

University of Southern Queensland

An Exploration of the Interconnectedness Between Elementary Teacher Job Satisfaction, School Culture and Student Achievement:

A Study in Two Canadian Elementary Schools

A Dissertation submitted by

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ABSTRACT

This research study aimed to explore the interconnectedness between the job satisfaction of elementary teachers, school culture and student achievement. This study focused on the inter-relationship factors between elementary teacher job satisfaction and school culture. Further it examined the nature of the relational factors of school culture and elementary teacher job satisfaction that contribute to or hinder student achievement.

The school sites that participated in this research study were two high-performing elementary schools in Ontario, Canada (Junior Kindergarten to Grade 6), one from a lower socio-economic area and one from a middle to upper-middle socio-economic area. The principals and elementary teachers from these two schools were the participants in this research study.

By employing a sequential mixed-methodological approach, this research study looked at how collaborative school cultures conducive to learning affect teacher job satisfaction and motivation, which has the potential to contribute to student outcomes. The study used the mixed quantitative and qualitative data within the interpretivist perspective. This perspective helped to determine principals' and elementary teachers' views of how they perceive job satisfaction in relation to the school's culture as well as their thoughts on the effect these two factors have on student achievement.

The findings of this research study led to a realization that elementary teacher participants are intrinsically motivated and have high levels of job satisfaction due to caring and collaborative relationships formed at work. The findings of this research study also indicated that both elementary teachers and principals enjoy autonomy as well as collaboration in their work settings which further ensures integrity and loyalty regarding their own careers and the careers of their colleagues. The significance of this research study has further emphasized the importance of collective action and distributed leadership (parallel leadership) on behalf of both elementary teachers and principals in order to sustain change and to further enhance student learning outcomes. This research study constructed a Cultural-Relational Leadership (CRL) model to further explain the relationship between elementary teacher job satisfaction, school culture and student achievement. The diagram below, (Figure 1) outlines the model that emerged. The CRL Model is further discussed in Chapter seven of this research study.

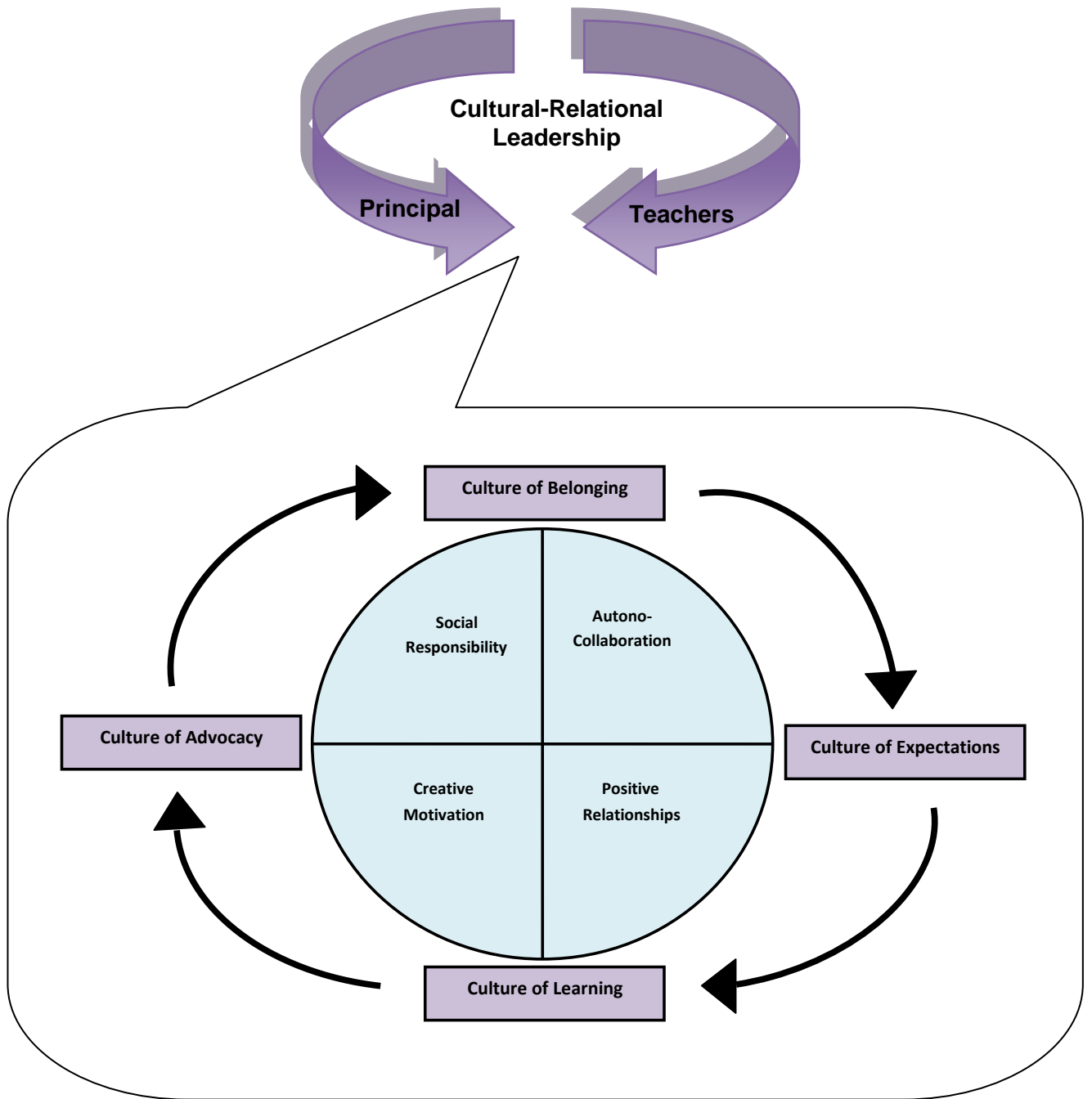



Figure 1: Cultural-Relational Leadership (CRL) Model

CERTIFICATION PAGE

CERTIFICATION OF DISSERTATION

I certify that the ideas, experimental work, results, analyses and conclusions reported in this dissertation are entirely my own effort, except where otherwise acknowledged. I also certify that the work is original and has not been previously submitted for any other award, except where otherwise acknowledged.

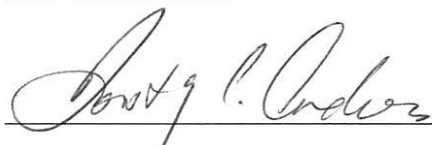


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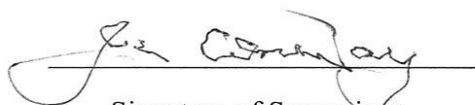
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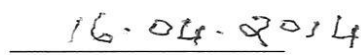
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
CERTIFICATION PAGE	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
GLOSSARY	xv
CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY	1
1.2 Background to the study.....	1
1.3 The research problem and research questions	2
1.4 The research design and methodology.....	3
1.5 Significance of the study.....	5
1.6 Limitations of the study	6
1.7 Organization of the dissertation.....	6
1.8 Chapter summary	7
CHAPTER 2 : LITERATURE REVIEW	8
2.1 Overview of the chapter.....	8
2.2 Canadian job satisfaction reports.....	8
2.2.1 The Ontario, Canada elementary teacher situation	9
2.3 International research on job satisfaction	10
2.3.1 Autonomy in the work place.....	11
2.3.2 Motivation in the work place	12
2.3.3 Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in the work place	13
2.3.4 Flow in the work place	14
2.3.5 Achievement and empowerment in the work place	15
2.3.6 Collaborative individualism in the work place	16
2.3.7. Emotional intelligence in the work place.....	16
2.3.8 Social community and sense of belonging in the work place	16
2.3.9 Conclusions regarding job satisfaction	17
2.4 School culture.....	18
2.4.1 Defining organizational/school culture	18
2.4.2 Concepts of culture	19
2.4.3 Characteristics of culture.....	23
2.4.4 Forming of groups and cultures	25
2.4.5 Roles and relationships relating to organizational/school culture.....	25
2.4.6 External and internal relationships relating to organizational/school culture.....	26
2.4.7 Conclusions regarding organizational/school culture	28
2.5 Contributing factors to student achievement.....	29
2.5.1 Contributing factor: Teachers	29
2.5.2 Contributing factor: Principals	30

2.5.3	Contributing factor: School leadership	31
2.5.4	Contributing factor: Collaborative relationships	32
2.5.5	Other contributing factors	33
2.5.6	Conclusions regarding student achievement	35
2.6	Student achievement levels in Ontario, Canada classrooms	35
2.7	The influences of leadership on job satisfaction, school culture and student achievement	37
2.7.1	Shared and distributed leadership	37
2.7.2	Parallel leadership	41
2.8	Chapter summary	41
CHAPTER 3 : METHODOLOGY		43
3.1	Overview of the chapter	43
3.2	Global perspective	43
3.2.1	The Canadian educational system	43
3.3	The theoretical framework	44
3.3.1	The complexity of mixed methodological research	45
3.3.2	Social construction of reality	46
3.4	The researcher	46
3.4.1	The role of the researcher	47
3.4.2	The participant-researcher relationship	47
3.5	The levels of culture	48
3.5.1	The level of artifacts	49
3.5.2	The level of espoused beliefs and values	50
3.5.3	The level of basic underlying assumptions	51
3.6	The research inquiry	52
3.6.1	The research problem and research questions	52
3.7	Research strategy	53
3.7.1	The interpretive paradigm	53
3.7.2	Naturalistic research/constructivist research	54
3.7.3	Comparative research	55
3.8	Research design, data collection and analysis	55
3.8.1	Humanistic procedures	55
3.8.2	Collaborative inquiry	56
3.8.3	Constructivist inquiry	56
3.8.4	Scientific/analytical research methods	57
3.8.5	Triangulation procedures	60
3.8.6	Mixed methodological approach	60
3.9	Phases of the research study	64
3.9.1	Selection of schools and participants	66
3.9.2	School profiles	67

3.10	Research instruments used in the data collection - Primary data.....	68
3.10.1	Voluntary anonymous mixed questionnaire	68
3.10.2	Anonymous mixed questionnaire description	69
3.10.3	Voluntary in-depth interviews	71
3.10.4	Voluntary focus group.....	72
3.11	Research instruments used in data collection - Secondary data	74
3.11.1	Externally reported systemic data from the 'Education Quality and Accountability Office' (EQAO)	75
3.11.2	School board documents	75
3.11.3	Researcher's reflective journal.....	75
3.11.4	Colleagues, peer debriefing and member checking	75
3.12	Working with the data.....	76
3.13	Validity	76
3.13.1	Trustworthiness	77
3.13.2	Rigour in the research study	77
3.14	The ethics and politics of the study.....	80
3.15	Chapter summary	80
CHAPTER 4 : DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS FROM PHASE ONE AND PHASE TWO		82
4.1	Overview of the chapter	82
4.2	Introduction	82
4.2.1	Broader Context - Ontario, Canada school system	84
4.3	Phase one - School identification.....	84
4.4	Phase two – Anonymous mixed questionnaires	85
4.5	Data analysis from the anonymous mixed questionnaire.....	85
4.5.1	Descriptive statistics for Willow Tree Public School.....	85
4.5.2	Descriptive statistics for Lake Dore Public School.....	87
4.5.3	Summary of descriptive statistics for Willow Tree Public School and Lake Dore Public School	88
4.5.4	Descriptive statistics for both schools (whole sample)	88
4.5.5	Preliminary analyses.....	90
4.5.6	Differences between the two schools.....	91
4.6	Research question one: What factors are relational between elementary teacher job satisfaction and school culture in two high performing Ontario, Canada schools?.....	92
4.6.1	Whole sample from Willow Tree Public School and Lake Dore Public School - Research question one	92
4.6.2	Mixed questionnaires sorted by school - Research question one	92
4.6.3	Data presentation for Willow Tree Public School - Research question one	93
4.6.4	Data presentation for Lake Dore Public School - Research question one	93

4.6.5	Summary of mixed questionnaires sorted by school - Research question one.....	94
4.6.6	T-test – Categorical variables related to job satisfaction, school culture and student achievement	94
4.6.7	Regression – Job satisfaction and school culture predict student achievement	95
4.7	Research problem	96
4.8	Themes emerging from phase one and phase two	96
4.8.1	Emerging understandings from theme one and theme two	97
4.9	Limitations of the quantitative portion of the research study.....	98
4.10	Chapter summary	99
CHAPTER 5 : DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS FROM PHASE THREE AND PHASE FOUR.....		100
5.1	Overview of the chapter.....	100
5.2	Schedule of data collection	100
5.3	Research questions explored	100
5.4	Presentation of themes emerging from phase one and phase two	101
5.5	The process and focus of in-depth interviews with the elementary teachers.....	101
5.6	Phase three (round one) - In-depth interviews with elementary teachers from Willow Tree Public School and Lake Dore Public School – Exploration of theme one	102
5.6.1	Phase three (round one) – In-depth interviews with elementary teachers from Willow Tree Public School and Lake Dore Public School - Exploration of theme two	118
5.6.2	Phase three (round one) - Initial analysis of data from theme one and theme two	133
5.7	Emergent understandings from themes one and two – Phase three (round one).....	136
5.7.1	Emergent understandings – Emergent understanding one	136
5.7.2	Emergent understanding two.....	139
5.7.3	Emergent understanding three.....	143
5.7.4	Emergent understanding four	146
5.8	Phase three (round two) - Voluntary interviews - Principals	148
5.8.1	Emergent understanding five.....	159
5.9	Phase three (round one and round two) - Presentation of emerging understandings from in-depth interviews with the teachers and the principals	160
5.9.1	Job Satisfaction	160
5.9.2	School culture	161
5.9.3	Student achievement	162
5.10	Focus group feedback	164
5.10.1	Participants in focus group	164
5.10.2	Focus group with elementary teachers – Purpose and process.....	164

5.11	Exploration by the focus group of emerging understandings from phase three.....	165
5.12	Summary of findings.....	173
5.13	Chapter summary	174
CHAPTER 6 : INTERPRETATION OF DATA: RESEARCH QUESTIONS ONE, TWO AND THREE		175
6.1	Overview of the chapter.....	175
6.2	Response to research question one.....	175
6.2.1	Similarities between the two schools related to the job satisfaction factor of Intrinsic Motivation	178
6.2.2	Similarities between the two schools related to the job satisfaction factor of Happiness	181
6.2.3	Similarities between the two schools related to the job satisfaction factor of Autono-Collaboration.....	183
6.2.4	Similarities between the two schools related to the job satisfaction factor of Autono-Collaborative Leadership	186
6.2.5	Similarities between two schools related to school culture factor of Level of Artifacts.....	188
6.2.6	Similarities between two schools related to the school culture factor of Level of Espoused Beliefs and Values.....	190
6.2.7	Similarities between two schools related to school culture factor of Level of Basic Underlying Assumptions	191
6.2.8	Differences between the two schools.....	192
6.2.9	Concluding remarks	193
6.3	Response to research question two	194
6.3.1	Similarities between the two schools related to school culture factor Level of Artifacts	197
6.3.2	Similarities between the two schools related to school culture factor Level of Espoused Beliefs and Values.....	199
6.3.3	Similarities between the two schools related to school culture factor Level of Basic Underlying Assumptions.....	202
6.3.4	Differences between the two schools.....	205
6.3.5	Concluding remarks	208
6.4	Response to research question three.....	208
6.4.1	Similarities between the two schools related to job satisfaction factor Intrinsic Motivation.....	211
6.4.2	Similarities between the two schools related to the job satisfaction factor of Happiness	214
6.4.3	Similarities between the two schools related to job satisfaction factor Autono-Collaboration	216
6.4.4	Similarities between the two schools related to job satisfaction factor Autono-Collaborative Leadership.....	219
6.4.5	Differences between the two schools.....	221
6.4.6	Concluding remarks	223

6.5	Chapter summary	224
CHAPTER 7: EXEMPLARY PRINCIPAL AND TEACHER LEADERSHIP		226
7.1	Overview of the chapter	226
7.2	Leadership and student achievement.....	226
7.2.1	Cultural-Relational Leadership (CRL) model	228
7.2.2	Cultural-Relationship Leadership (CRL) characteristics	230
7.2.3	The principal as a Cultural-Relational Leader.....	232
7.2.4	The teacher as a Cultural-Relational Leader	233
7.3	Concluding Comments.....	234
7.4	Significance of study	235
7.4.1	The significance of the employed theoretical framework	235
7.4.2	The significance of international research.....	236
7.5	Limitations of the research study.....	237
7.6	Recommendations for future research	238
7.7	Final Reflections	238
REFERENCES		242

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ethics approval from the University of Southern Queensland	257
Appendix B: Letter of information and agreement to the school principals	258
Appendix D: Letter of agreement to elementary teacher participants – In-depth interview.....	261
Appendix E: Letter of agreement to elementary teacher participants – Focus Group ..	262
Appendix F: Elementary teacher questionnaire	263
Appendix G: In-depth interview questions.....	272
Appendix H: Focus group emerging understandings	279

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Cultural-Relational Leadership (CRL) Model	iii
Figure 5.1: Willow Tree Public School – Theme one – Job satisfaction was found to be an important predictor of student achievement.....	107
Figure 5.2: Lake Dore Public School - Theme one – Job satisfaction was found to be an important predictor of student achievement.....	112
Figure 5.3: Willow Tree Public School - Theme two – School culture is an important predictor of student achievement.	122
Figure 5.4: Lake Dore Public School - Theme two – School culture is an important predictor of student achievement.	128
Figure 5.5: Willow Tree Public School - Relationships between job satisfaction, school culture and student achievement.....	134
Figure 5.6: Lake Dore Public School - Relationships between job satisfaction, school culture and student achievement.....	135
Figure 5.7: The principal’s leadership role in the inter-relationship between job satisfaction, school culture and student achievement.....	159
Figure 5.8: Job satisfaction - Emerging understanding number one, two and three	160
Figure 5.9: School culture - Emerging understanding number four, five and six.....	161
Figure 5.10: Student achievement - Emerging understanding number seven, eight and nine.	163
Figure 6.1: Relational factors between elementary teacher job satisfaction and school culture at Willow Tree Public School	176
Figure 6.2: Relational factors between elementary teacher job satisfaction and school culture at Lake Dore Public School	177
Figure 6.3: School culture factors that teachers and the principal perceive as contributing to student achievement at Willow Tree Public School	195
Figure 6.4: School culture factors that teachers and the principal perceive as contributing to student achievement at Lake Dore Public School	196
Figure 6.5: Job satisfaction factors that teachers and the principal perceive as contributing to student achievement at Willow Tree Public School	209
Figure 6.6: Job satisfaction factors that teachers and the principal perceive as contributing to student achievement at Lake Dore Public School	210
Figure 6.7: Relational aspects that emerged in response to research questions one, two and three	225
Figure 7.1: Impact of CRL on the relationship between teacher job satisfaction and school culture that enhances student achievement	227
Figure 7.2: Cultural-Relational Leadership (CRL) Model	229

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Research design: The relationships between research tools and data analysis.....	79
Table 3.2: Schedule of data collection	64
Table 3.3: Naturalistic techniques to establish trustworthiness.....	78
Table 3.4: Applied techniques for establishing trustworthiness in this study.....	79
Table 4.1: Schedule of data collection for Chapter four.....	83
Table 4.2: Descriptive statistics of Teachers from Willow Tree Public School	86
Table 4.3: Descriptive statistics of Teachers from Lake Dore Public School	87
Table 4.4: Descriptive statistics of whole sample (both schools)	89
Table 4.5: Descriptive statistics for absenteeism rates.....	90
Table 4.6: Hierarchical multiple regression of job satisfaction and school culture on student achievement.....	95
Table 5.1: Themes and emergent understandings from the end of phase two	96
Table 5.2: Theme one - Responses from elementary teachers at Willow Tree Public School.....	103
Table 5.3: Theme one - Responses from elementary teachers at Lake Dore Public School.....	108
Table 5.4: Researcher's reflections on the similarities between Willow Tree Public School and Lake Dore Public School	113
Table 5.5: Researcher's reflections on the differences between Willow Tree Public School and Lake Dore Public School	116
Table 5.6: Theme two - Responses from elementary teachers at Willow Tree Public School.....	118
Table 5.7: Theme two - Responses from elementary teachers at Lake Dore Public School.....	123
Table 5.8: Researcher's reflections on the similarities between Willow Tree Public School and Lake Dore Public School	129
Table 5.9: Researcher's reflections on the differences between Willow Tree Public School and Lake Dore Public School	132
Table 5.10: Emergent understanding one and the elementary teachers' discussions and reflections.....	136
Table 5.11: Similarities on emergent understanding one.....	138
Table 5.12: Differences on emergent understanding one.....	138
Table 5.13: Emergent understanding two and the elementary teachers' discussions and reflections.....	139
Table 5.14: Similarities on emergent understanding two	141
Table 5.15: Differences on emergent understanding two	142
Table 5.16: Emergent understanding three and the elementary teachers' discussions and reflections.....	143
Table 5.17: Similarities on emergent understanding three	145
Table 5.18: Differences on emergent understanding three.....	145

Table 5.19: Emergent understanding four and the elementary teachers' discussions and reflections.....	146
Table 5.20: Similarities on emergent understanding four	147
Table 5.21: Differences on emergent understanding four.....	148
Table 5.22: Data from in-depth interviews with the principals from Willow Tree Public School and Lake Dore Public School	149
Table 5.23: Similarities regarding the researcher's reflections on the five (5) themes.	156
Table 5.24: Differences regarding the researcher's reflections on the five (5) themes	158
Table 5.25: Focus group discussion.....	165
Table 5.26: Researcher's reflections on the focus group – Phase four.....	173
Table 7.1: Cultural-Relational Leadership (CRL) Characteristics	231

GLOSSARY

AC	Autono-Collaboration
ACL	Autono-Collaborative Leadership
ALP	Annual Learning Plan
CRL	Cultural-Relational Leadership
Custodian	Chief Caretaker at a School
Elementary School	Junior Kindergarten to Grade 6 (ages 4 – 12)
EQAO	Education Quality and Accountability Office
IEP	Individual Education Plan
IPRC	Identification, Process and Review Committee
JK	Junior Kindergarten (age 4)
Junior Division	Grade 4 to Grade 6 (ages 10 – 12)
PLCs	Professional Learning Communities
Primary Division	Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3 (ages 4 – 9)
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SK	Senior Kindergarten (age 5)
TPA	Teacher Performance Appraisal
USQ	University of Southern Queensland