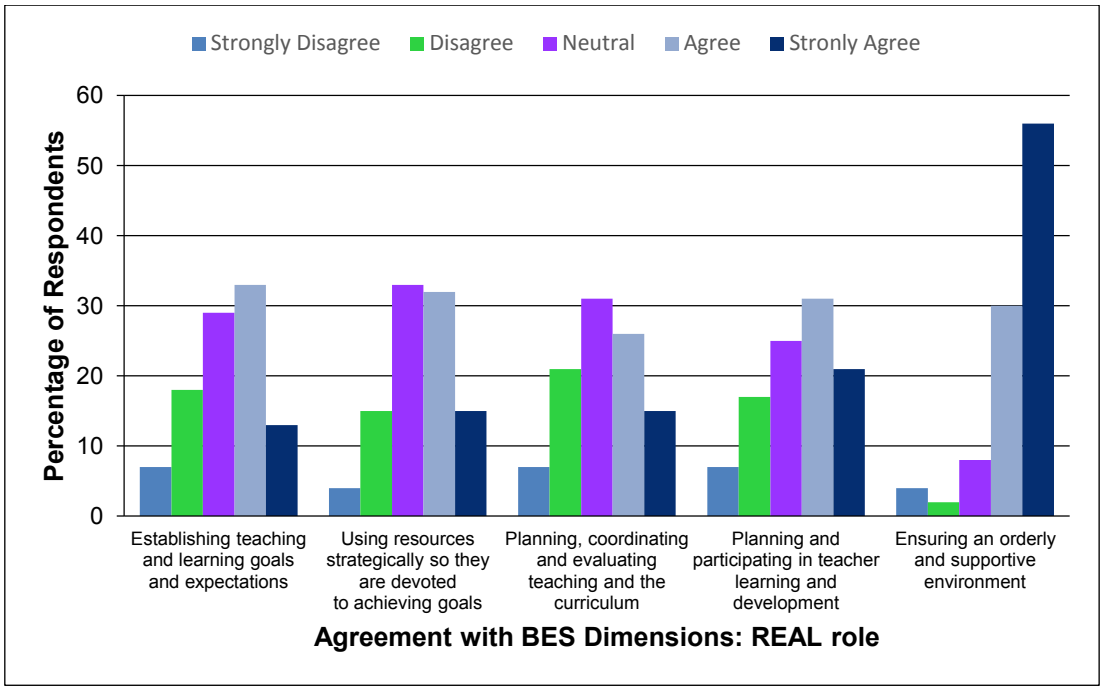

Figure 7.6 BES Dimension scores on 5 point scale: Importance in REAL DP role

A comparison of means between these scores and the scores for the IDEAL DP role discussed in RQ 3, shown in Figure 7.7, clearly demonstrates that these respondents felt Dimension 4 was the only dimension where they believed that their REAL work matched their IDEAL conception of the role.

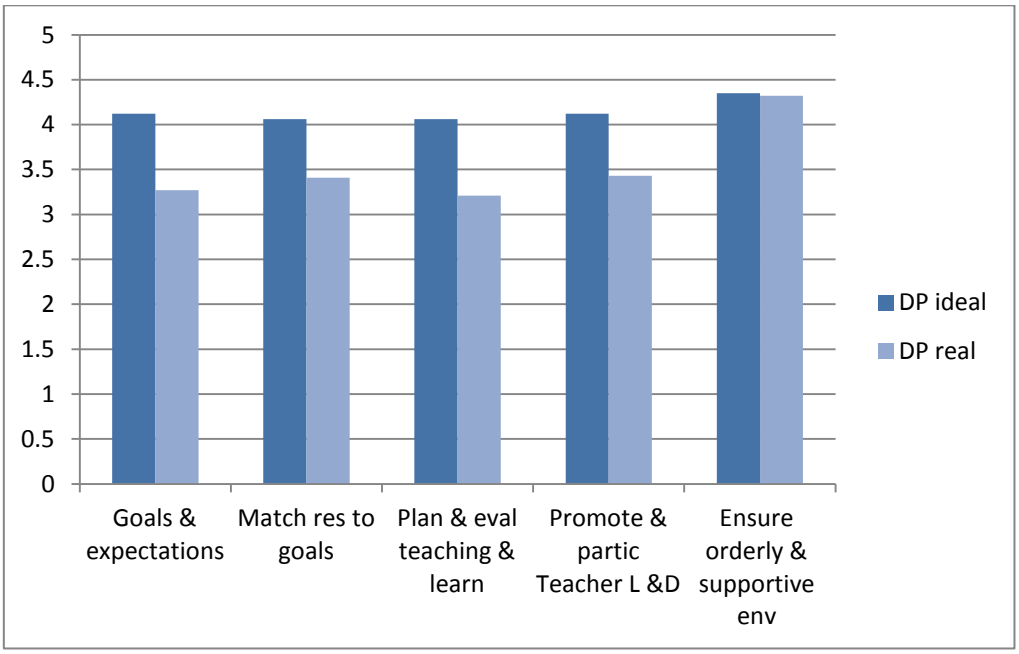

Figure 7.7 Comparison of BES EL Dimension scores: DP IDEAL and REAL

Some earlier authors have suggested this alignment may explain satisfaction rates for DPs (Mertz, 2000). The difference between IDEAL and REAL scores on all other dimensions also confirms that many DPs perceived that their roles should include higher order educational leadership activities, but in reality did not, as reported in earlier studies (Cranston et al., 2004). This result from a third lens on engagement in educational leadership provides important empirical confirmation of themes proposed in earlier studies.

Overall perceptions of the DP role

Further information as to the proportion of time spent on educational leadership may be inferred from analysis of Questionnaire Section 7 items. Table 7.8 provides a summary of means for key items relating to overall role perception.

Table 7.8 Mean scores/5 for DP role statements: managerial

Item	Statement	% Agree/ Strongly agree	Mean/ 5-point scale
7.2	Most of my work is reactive and in response to the needs of others.	72	3.86
7.6	My main focus is on keeping the school running smoothly.	83	4.06
7.10	I spend the bulk of my time on student behaviour and welfare.	78	4.13
7.12	My role is to manage the school so that others can focus on learning.	66	3.87

In combination, the relatively high agreement scores and means for these items, all of which apparently view the DP role as managerial and reactive in nature rather than as proactive involvement in student or staff learning, lend weight to the previous findings that the engagement of many DPs in high impact EL activities is low. In addition to these quantitative results, a small amount of qualitative data from open-ended questionnaire items and interview responses contributes to a more nuanced interpretation.

Findings from analysis of qualitative data

The qualitative data relating to this question were embedded in responses to open-ended questionnaire items and interview questions which did not directly address this issue, but nevertheless generally concur with the quantitative results outlined above.

Constraints on educational leadership

Of 19 unsolicited comments relating to EL within questionnaire responses, nearly half (eight) were cross-coded as 'negative' as respondents referred to their inability to engage in EL due to other constraints, such as 'A lot of my time is about putting out spot fires. I'd love to have more time to be involved in teaching and learning' and 'In my new role as permanent DP, there is not enough time to deal with all the low SES student issues … educational leadership which focuses on teaching and learning, seems to come a very poor second'. While few in number, these freely volunteered comments appear to confirm that while many DPs desired engagement in EL, they lacked opportunities to do so. Further examination of factors that impact on EL activity is reported in RQ 5.

Educational leadership vs 'real DP' work

Comparison of responses to two interview questions, however, suggests a more complex interpretation. It was noted in results for RQ 3 that in response to interview question 2a, respondents nominated their participation in a range of EL activities in ways fairly congruent with the concept as discussed in current literature. It is concerning, therefore, that the previous more general interview question 1c *Can you briefly describe your role as a DP?* elicited very few mentions of high impact educational leadership activities. This broader question was asked first, in order to capture how DPs viewed their overall role. Responses generally began with a statement about the diversity and unpredictability of the role, such as 'I often think if it walks in the door, sends an email, rings up or happens just outside the fence then it's my job' then focused overwhelmingly on student behaviour and welfare as exemplified by 'the core responsibility I have is welfare and discipline for years X and X … the nuts and bolts of everything each and every day'. Major comments to follow included responsibilities for staff welfare, student learning (generally teaching) and administration. In response to this question, only one interviewee, who was in a designated curriculum DP role, mentioned educational leadership activities such as developing staff and curriculum administration responsibilities. Those who mentioned teaching classes generally did so in the context of the fairness of this requirement or as an escape from the DP office, with the exception of one who is mentioned above as 'leading from the front'. Another recalled significant strategic level EL work but in a previous context.

In addition to content analysis of these interview question responses, analysis of word frequency showed that key words varied considerably within responses to these two interview questions. The ten most frequent conceptual words used in IQ 1c describing the

DP role were: *school, staff, work, role, discipline, kids, everything, need, welfare,* and *person*. In contrast, the ten most frequently used words in response to IQ 2a referring to specific EL work were *learning, people, school, team, professional, educational, think, curriculum, teachers* and *help*. Figure 7.8 and Figure 7.9 'word clouds' offer a useful visualisation of the frequency of key terms used by interviewees in response to the two questions. One might expect some difference in responses given the focus. However, comparison of these responses, noting the lack of overlap between the key words and the absence of educational leadership terms in the first figure, suggests a very different conceptual focus in responses to the overall DP role and the educational leadership question.

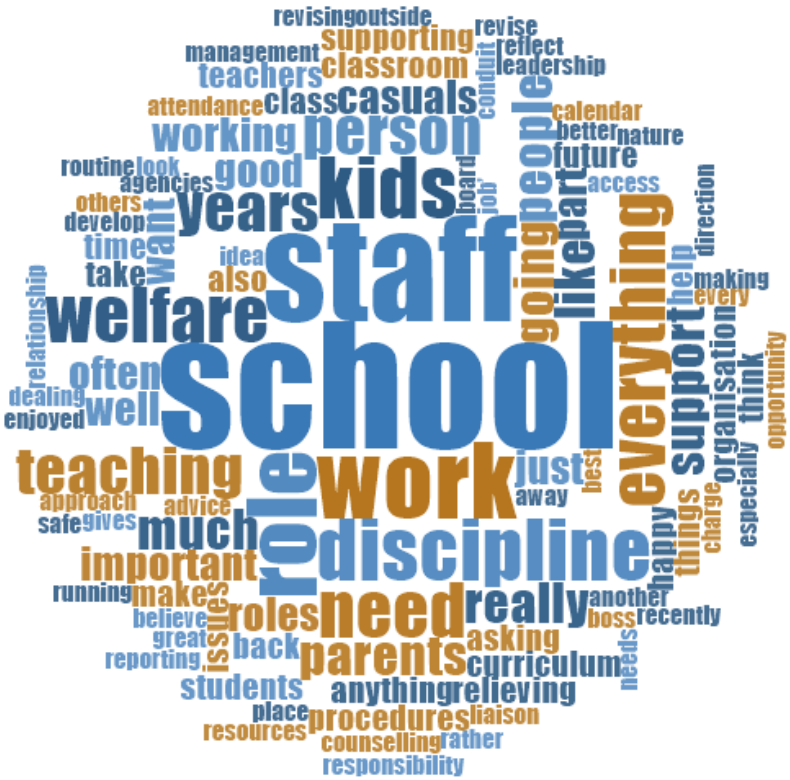

Figure 7.8 Words used most frequently in response to overall DP role

The contrast exposed by these patterns and close analysis of interview responses suggests that when specifically asked about EL, DPs demonstrate understandings which seem to be fairly well aligned with current literature, but the lack of evidence of these concepts in their overall conception of their DP role is stark. It appears that unless appointed to a particularly designated role, DPs keep their understandings of educational leadership and their daily work in separate compartments in their minds. It is as if they understand educational leadership but don't actually connect it to their real work.

Figure 7.9 Words used most frequently in response to educational leadership role

Summary

This section has provided strong evidence, based on analysis of multiple sources, indicating that the majority of DPs continue to engage in activities focused on student management and administration at the expense of more strategic and learning focused leadership, those high impact activities which make most difference to student learning. While this has been suggested in previous literature, these empirical findings provide detail through new lenses based on current literature in the educational leadership field. In addition, a compelling contrast was found between DPs' understandings of educational leadership activities when specifically asked to give examples in their work, and their lack of references when conceptualising their overall DP role.

In presenting these findings it is important to note that the author does not wish to suggest that management and administration aspects of the DP role are not critical. Indeed, one of few studies investigating the impact of leadership on student outcomes in the secondary context suggests that these 'indirect' activities are the 'bedrock' of leadership (Bendikson, 2012, p. 7). It is argued here, however, that these activities do not of themselves improve student learning unless a direct focus on teaching and learning is built on this foundation.

FINDINGS FOR RQ 1-4 AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO RQ 5

RQ 1: It was established with some confidence in RQ 1 that while about half the sample DPs *aspired* to become a principal, many did not aspire or were undecided. For a large proportion of respondents, the DP role may well be the terminal position of their career, and indeed the notion of career DP was well supported though with important caveats about remaining fresh in the role. The effectiveness of deputies in this senior leadership role is thus an important subject for sustained inquiry. Empirical and current knowledge about how DPs were prepared for their role, their understandings about leadership and their leadership practices are all important areas for consideration in order to ensure that current and future DPs may be prepared, selected and supported to be highly effective senior educational leaders. Findings for these topics in relation to Research Questions 2-4 are summarised below.

RQ 2: The *preparation* of DPs for their current role was examined through various indirect measures and considerable qualitative data. In the absence of system requirements for certification or specific preparation, 'hands on' experience was seen as an essential element of preparation, with practical learning opportunities and encouragement from senior staff also considered to be significant. Theoretical learning about leadership attracted little attention. Merit selection issues were prominent, suggesting that preparing for selection may dominate rather than preparing for leadership per se. Whether this is the optimum preparation for such a position is the subject of later discussion.

RQ 3: The *perceptions* of this cohort about educational leadership were found to be fairly consistent with recent literature, although important recent understandings about the impact on student learning of leading and participating in professional learning with teachers, rather than maintaining safe and orderly conditions for learning, appear not to have filtered through to all sample DPs.

RQ 4: Four different quantitative measures and substantial qualitative data provided evidence regarding the *practice* of DPs, particularly in relation to high impact educational leadership activities. These findings confirmed tentative themes from earlier studies that the majority of deputies engage in effective EL activities to a minimal extent, being preoccupied with student management and administration.

Many threads from the above findings are now drawn together in presenting results for the final research question.

RQ 5 WHAT FACTORS APPEAR TO INFLUENCE THE EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF DEPUTY PRINCIPALS?

While previous studies, generally qualitative, have proposed reasons for the lack of educational leadership practice by DPs clearly demonstrated in results for Research Question 4, few if any large scale quantitative analyses have to date contributed to understanding the factors influencing this issue. In an exploratory element of the study, RQ 5 aimed to directly address this complex matter. This section reports on quantitative, qualitative and integrated data analysis to assess the potential influence of variables on EL practice, as summarised in Table 7.9.

Table 7.9 RQ 5 Joint display

RQ 5: What factors appear to influence the educational leadership practices of deputy principals? **JOINT DISPLAY: Summary**	
Quantitative results: Questionnaire data	**Qualitative findings: Interview and open-ended questionnaire data**
Senior Management Team: item mean scores on 5 point agreement scale were generally positive. • *I am able to negotiate which roles I undertake as part of the senior management team*: mean = 3.79 • *Our senior management team (principal and deputies) meets regularly and plans effectively*: mean = 3.98 • *I feel that I am an equal member of the senior management team with the principal and other DP (if any)*: mean = 4.28 **Multiple regression** The d.v. ActivTL [proxy for EL activity] was regressed against 12 independent variables. Small but significant predictive relationships were found with: (i) gender; (ii) total years DP; (iii) number of DPs; and (iv) encouragement to lead.	Themes derived from **IQ 2b:** *Are there any barriers which you feel prevent your involvement in the leadership of learning at your school?* and other qualitative sources included: • Staff attitudes • Community characteristics • Time • SMT relationships, role definition • Being a single DP
Integrated analysis **NVivo matrix queries** explored potential relationships between gender, number of DPs and the types of EL mentioned in interviews. Some different patterns were observed in responses for both categories.	

Firstly, quantitative results for several elements of senior management team operation are reported, as the impact of this factor on EL practice has been raised in the literature (Cranston & Ehrich, 2009; Cranston et al., 2004; Hall & Wallace, 1996). Secondly, the influence of variables suggested by the literature or results for previous research questions is

tested in an exploratory analysis using multiple linear regression. This is followed by an outline of factors reported in qualitative sources. Finally, the results of integrated analyses of two factors of interest using a matrix query are reported. At the conclusion of this section, results are discussed through the lens of the three clusters of variables proposed in Chapter 1: *personal background*, *school and system context* and *preparation and succession*. It should be noted that in the following report the term 'factor' is used in both its specific quantitative sense (extracted through factor analysis) and in its more generic sense of something that may influence practice.

Results from quantitative analysis

Senior Management Team (SMT) operation

The operation of a school's SMT has been seen as one possible element of a distributed approach to leadership (Cranston & Ehrich, 2009). It has also been implied in previous research that a SMT which works effectively and allows equitable negotiation of roles may be related not only to the satisfaction of members (Farnham, 2009; Hall & Wallace, 1996), but also to greater engagement of DPs in educational leadership activities (Cranston et al., 2004). Three key items in Section 7 of the questionnaire relating to the operation of the SMT are reported in Table 7.10 (A reversed item is not reported for clarity and brevity).

Mean scores for these items suggest that a majority of respondents, though not all, believed that their SMT operated fairly and effectively and allowed them to negotiate their roles. Qualitative data reported later in this section elaborates on the range of different attitudes to SMTs. It is logical to suggest that there may be some interrelationships between the number of DPs and the operation of the SMT especially regarding their equal status and negotiation of power, and some impact on engagement in EL.

Table 7.10 Mean scores/5 for items relating to SMT operation

Item no.	Statement	Mean/5-point scale
7.1	I feel that I am an equal member of the senior management team with the principal and other DP (if any).	4.28
7.8	Our senior management team (principal and deputies) meets regularly and plans effectively.	3.98
7.14	I am able to negotiate which roles I undertake as part of the senior management team.	3.79

Predictors from multiple regression analysis

Scores for *Active engagement in teaching & learning* (ActivTL), Factor 1 in the CELSA scale, were used as a proxy measure for educational leadership practice as explained in Chapter 5. A multiple regression analysis was conducted with ActivTL as the dependent variable. The following were included as independent variables based on sufficient variance in scores and/or having been categories of interest in qualitative analysis: gender, total years DP, school size, school location, school type (comprehensive or not), number of DPs (1 or >1), SMT effectiveness, SMT equality, SMT negotiation, aspiration for principal, encouragement and Masters (completion or not). The N was reduced from 233 to 222 due to missing values for the item Total years DP. The following results are provided for the proportion of variance accounted for by the model, the significance of the model and the significance of independent (predictor) variables.

In the model shown in Table 7.11, ($F_{12,210}$ = 3.666, p = < .05, R square = .173) inspection of the standardised regression coefficients suggested that four variables were significant predictors (p = < .05) for engagement in educational leadership. These were having received encouragement (β = –.20, p =.003), the number of DPs in the school (β = .16, p =.035), gender (β = .14, p =–.031) and number of years' experience as a DP (β = .14, p =.034).

It is evident that the predictive value of the overall model (17%) and the relative contribution of individual variables, while significant, is quite low. On the basis of this analysis it may be suggested that those who have received **encouragement** during their careers, those in schools with **more than one DP, female DPs** and those with **more years as a DP** were slightly more likely to score highly on the ActivTL measure. Therefore, the importance of these variables for variation in educational leadership is of interest and worth exploring further in qualitative data, but should not be overstated.

It is notable that on initial examination of correlation tables for this regression, some accumulated patterns of interest were observed. For example, the variable of school **'location'** (metropolitan or rural/regional areas) did not emerge as a predictor in the regression, but showed a pattern of low, significant (p = <.01) and generally negative correlation with six other variables. The only positive correlation was with years' experience as a DP (.20), while negative correlations were observed with school size (–.23) and number of DPs (–.25).

Table 7.11 Predictors for engagement in EL

z		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std Error	Beta		
1	***(Constant)***	2.73	.37		7.366	.000
	Gender 1. male 2. female	.16	.07	**.14**	2.171	**.031**
	Particularly encouraged to consider leadership by someone in career? 1. Yes 2. No	–.29	.10	**–.20**	–3.047	**.003**
	Masters completed 1. Yes 2. No	–.15	.08	–.19	–1.829	.069
	School size 1. <500 2. 500–750 3. 751–1000 4 >1000	.02	.04	.03	.423	.673
	School location 1. metro 2. rural/regional	–.13	.08	–.12	–1.722	.087
	Comprehensive – 1 not 2	–.01	.09	–.01	–.145	.885
	Number DPs – 1 or > 1	.27	.12	**.16**	2.118	**.035**
	Total years – DP 0–30	.02	.01	**.14**	2.137	**.034**
	I am actively interested in becoming a principal in the future 1. Yes 2. No	.04	.03	.11	1.71	.090
	I feel that I am an equal member of the senior management team with the principal and other DP (if any)	.01	.04	.02	.28	.781
	I am able to negotiate which roles I undertake as part of the senior management team	0.3	.04	.06	.71	.480
	Our senior management team (principal and deputies) meets regularly and plans effectively	.02	.04	.05	.63	.527

Dependent Variable: ActivTL

While these relationships between variables might be expected in non-metropolitan areas, the small negative correlations with all three variables relating to the SMT operation (–.19, –.17 and –.20) is more concerning, especially as location was also negatively correlated ($p = <0.05$) with having received encouragement (–.14). These patterns, linking a number of low impact variables, suggest that the experiences of rural and regional DPs are worthy of closer investigation.

Results from these quantitative analyses are complemented by qualitative and integrated data analysis as discussed in the next sections.

Findings from qualitative analysis

Data collected from a specific interview question IQ2b *Are there any barriers which you feel prevent your involvement in the leadership of learning at your school*? provided detailed insights for this RQ, but there was also information embedded in other interview and questionnaire responses relating to both barriers and positive influences on DPs' educational leadership practices. The focus of this question is influences on engagement in the high impact practices discussed in RQ 4, focusing on student learning and particularly leading and engaging in professional learning with teachers. Five main categories of influences were drawn from interviews: staff attitudes, the nature of students and the community, time, SMT operation and role definition, and the number of DPs in the school. Categories attracting fewer references included the unacknowledged complexity of the role and lack of system support. These issues are expanded upon below, with additional references from questionnaire responses included where relevant.

Staff attitudes

Staff resistance as a barrier to EL activities was mentioned by five interviewees (13 references), with proposed changes that required engaging with new ideas about teaching encountering particular resistance. Statements including 'People just get very comfortable where they are, and some teacher will say 'well I've been doing this for 20 years and I've been fairly successful' and 'they want to cling to the way that they did things' were quoted. An expectation of all professional learning occurring in school time, and 'getting people to understand that ongoing professional learning is a professional responsibility' frustrated two respondents, while trying to raise expectations for student achievement met resistance in two other schools. Two interviewees referred specifically to difficulties with their head teachers, who had had 'a sense of entitlement' defining their roles narrowly for historical reasons or

being unwilling to take on new challenges, while another referred to issues in a previous schools such as 'staff divisions, mistrust, ambushes – you'd try an idea and they'd plan to hose you down'. These comments reinforce the key aspect of DP educational leadership work as being dependent on interpersonal relationships or 'relational' work. Clearly, leading the professional learning of others was not always an easy task.

Community characteristics

The nature of the community and students, often referred to as 'the clientele', was cited by three interviewees who emphasised that the DP role in different schools cannot be directly compared. The impact of this aspect of context on secondary schools has been noted in the literature (Braun, Ball, Maguire, & Hoskins, 2011). One interviewee quoted EL activities undertaken in a favourable school context but noted, 'If I was at a lot of other high schools … I would just be dealing with discipline the whole time. There wouldn't be any EL in my role.' The lack of respect for education and low expectations of some students and families was also noted in a school where 'a big challenge … was to get kids motivated to work and they had the attitude, "Don't worry Sir, chill out".' Another interviewee who had seen huge changes in the school community commented, 'In recent years I've been doing a lot less whole school leadership stuff and a whole lot more 24/7 discipline and welfare.'.

The impact of the school clientele on the DP's engagement in EL was strongly reflected in embedded questionnaire comments (17 comments). One group of participants described the impact of working with low SES communities in comments such as: 'my situation unfortunately is day to day management of student/family/community issues. Minimal time or opportunity exists to be able to move away from this and engage in professional development for self or others'. Similarly, others cited 'poorly behaved children without structures at home, parents who have unrealistic expectations' and 'dealing with the discipline of repeat offender students who do not fit a comprehensive school' as dominating their time at the expense of more proactive EL activities. One respondent claimed 'I'm sure that in a selective school or a very middle class school I would have more time to plan and focus on good pedagogy' while another observed, 'If I was placed at a Northern suburbs school (as a colleague of mine is) spitting out chewing gum in the playground is a major offence. I wish LOL.'

Deputies in 'easier' schools acknowledged the great impact this had on their role, noting that their situation in a senior high school or a high performing girls school in Sydney gave them many more opportunities to engage in high impact EL activities than their colleagues who

were ‘running around chasing after kids and suspending them all day’. Several respondents contrasted their engagement in EL in different schools they had worked in, one noting, ‘My time spent on student behaviour management is much less intense than my previous low SES, co-ed school in Western Sydney’, while in contrast another lamented, ‘I feel that I am a failure as an educational leader’ (which was not the case in my last school in Sydney where I had time to discuss curriculum, professional learning, etc).’ Others cited major changes within the same school over time, where rapid growth had increased student management demands, or changes to the rural community or competition from new schools had changed the size and character of the school and directly impacted on the DP role. Sample DPs clearly perceived that a major determinant of their ability to engage in educational leadership activity was the nature of the community and students they were working with, a key element of school context. One summed up these concerns stating, ‘Depending on where you are placed will determine the role you play in the school.’ Context, therefore, is highly important.

‘It is a time factor’

Closely related to this category were comments relating to the pressure of time impacting on EL activity. Two broad references were made to lacking the time ‘to think things through as carefully’ and that ‘to actually make a change in a school, to plan it, to get people to come on board, to assist, to push it, it’s a big job, very time-consuming’. Most comments, however, referred to the pressures of more reactive work as in, ‘it’s time, because I get bogged down in the welfare and the discipline’. This ‘nuts and bolts’ work was perceived, realistically, to be urgent and non-negotiable, while more proactive EL work, referred to as ‘the other stuff’ or ‘the more theoretical job of leading learning’ was relegated as ‘there’s only so many hours in the day’.

Questionnaire respondents similarly commented on pressures of time specifically in relation to their EL practice, with a number citing an inability to be proactive in comments such as ‘My position as DP … is very reactive and … the bulk of time is still spent on ‘putting out fires’. Most management and development of professional learning opportunities is coordinated out of school hours.’ ‘There is not enough time to deal with all the low SES student issues (including parents) … educational leadership which focuses on teaching and learning seems to come a very poor second.’ Too much time was spent on management and not enough on leadership according to one participant, while another stated, ‘I THOUGHT my job could involve helping staff become better teachers, looking at good practice across

the school and developing students to become better learners,' but after describing her daily operations asked, 'When do I have time to fit in teaching and learning?' These aspects of school context were clearly seen by many respondents as significant impediments to engagement in educational leadership.

SMT relationships and role definition

A different type of factor which several interviewees saw as impacting on their own EL practice was the nature of relationships within the senior management team (SMT). It must be remembered that these teams consisted of one principal and one, two or three DPs, so the relationships varied in number as well as type. Quantitative data on the operation of SMTs (reported above) indicated that a majority of respondents believed they were equal members, could negotiate their roles and that their teams worked effectively. In interviews all teams were characterised as functional and positive, but some issues were raised. For example, references were made to power imbalances between new DPs and incumbents as in 'I get that – you come in new so you get dunnies and drains'. One DP also noted that differences of opinion with principals means that 'the vision is not always shared' regarding their participation in educational leadership but accepted 'our job description says to us 'it's the Principal's school'.' Two others reported more positively, being entrusted with strategic responsibilities 'to lead learning' and 'to take the school into the future'.

Many questionnaire respondents also commented on SMT relationships. Negotiation of roles was a key theme and had implications for engagement in EL activities, with many variations being reported. Roles were sometimes decided within the team as in 'Two new DPs were employed. We negotiated our role in liaison with principal' and 'My roles were largely negotiated with the other DP and principal'. Other respondents, however, indicated that their role was imposed by the principal, with implications for EL engagement ranging from positive, 'My role is the DP Curriculum, this was decided by the principal' to disappointing, 'I replaced a DP whose sole role was student welfare … have been trapped in this scenario.' There was some evidence that incumbent DPs, longer serving in most cases, tended to have more power including the choice of greater EL focus in their role. In other schools, roles, including leadership of staff learning, were renegotiated fairly regularly and new DPs reported eventually being able to refine their responsibilities 'to suit our areas of expertise and professional development needs'. Notably however, a small number DPs cited feeling that their strengths were not taken advantage of or resenting changes made without consultation.

In relation to SMTs meeting regularly and planning effectively there was a similar range of experiences, from 'We find time to strategically plan and getting over and above the discipline is the constant focus of the DPs' to 'Difficult to develop leadership skills when principal does not meet regularly to discuss strategic leadership. No school management plan. Feel totally bogged down with day to day crap.' It is clear from interviews and questionnaire comments that while the majority of teams were generally effective, there were some instances of extremely poor team leadership by principals. As one respondent noted: 'This type of working environment is a difficult one in which to exist. Papal infallibility has found a new home at my school.'

SMT relationships and operation overlaps with the category of role definition, an issue prominent in earlier literature as discussed in Chapter 2. Whether it was the principal, SMT members, staff or the community, several interviewees felt that their role was generally defined by others, as in 'people expect that I will do the welfare and discipline first' or 'my role as DP is the safety of the school'. These expectations tended not to include a significant leadership of learning component.

Being a 'single DP'

A final barrier to engaging in EL cited by several interviewees was the number of DPs in the school, particularly if operating as the only DP and especially if having recently become a single DP as a result of a school losing student numbers. Sometimes the impact was implied as in 'because we're a small high school, my role is basically the organisation of the school' while one reference was more specific, commenting that the role was a traditional DP one of 'discipline and welfare, especially since going back to one DP'. For this respondent EL activities took a back seat as 'demands of other sections of the job were increasing for time and energy'. The three single DPs in the interview group were all in regional or rural areas where school sizes are generally smaller, so this factor has the potential to impact more in these areas. Interestingly, some differences were also noted in schools which had a third DP, though these tended to be in *relationships* within the SMT rather than directly on EL practice. In two cases, it appears that when a third DP was appointed, this group worked more closely together than with the principal.

Being a single DP, or the potential of becoming one due to student numbers falling below the 'magic 700' due to the staffing formula applied in DEC schools, was raised by survey respondents (13 comments) despite not being the focus of a specific question. Comments claimed that for a single DP 'the workload is all about student and staff welfare' or 'just

focused on welfare and discipline'. Obviously these DPs felt unable to engage in broader, high impact EL activities. Remarks also reflected frustration at the inflexibility of gaining or losing a DP due to fluctuating numbers, with one respondent clearly dreading the prospect, 'It is likely I will be the only substantive DP at the school in two years.' As well as focusing on reactive rather than leadership work, one single DP noted the increase in his role of being the 'pivot point' between staff, parents and the principal, while another maintained that 'one DP CANNOT fulfil all of the necessary tasks in a comprehensive high school of over 500 students'.

The appointment of a second DP was seen as having a positive impact as in 'we would sit after school, be able to reflect where we wanted to go, what we'd do, share roles, that makes a big difference'. Sharing of roles appeared to mean potential for some engagement in EL for this respondent, while another summarised it simply as 'having two DPs is so much better.' In contrast, gaining a third DP was only mentioned once, by the additional appointee, and did not seem to make the same difference. The impact of being a single DP in a secondary context is not prominent in the literature, so the fact that it is raised in both quantitative and qualitative data analysis in the current study and has particular impact on rural DPs provides important new insights into factors affecting the engagement of DPs in educational leadership activities.

In addition to multiple references to the impact of the above factors on EL practice, fewer but powerful references were made about interrelated issues of the complexity of the role and lack of system support. The complexity of the role was inferred in many comments but specifically mentioned as a barrier to EL by one interviewee who believed that there was no real recognition of the work DPs do, or how little opportunity they have for proactive EL initiatives, 'You don't have surplus capacity to spend concentrated periods of time on other things.' This deputy claimed that the DEC had little understanding of the work and therefore offered no support or proper training. A survey respondent also cited the provision of regional conferences for principals and head teachers but nothing for DPs feeling that 'we are just left to fend for ourselves, make sure the school runs properly and deal with all the crap.'

This section has reported a range of factors which appear to influence the engagement of DPs in EL activities. Interestingly, lack of knowledge of or training in educational leadership was not mentioned as a factor impacting on engagement in these activities. It appears that

sample DPs were generally confident in their preparation and knowledge in this area and did not perceive it to be a barrier to their EL engagement.

Findings from integrated analysis

For this research question the NVivo Matrix Query function was used to explore whether gender or the number of DPs in a school appeared to have any relationship with the of type of EL activities reported by interviewees. (The data for total years DP was judged to be unsuitable for this analysis due to the wide range of years' experience and the small number of DPs.) Counts of categories of responses to IQ 2a, which asked interviewees to outline specific educational leadership they engaged in, were used for this analysis. Having previously been coded and reported in RQ 3, these data are less likely to lose their meaning by being reported only as a frequency count (Fakis, Hilliam, Stoneley, & Townend, 2014). In addition, the capacity to check on the actual words, as outlined in Chapter 4, allowed closer analysis.

In relation to gender, Table 7.12 shows considerable variation between the sexes in both the number and category of responses. The number of individual sources for each comment type is in brackets.

Table 7.12 Types of EL activity reported by females and males

Type of EL activity	Deputies = Female	Deputies = Male
building culture	3 (2)	2 (2)
classroom example, expertise	6 (3)	1 (1)
curriculum innovation	1 (1)	2 (1)
data and assessment	1 (1)	1 (1)
future focused strategic	2 (1)	0 (0)
incidental only	0 (0)	1 (1)
lead and develop teams	4 (2)	0 (0)
leadership theory mentions	1 (1)	0 (0)
professional learning with staff	9 (3)	2 (1)
professional association/s and networks	2 (1)	0 (0)
through executives	4 (2)	2 (1)
Totals	**33**	**11**

First level analysis suggests interesting differences in that females reported more professional learning with staff, classroom support, leading and developing teams and working through executives with an overall total number of references being 33 compared with 11 for males.

Males reported fewer activities for all categories except for curriculum innovation where one male interviewee cited two examples. Even after accounting for the number of sources for each category, there is a clear difference between the genders in the number of references and categories of EL activities mentioned in this open interview question. Although examining gendered differences in EL was not a particular focus of this study, this qualitative finding, in combination with the quantitative result from multiple regression that females engaged in more high impact activities associated with the ActivTL factor, suggests that the apparent small but significant influence of gender on engagement in educational leadership is an area worthy of further investigation.

Results are presented in Table 7.13 for a similar matrix query which analysed whether the number of DPs in a school appeared to be related to the types of EL undertaken.

Table 7.13 Types of EL reported by DPs by number of DPs in school

Type of EL activity	DP = 1	DP = 2	DP = 3
building culture	1 (1)	3 (2)	1 (1)
classroom example, expertise	4 (2)	3 (2)	0 (0)
curriculum innovation	2 (1)	1 (1)	0 (0)
data and assessment	0 (0)	3 (2)	0 (0)
future focused strategic	0 (0)	2 (1)	0 (0)
incidental only	1 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)
lead and develop teams	0 (0)	4 (2)	0 (0)
leadership theory mentions	0 (0)	1 (1)	0 (0)
professional learning with staff	1 (1)	10 (3)	1 (1)
professional association/s and networks	0 (0)	2 (1)	0 (0)
through executives	1 (1)	1 (1)	4 (2)
Totals	**10**	**30**	**6**

The significance of these numerical comparisons among small numbers of interviewees should not be overstated. That said, some interesting patterns can be observed on closer

examination of responses. For example, where there were three DPs, most EL examples were of working through the executive, whereas examples given by single DPs focused more on sharing classroom or subject expertise. A non-teaching single DP liked to 'share my expertise with the head teacher and lots of young teachers', while another who continued to teach classes regularly mentored inexperienced new staff and had them observe his teaching. The category attracting the largest number of mentions was professional learning with staff (10), which dominated EL activity for DPs in schools with two DPs but not smaller or larger schools. One interviewee cited being 'able to do a significant amount of educational leadership, for example, look at how we teach, what we are teaching' while another noted, 'I'm now part of the team as a participant … and I think that's a really good move as an educational leader that you are still willing to develop yourself, as a learner.' This evidence supports the contention that the number of DPs in a school may have some influence on the type of EL undertaken by individuals as well as the overall amount of EL, as suggested by the quantitative results. It appears that not only does being a single DP act as a constraint on the time available to engage in EL, having more than two DPs may also alter the dynamics of how EL is envisaged and enacted. This result, while only indicative, is worthy of further investigation.

Summary

This section has reported on a wide range of data analyses in exploring the potential influence of various factors on the educational leadership practice of DPs. Quantitative data indicates that the majority of sample DPs were reasonably satisfied with the operation of their senior management teams which appeared to support some engagement in EL. Regression results showed weak but significant relationships between EL scores and having received encouragement to lead, the number of DPs in a school, gender and years' experience as a DP. Comments regarding the impact of many factors on El activity were outlined, such as staff attitudes, school communities, time, SMT relationships and roles, and being a single DP. The relationships between gender and the number of DPs with types of EL activity, explored in integrated data analysis, appeared to support the notion that these factors may have some influence. Drawing these findings together, it is evident that engagement in educational leadership, particularly in those high impact activities which affect student outcomes the most, is clearly influenced by a complex interplay among many factors, some of which have been identified as worthy or further investigation.

In terms of the conceptual model proposed in Chapter 1, it can be seen that aspects from all three clusters of factors appear to have some influence on the educational leadership practice of DPs, as shown in Table 7.14.

Table 7.14 Findings for influences on EL practice by cluster of factors

Cluster of factors	Type of data analysed and reported as influencing engagement in educational leadership		
	Quantitative	**Qualitative**	**Integrated**
Personal background	Gender Years DP		Gender
School and system context	Number of DPs SMT effectiveness, equality and negotiation	Staff attitudes Community characteristics Time SMT relationships Being a single DP	Number of DPs
Preparation and succession	Encouragement		

From this summary it can be seen that several factors are represented in two or more sources of data: the number of DPs in a school, the gender of the individual, and elements of SMT operation. The number of DPs appears in all data sources. School context factors feature strongly in qualitative data, including the nature of the community, staff attitudes and time pressures as well as the number of DPs and the operation of the SMT. Obviously these factors are interconnected, and the context of a school is confirmed as having a strong influence on how individual DPs operate.

It is interesting that the only prominent preparation and succession factor in these findings is encouragement, which was the variable showing strongest relationship in the regression analysis but did not feature in qualitative data as having an impact on EL practice. It appears once again that sample DPs did not make any connection between their preparation for being a DP and their engagement in EL, citing only school context factors in interviews and open questionnaire items. Further discussion of these findings and their implications is presented in Chapter 8.

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION

This chapter draws together key themes arising from the study's findings, places them in the context of previous literature and considers their implications. The investigation served confirmatory and exploratory purposes, thus implications of key findings addressing both these purposes are threaded through this discussion. Firstly, the research questions are restated to serve as organisers for the first section of the chapter. Major themes are then discussed for two significant areas about DPs on which the previous literature has largely been silent, *career progression* and *educational leadership,* with implications elaborated at the conclusion of each section. Broader implications and considerations conclude the chapter.

CAREER PROGRESSION

Research Questions 1 and 2 related to the work and career progression of participants. Research Question 1: *Do deputy principals aspire to the role of principal?* focused on an area for which DPs have previously received significant attention, albeit indirectly. Aspirations of teachers and executives have been of urgent interest in the context of the well-documented looming principal vacancies in many countries as a result of demographic changes, and the shortage of suitably qualified and willing candidates to fill these positions (Cranston, 2006; Farley-Ripple, Raffel, & Welch, 2012; Harris, Muijs, & Crawford, 2003). Previous literature has suggested that many middle and senior school leaders do not aspire to the principalship (Bezzina, 2012; Fink, 2010; Gronn & Lacey, 2004; James & Whiting, 1998b), mostly due to perceptions of the role and impact on family. By drawing on respondents' ratings of their aspiration to the principalship, exploring their reasons for their *aspiration*, *ambivalence* or *reluctance* and examining attitudes to the notion of the 'career deputy', it was possible to generate valuable insights not only regarding influences on DP aspirations but also about how to sustain and nurture their current role.

Research Question 2: *How have deputy principals been prepared for the responsibilities of this role?* also relates to career progression and was very important for the overall purpose of the study. Little is known in the literature about how deputy principals have been prepared for this designated role or if indeed there is preparation (Harris et al., 2003; Oleszewski, Shoho, & Barnett, 2012). While there is great interest in preparation for school leadership

(Barber, Whelan, & Clark, 2010; Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, & Orr, 2007; Lumby, Crow, & Pashiardis, 2008), this overwhelmingly focuses on principals, with an apparent assumption that school leadership positions other than principal are just 'stepping stones' on the way to the top. By exploring the training and previous experiences of DPs in this school system, as well as their perceptions of what preparation served them best, it was possible to generate a picture of how and indeed whether these senior leaders were equipped for *all* the responsibilities of the role, including those of educational leadership.

Themes relating to career progression

This section discusses five main themes drawn from results for RQ 1 and RQ 2 as they illuminate the career progressions of DPs into and beyond their current roles. Broad implications are elaborated at the end of the section.

Depth vs breadth of experience

Background data for DPs in this study showed somewhat unexpected homogeneity in terms of their training, types of experience, prior roles and recruitment (see Chapter 5, Sample characteristics) considering that sample DPs had been in the role for between 1 and 21 years. Almost universally, these DPs had been trained in NSW, and had progressed through the hierarchical ranks from teacher, head teacher to deputy principal, even though this pathway was not technically required. A clear pattern was evident of teachers gaining considerable experience at each level, then taking up opportunities to relieve at the next level, most often with the encouragement of a principal or deputy principal. Although one third were aged over 55 and had in excess of 30 years overall experience in teaching, the average experience as a deputy was only about six years, indicating that most had entered the role fairly late in their careers. Subsequently, the vast majority had been DP in only one school and worked with only one principal while in that role. Qualitative data appeared to confirm that overall experience was gained in a small number of schools and positions (*depth* of experience) rather than *breadth* across different schools and contexts. There was, in fact, some distrust of those who may have strayed from this traditional path by progressing too quickly, or taking roles outside school for a period of time.

It could be argued that as a result of sometimes long immersion in the culture of their employer, the DEC, and lack of engagement with different or disruptive conceptions of how schools and systems work, these DPs had developed some shared assumptions as to 'how we do things around here' (Schein, 1992, p. 10). Most perceived themselves to be active,

organised, problem-solving and connecting, often taking pride in successfully dealing with complex and unpredictable work, while strategic conceptions of the role were rarely mentioned. Another key aspect revealed throughout the data was the limited circle of people trusted to know and understand the job, generally being other DPs and some principals. It would be fair to say that many DPs viewed themselves as an underappreciated group of hard working leaders who kept their schools on the rails with little support apart from that of trusted colleagues. These values appear to have influenced the attitudes of DPs to their preparation for leadership roles.

Role definition and work of deputy principals

Findings from this study confirm some of the most consistent claims from earlier studies that secondary deputy principals often lack a clearly defined role, purpose or boundaries, thus tend to respond to the expectations and demands of others including principals, other staff and school communities (Armstrong, 2010; Celikten, 2001; Mertz, 2000; Muijs & Harris, 2003). DPs in this study echoed many earlier themes, citing the complexity and reactivity of their work, time pressures and lack of control over their daily tasks (Koru, 1993). The majority reported being expected to manage the school and keep it running smoothly, with administration and student behaviour management being key responsibilities (Hausman, Nebeker, McCreary, & Donaldson, 2002). In fact, data for time spent on various leadership tasks by NSW deputy principals closely matched those of Queensland deputies a decade ago (Cranston, Tromans, & Reugebrink, 2004). While there was some negotiation of roles among senior management teams, this occurred within fairly narrow and traditional conceptions of the role, generally with little explicit reference to strategic or educational leadership responsibilities (Dowling, 2007; Ruwoldt, 2006).

Although some studies of secondary DPs have proposed a different conceptualisation of the role (Curtis, Evans, & O'Connor, 2010; Harris et al., 2003), and the recent discussions about the notion of shared or distributed leadership might be expected to have had some impact on it (Fitzsimons, James, & Denyer, 2011; Harris & Spillane, 2008), findings from this study support the contention that little has changed (Militello, Fusarelli, Mattingly, & Warren, 2015). These conclusions are a cause for concern, as studies and a major report have been suggesting for over 30 years that this poorly defined and reactive interpretation of the DP role neither makes optimum use of their skills nor prepares them adequately for the role of principal (Golanda, 1991; Harris et al., 2003; Harvey, 1994; Hausman et al., 2002).

Satisfaction and aspiration

A common focus of earlier studies was satisfaction levels among deputy principals and elements of the role which afforded this satisfaction (Chen, Blendinger, & McGrath, 2000; Sutter, 1996). While not a major element of this study, findings confirm there were a number of satisfiers which counterbalanced the frustrations described above. Enjoying being second in charge and implementing changes at that level was cited, as was operating as part of an effective senior leadership team and other relational elements such as working with a variety of people and acting as a conduit between them. The contention that satisfaction was related to time dedicated to strategic and educational/curriculum leadership (Cranston et al., 2004) also received some support. This study appeared to confirm suggestions from earlier studies that although DPs report major differences between their ideal conceptions of the role and their actual work (Cranston et al., 2004; Farnham, 2009) many still find it relatively satisfying. One possible explanation for this may be that they derive satisfaction from doing their job well, even if limited in scope, consistent with the findings of Mertz (2000).

Whether in looking back over their career journey or forward to a possible principalship, it became evident that this group, with some exceptions, did not demonstrate an ambitious approach to their overall careers as educators. Many claimed not to have aspired to become a DP, to have become an 'accidental deputy' as a result of ad hoc opportunities or pressures. Examples were offered of 'prompts' which led to sudden change in attitudes, with negative prompts including a school crisis requiring someone to 'step up', or the desire to escape a position perceived to be untenable, while positive prompts included the arrival of a new mentor in the school or a vacancy suddenly becoming available.

In terms of aspiration to becoming a principal, there was significant variation, consistent with earlier studies (Bezzina, 2012; Fink, 2010; Gronn & Lacey, 2004), with only about half the DPs in this study expressing that they actively aspired. In elaborating their attitudes towards becoming a principal there were far more reasons cited for *reluctance* or *ambivalence* than for *aspiration*. Some reasons for reluctance accorded with earlier studies, such as negative perceptions of the intensified principal role (Farley-Ripple et al., 2012; Gronn & Rawlings-Sanaei, 2003) and its impact on family and lifestyle (Bezzina, 2012; Fink, 2010). An additional deterrent identified in this study impacted particularly on rural or regional DPs. Due to the concentration of population along the seaboard in NSW, secondary schools were fewer and more scattered in rural areas, so opportunities for promotion frequently meant re-locating home and family for each promotion level, deterring many

potential aspirants. (This impacts more on secondary level positions, where middle leadership roles are mostly based on subjects thus there is only one position per school.) Alternatively, there was a perception that ambitious individuals who were prepared to move around could exploit the lack of competition for positions in rural areas and progress very rapidly, perhaps not gaining sufficient experience at each level. This echoed a concern expressed in the literature in Australian and New Zealand contexts (Macpherson, 2009a; Roberts, 2004). Neither of these scenarios would appear to be positive for ensuring a supply of well-qualified leaders for rural areas.

There was limited support in this study for earlier suggestions that aspiration to the principalship was positively correlated with satisfaction in the DP role (Kwan & Walker, 2012; Sutter, 1996). While some DPs expressed satisfaction a well as aspiration, there was more evidence suggesting that satisfaction in the current DP role actually worked against aspiration, with both the concept and the prospect of remaining as a career deputy receiving robust support. As noted by Bezzina, 'At its most fundamental level, if a potential principal is satisfied in their current role, there is little incentive to seek promotion' (2012, p. 22). Qualitative data strongly supported the career deputy role as a valid and potentially attractive one, although caveats were expressed about staying in one specific position for too long and the need to refresh and revitalise.

Aspiration appeared not to be a fixed attribute, but malleable and highly responsive to changes in context or circumstances, including family circumstances and health, school culture and personnel, as well as availability of suitable positions. Considerable fluidity and vulnerability of these attitudes and a wide range of influences affecting them were observed in this study. One variable which did appear to make a difference was age, though whether this was due to age or proximity of a fairly fixed retirement date was difficult to gauge. Clearly, aspiration is a complex area which is deserving of attention throughout the entire career of school leaders, not just when considering a principalship, as has often been the focus in the literature (Bezzina, 2012; James & Whiting, 1998a; Muller & Hancock, 2013; Walker, Bryant, & Lee, 2013).

As well as the above stated reasons for various career moves, the question may be asked as to whether there are some unstated norms in the teaching profession or the DEC which work against aspiration to leadership. All participants in this study had been teachers, mostly with extensive experience. Teaching is sometimes depicted as a vocation (Hansen, 1994) rather than a career with lofty ambitions to aspire to, with work 'at the chalkface' being highly

valued as the real work of schools and having its own intrinsic rewards. There is evidence in this study that aspiration for promotion was viewed with some distrust by peers particularly if progression appeared to be rapid, similar to the risk of 'alienating immediate colleagues' noted by Rhodes et al. (2008, p. 318). One interviewee experienced resentment as 'there were other people who were head teacher for longer' while a survey respondent referred to 'ambitious people who focus on their climb to the top (which is usually over a few warm bodies)'. Some comments such as 'Go back to the old system' even appeared to reflect vestigial cultural memories of the previous recruitment system, described in Chapter 2, which was perceived to reward seniority rather than personal ambition.

Preparation and merit selection for senior leadership

Dominant themes relating to preparation for the DP role were reliance on practical experience, particularly relieving at a higher level, and encouragement from senior school leaders. Overwhelmingly, relieving for regular or extended periods at the next level was seen as critical, enabling aspirants to 'learn the ropes' of the complex managerial aspects of the DP role which were not always visible to others in the school. A concerning attitude to preparation was the notion, not uncommon in the data, that one could learn 'on the job' *after* entering it, rather than undertaking any particular preparation prior to appointment. This goes against calls, surely not unreasonable, for aspirants to be prepared for basic competence before commencement in a position (Gurr & Drysdale, 2013; Huber & Pashiardis, 2008; Macpherson, 2009b). Encouragement was the second major feature in descriptions of career journeys and preparation. Most DPs claimed to have received significant encouragement, and whether through ongoing mentoring relationships or ad hoc 'taps on the shoulder', this was seen to have been highly influential. In fact it was claimed by some respondents, mostly female, that without specific and sometimes persistent encouragement they would not have considered aspiring to leadership.

Overall, participants appeared to believe that these forms of experiential learning, combined with some personal characteristics such as interpersonal skills, were sufficient preparation for the DP role. Formal learning about school leadership, whether postgraduate study or of employer-provided courses, was considered far less relevant. Even Masters degrees in school leadership, a common requirement in other jurisdictions (Ministry of Education, 2010; OPC, 2013), were rarely mentioned by those individuals who had completed them. While some DEC professional learning programs were considered useful, the lack of continuity and coherence of offerings over time meant these were generally not considered particularly

valuable preparation. These attitudes contrast with those of secondary principals in one New Zealand study, who reflected that they wished they had engaged in more study prior to appointment (Macpherson, 2009a). This view may reflect the fact that DPs overwhelmingly conceived of their role as managerial unless specifically asked to focus on educational leadership aspects, thus were more attentive to preparation which would meet their urgent needs.

The impact of merit selection on career progression arose in relation to both future aspirations to the principalship and in reflections on career journeys. Merit selection was, and remains, an individualistic, competitive approach to being appointed to a senior leadership position. As revealed in findings for RQ 2, it was perceived by many to be an onerous and opaque process, with perceived negative side-effects for both successful and unsuccessful candidates. This corroborates strong and unexpected findings from earlier research (Cranston, 2006; Gronn & Lacey, 2006). While the procedures were intended to reflect transparency and fairness, the actual implementation was widely perceived to be a 'game' and success in it largely dependent on either inside knowledge or luck. Implications for rural aspirants, noted above, were concerning, as was the finding that applicants for principal positions in rural areas were particularly vulnerable to relationships with the same local senior officer who conducted all panels. A final and concerning aspect of attitudes towards merit selection was the focus of time and energy on learning the mechanical aspects of merit selection processes such as writing an application or preparing for interview at the expense of broader preparation for senior leadership. In summary, it appears that some aspects of merit selection may tend to work against rather than support the development and appointment of the best leaders for senior roles.

The concept of a 'career DP'

A further important theme in this investigation was the endorsement of the 'career deputy', a long-term position for those who either never particularly aspired or who ceased to aspire to the principalship, as a valid career option. It has been previously shown that not all DPs in this study aspired to the principalship or could realistically expect to achieve that position. While some commentators have suggested that staying in such a position 'blocks the pipeline' for upcoming aspirant principals (Fink, 2010), or 'does not serve the future of school leadership' (Curtis et al., 2010), there was genuine support for the notion among interviewees in this study. Respondents saw no necessity for all DPs to aspire to principalship and saw value for both individuals and schools in having long-serving DPs,

citing examples of both. The valued contribution of current career deputies to the professional association was also noted. Participants were, however, keenly aware of potential risks of burnout or stagnation, and offered suggestions for addressing these concerns, some of which implied more flexibility in DEC provisions to enable them.

Impact of recent and proposed changes

These themes regarding career progression and preparation have important implications for individuals, schools and the DoE, now and into the future. In order to situate these implications in the current fluid context, a brief overview of some changes affecting schools is offered. It is beyond the scope of this study to elaborate on all the social, political, technological changes which will impact on schools in the near future. However, since the data collection for this study there have been significant moves within and beyond the DEC.

Accreditation and selection to be linked to standards

In 2013 a key document was released by the newly merged *Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards NSW* (BOSTES) entitled *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning Blueprint for Action (Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards NSW, 2013)*(GTIL). This document acknowledged the lack of an explicit pathway to becoming a principal across all systems (government, Catholic and independent), and proposed actions to address this. Recommendations included basing professional learning on the newly developed *Australian Professional Standard for Principals (*or Principal Standard) (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2014), early identification of promising leaders, development of systemic approaches to build the leadership skills of current and aspiring school leaders, and articulation between university courses and the standard/s. Significantly, the GTIL document suggested that 'school authorities could consider using the leadership credential as a requirement in applications for principal positions'(Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards NSW, 2013).

These recommendations reflect some of the practices cited in Chapter 2 as pro-active approaches to leadership preparation. While there are dangers in wholesale policy borrowing across different jurisdictions and cultures (Harris, Jones, & Adams, 2016; Lingard, 2010), the proposals suggest an incremental approach with some consideration of the differences in scale between school systems in NSW, as well as political and industrial sensitivities. However, the close alignment of most of these recommendations with the AITSL standards, claimed to improve the consistency and quality of leaders, is of some concern. Writers cited

in Chapter 2 caution that this approach has the potential to be restrictive and/or subject to political influence (Eacott, 2011b; Fink, 2010; Gronn, 2003; Gronn & Rawlings-Sanaei, 2003; Macpherson, 2010b). Requiring aspirants to engage in professional learning is generally recommended, but tight alignment of such learning to fixed standards may constrain universities and other providers from delivering new research-based or future-focused approaches, or engaging in critique of current structures and approaches. What learning is considered valid for accreditation will be a continuing issue for BOSTES and systems. The potential for political influence on bodies which have carriage of developing and maintaining standards is also a concern (Cowie & Crawford, 2007; Macpherson, 2010b) if they are to be the cornerstone for all future career progression.

'The Department' – Changing status and structure

The DEC may have seemed to be a constant and powerful presence in the long careers of many DPs, but as has become apparent in this study, its influence is gradually waning, due to the combined effects of reduced market share, more influential regulatory bodies within NSW and greater nationalisation of policies such as curriculum, assessment and accreditation (see Chapter 3). Also, since the commencement of this study, major changes have been made within the DEC itself, now rebadged (again) as the Department of Education (DoE). A system-wide reform agenda, *Local Schools, Local Decisions* (NSW Department of Education and Communities, 2014) is under way, with devolution of significant responsibilities and accountabilities (not including curriculum or assessment) to schools in a staged approach. This devolution follows trends in other jurisdictions such as England, New Zealand and Victoria, though the proposed positive impact on student learning outcomes has yet to be proven (Eacott, 2011a).

These changes have already begun to impact on the work and expectations of principals and DPs in secondary schools, for example with greater local responsibility for finances, where 70% of education funding will now reside in schools, as opposed to about 10% prior to the reform (NSW Department of Education and Communities, 2014). With this additional flexibility will come the need for greater financial competency and responsibility at the senior leadership level (Johnson, 2016). Importantly, the *Staff in our schools* provision now allows up to 50% of teaching staff, including executives, to be appointed through local merit selection, albeit with close monitoring from central office. This suggests that more selection may be undertaken locally, with panels being run by principals or DPs, but does not imply any major changes to the Merit Selection procedures themselves. Also very relevant for

participants in this study is the statement *School leaders have leadership and management credentials before being eligible for leadership positions* (NSW Department of Education and Communities, 2014). While this is a future goal, those aspiring to become principals (about half the study sample) are now on notice that they will soon need to show professional learning aligned to the *Principal Standard*, and even career DPs employed before November 2004 will need to register with BOSTES and maintain their accreditation. Future aspiring DPs may also need to attain higher levels of the *Professional Standards for Teachers* (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2014) though as is often the case, detailed arrangements for leaders other than principals are as yet unclear.

Some of these developments appear to be positive in that the ad hoc approach to leadership development experienced by the DPs in this study may gradually shift to an expectation of some formal, or 'intentional' preparation (Fink, 2010, p. 145). As always, however, the detail of these requirements will be important. The implications are spelled out most clearly for principals, with vague references to 'executives' including all other primary and secondary leadership positions. Evidence from this investigation has suggested that differences between secondary and primary contexts are not recognised in such broad brush approaches, nor are significant differences between middle and senior leadership roles. How the DoE interprets this and supports the development of its future leaders in an era of reduced central financial resources may be problematic. Leaving all development to local schools and accredited providers has created some issues in other jurisdictions (Rhodes et al., 2008).

Implications of themes relating to career progression

Discussion of implications for career progression at a time of such significant change after many years of relative stability could be viewed as a complex challenge. Alternatively, this may be welcomed as an ideal opportunity to raise issues identified by the study, with a view to influencing how these changes play out. Implications of key issues including the nature of career journeys experienced by the current DPs, their attitudes to leadership preparation and merit selection, and the status and maintenance of the career DP role are elaborated below.

Learning on the job is not enough

The lack of provision of, or requirements for, systematic preparation to equip DPs for the full range of responsibilities of senior leadership has been demonstrated, as has the reliance on 'learning on the job' with encouragement from senior school leaders. In contrast, formal

learning was neither expected nor apparently valued by the DPs themselves or their employing authority. The fact that such ad hoc experiential arrangements, made at school level and invisible at system level, were clearly a major determinant of entry into the substantive DP role through merit selection has not previously been acknowledged. Importantly, such a promotion is gained not only to a particular school but to permanent employment at this status.

The implications of this ongoing absence of pro-active leadership preparation are concerning (Clarke, Wildy, & Slater, 2007). Not only does this approach lack a sustained theoretical component, but opportunities and criteria for relieving in higher roles are uneven, and the value of encouragement is contingent on the quality of in-school models or mentors. Reliance on self-selection and random opportunities to practise have been adjudged by many other jurisdictions to be insufficient to prepare senior leaders for the challenges of their roles (Barber et al., 2010; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Dempster, Lovett, & Flückiger, 2011; Ministry of Education, 2010). Further, such 'serendipitous enculturation on the job' (Macpherson, 2010a, p. 70) risks preparing aspirants for the role as it is currently conceived, rather than for emerging challenges and opportunities, as cautioned in the literature (Fink, 2010; Huber & Pashiardis, 2008). The view that the DP role is basically a conservative one, focused on maintaining order and stability is likely to be reinforced rather than challenged if no critical learning is encountered (Gurley, Anast-May, & Lee, 2015; Huber, 2008). Finally, while the DP is not the principal, there are increasing recommendations for a genuine sharing of responsibilities among the senior leaders (Curtis et al., 2010) for which DPs would need to bring current strategic and educational leadership capacity. It can be argued that a broader range of preparation strategies is required to equip DPs with these capabilities. As noted of the New Zealand context which shares similar issues, our 'educational leaders … are poorly educated in leadership compared with their international counterparts' (Macpherson, 2010b, p. 409).

Unintended consequences of merit selection

In related findings**,** attitudes to merit selection gave rise to concerns not only as it often acted as a deterrent to aspiration, particularly for rural aspirants, but also due to the prominence it seemed to have attained in career trajectories. In the absence of system-sponsored preparation for leadership, this recruitment method appeared to have, by default, influenced how individuals viewed their career progress, prioritising targeting of individual school positions, self-nomination, and to some extent a narrow training in techniques of selection

rather than whole-of-career development towards leadership. In contrast with this individual career approach, in other systems cited in Chapter 2, such as Ontario and some US states, completion of well-designed preparation courses was claimed to develop a sense of shared identity within the cohort of leaders prepared for the next step (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007), and also to the establishment of ongoing collaborative networks (Gurley et al., 2015; Ontario Principals Council, 2007). The individualistic and competitive aspects of merit selection could be seen to work against this shared identity. On the evidence of this study, merit selection policies, as they are currently implemented, appear to have both a narrowing and deterrent effect on aspiration and preparation.

Recognition and support for the DP role as a career

Finally, the robust support among study participants for the notion of the career deputy stands in contrast to concerns expressed by some commentators (Curtis et al., 2010; Fink, 2010). These concerns appear to be based on unstated assumptions that such individuals are failed or frustrated principal applicants who are just getting in the way of more talented and ambitious aspirants. There are good arguments for testing these assumptions, and also examining more closely the implications of such statements. As has been demonstrated in this study, lack of advancement is not necessarily due to lack of leadership ability or even aspiration, as many other factors such as limited opportunities for development and leadership practice were evident.

Elsewhere in the literature the notion is not uncommon that good teachers should not always feel obliged to leave the classroom to become leaders, but should remain doing what they do well and perhaps mentoring others (McCulla, Dinham, Brock, & Scott, 2015). Similarly, there appears to be less call for every head teacher to seek the deputy role, perhaps as the mathematical impossibility of all achieving success is clearer, as is shown in the organisation of secondary schools, Chapter 3. Characterising career DPs as stale, pressuring them to aspire for jobs which do not necessarily exist or for which they have no desire, or offering unrealistic alternatives such as returning to a head teacher role as proposed by Fink (2010) do not seem to be helpful. Given the strongly hierarchical nature of secondary schools, alternative options for DPs are not immediately visible. One interviewee's response to such a suggestion was: 'If you learn how to fly fighter jets and they send you back to fly kites … my hypothesis is that [it] would go pear shaped.' It is argued that it would be more beneficial to address the root causes of potential stagnation or personal stress within the career deputy position with positive refreshment and revitalisation strategies.

Many DPs are likely to continue in their current role for some years. These previously 'forgotten' and 'invisible' career DPs (Cranston et al., 2004; Ribbins, 1997) are deserving of greater recognition and support if they are to make their optimum contribution to schools as senior leaders, including engaging in productive educational leadership activity. The implications from this study are that some DPs are perhaps not as well prepared for the full range of these responsibilities as they believe. Ongoing support for senior leaders is a recommendation from the international literature (Fink, 2010; Lumby et al., 2008; Macpherson, 2009b) and considering the additional responsibilities being devolved to schools, current DPs would benefit from flexible professional learning from the DoE lest educational leadership slip even further from their radar. Importantly, enforcing compliance with leadership standards is not enough to ensure enhanced practice without some quality standards also being applied to the learning opportunities provided.

Changes in the wind

Given the substantial changes that are on the horizon, as discussed above, the common elements of career trajectories of this group, proceeding to the deputy role 'through the ranks' and entering the role fairly late in their career, are unlikely to be replicated for next generation DPs. Similarly, current DPs and other aspirants for a principal role will experience different expectations as they move towards this goal. The existing unbalanced individual career approach, where many DPs do not believe they need any theoretical learning about leadership, and some view their career progress to be the result of luck or personal characteristics, will be insufficient not only for coming bureaucratic demands but also for the real leadership challenges in schools. Many elements of DoE culture are likely to change due to external pressures, suggesting some uncomfortable times ahead for leadership aspirants. At the same time, the difficulty of filling vacancies at both DP and principal levels, especially in less favoured schools, is likely to intensify, prompting the need for individuals and the DoE to adapt.

This section has considered major themes relating to career progression of DPs and the implications of these issues. The next section focuses on the educational leadership aspects of DP work, and discusses implications of these overall findings.

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Research Questions 3, 4 and 5 focused on aspects of educational leadership as they related to DP work. Research Question 3: *How do the perceptions of deputy principals regarding the*

concept of educational leadership align with those in the literature? addressed a gap identified in earlier studies and sets the stage for later examination of DPs' practice. Hitherto there has been little connection made between conceptions of educational leadership (Dempster, 2009; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Pont, Nusche, & Moorman, 2008; Robinson, 2006) and persistent claims from studies of secondary DPs that they rarely engage in such leadership (Celikten, 2001; Cranston et al., 2004; Muijs & Harris, 2003). Few if any studies have based these assertions on a clear definition of the term 'educational leadership' or explored what DPs mean by this term. This question was intended to establish how closely DPs' perceptions of EL accorded with conceptions in current literature as a basis for then exploring their engagement.

Research Question 4: *To what extent do deputy principals engage in educational leadership?* aimed to test earlier suggestions that DPs have little opportunity to engage in EL, by adapting measures used in previous studies (Cranston, Tromans, & Reugebrink, 2002; Cranston et al., 2004) and also seeking much finer-grained information about the specific educational leadership practices of participants using the CELSA instrument. These and other data sources served to flesh out earlier claims about DP work while also exploring possible connections between DPs' perceptions of EL and their engagement.

Research Question 5: *What factors appear to influence the educational leadership practices of deputy principals?* This culminating question was important in the overall design and purpose of the study, addressing an issue arising from but not satisfactorily addressed by earlier studies. It was explored in an empirical manner, integrating quantitative and qualitative data to examine and report on the potential impact on EL practice of factors from three clusters: *personal background*, *school and system context* and *preparation and succession*. The next section discusses themes drawn from RQ 3, 4 and 5.

Themes relating to educational leadership

This section discusses two major themes drawn from results for RQ 3, 4 and 5 as they relate to the concept of educational leadership. Broad implications are elaborated at the end of the section.

Educational leadership: the concept and its relationship to DP work

Previous studies have reported that DPs engage in limited educational leadership (Hausman et al., 2002; Militello et al., 2015; Oleszewski et al., 2012) but have been silent on their

actual perceptions of the term. By honing in on the understandings of DPs, findings from this study have shown overall congruence between DP views and the literature, but also uncovered some significant differences and potential contradictions amongst these perceptions. Firstly, close comparison of DPs' perceptions of EL with dimensions proposed in current literature (Dempster, 2009; Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009) showed small but significant differences in emphasis, with respondents appearing to underestimate the importance of actively participating in teacher learning, and greatly overestimate the impact of creating conditions for learning. In more holistic views of their overall role, the majority of DPs confirmed this interpretation, strongly characterising their role as maintaining stability while simultaneously claiming to be focused on educational leadership. These findings suggest that DPs may be lacking currency and depth in their knowledge of educational leadership, and continue to operate in a somewhat dated scenario of 'letting the teachers get on with the teaching' rather than engaging with teachers in explorations of good teaching and learning practice.

Possible explanations for the apparent disconnect between DPs' broad knowledge of educational leadership and their view of their 'real job' may include practical impediments gradually influencing their view of what is possible, and the pressure of expectations of others. It may also be explained in part by the *type* as well as the *amount* of professional learning they had experienced. Theoretical learning about leadership, mostly gained through DEC courses, was clearly viewed by many participants as a luxury or an 'add-on'. Indeed, several comments viewed such learning as being useful mostly to flesh out an application for promotion rather than adding value to the current DP role. This suggests that there needs to be a greater focus on integration between 'theoretical' professional learning about leadership and the workplace.

Interestingly, Burgon's (2012) report of a national survey in New Zealand, designed contemporaneously with the questionnaire in this study and based on the BES, found that 'principals and senior leadership teams' were rated more effective on goal setting and maintaining safe and effective learning environments than on teacher learning and development (Burgon, p. 17). Thus the current study corroborates findings from one of few that extends its analysis of school leadership to more than the principal.

Why so little engagement in high impact educational leadership?

In addition to new understandings about how DPs perceived educational leadership, this study has reported detailed findings about how it was enacted in their roles based on multiple

data sources. Literature-based quantitative measures provided compelling evidence that student management and administration continue to dominate the time and energy of DPs at the expense of educational leadership. The CELSA data showed that the *most* effective EL strategies for improving student learning outcomes were being engaged in *least* by sample DPs, and vice versa. Qualitative data provided another interesting lens, with participants' conception of their DP role generally not including EL activities unless specifically asked.

Previous studies have decried this overall lack of engagement by DPs in educational leadership, and proposed reasons for this based on qualitative data. Attempts to analyse relationships between such a complex and multi-faceted concept and potential factors affecting it are of course not simple. The findings from this study, from quantitative, qualitative and integrated analysis, that several factors have a small but positive impact on engagement in high impact EL are therefore of considerable interest. Elements of personal background (length of DP experience, gender), school and system context (number of DPs, operation of the senior management team) and professional preparation (having received encouragement) all appeared to have some influence.

Personal background factors. The quantitative result that length of experience as a DP had a small but significant predictive effect on high impact educational leadership activity is perhaps not unexpected. It might be anticipated that more experience in the role would allow deputies to streamline administrative processes and focus more on learning-related work, though there is no support for this interpretation in the qualitative data and little in previous studies. Another interpretation, arising from some limited evidence in the study, may be that in senior management teams, newly appointed DPs are relegated to and almost expect to be given the more mundane tasks while incumbents may choose more favourable activities such as leading professional learning. The lack of definitive data on this matter suggests that further investigation would be of benefit.

The finding regarding the small positive influence of female gender on the CELSA measure of educational leadership was not anticipated, and although there is a significant body of work on this topic in broader leadership research there is still no agreement as to whether gender is related to different leadership practices or styles (de la Rey, 2005; Klenke, 2004). In the discussion of gender in educational leadership literature the influence has been reported to be quite weak (Coleman, 2005). The influence found in quantitative analysis in this study should not be overstated, though it also arose in qualitative and integrated analysis.

School context factors. Two school context factors shown in quantitative analysis to have some influence on engagement in high impact EL were the number of DPs in the school, particularly if only one, and the relationships and operation of the senior management team (SMT). These are clearly inter-related, and while SMT relationships have received some attention in previous literature (Cranston & Ehrich, 2009; Wallace & Hall, 1994), there has been little or no consideration of the impact of being a 'single DP'. Qualitative data supported this finding, indicating that those DPs operating alone faced not only time pressures associated with additional work, but lacked collegial support and opportunities to share emotional aspects of the job. They were also more vulnerable to the quality of working relationships with the principal, with both positive and highly toxic relationships being reported. An additional aspect of the single DP issue is that many of these positions are situated in rural areas due to smaller school sizes, so internal isolation may be compounded by geographical isolation from lateral networks beyond the school. There was evidence that the arbitrary 'cut-off' point of 700 student enrolments, below which a DEC secondary school is entitled to only one DP, does not recognise the requirements for management let alone the more specific educational leadership responsibilities of one individual for hundreds of students. Single DPs, particularly in rural areas, may be deserving of greater attention and support, especially if they are to have more opportunities to engage in more high impact educational leadership.

Qualitative data suggested that senior management team relationships and operations appeared to impact on the ability of DPs to engage in educational leadership as well as their satisfaction. Here principals were understandably highly influential in how DP roles were negotiated, whether or not leadership was shared or merely delegated, as well as in fostering an efficient team operation. This reminds us that the principal holds positional authority, and as noted in Chapter 2 in discussions about SMTs and distributed leadership, his or her commitment and ability to work collaboratively with one or more DPs is a pre-condition for any effective team operation (Cranston & Ehrich, 2009; Harris, 2013). Principals also bear the responsibility of judging what type of leadership structure and relationships are appropriate for the needs of the school at that time and in that context (Harris et al., 2016). In addition to the influence of the principal, relationships between DPs also made a difference. Most were claimed to be positive, but there was some evidence that the number of DPs impacts on work as well as relationships, and that incumbents can wield more power than newly appointed DPs in how roles were allocated, including taking on more visible educational leadership activities.

Other school-based factors raised in qualitative data included staff attitudes, the nature of the community and the lack of time to focus on leading learning. Respondents reiterated that the context of a school, whether its economic disadvantage or staff age profile, made a huge difference to them being able to engage in EL activities, and drew comparisons between different school environments. Finally, the large proportion of time spent on reactive, administrative and student management tasks was seen to detract from possibilities to engage in or even think about 'leadership stuff'.

Preparation and succession factors. The majority of respondents reported experiencing encouragement from a principal or DP to lead, whether for a specific relieving role or more general mentoring and support. It was the strongest predictor of high impact educational activity as well as featuring in qualitative data. The importance of this encouragement to aspirants suggests that many SMT members are taking on their responsibility to groom future leaders. However, with this comes responsibility not only to exercise care as to who is encouraged and for what roles, but also to ensure that mentoring advice is current and valid beyond the specific school context. The risk of perpetuating poor practice through narrow or inappropriate advice is real if mentoring and encouragement occurs on a haphazard basis (Bezzina, 2012; Crow, Lumby, & Pashiardis, 2008; Fink, 2010; Huber, 2008).

Implications of themes relating to educational leadership

Broad implications are elaborated below of key issues relating to educational leadership and the DP role, including their perceptions of and engagement in educational leadership, and what factors influence this engagement.

Understanding how to support student learning

The finding that many DPs' perceptions of educational leadership, while generally in alignment with the literature, seemed to lack currency and detail regarding this important subject is concerning, with considerable evidence that many DPs still perceived their contribution to student learning to be indirect and expressed through administrative support. While the BES meta-analysis is only one recent, albeit influential study, this interpretation of the DP role has been challenged for some years as canvassed in Chapter 2. The literature about the educational leadership has continued to evolve since the initial review for this study. Earlier recommendations that elements of both transformational and instructional leadership should be integrated (Marks & Printy, 2003) were heeded in the definition of EL employed in this study. Recent publications based on large-scale mixed methods studies

(Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016) have reinforced this idea, suggesting that the two approaches 'too often dichotomised'(p. 221), should be applied flexibly to suit different school contexts and communities. The authors claimed that this approach was more sophisticated than the earlier 'contingency' view of leadership (explained in Chapter 2), as it was solidly grounded in recent, school-based research.

The body of knowledge about the relationship between leadership and learning is not static, as developments since the commencement of this work attest. However, specific attention to secondary contexts remains minimal and the contribution of DPs remains largely unacknowledged. If DPs are to make their optimum contribution to student learning, they will need to keep more abreast of new understandings of this key aspect of their work.

A second key finding discussed in Chapter 7, that DPs knowledge of EL is rarely seen as connected to their real work, is concerning and would benefit from further investigation. One possible explanation may be that work pressures and the expectations of others (including peers, principals and community members) gradually erode any prospects of engaging in EL in the role and eventually their perceptions of it. Alternatively, the *type* of theoretical EL learning experienced, mostly through courses not connected to the workplace, may contribute to this lack of apparent relevance to real work.

Overall, the strong confirmation that these DPs engage so little in high impact educational leadership activities has implications not only for deputies but for secondary schools and their communities. These leaders have come from positions where their curriculum and pedagogical knowledge was highly valued, yet this background is being squandered while they deal with many non-learning related matters. It can be argued that schools would benefit from DPs being empowered to bring their extensive knowledge about teaching and learning to a more active role in leading learning. The factors impacting on this engagement are explored in the next section.

What really influences educational leadership activity, and what can be done about it?

Findings from this study contribute to understanding what factors impact on DPs' levels of engagement in high impact educational leadership activities, but they also raise many questions. For example, the influence of gender and years of experience bear further investigation to explore the ways in which these factors influence DPs work, and why. One question which may be asked is, if female DPs engage more in high impact educational

leadership practices such as working with teachers on their learning, is this a result of their innate qualities, or perhaps due to unintentional reinforcing of stereotypes in roles allocated to women? (Klenke, 2004). And, ironically, if female DPs do engage in these EL activities rather than more managerial ones such as finances, technology or timetabling, might this actually count against them in future applications for principal positions? These questions would clearly benefit from further investigation. Similarly, the association between experience as a DP and increased engagement in EL are worthy of further investigation to explore whether this is the result of greater effectiveness and focus or alternatively, increased power. This finding, while only tentative, also has interesting implications for the notion of a career deputy. If confirmed, it could be interpreted that longer-serving DPs may possibly engage in more effective educational leadership, contradicting some assumptions that they become stale in the role.

School context factors identified in the study are perhaps more amenable to change efforts by both school and system personnel. The nature of the school community is of course not directly within the control of school leaders; however, more pro-active attention to productive relationships with the community may reduce the time spent on reactive responses. The number of DPs clearly has a bearing on the capacity of individuals to support learning, and recognition of this challenge, particularly for single DPs in rural schools, suggests that they would benefit from further support. Under the newly devolved and more flexible staffing arrangements described earlier, consideration could be given to providing additional personnel, whether from a teaching or administrative background, to allow more focus on supporting learning. Other school context factors could be considered in relation to these findings. For example, this study's recognition of the importance of effective senior management team operations and relationships could encourage principals as well as DPs to reflect on how these can be refined and improved. Also if, as reported, staff appear resistant to new approaches to teaching and learning, perhaps the model of professional development in the school could be re-examined, extending beyond the 'presentation' model mentioned most often in qualitative data. Recent developments in the areas of collaborative learning (Harris, Jones, & Bab, 2013; Muijs et al., 2014; Sharratt & Planche, 2016), professional learning communities (Jones & Harris, 2014; Stoll, Harris, & Handscomb, 2012) and trust (Fink, 2016; Tschannen-Moran, 2014) all suggest models for learning which could inform these explorations. The findings regarding the influence of school context are tentative and exploratory, but could provide useful prompts for reflection and action, particularly among SMT members.

The most prominent preparation factor influencing EL engagement was having received encouragement, through offers of relieving opportunities or other general support from a principal or DP. The long term implications of such opportunities have been highlighted, and these raise the important question of whether individuals are encouraged for short term expediency or long term suitability as leaders. The fact that other preparation factors are not evident in this analysis perhaps reflects the dearth of empirical data available in the NSW government sector, where an individual career approach dependent on serendipitous opportunities is the status quo.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

One inference that could be drawn from the overarching themes and implications discussed above is that *career progression* and *educational leadership* practice are linked. The influence of various factors on the perceptions and work of DPs, particularly educational leadership practice, was of major interest in the study. In the simplified conceptual framework proposed in Chapter 1 (refer to Figure 1.1 on page 7), elements of career progression are captured in the *Preparation and succession* cluster.

It could be argued that the limited preparation and succession strategies experienced by the sample DPs have had an impact on their *perceptions* of educational leadership. These perceptions can be viewed as a mediating factor, in turn having some impact on their overall work and their engagement in *educational leadership* within that role. It could further be suggested that the combination of a narrow range of preparation strategies and recruitment through merit selection have resulted in a very individualistic approach to gaining such a senior leadership position, contrasting starkly with the system-wide and career-long approaches now adopted by many other jurisdictions.

It is evident from the literature (Chapter 2, Section 3) that many school systems act on the belief that pro-active identification, training, and development of future school leaders results in enhanced leadership and, it is hoped, improved student learning. Formal study of leadership theory is generally a key component of these systemic approaches. There is limited evidence in this study, however, that participant DPs felt the lack of such strategic preparation, particularly the theoretical component. Macpherson dubs this attitude 'a professional norm that perversely celebrates 'learning on the job' rather than achieving basic role competency prior to or soon after being appointed' (Macpherson, 2010b, p. 238). It is apparent that some steps towards richer and more systematic preparation are warranted.

A second conclusion is that elements of school context strongly influence the work of DPs, and their ability to engage in educational leadership. This seems self-evident, yet some leadership theories and indeed standards frameworks appear to ignore the significance of context on school leaders' work. This study included some recognition of the impact of context in the nomenclature of the CELSA scale: *Contextual Educational Leadership Self-assessment,* to draw attention to the fact that this 'score' did not reflect educational leadership knowledge or ability, but rather practice in a particular school context. Many participants commented on the impact of their current school context on their job, particularly their opportunity to engage in EL, with several contrasting their work in different schools.

The impact of being a single DP, particularly in rural schools, was also evident in responses. While low SES and isolated communities received mentions, other contextual factors such as changes in senior leaders, crises, and positive changes within schools were noted. While there is a risk that school context could be used as an excuse for stagnation or complacency, there is ample evidence that many contextual factors cannot be controlled and have a genuine impact on the work of DPs. There is much yet to learn about the impact of contextual factors on the work of school leaders, but evidence from this study suggests that they cannot be ignored in preparing or supporting leaders to focus on student learning.

Having now considered the implications of major themes in findings from this investigation, the final chapter will briefly review main features of the study and make recommendations for further research, practice and policy.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

This chapter briefly restates the research problem and outlines how it was addressed through a large-scale mixed methods investigation in one jurisdiction. It reviews what has been discovered, and offers judgements as to the merits of these findings and their overall contribution to the body of knowledge in the field. Possible limitations of the study are acknowledged, and recommendations are made for further research, practice and policy.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND HOW IT WAS INVESTIGATED

This study has argued that the deputy principal role in the secondary school context is of inherent interest and importance as incumbents are not only potential principals but also key senior management team members. It demonstrated the lack of research attention to this role and suggested that the potential of DPs to contribute to student learning, the main goal of schooling, was being squandered. The five research questions, restated in Chapter 8, focused on two main areas of interest: the career progression of DPs up to and possibly beyond their current role, and factors which may influence their engagement in educational leadership.

The study was situated in secondary schools in the NSW government school system, a large, influential jurisdiction exhibiting great diversity in both geographical contexts and population characteristics. The research design employed an advanced explanatory sequential mixed methods approach, with two phases of data collection: a mixed online questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Within the questionnaire a new instrument (CELSA) was developed and employed to gauge participation in educational leadership. Findings reflect inferences based on quantitative, qualitative and integrated analysis techniques.

MAIN FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Findings from this investigation contribute significant new knowledge about the work of DPs in secondary schools as well as building on themes suggested in previous studies. It has focused on leadership in the secondary context, particularly as it relates to supporting teacher learning and development, as strongly recommended in recent literature (Burgon, 2012; Robinson, Bendikson, & Hattie, 2011; Seashore Louis, Dretzke, & Wahlstrom, 2010).

Firstly, findings from this large empirical study add currency and breadth to the literature by corroborating issues previously derived from small scale studies. They confirm earlier themes about the generally ill-defined and reactive nature of DP work, ambivalence in aspiring to become a principal, and reasons for varying levels of satisfaction. Despite occasional calls for greater attention to and reconceptualisaton of the secondary DP role, it appears that little has changed in these critical areas over several decades.

Exploratory elements of the study went beyond a descriptive approach to analyse key aspects of deputy principals' past experiences, perceptions, current work and potential impact on student learning. Close investigation of the ***career progression*** of these DPs revealed that they were quite homogenous in important background characteristics such as prior positions and recruitment method, with their experience generally tending to be 'deep' but rather narrow in a few schools, rather than broad. Only about half of these DPs aspired to the principalship, with age, concerns about the impact of the role and recruitment methods appearing to affect aspiration. Preparation for their current DP role was ad hoc and relied on opportunistic access to experiential learning, encouragement from senior school leaders and some voluntary participation in professional learning. Formal or theoretical learning about the more strategic or specific educational leadership aspects of the role was not required by their employer and generally not highly valued by participants.

It is argued in this study that such experiential approaches are no longer sufficient preparation for senior leadership roles, and nor do they reflect international best practice. The ad hoc, unequal opportunities risk promoting unsuitable aspirants and missing potential quality leaders who are not so 'lucky' or inclined to self-nomination. Current merit selection procedures may be seen to exacerbate this. Dependence on in-school mentoring and lack of engagement with theoretical learning may also present a risk of perpetuating the status quo at a time when secondary schooling needs to prepare for rapid and unpredictable challenges. While many current DPs do great work in schools, the lack of preparation and support for them contrasts starkly with systems that take a balanced, pro-active whole-of-career and whole-of-system approach to preparing new leaders.

A second set of themes in the findings pertained to ***educational leadership***. The study referenced current literature to explore DPs' perceptions about this concept, which have generally not been clarified in earlier studies, and their participation in various EL activities. While participants' understandings of educational leadership were generally consistent with recent thinking, it was found that they tended to ascribe greater importance to creating the

conditions for learning, and to underestimate the impact of what current literature suggests are much more impactful activities such as leading and participating in teachers' professional learning. Findings also suggested apparent tensions and contradictions between DPs' perceptions about EL and their conceptions about its place in their overall DP role.

A key element in this analysis was the development and use of the CELSA scale to operationalise the concept of educational leadership. This tool proved to be valid, reliable and beneficial for demonstrating the extent to which DPs were engaging in specific lower impact rather than high impact EL activities. In addition, the major factor from the CELSA scale, *Active engagement in teaching and learning*, served as a useful proxy for high impact EL in regression analysis, identifying several variables which had small but significant influence on participants' engagement in educational leadership. These were whether they had received *encouragement* to lead the *number of DPs* in a school, years of *experience as a DP* and *gender* of participants. Importantly, these factors were all also identified in qualitative or integrated analysis, along with other school context factors..

On the basis of these findings, it was proposed that of many factors impacting on the educational leadership work of secondary DPs, greater consideration should be given to the impact of leadership preparation strategies. Few DPs in this study cited lack of preparation as an issue, but it is possible that they may have become somewhat insular as a result of their long-term enculturation within the DEC and perhaps unprepared for major changes to school education which are in the pipeline. The weight of international literature and practice would indicate that not only principals but DPs should undergo balanced, intentional preparation including theory and supported practice prior to appointment if they are to be fully prepared for future school leadership challenges.

The strong findings from this study, that DPs engage <u>least</u> in the EL strategies that have <u>most</u> effect on learning, must be of concern to principals, system administrators and DPS themselves. They provide important justification for a more empirical and large-scale approach to analysis of the educational leadership work of DPs and analysis of what factors impact on it.

ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

As well as beginning to address some knowledge gaps identified in the previous literature, this study makes distinct theoretical and methodological contributions to the field. In

generating the above findings about the career progression and educational leadership of DPs, the study proposed a new *theoretical framework* to analyse the literature, a newly-designed *conceptual framework*, and employed a rigorous *methodology* to complement earlier, mostly smaller studies.

In analysing literature relevant to the research problem, a new theoretical framework was applied. This linked the analysis of secondary DP work with two other areas of inquiry that seemed to be related (Nazaro, 2012): the concept of educational leadership and approaches to leadership preparation and succession around the world. Through this approach it was established that there was limited attention to the role and contribution of deputy principals generally, as well as within the existing literature about school leadership and in leadership preparation programs. The lens provided by integrating these three areas prompted the design of an investigation which attended to key gaps in the literature, and for recommendations to be made not only for further research, but for policy and practice.

The conceptual framework represented in Figure 1.1 (Chapter 1, page 7) helped to clarify this part of the research problem and give direction to the study (Nazaro, 2012). It allowed visualisation of the more quantitative, predictive aspects of the research, placing concepts in a logical and sequential design. It supported reflection about the factors that might influence the educational leadership practices of DPs, which clusters they belonged to, potential data sources for each variable and how and why they might be related.

The overall methodology employed in this study, with its rigorous application of a mixed methods approach, contributes to a field which had previously largely relied on small-scale or qualitative studies. Importantly, results from quantitative data were not only well-supported but enriched and contextualised by qualitative findings. This partially addresses recent recommendations made by prominent researchers in the leadership field (Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016) for mixed methods studies, as being more likely 'to provide finer-grained, more nuanced evidence-based understandings … than single lens approaches' (p. 222). In terms of research focusing specifically on DPs, this study addresses a strong recommendation that 'further research, using other methodological approaches, is needed to collect evidence of *in situ* leadership practices of [DPs], and how those practices relate to the larger objectives for teaching and learning in the schools in which they work' (Petrides, Jimes, & Karaglani, 2014, p. 189).

Finally, not only were the exploratory results of the study internally coherent, but the confirmatory findings corroborated tentative themes from prior international studies. There is potential therefore, for consideration of how new findings from this research, some arising from newly developed instruments, may apply across broader contexts.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In drawing conclusions, a number of limitations of the present study should be considered. Notwithstanding the above statement, the study sample represented the population of one jurisdiction so, this may be considered to limit generalisability of the findings. The NSW Department of Education is the largest school system in the southern hemisphere, but represents only one state in Australia and government schools within that state, so caution must be recommended in generalising findings beyond this context. However, as noted in the previous section, this study did confirm themes from earlier studies across nationalities and systems, so there are clearly elements of the secondary DP role which cross these boundaries.

A second limitation relates to the definition and operationalisation of the concept educational leadership within the study. As explained in Chapter 2, this is a notoriously slippery, contentious and multi-dimensional term, so the decisions made about these elements of the study may not satisfy all researchers in the field. However, it can be argued that in such a practice-based discipline, if analysis of leaders' engagement in educational leadership is deemed to be fruitful, this discussion can benefit from a clear definition of the term being discussed. This study's definition of educational leadership was based on current, well-regarded literature (Dempster, 2009; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009). It then operationalised EL practice based on a major international meta-analysis (Robinson et al., 2009) which linked specific practices to student learning outcomes, in designing the CELSA tool. Therefore, while these definitions and tools may not gain universal acceptance in the field, they are based on solid foundations and have proven to be beneficial for the purposes of this study.

A possible third limitation may relate to data collection, which consisted of an online survey and semi-structured interviews. The response rate of 30% for the survey may be considered lower than ideal, however this is comparable with rates for other studies of busy senior leaders and, as explained in Chapter 5, the sample was strongly representative of the population in all major characteristics. The number of interviews was also small (eight) for

reasons of feasibility, so the contribution of qualitative data gathered from these participants should not be over-stated. However, by purposefully selecting a nested group from the larger sample, key characteristics were represented in order for experiences from most groups of DPs to be included in the data.

A final consideration is that analysis of qualitative data from participants' elaborations of their work, past experiences, and attitudes is an art rather than a science. It is recognised that drawing out of categories and generation of themes from such data by a single researcher who has personal background in the field may risk researcher bias. Several steps were taken to limit such bias, as outlined in Chapter 4, however it is acknowledged that interpretation of results may still be subject to some influence.

Taking into consideration these acknowledged limitations, findings from this study are presented as exploratory and tentative. They appear to be, however, of sufficient interest and import to be examined more deeply in follow-up studies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Research

After a review of the literature and consideration of results from the current study, the following recommendations are made to address some gaps in the knowledge base and to follow up on tentative findings. There is a need for further research, particularly large-scale empirical work, into the following areas:

Leadership in the secondary context. There is a pressing need to know more about how leadership influences student learning in the secondary school context, without narrowing the definition of learning outcomes to standardised test results.

The secondary DP role. Deputies in secondary schools are deserving of greater research attention, particularly if they choose to remain as career deputies, so their contribution can be recognised and enhanced.

Attitudes of educators to preparation strategies. The attitudes of other Australian aspirant leaders to existing preparation strategies would be of great interest and inform the development of new programs.

The CELSA scale. This tool has the potential to be used more widely but would first benefit from further methodological validation by use in similar contexts i.e. another Australian state government system. Given its basis in international research, its potential utility for self-assessment of educational leadership practice may then be considered for wider use, for example by principals, in both primary and secondary schools, and beyond the Australian context.

Practice

The following recommendations for school personnel and professional associations are drawn from the literature as well as study findings.

Deputy principals. For those DPs who are not already doing so, it is strongly recommended that they consider engaging in some sustained, formalised learning about leadership, whether or not they aspire to the principalship. It is also suggested that they actively engage in DP networks for collegial support and professional learning.

Principals. In consultation with DPs, it is recommended that principals give further attention to how roles are shared among senior management team members. Care should be taken that this does not result in mere delegation of administrative tasks, and that all members, over time, have opportunities to engage in high impact educational leadership activities as well as important responsibilities such as financial management.

Principals and DPs. Both principals and DPs are urged to take into account the long term implications of appointing individuals to relieving positions, giving consideration to leadership potential as well as short term school needs.

The NSWSDPA. It is recommended that the professional association expand its current active role in providing professional learning for DPs and aspirants. The association may have a role to play in brokering services from well-regarded experts in the field of leadership to deliver professional learning at state conferences and local networks. It could also negotiate with universities or other providers in the design of suitable postgraduate learning opportunities to support the more strategic and educational leadership aspects of secondary DP work, with a view to aligning these with BOSTES standards if appropriate.

Further, it is recommended that the association expand its support for DPs in smaller rural schools who often experience the 'tri-fecta' of working alone as a DP, lacking local peer

support or mentoring, and having fewer realistic options for progression to principal. This group may represent a sub-set of career DPs, all of whom could benefit from additional support.

Final recommendation for practice. Deputy principals and principals are encouraged to collaborate more not only at school level, but through their professional associations. The NSW Secondary Principals Council (NSW SPC) is an influential body with the ear of DoE and government bodies. By collaborating with NSWSDPA, acknowledging DPs as current colleagues and SMT members, there is the potential to create a critical mass for negotiations with educational bodies such as DoE, BOSTES and ACARA in a period of unprecedented 'reforms'.

Policy

Recognition and support for DPs. The first recommendation is for the DoE to provide formal recognition for secondary DPs, a group that is rarely acknowledged and that, on the evidence of this study, often feels disenfranchised and unsupported. This recognition should reference their expert educational leadership role. Career deputies, up to half of current DPs, are deserving of respect and support if they are to remain engaged in the role, and greater consideration should be given to the unique challenges faced by rural deputies.

It is recommended that the DoE urgently review the following policies and programs:

Leadership preparation. While compliance with standards established by accrediting bodies will be required, there is much more to be done to establish infrastructure for career-long preparation including a balance between individual and institutional needs, and practice-based and theoretical learning.

Merit selection. Recruitment policies should ideally go hand-in hand with leadership preparation strategies, in order to not only provide sufficient numbers to fill leadership roles, but also to ensure well-prepared, quality candidates. International concerns regarding self-nomination and reliance on interviews, as well as evidence from the current study of the deterrent and career-narrowing effects of current policies, suggest that they do not match or support the needs of leaders or the system. The need for change is urgent.

FINAL COMMENT

Deputy principals in NSW government secondary schools are in some ways unique, a product of the system and times in which they have taught and served as leaders. In other ways, they represent those leaders in schools around the globe, often neglected in the literature, who are not principals but do incredible work on a daily basis to ensure students can learn. This study goes a small way to turning the spotlight onto this group and suggesting ways in which they might make an even greater contribution to this central goal of student learning.

What happens if we invest in these people and they leave?
What happens if we don't and they stay?

Anon

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List of Appendices

APPENDIX 1:
COPY OF ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

Default Question Block

Department of Education
Faculty of Human Sciences
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY
NSW 2109
Phone: +61 (0)2 9850 8656
Fax: +61 (0)2 9850 8674
Email:educ_iec.hdr@mq.edu.au

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name: Norman McCulla

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Title: Dr

Information and Consent Form

***Name of Project*: Growing Great Deputies**: *Success and succession for deputy principals in secondary schools (Phase 1 survey)*

You are invited to participate in a study of the role of deputy principals in NSW government secondary schools. The purpose of the study is to explore the perceptions of secondary deputy principals in NSW DET secondary schools about their roles, what activities they undertake, and how they were prepared for the position.

The study is being conducted by Wanda Snitch, telephone 0412 027 484, email wanda.snitch@students.mq.edu.au. It is being conducted to meet the requirements of a Ph D in Educational Leadership under the supervision of Dr Norman McCulla, telephone 9850 8650, email norman.mcculla@mq.edu.au in the Department of Education at Macquarie University.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete an online survey which should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Questions include background information about your training and experience, your day to day tasks as a deputy principal and your perceptions about the role and preparation of deputies in NSW government secondary schools.

At the conclusion of the survey, you will be invited to offer your contact details if you are interested in being contacted for Phase 2, where a small number of participants will be interviewed for approximately one hour. Audio recordings will be taken of these interviews to allow transcription and analysis.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only the researcher and her supervisor will have access to the data. A summary of the results of the data can be made available to you on request by contacting Wanda Snitch at the above email address.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

Investigator's Name: WANDA SNITCH

*I have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep. *Please print or save a copy of this information for your own records.*

***If you agree to the above conditions**, please use the 'Next' >> button below to begin the survey.*

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

PARTICIPANT'S COPY

Section 1 Please complete for your current school

Number of secondary students

<500	500-750	751-1000	>1000
○	○	○	○

Location of school

Metropolitan	Rural/regional
○	○

Type of school: select from

- ☐ Comprehensive 7-12
- ☐ Senior campus
- ☐ Junior campus
- ☐ SSP
- ☐ Central
- ☐ Other - please specify

Total number of deputies in your school, including yourself:

1	2	3	>3
○	○	○	○

Section 2 Your background information

Your gender

- ○ Male
- ○ Female

Your age range

34 or less	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 or more
○	○	○	○	○

What was the length/type of your INITIAL teacher training? (Do not include later training)

- ○ 2 years
- ○ 3 years Diploma
- ○ 4 years - Degree + Diploma or equivalent
- ○ 5 year Degree/Master
- ○ other please specify

WHERE were you trained (your initial teacher training) ?

- ○ NSW
- ○ Other Australian State
- ○ overseas

Any SUBSEQUENT teacher or education training completed:

☐ 3 – 4 year conversion course

☐

Postgraduate CERTIFICATE in

☐ Postgraduate DIPLOMA in

☐

MASTERS in

☐ Other - please specify

Section 3 Please answer for your current role as a deputy principal

In **a typical week, HOW MUCH TIME do you generally spend on the following activities:**

	LITTLE OR NO TIME	SOME TIME	GREAT DEAL OF TIME
Management/administration	○	○	○
Strategic leadership	○	○	○
Student issues	○	○	○
Educational/curriculum leadership	○	○	○
Parent/community issues	○	○	○
Staffing issues	○	○	○
Operational matters	○	○	○

Please add any TYPES of activities which take up a significant proportion of your time and which are not reflected above

Section 4 Frequency of types of activities

For each statement below, please indicate the FREQUENCY with which you actually undertake the following activities as part of your role:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very frequently
1 I ensure consistent discipline routines	○	○	○	○	○
2 I observe classroom teaching and give useful feedback to teachers	○	○	○	○	○
3 I establish the importance of whole school shared goals (teaching/learning, philosophical, moral)	○	○	○	○	○
4 I promote collective responsibility and accountability for student achievement and wellbeing	○	○	○	○	○
5 I provide useful advice about how to solve teaching problems	○	○	○	○	○
6 I identify and resolve conflict quickly and effectively	○	○	○	○	○
7 I am actively involved, as a leader or learner, in professional learning with staff	○	○	○	○	○
8 I work directly with teachers or executives to plan, coordinate and evaluate teachers and teaching	○	○	○	○	○
9 I use clear criteria aligned to teaching and learning priorities to allocate resources	○	○	○	○	○
10 As a result of my involvement in professional learning with teachers I make adjustments to support sustained improvements in student learning	○	○	○	○	○
11 I ensure an intense focus on the teaching and learning relationship	○	○	○	○	○
12 I ensure that whole school goals are clear for all staff	○	○	○	○	○
13 I ensure systematic monitoring of student progress and use student assessment data for programming improvement	○	○	○	○	○
14 I promote collegial discussion of teaching and learning and their impact on student learning	○	○	○	○	○
15 I actively oversee and coordinate teaching programs	○	○	○	○	○
16 I ensure sustained funding for pedagogical priorities, including provision of staff expertise	○	○	○	○	○
17 I protect the teaching time of teachers and students	○	○	○	○	○
18 I develop staff commitment to whole school goals	○	○	○	○	○

Section 5 Becoming a Deputy Principal

Experience as Deputy Principal

	0	3	6	9	12	15	18	21	24	27	30
TOTAL years as DP											
Years in CURRENT school as DP											

Position PRIOR to DP

- ○ Head Teacher: please specify
- ○ Other: please specify

How were you recruited/selected into your FIRST Deputy Principal position?

- ○ Merit selection
- ○ Achieved list and appointed on seniority
- ○ Other - please specify (NB Please note if you are currently relieving/acting)

Is your DP position additional i.e. funded by a specific program e.g. PSP, National Partnerships?

If Yes, does this external funding have any influence on your role?

Are you in your SECOND or subsequent DP position?

How many DIFFERENT PRINCIPALS have you worked with as a Deputy Principal (at least 2 terms)?

TOTAL years TEACHING including your current position

<10	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35+
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Did you participate in any DET LEADERSHIP programs? If Yes, please specify and comment.

Did you undertake any OTHER form of specific LEADERSHIP program, study etc? If Yes, please specify and comment.

Please comment on any OTHER TYPES OF PREPARATION that you undertook prior to becoming a deputy principal. This can include any formal or informal preparation.

Can you comment on what in your professional background prepared you BEST for the role of DP

Were you PARTICULARLY ENCOURAGED to consider a leadership role by someone in your career? If so please give details of at what stage and their professional relationship to you.

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Do you have any suggestions for how FUTURE deputy principals could best be PREPARED for the role?

Do you have any suggestions for how FUTURE deputy principals could best be RECRUITED into the role?

Section 6 The importance of leadership dimensions in the DP role

Please read each statement and click on the appropriate response on the LEFT to express *how IMPORTANT you think the leadership dimension is in the Deputy Principal's role*
For the same item please please click on the appropriate response on the RIGHT to register *how closely you feel the item describes your role AT THE MOMENT*
The responses on the left represent your views on what would be IDEAL and the responses on the right provide some idea of what at the moment you perceive to be REAL.

Importance

1 Not important at all **2 Not very important** **3 Uncertain** **4 Important** **5 Very important**

Describes my current role

1 Strongly disagree **2 Disagree** **3 Uncertain** **4 Agree** **5 Strongly agree**

I think this is IMPORTANT in a Deputy Principal role (IDEAL). Not important > Very Important						This DESCRIBES what I do in my current role (REAL) Disagree > Agree				
1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○	Establishing teaching and learning goals and expectations	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	Using resources strategically so they are devoted to achieving goals	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	Planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	Planning and participating in teacher learning and development	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment	○	○	○	○	○

Section 7 Operating as a Deputy Principal in your school context

Please indicate your AGREEMENT with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1 I feel that I am an equal member of the senior management team with the principal and other DP (if any)	○	○	○	○	○
2 Most of my work is reactive and in response to the needs of others	○	○	○	○	○
3 I make a difference to teaching and learning in the school	○	○	○	○	○
4 My DP role was mainly constructed to replace the person before me	○	○	○	○	○
5 I am actively interested in becoming a principal in the future	○	○	○	○	○
6 My main focus is on keeping the school running smoothly	○	○	○	○	○
7 I operate as an educational leader in my current role	○	○	○	○	○
8 Our senior management team (principal and deputies) meets regularly and plans effectively	○	○	○	○	○
9 A key focus of my role is a focus on student learning outcomes	○	○	○	○	○
10 I spend the bulk of my time on student behaviour and welfare	○	○	○	○	○
11 I am able to engage in strategic educational leadership as part of my role	○	○	○	○	○
12 My role is to manage the school so that others can focus on learning	○	○	○	○	○
13 My role as DP is good preparation for becoming a principal	○	○	○	○	○
14 I am able to negotiate which roles I undertake as part of the senior management team	○	○	○	○	○

General comments about your role as a deputy in your current context . Please feel free to add general comments (e.g about how your role as a DP was decided, how you were recruited and appointed, what your daily operation is, how leadership is shared in your school) as this will help develop questions for interviews.

Final comments

This survey is completely anonymous.
However, the next phase of the study includes interviewing a small number of participants. IF YOU ARE HAPPY TO BE CONTACTED by the researcher with regard to being interviewed in future please complete the following.
THANK YOU for taking the time to complete this survey. Wanda Snitch

Full name

Email contact

Phone contact

APPENDIX 2:
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY ETHICS APPROVAL

MACQUARIE University

WANDA SNITCH <wanda.snitch@students.mq.edu.au>

Re: Ethics Application - Final Approval (Ref. 5201100910D)

2 messages

Fhs Ethics <fhs.ethics@mq.edu.au> Wed, Feb 8, 2012 at 1:51 PM
To: Dr Norman McCulla <norman.mcculla@mq.edu au>
Cc: Mrs Wanda Lenore Snitch <wanda.snitch@students.mq.edu.au>

Dear Dr McCulla,

Re: "Growing Great Deputies: Success and Succession for deputy principals in secondary schools"

Thank you for your recent correspondence. Your response has addressed the issues raised by the Faculty of Human Sciences Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee and you may now commence your research.

This research meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). The National Statement is available at the following web site:

http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/e72.pdf.

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Chief Investigator: Dr Norman McCulla
Other Personnel: Mrs Wanda Snitch

NB. STUDENTS: IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP A COPY OF THIS APPROVAL EMAIL TO SUBMIT WITH YOUR THESIS.

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).

2. Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports.

Progress Report 1 Due: 1st March 2013
Progress Report 2 Due: 1st March 2014
Progress Report 3 Due: 1st March 2015
Progress Report 4 Due: 1st March 2016
Final Report Due: 1st March 2017

NB. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report for the project

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew

approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

4. All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee before implementation. Please complete and submit a Request for Amendment Form available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

5. Please notify the Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University. This information is available at the following websites:

http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/
http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/policy

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide the Macquarie University's Research Grants Management Assistant with a copy of this email as soon as possible. Internal and External funding agencies will not be informed that you have final approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Management Assistant has received a copy of this email.

If you need to provide a hard copy letter of Final Approval to an external organisation as evidence that you have Final Approval, please do not hesitate to contact the FHS Ethics at the address below.

Please retain a copy of this email as this is your official notification of final ethics approval.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Peter Roger
Chair
Faculty of Human Sciences
Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee

Faculty of Human Sciences - Ethics
Research Office
Level 3, Research HUB, Building C5C
Macquarie University
NSW 2109

Ph: +61 2 9850 4197
Fax: +61 2 9850 4465

Email: fhs.ethics@mq.edu.au

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/

Norman McCulla <norman.mcculla@mq.edu.au> Wed, Feb 8, 2012 at 2:33 PM
To: WANDA SNITCH <wanda.snitch@students.mq.edu.au>

Well done Wanda

Norman
[Quoted text hidden]

APPENDIX 3:
LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM NSW SECONDARY DEPUTY PRINCIPALS ASSOCIATION

NSW Secondary Deputy Principals Association Inc

www.nswsdpa.asn.au

Wanda Snitch
10 Hession Road
NELSON
NSW 2765

Re: PhD research into the role of secondary deputy principals in NSW DET schools

Dear Wanda

On behalf of the NSW Secondary Deputy Principals Association I am happy to confirm our support for the research proposal which you outlined to us at our July State Congress Meeting and the State Conference for Secondary Deputy Principals in September this year.

We are keen to view the final survey and will be pleased to assist you in your research by organising for its distribution to secondary deputy principals in NSW via email. Can I ask you to provide a covering note and a link to the online survey site when you are ready for this to happen.

The NSWSDPA will encourage colleagues to complete the survey, and look forward to following the progress of your research.

Yours sincerely

Evelyn Hazzard
President
NSW Secondary Deputy Principals Association
1 November, 2011

APPENDIX 4:
DESIGN DETAILS FOR ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

Further details of questionnaire design

Closed items collected demographic and background data as well as scales to measure self-reported activity and attitudes, as detailed below. Open items encouraged respondents to reflect on their experiences and make recommendations for future policy changes. The order of these sections was carefully considered to encourage completion of what was rather a detailed questionnaire, beginning with more familiar and easier items. It also presented sections 4 and 6, about educational leadership, in a sequence which avoided flagging this focus too early, in order to limit response bias or social desirability bias, where respondents may be inclined to give the answers that are assumed to be what the researcher is seeking (Cooksey & McDonald, 2011; R.B Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Open questions were placed later in the questionnaire, with a completely open-ended question at the end to capture any thoughts DPs wanted to add.

Several technical design options offered by the Qualtrics program were utilised to optimise questionnaire completion. These included "forced response" for all multiple choice and agreement scales so these questions could not be missed, and no option to go back to previous page, to avoid respondents changing responses after completing later items, for reasons noted above. The following types of item design were used: a multiple choice/single answer; matrix tables with multiple statements requiring agreement scales (5 point and 3 point); Yes/No choices; a "Slider" allowing recording of fine–grained experience data; one Side by Side item (5 statements, ideal vs real responses); and a number of closed items offered an "Other, please specify" option in order to capture unanticipated details (R. B Johnson & Turner, 2003, p. 304).

APPENDIX 5:
ITEMS IN *CONTEXTUAL EDUCATION LEADERSHIP SELF-ASSESSMENT* (CELSA) SCALE

CELSA scale: 18 items linked to BES Dimension and effect size.

Leadership Dimension (effect size)	"I" statement item (number of question in CELSA scale)
1. Establishing teaching and learning goals and expectations (0.42)	• I establish the importance of shared school goals (teaching/learning, philosophical, moral) (4.3) • I ensure that whole school goals are clear for all staff (4.12) • I develop staff commitment to whole school goals (4.18)
2. Using resources strategically so they are devoted to achieving goals (0.31)	• I use clear criteria that are aligned to teaching and learning priorities to allocate resources (4.9) • I ensure sustained funding for pedagogical priorities, including staff expertise (4.16)
3. Planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum (0.42)	• I promote collegial discussion of teaching and learning and their impact on student learning (4.14) • I actively oversee and coordinate teaching programs (4.15) • I observe classroom teaching and give useful feedback to teachers (4.2) • I ensure systematic monitoring of student progress and use of assessment results for programme improvement (4.13)
4. Promoting and participating in teacher learning and development (0.84)	• I ensure an intensive focus on the teaching–learning relationship (4.11) • I promote collective responsibility and accountability for student achievement and well-being (4.4) • I am actively involved, as a leader or learner, in professional learning with staff (4.7) • I work directly with teachers or executives to plan, co-ordinate and evaluate teachers and teaching (4.8) • As a result of my involvement in professional learning with teachers I make adjustments to support sustained improvements in student learning (4.10) • I provide useful advice about how to solve teaching problems (4.5)
5. Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment (0.27)	• I protect the teaching time of teachers and students (4.17) • I ensure consistent discipline routines (4.1) • I identify and resolve conflicts quickly and effectively (4.6)

APPENDIX 6:
NOTE FROM RESEARCHER ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION IN QUESTIONNAIRE

Note to DPs regarding the online survey

Note to DPs from Wanda Snitch 2 March 2011 – attached to email sent by President of the NSWSDPA when forwarding link to questionnaire.

Dear Deputy Principal
I invite you to complete the following anonymous online survey about the role and preparation of deputy principals in NSW DEC secondary schools. See link below.

While this topic is currently the focus of my PhD study, I have been exploring the issue since I was a DP myself. I have presented several workshops at state conferences over the last few years where some of you have given me valuable feedback and suggestions for this work.

I have requested the support of NSWSDPA for this independent research, which is not sponsored by DEC, as there is so little evidence about this important role. I hope to present some early findings at this year's conference.

Your survey response is totally anonymous unless you choose to provide contact details for follow up interviews. You can 'save and continue later' if necessary (if on the same computer) though it should not take more than 10-15 minutes. Most items are quick multiple choice, but there is provision for longer responses to some questions if you wish.

The survey link is being emailed to you via the Association to ensure that only DPs will complete it, therefore I request that you do not forward it on. If you have any difficulty with the online survey please contact me on wandasni@yahoo.com or 0412 027 484.

The survey will be 'live' until Friday 30 March, but as I know how busy the inbox of a DP can be I would encourage you to complete it sooner rather than later.

Control/click on the link: Survey: Secondary Deputy Principals <https://qtrial.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_ai4dNHvpcsbcYE4> or cut and paste the html link below if needed.

Survey: Secondary Deputy Principals

Thank you for your participation.
Wanda Snitch
PhD candidate, Macquarie University

****
This message is intended for the addressee named and may contain
privileged information or confidential information or both. If you
are not the intended recipient please delete it and notify the sender.

APPENDIX 7:
QUESTIONNAIRE: DATA REPORT WITH SUPPLEMENTARY ANALYSIS

This document includes summaries, tables and graphs originally generated using the Qualtrics Report function in 2013. For purposes of clarity in this Appendix, main sections were re-numbered and some headings re-worded as statements rather than questions.
****Where the Report has been supplemented by additional analysis (counts and commentary) by the researcher this is noted with an asterisk. A copy of the original online questionnaire is provided in Appendix 1 for further reference.***

Questionnaire: Summary of results.

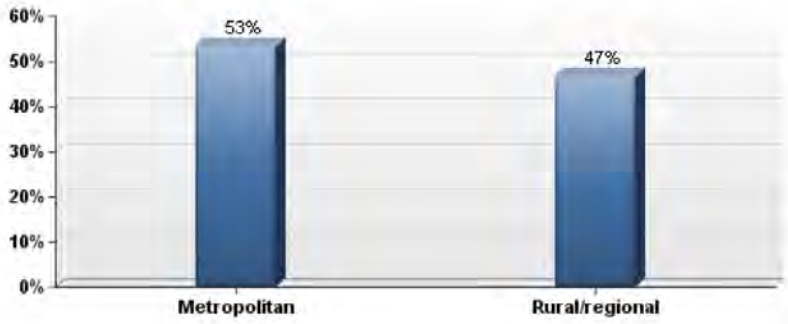
Section 1: SCHOOL CONTEXT

1.1 Number of secondary students

#	Answer		Response	%
1			40	17%
2	500-750		59	25%
3	751-1000		66	28%
4	>1000		68	29%
	Total		233	100%

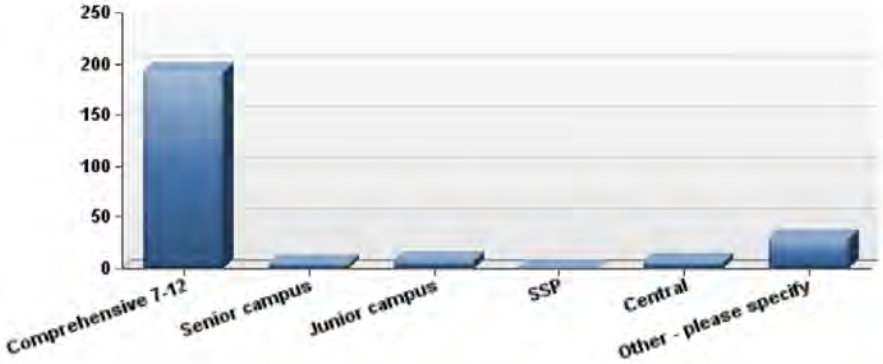
1

1.2 School location



#	Answer		Response	%
1	Metropolitan		124	53%
2	Rural/regional		109	47%
	Total		233	100%

1.3 School type



#	Answer		Response	%
1	Comprehensive 7-12		193	83%
2	Senior campus		5	2%
3	Junior campus		8	3%
4	SSP		0	0%
5	Central		7	3%
6	Other - please specify		29	12%

***School type: Analysis** of 'other, please specify' text responses. NB some schools were categorized in more than one cell e.g. boys selective.

	Selective	Partially Selective	Distance education	Performing/ Creative, Arts	Boys	Girls
Raw number in sample	10	7	5	3	3	3
% of Sample n=233	4.3%	3.0%	2.2%	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%
% of DET schools	4.5%	5.5%	Not available	2.0%	4.5%	5.1%

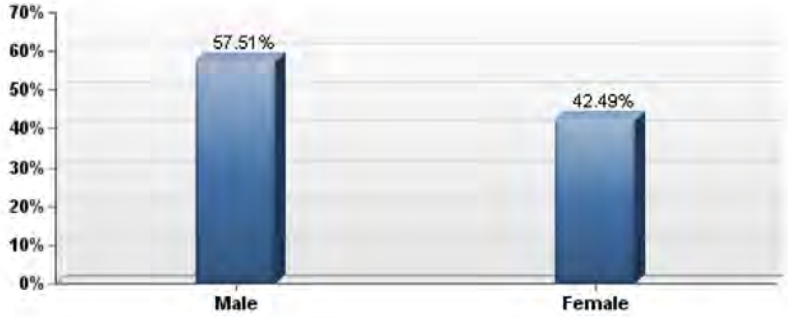
1.4 TOTAL number of deputies in the school.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	1		34	15%
2	2		170	73%
3	3		28	12%
4	>3		1	0%
	Total		233	100%

3

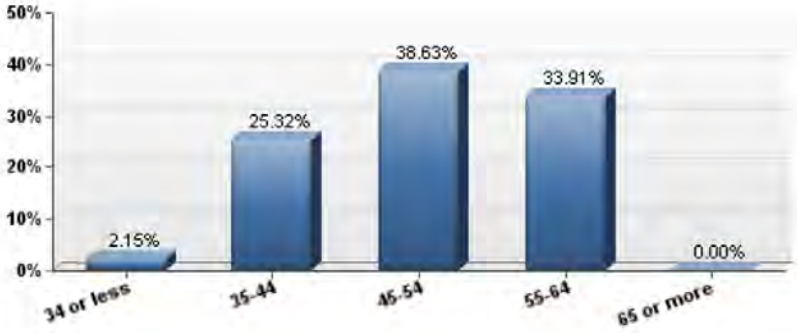
Section 2: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 DP Gender



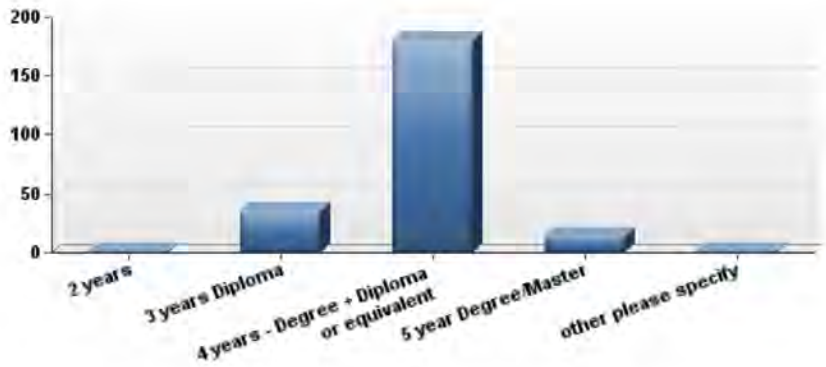
#	Answer		Response	%
1	Male		134	58%
2	Female		99	42%
	Total		233	100%

2.2 DP Age range



#	Answer		Response	%
1	34 or less		5	2%
2	35-44		59	25%
3	45-54		90	39%
4	55-64		79	34%
5	65 or more		0	0%
	Total		233	100%

2.3 Length/type of INITIAL teacher training? (Not including later training)



#	Answer		Response	%
1	2 years		2	1%
2	3 years Diploma		35	15%
3	4 years - Degree + Diploma or equivalent		180	77%
4	5 year Degree/Master		14	6%
5	other please specify		2	1%
	Total		233	100%

***Summary (Other).** Both responses indicated completion of a 4 year degree or equivalent (Category 3) so could be added to the score for this column.

2.4 WHERE initially trained.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	NSW		225	97%
2	Other Australian State		6	3%
3	overseas		2	1%
	Total		233	100%

2.5 Any SUBSEQUENT teacher or education training completed:

6

#	Answer		Response	%
1	3 – 4 year conversion course		24	10%
2	Postgraduate CERTIFICATE in		28	12%
3	Postgraduate DIPLOMA in		49	21%
4	MASTERS in		58	25%
5	Other - please specify		106	45%

*NB Total % > 100 as some respondents had completed multiple additional courses. Also, column 5 'Other' also reflects many Nil responses due to the 'forced response' design of this item.

***Analysis of text responses for each category of subsequent training in education/teaching.** *Adjusted totals reflect cleaning i.e. transfer of items to correct columns and removal of extraneous wording.

Postgraduate Certificate	***Adjusted total 23**
Specific teaching areas such as Dance, Drama, Careers or Information Technology.	13
Education, Secondary Education or Educational Studies	5
Human Resource Management(2) Mentoring (2) and School Management (1)	5

Postgraduate Diploma	***Adjusted total 46**
Education	24
Computer Education/Business Computing	4
Educational Leadership or Administration	3
Special Education/Learning Assistance/Autism	3
Vocational Education and Training	2
Single teaching subject or approach: Mathematics, Home Economics, English/History, Science, Business/Systems , Literacy, TESOL	1 x 8
Single other: Law, Philosophy for Children	1 x 2

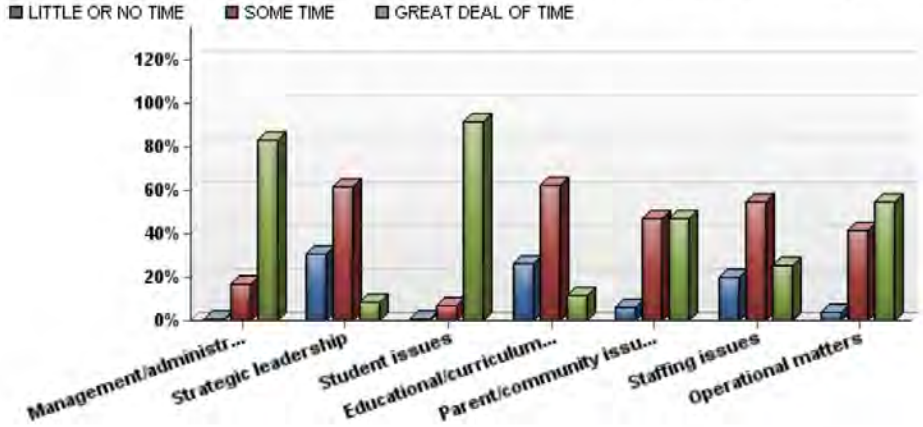
Masters Degree	**58**
Education, Educational Studies	22
Educational Leadership or Administration	15
Computing, Computer Education, IT	6
Special Education	6
Single other: Human Resource Management, Letters, Counselling, Training and Development, Politics	5
Specific teaching subject: Science, Mathematics, English Literature, Arts	4
	58

***Summary of 'Other, please specify' text comments (*26 specific, 12 general)**
This column attracted a confused set of responses which are therefore not tabulated or included in results. When responses indicating no further formal studies had been undertaken were removed (e.g. 'none', 'nil', as the question forced a response) the following patterns were observed.

- Additional university degrees were recorded in this category by nine respondents: Bachelor Degrees (7); one PhD and one Honours degree.
- Five references to Diplomas or 'Majors' suggested further university or possibly Technical and Further Education (TAFE) college study had been completed.
- TAFE courses had been completed by eight respondents, apparently as a requirement for teaching Vocational Education and Training (VET) subjects: e.g. Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (6) and Certificate II in various industry courses (6) and two generic references to VET. (NB Two respondents incorrectly included these as Postgraduate Certificates (Category 1) although they are actually undergraduate certificates.)
- Although this item was intended to capture formal study, references were made to a wide range of other non-accredited training seen to be relevant, with comments mentioning ongoing professional learning, DEC in-service courses and conferences (12). Details regarding relevant DEC training were captured in later items so this data was not analysed further at this stage.

Section 3: HOW TIME is ALLOCATED IN THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL ROLE.

3 In a typical week, HOW MUCH TIME do you generally spend on the following activities:



#	Question	LITTLE OR NO TIME	SOME TIME	GREAT DEAL OF TIME	Total Responses	Mean
1	Management/administration	1	39	193	233	2.82
2	Strategic leadership	71	143	19	233	1.78
3	Student issues	2	17	214	233	2.91
4	Educational/curriculum leadership	61	145	27	233	1.85
5	Parent/community issues	14	109	110	233	2.41
6	Staffing issues	46	128	59	233	2.06
7	Operational matters	9	96	128	233	2.51

Statistic	Management/ administration	Strategic leadership	Student issues	Educational /curriculum leadership	Parent/ community issues	Staffing issues	Operational matters
Min Value	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Max Value	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Mean	2.82	1.78	2.91	1.85	2.41	2.06	2.51
Variance	0.15	0.34	0.10	0.36	0.36	0.45	0.33
Standard Deviation	0.39	0.58	0.32	0.60	0.60	0.67	0.57
Total Respons es	233	233	233	233	233	233	233

3 (Other) TYPES of activities which take up a significant proportion of time but are not reflected above:

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	58

***Analysis:** Text responses to the 'Other activities' item were divided into those which could probably have been identified and included within one of the seven original categories, and some which represent new or different perspectives - these are captured under five additional broad themes a-e below.

Category 1-7	'Other activities'
1.Management/ administration	Staff organisation for absences and excursion covers; reading and responding to emails; Paperwork related to student issues - Access Request Forms, Behaviour Plans, Risk Management Plans, suspension paperwork, part time exemption paperwork, student absences paperwork etc; Board of Studies entries; Reports, responses, accountability surveys; surveys issuing, collating and answering, VET requirements, National Partnerships and PSFP requirements, NAPLAN analysis evaluation and responses, Weekly bulletins, casual pay; Enrolment procedures, contact with home schools; Day to day issues; Programs which crop up that are unexpected but mandatory (eg driven by political imperatives); After hours work night time info nights, parent teacher, P and C; additional programs which may be one off or short term e.g. PSP.
2.Strategic leadership	
3.Student issues:	Welfare issues with students; Dysfunctional family relationships, depression and anxiety of students; Student welfare, Student Leadership; Playground and sport discipline problems; Student welfare and discipline; Counselling students (as there are not enough counsellor support services; helping students with family issues including homelessness; Student welfare issues when dealing directly with parents as we have no counsellor; Discipline and welfare; name calling and other social issues; Student behaviour; discipline; discipline; student mental health is a growing and currently huge area with very little counsellor time; Trying to access outside agencies to align with student needs; Learning Support; liaising with parents over mental health managing social, emotional, psychological needs not only of students but families issues.
4.Educational/curriculum leadership	Assessment and Reporting 7 -12; teacher professional learning; Professional learning of Staff.

5.Parent/community issues	Parental concern particularly those arising in the community and impacting in the school.
6.Staffing issues	Staff welfare; Staff and student mental health is a growing and currently huge area with very little counsellor time; Staff welfare; individual teacher meetings e.g. HTs of faculties I lead, YAs I support, other staff i.e. due to 'open door' policy.
7.Operational matters	Properties issues; maintenance; tradesmen; Maintenance; Assisting builders, plumbers etc. complete work needed in school; Grounds/maintenance issues; Properties - huge time drain (Operational issue I know, but deserves a separate mention); cleaning the playground.

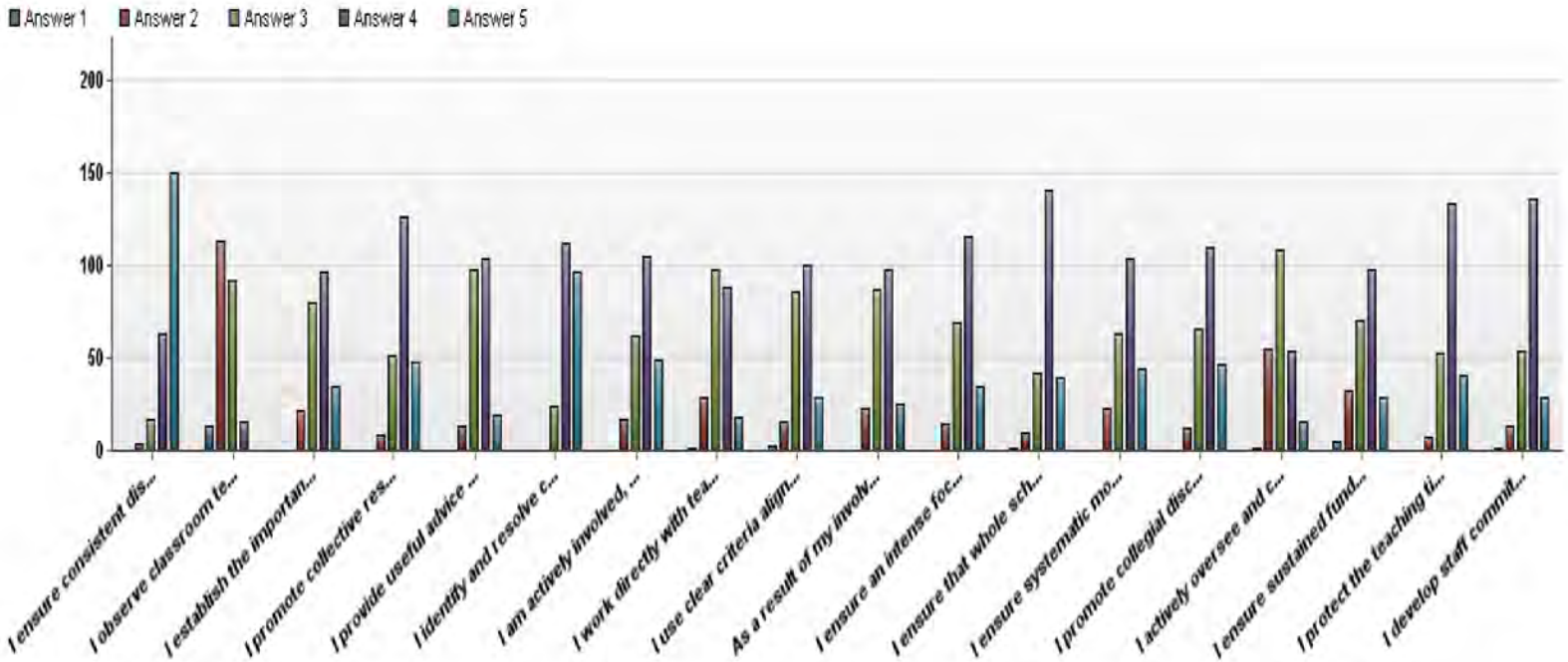
***Additional themes** – apparently newly emerging themes (remembering that Cranston originally collected data using these headings in 2002) or those not captured under 7 categories.

Additional theme	**'Other activities'**
a. Technology related issues – technical and behaviour	Cyber bullying; Facebook, technology issues; Student issues to do with cyber bullying; technology driven imperatives; managing the enormous social problems associated with misuse/abuse of technology occuring outside school time but having negative flow on effects; Facebook and Welfare issues of students; Managing technology; Dealing with bullying typically started on home computers the night before while children are at home with their parents. Parental expectations are that we will sort out the issues that have actually occurred in an unrelated manner to the school; FM Web; Managing laptop learning and digital citizenship issues
b. Liaising and partnership expectations	Liaising with DET officers; liaising with external agencies and DET agencies e.g. police, regional student welfare, local agencies for student placement, HSLO; Developing and furthering linkages with the community. Liaising with partner primary schools. Involvement in Aboriginal Education initiatives. Requirements/queries by growing number of external agencies who want to have some partnership with a school; Community Liaison with local industry, NGOs and other government agencies.
c. Teaching	Teaching a senior class; Teaching (2 classes) including programming, assessment, marking and reporting; Teaching; Teaching, planning & marking; Classroom teaching; Teaching and preparing lessons; Teaching, lesson preparation and practical area without an aid; Teaching: As a Central School Deputy Principal, I also teach 4 classes!

d. School promotion/ marketing	School promotion; web page manager, promotion of school manager; Public Relations.
e. General	Every day brings a new surprise. There are so many unscheduled developments /interviews/parents dropping in that getting anything you planned to do does not happen; Problem solving; de-briefing with principal.

Section 4: FREQUENCY OF TYPES OF LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES.

4. FREQUENCY of following activities as part of DP role:



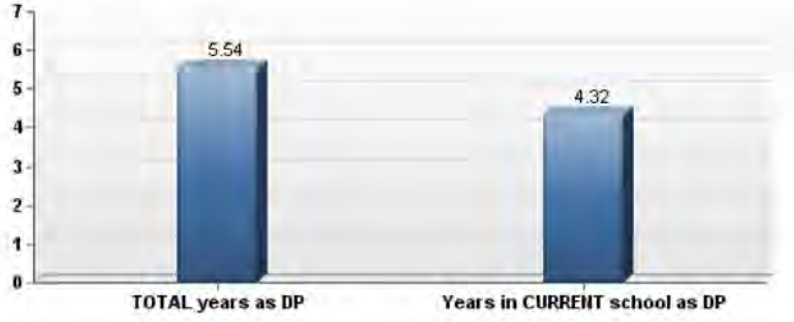
#	Question	Label 1	Count 1	Label 2	Count 2	Label 3	Count 3	Label 4	Count 4	Label 5	Count 5	Total Responses	Mean
1	I ensure consistent discipline routines	Never	0	Rarely	3	Sometimes	17	Frequently	63	Very frequently	150	233	4.55
2	I observe classroom teaching and give useful feedback to teachers	Never	13	Rarely	113	Sometimes	92	Frequently	15	Very frequently	0	233	2.47
3	I establish the importance of whole school shared goals (teaching/learning, philosophical, moral)	Never	0	Rarely	22	Sometimes	80	Frequently	97	Very frequently	34	233	3.61
4	I promote collective responsibility and accountability for student achievement and wellbeing	Never	0	Rarely	8	Sometimes	51	Frequently	126	Very frequently	48	233	3.92
5	I provide useful advice about how to solve teaching problems	Never	0	Rarely	13	Sometimes	98	Frequently	103	Very frequently	19	233	3.55
6	I identify and resolve conflict quickly and effectively	Never	0	Rarely	0	Sometimes	24	Frequently	112	Very frequently	97	233	4.31
7	I am actively involved, as a leader or learner, in professional learning with staff	Never	0	Rarely	17	Sometimes	62	Frequently	105	Very frequently	49	233	3.80
8	I work directly with teachers or executives to plan, coordinate and evaluate teachers and teaching	Never	1	Rarely	28	Sometimes	98	Frequently	88	Very frequently	18	233	3.40
9	I use clear criteria aligned to teaching and learning priorities to allocate resources	Never	2	Rarely	16	Sometimes	86	Frequently	100	Very frequently	29	233	3.59
10	As a result of my involvement in professional learning with teachers I make adjustments to support sustained improvements in student learning.	Never	0	Rarely	23	Sometimes	87	Frequently	98	Very frequently	25	233	3.54
11	I ensure an intense focus on the teaching and learning relationship	Never	0	Rarely	14	Sometimes	69	Frequently	115	Very frequently	35	233	3.73
12	I ensure that whole school goals are clear for all staff	Never	1	Rarely	10	Sometimes	42	Frequently	141	Very frequently	39	233	3.89
13	I ensure systematic monitoring of student progress and use student assessment data for programming improvement	Never	0	Rarely	23	Sometimes	63	Frequently	103	Very frequently	44	233	3.72
14	I promote collegial discussion of teaching and learning and their impact on student learning	Never	0	Rarely	12	Sometimes	65	Frequently	109	Very frequently	47	233	3.82
15	I actively oversee and coordinate teaching programs	Never	1	Rarely	55	Sometimes	108	Frequently	53	Very frequently	16	233	3.12
16	I ensure sustained funding for pedagogical priorities, including provision of staff expertise	Never	5	Rarely	32	Sometimes	70	Frequently	98	Very frequently	28	233	3.48
17	I protect the teaching time of teachers and students	Never	0	Rarely	7	Sometimes	52	Frequently	133	Very frequently	41	233	3.89
18	I develop staff commitment to whole school goals	Never	1	Rarely	13	Sometimes	54	Frequently	136	Very frequently	29	233	3.77

Statistic	I ensure consistent discipline routines	I observe classroom teaching and give useful feedback to teachers	I establish the importance of whole school shared goals (teaching/learning, philosophical, moral)	I promote collective responsibility and accountability for student achievement and wellbeing	I provide useful advice about how to solve teaching problems	I identify and resolve conflict quickly and effectively	I am actively involved, as a leader or learner, in professional learning with staff	I work directly with teachers or executives to plan, coordinate and evaluate teachers and teaching	I use clear criteria aligned to teaching and learning priorities to allocate resources	As a result of my involvement in professional learning with teachers I make adjustments to support sustained improvements in student learning.	I ensure an intense focus on the teaching and learning relationship	I ensure that whole school goals are clear for all staff	I ensure systematic monitoring of student progress and use student assessment data for programming improvement	I promote collegial discussion of teaching and learning and their impact on student learning	I actively oversee and coordinate teaching programs	I ensure sustained funding for pedagogical priorities, including provision of staff expertise	I protect the teaching time of teachers and students	I develop staff commitment to whole school goals
Min Value	2	1	2	2	2	3	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	2	1
Max Value	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Mean	4.55	2.47	3.61	3.92	3.55	4.31	3.80	3.40	3.59	3.54	3.73	3.89	3.72	3.82	3.12	3.48	3.89	3.77
Variance	0.47	0.49	0.72	0.56	0.52	0.42	0.73	0.66	0.68	0.66	0.62	0.55	0.78	0.66	0.74	0.90	0.51	0.57
Standard Deviation	0.69	0.70	0.85	0.75	0.72	0.65	0.85	0.81	0.83	0.81	0.79	0.74	0.88	0.81	0.86	0.95	0.71	0.75
Total	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	233

15

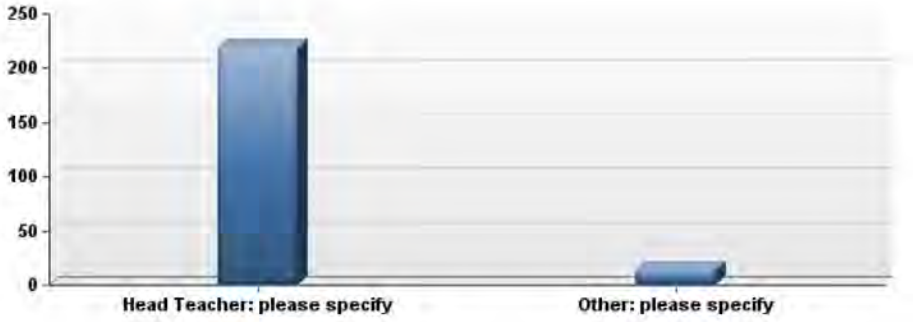
Section 5: Becoming a deputy principal.

5.1 TOTAL years as Deputy Principal



#	Answer	Min Value	Max Value	Average Value	Standard Deviation	Responses
1	TOTAL years as DP	0.00	21.00	5.54	4.11	233
2	Years in CURRENT school as DP	0.00	21.00	4.32	3.35	233

5.2 Position PRIOR to DP:



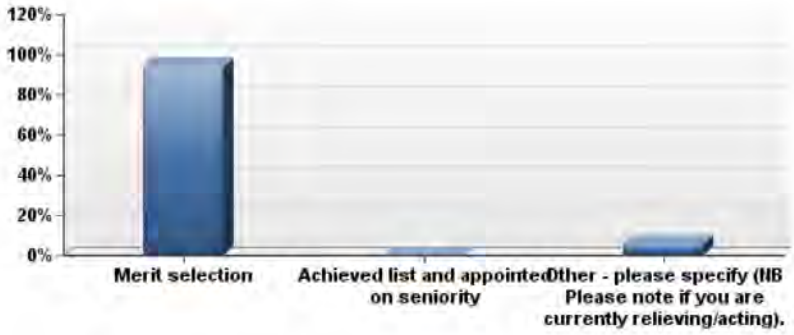
#	Answer		Response	%
1	Head Teacher: please specify		219	94%
2	Other: please specify		14	6%
	Total		233	100%

***Analysis:** Separated into Head Teacher (Key Learning Area - KLA), Head Teacher (not KLA = Not) or *non-Head Teacher position (other) prior to becoming DP.
NB General trends only should be noted due to levels of accuracy and consistency in terms used. Different terms are commonly used for HT roles, and these were allocated to KLAs on best knowledge of subject areas. Also, some respondents named split roles or different consecutive HT roles.

Position Prior to DP: HT (KLA), HT (not KLA), Other	**Total**	**% sample** n =233	**KLA or not**
Human Society in the Environment (History, Social Sciences)	33	14	KLA
Science	25	11	KLA
English	24	10	KLA
Technology and Applied Sciences	24	10	KLA
Mathematics	22	9	KLA
Personal Development, Health and Physical Education	22	9	KLA
Administration	13	6	Not
Welfare	11	5	Not
*Consultant, Regional or District	10	4	other
Creative and/or Performing Arts	9	4	KLA
Teaching and Learning	5	2	Not
Special Education/Support	4	2	Not
Languages	3	1	KLA
Vocational Education and Training	2	<1	Not
*Principal, Central School	2	<1	other
College	1	<1	Not

Curriculum	1	<1	Not
Secondary Studies (Senior)	1	<1	Not
Mentor	1	<1	Not
Classroom teacher heading faculty	1	<1	Not

5.3 How were you recruited/selected into your FIRST Deputy Principal position?



#	Answer	Response	%
1	Merit selection	220	94%
2	Achieved list and appointed on seniority	0	0%
3	Other - please specify (NB Please note if you are currently relieving/acting).	13	6%
	Total	233	100%

***Analysis:** The small number of respondents who indicated that they were not selected for a particular school position through local Merit Selection (Category 3) were nevertheless appointed through the provisions of the state-wide staffing system (ref Context). Application of these provisions was specifically noted by one of the Consultants returning to school from a Regional/District position, one Central School principal, and one DP who had transferred. Some of the comments under 'Other' were not relevant as they referred to issues prior to selection as DP.

Respondents whose text responses in 'Other' indicated that they were currently relieving/acting in the role (3) were previously excluded from the sample as this was one of the sample boundaries (ref Methods).

5.4 Is the DP position additional i.e. funded by a specific program e.g. PSP, National Partnerships?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Yes	14	6%
2	No	219	94%
	Total	233	100%

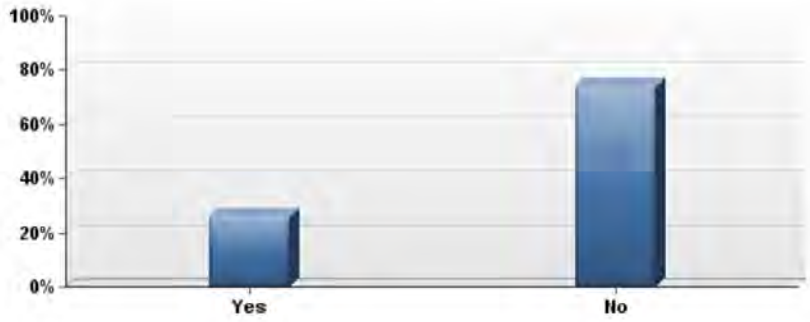
5.5 If Yes, does this external funding have any influence on the role?

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	21

***Analysis**: 14 respondents indicated that their position was an 'additional' funded DP position. Of relevant responses regarding whether external funding made a difference to their role, the majority (8) indicated that they undertook most or the full range of DP responsibilities, not seeing their position as 'additional' but attempting to ensure that their equity focus was reflected in school planning and organisation. A few (3) said their key areas of responsibility focused on resources and programs in narrower areas. Several respondents indicated that these positions do not stand alone, two had 'moved sideways' into the role from a standard DP position, while one appeared to wish to justify the legitimacy of the funded role.

NB: This item was included to help make a judgement whether or not to include 'additional' funded DP positions in the sample. On the basis of these comments and other considerations (e.g. DEC email group and list included these positions as 'substantive' and they were appointed for up to 3 years through a version of merit selection) it was decided to include these respondents in the sample.

5.6. SECOND or subsequent DP position.

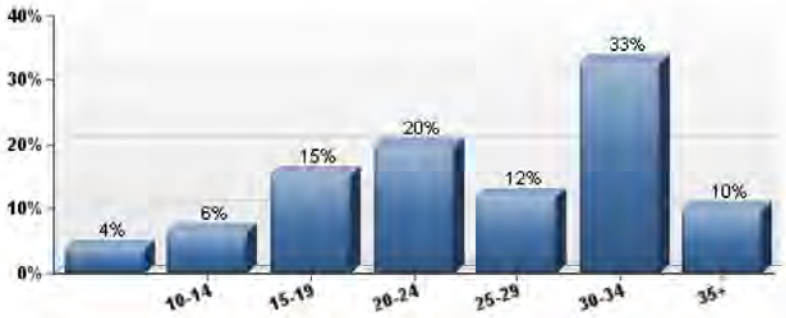


#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		61	26%
2	No		172	74%
	Total		233	100%

5.7 Number of DIFFERENT PRINCIPALS worked with as a Deputy Principal (at least 2 terms).

#	Answer		Response	%
1	1		98	42%
2	2		70	30%
3	3		50	21%
4	4		8	3%
5	5 or more		7	3%
	Total		233	100%

5.8 TOTAL years TEACHING including current position



#	Answer		Response	%
1			9	4%
2	10-14		15	6%
3	15-19		36	15%
4	20-24		46	20%
5	25-29		28	12%
6	30-34		76	33%
7	35+		23	10%
	Total		233	100%

5.9 Participation in DET LEADERSHIP programs – 'specify and comment'.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	197

***Analysis:** 54 respondents (23% of sample) did not answer this open-ended item and some answered with a simple 'No'. Valid text responses referred to a multitude of current and previously available DEC programs, frequently by acronym or slightly incorrect but recognisable titles. The most commonly referred to programs are summarised below, once again with the caveat that general trends only should be noted due to inconsistent wording.

Specific course named (recognisable)	Refs	State dev	Regional dev
Executive Leadership Development Program (EDLP)	23	y	
Deputy Principal Induction	18	y	
School Leadership Preparation Program (SLPP)	5	y	
Principal Preparation Program (PPP)	8	y	
Team Leadership/for School Improvement	8	y	
Covey: 7 Habits of highly effective people.	3	Co-ord	
Aspiring/Preparing DP program/seminar	3		y
HT/Executive Induction	3		y

Specific course, 2 or fewer mentions (not recognised as above)
Leadership Capability Framework Seminar; Certificate of School Leadership & Management; DET leadership program; Faculty Leadership for Educational Change (FLEC); Great Leaders, Great Teams, Great Results; Learn Lead Succeed; Head teacher leadership program; Principal capabilities program; ISLG; TLDP; Emotional Intelligence; Diagnostic Mapping; CLN; PLLDD online leadership programs; HT and DP mentoring programs.

More general comments
Many respondents commented generally about having participated in state or regionally developed courses or programs. A few comments were positive, but most courses attracted little or no commentary. It was frequently remarked that they could not remember the name of the program. Four general comments expressed dissatisfaction with the usefulness of available programs, and one expressed great frustration with trying to access promised training and induction. Several comments related to being a facilitator rather than a participant in courses (i.e. EDLP).

5.10 Participation in any OTHER form of specific LEADERSHIP program, study – 'specify and comment'.

***Text response analysis** 84 respondents (after removing 55 'No' responses). Some responses referred to more than one type of training.

Specific form of leadership training– OTHER (*after asking for DET courses in previous question.) **PROVIDER**	**References**
*Actually DET provision or coordination (e.g. 7 Covey).	22
University: Masters completed or begun, Diplomas, units or courses, leadership conference.	14
DP professional association (annual conferences, local networks)	8
Own school or group of local schools.	5

22

Army officer training.	2
Specific leadership course commercial (not including Covey).	2
Plus general comments e.g. 'too many to name', 'yes, 20 years ago', 'reading'.	

Analysis of text responses to the open-ended items 5.11 – 5.15 and the final open-ended question 7.2

*Text responses to the following items were read and considered but not closely analysed prior to the Phase 2 interviews being conducted. Responses were then coded and analysed jointly with interview responses as described in Chapter 4. This was due to relevance to research questions, the relatively large number of text responses, and overlap between questionnaire items and interview questions.

***Text responses to items 5.9 – 5.15** were merged with interview data, relevant comments embedded in other item responses and integrated with quantitative data in order to answer RQ4: *How have deputy principals been prepared for the responsibilities of this role?*

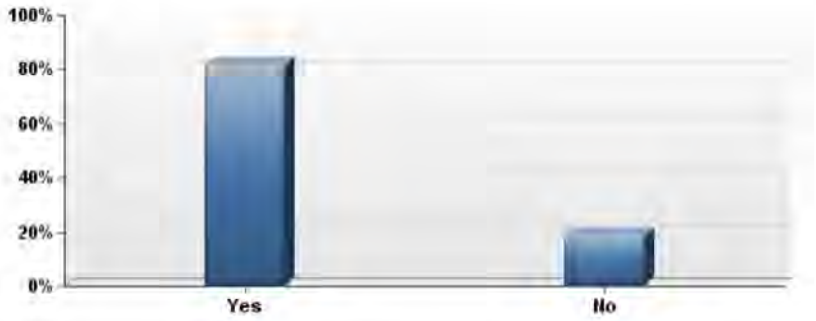
5.11 OTHER TYPES OF PREPARATION undertaken prior to becoming a deputy principal - formal or informal.

***Text response analysis** 171 respondents. See joint analysis as above.

5.12 'Can you comment on what in your professional background prepared you BEST for the role of DP.'

***Text response analysis** 200 respondents. See joint analysis as above.

5.13 PARTICULAR ENCOURAGEMENT to consider a leadership role - 'at what stage and professional relationship'.



#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		190	82%
2	No		43	18%
	Total		233	100%

Text response analysis 101 respondents. See joint analysis as above.

Encouragement by	**Survey count N=**
Principal	126
DP	67
Professional colleagues	37
Head Teacher (positive)	21
Senior management team general	11
Senior officers	10
Family or friends	2

Encouraged at what stage in career	**Survey count N=**
Classroom teacher	43
Head Teacher	58

5.14 Suggestions for how FUTURE deputy principals could best be PREPARED for the role.

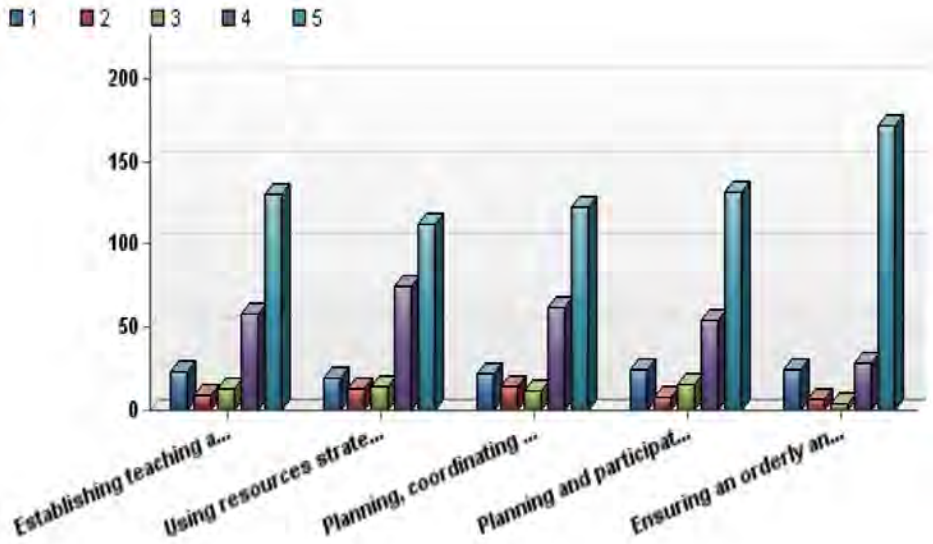
***Text response analysis.** 183 respondents. See joint analysis as above.

5.15 Suggestions for how FUTURE deputy principals could best be RECRUITED into the role.

***Text response analysis.** 149 respondents. See joint analysis as above.

Section 6: The importance of BES leadership dimensions in the DP role.

6.1 IMPORTANT in a Deputy Principal role (IDEAL). Not important > Very Important



#	Question	1	2	3	4	5	Total Responses	**Mean**
1	Establishing teaching and learning goals and expectations	23	9	13	58	130	233	**4.13**
2	Using resources strategically so they are devoted to achieving goals	19	13	14	75	112	233	**4.06**
3	Planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum	22	14	12	62	123	233	**4.07**
4	Planning and participating in teacher learning and development	24	8	15	54	132	233	**4.12**
5	Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment	24	6	4	28	171	233	**4.36**

Statistic	Establishing teaching and learning goals and expectations	Using resources strategically so they are devoted to achieving goals	Planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum	Planning and participating in teacher learning and development	Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment
Min Value	1	1	1	1	1
Max Value	5	5	5	5	5
Mean	**4.13**	**4.06**	**4.07**	**4.12**	**4.36**
Variance	1.65	1.50	1.67	1.69	1.66
Standard Deviation	1.28	1.22	1.29	1.30	1.29
Total Responses	233	233	233	233	233

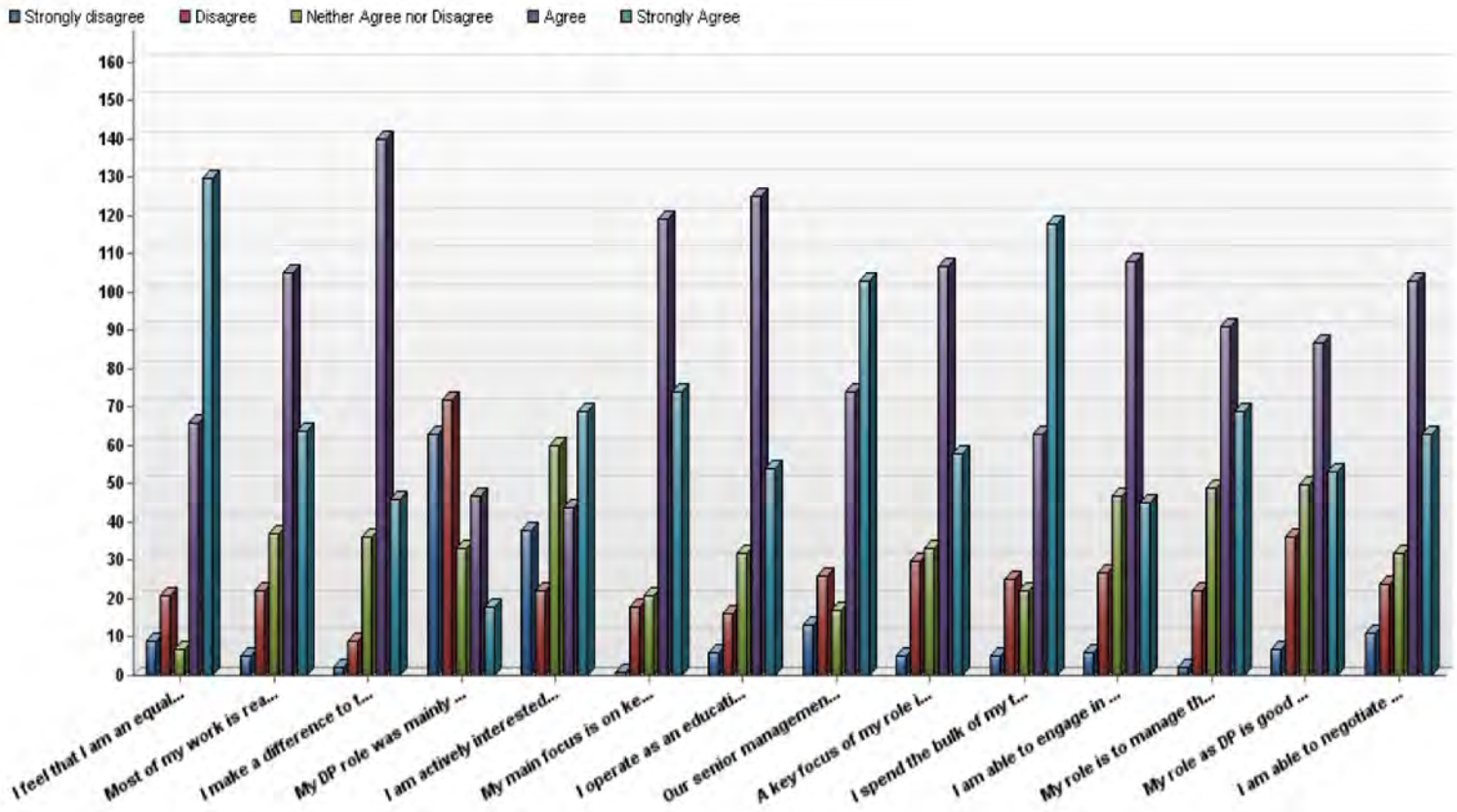
6.2 DESCRIBES my current DP role (REAL)
Disagree > Agree

#	Question	1	2	3	4	5	Total Responses	**Mean**
1	Establishing teaching and learning goals and expectations	16	43	67	76	31	233	**3.27**
2	Using resources strategically so they are devoted to achieving goals	10	34	78	75	36	233	**3.40**
3	Planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum	17	48	73	61	34	233	**3.20**
4	Planning and participating in teacher learning and development	16	39	58	72	48	233	**3.42**
5	Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment	9	5	18	70	131	233	**4.33**

Statistic	Establishing teaching and learning goals and expectations	Using resources strategically so they are devoted to achieving goals	Planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum	Planning and participating in teacher learning and development	Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment
Min Value	1	1	1	1	1
Max Value	5	5	5	5	5
Mean	**3.27**	**3.40**	**3.20**	**3.42**	**4.33**
Variance	1.25	1.10	1.31	1.41	0.97
Standard Deviation	1.12	1.05	1.14	1.19	0.99
Total Responses	233	233	233	233	233

7. Operating as a DP in current school context.

7.1. **AGREEMENT with statements:**



#	Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Resp	Mean
1	I feel that I am an equal member of the senior management team with the principal and other DP (if any)	9	21	7	66	130	233	**4.23**
2	Most of my work is reactive and in response to the needs of others	5	22	37	105	64	233	**3.86**
3	I make a difference to teaching and learning in the school	2	9	36	140	46	233	**3.94**
4	My DP role was mainly constructed to replace the person before me	63	72	33	47	18	233	**2.51**
5	I am actively interested in becoming a principal in the future	38	22	60	44	69	233	**3.36**
6	My main focus is on keeping the school running smoothly	1	18	21	119	74	233	**4.06**
7	I operate as an educational leader in my current role	6	16	32	125	54	233	**3.88**
8	Our senior management team (principal and deputies) meets regularly and plans effectively	13	26	17	74	103	233	**3.98**
9	A key focus of my role is a focus on student learning outcomes	5	30	33	107	58	233	**3.79**
10	I spend the bulk of my time on student behaviour and welfare	5	25	22	63	118	233	**4.13**
11	I am able to engage in strategic educational leadership as part of my role	6	27	47	108	45	233	**3.68**
12	My role is to manage the school so that others can focus on learning	2	22	49	91	69	233	**3.87**
13	My role as DP is good preparation for becoming a principal	7	36	50	87	53	233	**3.61**
14	I am able to negotiate which roles I undertake as part of the senior management team	11	24	32	103	63	233	**3.79**

Statistic	I feel that I am an equal member of the senior management team with the principal and other DP (if any)	Most of my work is reactive and in response to the needs of others	I make a difference to teaching and learning in the school	My DP role was mainly constructed to replace the person before me	I am actively interested in becoming a principal in the future	My main focus is on keeping the school running smoothly	I operate as an educational leader in my current role	Our senior management team (principal and deputies) meets regularly and plans effectively	A key focus of my role is a focus on student learning outcomes	I spend the bulk of my time on student behaviour and welfare	I am able to engage in strategic educational leadership as part of my role	My role is to manage the school so that others can focus on learning	My role as DP is good preparation for becoming a principal	I am able to negotiate which roles I undertake as part of the senior management team
Min Value	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Max Value	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Mean	**4.23**	**3.86**	**3.94**	**2.51**	**3.36**	**4.06**	**3.88**	**3.98**	**3.79**	**4.13**	**3.68**	**3.87**	**3.61**	**3.79**
Variance	1.25	0.99	0.58	1.66	2.00	0.75	0.86	1.47	1.06	1.21	0.99	0.95	1.19	1.20
Standard Deviation	1.12	0.99	0.76	1.29	1.41	0.87	0.93	1.21	1.03	1.10	1.00	0.97	1.09	1.10
Total Responses	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	233

7.2. General comments about your role as a deputy in your current context . Please feel free to add general comments (e.g. about how your role as a DP was decided, how you were recruited and appointed, what your daily operation is, how leadership is shared in your school) as this will help develop questions for interviews.

***Text analysis** 110 respondents. See joint analysis as above.

***Responses to item 7.2** were analysed and combined with qualitative data from other open-ended questionnaire items and interviews, and used to answer relevant Research Questions. As discussed in Chapter 4.

APPENDIX 8:
EMAILS (3): INTERVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

Subject: Continued availability for interview for research into the role of deputy principals

From: Wanda Snitch (wandasni@yahoo.com)

To: [redacted]@det.nsw.edu.au;

Date: Monday, 11 February 2013, 9:42

Dear [redacted]

In 2012 you kindly completed an online survey which was distributed for me via the NSWSDPA. This survey, for my PhD project at Macquarie University, focused on the role, daily practice and preparation of DPs in DEC secondary schools.

At that time you also indicated that you would be willing to be contacted about the possibility of being interviewed. I am now at the stage of planning interviews.

This email is NOT a definite invitation to interview, as I am currently approaching 'volunteers' from a range of contexts and backgrounds to assess availability. **I would like to confirm if you are still available to be interviewed, most likely during Term 1.** This would take place outside school hours at a time and place convenient to you and take approximately one hour.

I am very aware that people's circumstances may have changed so if it is no longer appropriate I will absolutely understand.

I would appreciate it if you could indicate by return email if you are still willing to be interviewed. I will then contact you in the next few weeks to confirm your selection as an interviewee or not, and make arrangements.

Thank you for your initial survey response and offer to be contacted, and I look forward to your early response.

Regards

Wanda Snitch

PhD Candidate, Macquarie University

Subject: Invitation to interview - research into the role of deputy principals

From: Wanda Snitch (wandasni@yahoo.com)

To: [redacted]@det.nsw.edu.au;

Date: Wednesday, 20 February 2013, 12:32

Dear [redacted]
Thank you for confirming your offer to be interviewed for my research into the role and preparation of secondary deputy principals. I would now like to invite you to be interviewed in the next few weeks.
As you may realise, I am interviewing a number of DPs, males and females in different types of rural and metropolitan schools, in order to reflect a range of experiences.
At this point I think it would be easier to plan a meeting time on the phone. I have the following number for you [redacted] and plan to ring you this afternoon. I realise it is sometimes easier to make a call yourself when you have a free moment, so if you wish to ring me my numbers are 9679 1444 or 0412 027 484.
I have attached a copy of the official Macquarie University *Information and Consent Form for Interviewees* which we will both need to sign on the day. You will receive a copy for your records.
Thank you again for your offer to be involved, and I look forward to talking to you soon.
Regards
Wanda Snitch
PhD candidate, Macquarie University

Attachments

- Information and Consent Form Phase 2 - copy for Interviewees.docx (114.60 KB)

Subject: DP research interviews - now selected

From: Wanda Snitch (wandasni@yahoo.com)

To: [redacted]@det.nsw.edu.au;

Date: Tuesday, 19 March 2013, 9:30

Dear [redacted]

Thank you again for offering to be interviewed for my research into the role and preparation of deputy principals in NSW government schools.

At this stage I will no longer need to call on you for interview.

As you may know I wished to speak with individuals who are fairly representative in terms of gender, location and type of school, and due to the generous offers of over 100 DPs I have now been able to select such a group. I am in the process of conducting interviews in both metropolitan and rural locations.

While the number is small - only 8 - I believe that combined with the large number of responses to the survey last year (nearly 250) there is now a very good representation of the experiences and views of deputies.

I hope to be able to provide some early results at the State Conference in August, so perhaps I will see you there.

Once again thank you for completing the survey and offering to take part in the next stage. I have been blown away by the generosity of such busy people.

Yours sincerely

Wanda Snitch
PhD candidate Macquarie University
9679 1444, 0412 027 484

APPENDIX 9:
INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS

Department of Education
Faculty of Human Sciences
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY
NSW 2109
Phone: +61 (0)2 9850 8656
Fax: +61 (0)2 9850 8674
Email:educ_iec.hdr@mq.edu.au

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name: Norman McCulla

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Title: Dr

Information and Consent Form

Name of Project: Growing Great Deputies: Success and succession for deputy principals in secondary schools (Phase 2: Interview)

You are invited to participate in a study of the role of deputy principals in NSW government secondary schools. The purpose of the study is to explore the perceptions of secondary deputy principals in NSW DET secondary schools about their roles, what activities they undertake, and how they were prepared for the position.

The study is being conducted by Wanda Snitch, telephone 0412 027 484, email wanda.snitch@students.mq.edu.au. It is being conducted to meet the requirements of a Ph D in Educational Leadership under the supervision of Dr Norman McCulla, telephone 9850 8650, email norman.mcculla@mq.edu.au in the Department of Education at Macquarie University

You have been invited to participate in this interview following your completion of an online survey of deputy principals in NSW secondary schools (Phase 1) in which you provided your contact details. The interview will explore in greater depth your teaching and leadership background, leadership preparation, experiences as a deputy principal and views about the role.

If you decide to participate your interview will be conducted by the researcher at a convenient time and place to be negotiated. It should take approximately one hour.

Records of the interview will be by notes taken by the researcher and an audio recording which will enable transcription and analysis. Recordings will be stored securely and available only to the researcher and supervisor.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only the researcher and her supervisor will have access to the data. A summary of the results of the data can be made available to you on request by contacting Wanda Snitch at the above email address.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

I, have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name:_____
(Block letters)

Participant's Signature:_____ Date:_____

Investigator's Name: WANDA SNITCH

Investigator's Signature:_____ __ Date:_____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

PARTICIPANT'S COPY/INVESTIGATOR'S COPY

APPENDIX 10:
MEMBER CHECKING OF INTERVIEW DATA: EMAIL AND SAMPLE PAGES

Subject: DP interviews - summary of responses

From: Wanda Snitch (wandasni@yahoo.com)

To: [redacted]@det.nsw.edu.au;

Date: Saturday, 3 August 2013, 14:04

Dear [redacted]
Thank you once again or offering your time to be interviewed earlier in the year for my research project into the role and preparation of deputy principals. I thoroughly enjoyed travelling around the state and meeting all the interviewees.
As I mentioned, I will be presenting a workshop on the early findings of this research at the NSWSDPA State Conference. Part of my presentation will refer to some general findings from the interviews, as well as trends from the 2012 surveys.
I thought you might be interested in a preview glimpse of my summary of the interviews, organised by question and with supporting quotes, prior to the conference. It is quite a long document (31 pages) but I thought you may like to skim through and see what you and your colleagues said - the red questions and **highlighted words** may help with navigating to the more interesting bits!
I have done my very best to maintain your anonymity and keep true to the intent of any quotes, though as you can imagine I have had to shorten many of these. I was interested to see which questions generated agreement vs those with a range of views.
If you do have a chance to glance through it and have any comments I would be most interested, so please get back to me with them. I would also appreciate it if this document could be kept confidential as it is part of my data collection agreement and I am sharing it in this form only with interviewees.
Meanwhile I trust Term 3 is being good to you, and I hope to see at least some of you at the conference (please forgive me if I don't recognise you, my facial recognition is terrible!).
Once again thanks, and kind regards.
Wanda

Wanda Snitch
PhD Candidate, Macquarie University
0412 027 484
wandasni@yahoo.com
wanda.snitch@students.mq.ed.au

Attachments

- Summary of interview themes and quotes.docx (85.08 KB)

Two sample pages from summary of interview data for Member Checking (see Chapter 4)

'Growing Great Deputies'

Summary of interview response themes by question – sent to interviewees 2013

Question 1

Would you like to begin by outlining the way you came to be a deputy principal?
a) When was it that you first aspired to a formal position of leadership?

This was the most open-ended question and revealed the **diversity of paths** by which deputy principals travel to this position and of their attitudes to career progression generally.

It is clear that the careers of most deputy principals are not linear or mapped out in advance. Most indicated that they were not initially ambitious and even those who were did not experience a smooth ride to their current position. Two aspired to leadership from early in their career, but others came to it quite late in their career and often without seeking it.

While those who had worked in other careers or non-government schools valued the career options in the DEC [7] [4], a clear theme emerged that 'it was an ad hoc process becoming a DP' [8].

Major themes emerging from responses to this question include: an emphasis on luck or timing, motivation (or lack of) at various steps in career progression, the impact of various factors on career path (including family, experiences beyond school, movement between schools including city/country and challenging schools), relieving in higher roles and merit selection processes.

All had progressed through the traditional path of classroom teacher, to head teacher then deputy principal. Despite outlining many instances of hard work and initiative, all respondents referred to the **'accidental' or 'lucky' nature** of at least some steps in their career. 'I was very, very, very lucky' [5] and 'I had the opportunity to apply...very fortunate the way things turned out' [8] were typical comments. Circumstances included an opportunity to relieve for an extended period or where a position went to Merit Selection rather than transfer (see later discussion), and in one case a position in a non-school based position was offered apparently 'out of the blue'. Two respondents commented that they were lucky to get their current job 'I was lucky, I jagged it' [4] and timing was seen as fortuitous by others: 'if that [circumstance] hadn't happened I wouldn't have the opportunity to prove myself for six months' [7]. In summary, hard work, planning and initiative were not seen as sufficient for career advancement: 'Yes, I've worked hard but I' willing to admit that luck has played its part as well' [7].

Desire to move up the ranks of school leadership was not seen as a driving **motivation** by most respondents though it varied at different phases in their careers. Only two interviewees reflected that

they had always seen a leadership role as a possibility: 'I was always interested in being involved in things' [8] and 'I was observing leadership in that school...I thought ...I can do that, there is nothing to stop being a leader within a school' [7]

Satisfaction in classroom teaching and head teacher roles was suggested by some as a reason not to aspire to further promotion; while others noted that their first desire to seek a higher position was due to negative developments in the faculty or school.

A number expressed real **reluctance to move on from classroom teaching**. 'I had at that point no intention of going for promotion [through the old List system]' [1]: 'If you had asked me 8 years ago if would I become a DP I would have said 'not on your nelly' [4] and 'I never had any interest in relieving in the HT role...I resisted for a while then the principal insisted that I act in the position [2].

Satisfaction in teaching, particularly in happy faculties in positive school cultures, was quoted: 'I loved teaching [subject], I loved my craft' [4] and 'I had my own little world as a [subject] teacher. I very much enjoyed it. I liked teaching.' [5]. Also, being a classroom teacher in a school which was perceived to be a 'good' school with few discipline problems and high academic achievement was a consideration. [8]

The role of **head teacher** was also mentioned as **satisfying** by at least half the interviewees: 'I loved the position, loved looking after the department, having some involvement in the direction of the school...making decisions...I think I was making a difference' [8]; 'HT ... was great. ... a very settled school, a broad range of kids but I felt fantastic... I was managing a faculty, had a nice team and was well supported' [7] and 'you get to bring along staff...you really help them to think positively about teaching and learning, about kids' [4]. The comment 'if I hadn't been tapped on the shoulder to relieve, I would have cheerfully stayed where I was, looking after my faculty for a lot longer' [2] was fairly typical of those whose aspirations kicked in after being pushed by circumstances out of a role they quite enjoyed.

Some moves were prompted by **less positive** circumstances. Incidents such as major fires or leadership crises sometimes provoked a desire or need to 'step up' and relieve in a role or apply for a promotion [4]. A **negative culture** of interpersonal relationships or stagnant approaches in a faculty or school also prompted a rethink: one described the atmosphere in a previous school as 'dictatorial... oppressive and toxic' [5]; another expressed dissatisfaction when moving to a new school that 'my first year...was my worst year of teaching...I didn't like the way things happened at the school' [8] and was pleased to be able to make some changes after gaining a leadership role.

APPENDIX 11:
CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS IN SUPPORT OF THESIS DEVELOPMENT

Methodological issues and selected emergent findings from this research were presented at state, national and international conferences for discussion as iterative steps in the development of the thesis. A selection of these presentations includes:

Snitch, W. (2013, August). *The role of current and future deputy principals as leaders of learning: Report on research into the role and preparation of secondary DPs.* Paper presented at the NSW Secondary Deputy Princpals Association state conference, Sydney, Australia

Snitch, W. (2013, September). *Educational leadership in secondary schools: can deputy principals lead learning?* Paper presented at the International School Leadership Symposium: Transforming Challenges into Opportunities, Zug, Switzerland.

Snitch, W. (2014, July). *Seeing the forest AND the trees: Using a Mixed Methods Research approach to understand school leadership through both system-wide data and personal stories.* Paper presented at the Mixed Methods International Research Association International Conference, Boston, USA.

Snitch, W. (2014, July). *So what? Who cares? Implications of research into the role of secondary deputy principals in NSW government school.* Paper presented at the NSW Secondary Deputy Princpals Association state conference, Sydney, Australia

Snitch, W. (2015, December). *How am I leading learning? A new evidence-based self-analysis and reflection tool for deputy principals in secondary schools.* Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education National Conference, Freemantle, WA, Australia.