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Exploring Educational Leaders Enactment of Emotional Intelligence

Kelly Louise Norwood

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Exploring Educational Leaders Enactment of Emotional Intelligence

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Abstract

It is widely accepted that the success of schools is dependent on effective leaders and leadership practice. School leaders manage an increasingly complex set of demands, including policy transformations, advances in technology and ongoing curriculum changes. Acknowledgement of the importance of educational leadership roles and the recognised complexity of such positions has resulted in considerable research interest in identifying the skills of successful school leaders (Holmberg et al., 2016). There is now growing evidence to support the proposition that emotional intelligence is strongly linked to effective school leadership and an ability to navigate the complexities of contemporary school environments (Doe et al., 2015; Dabke, 2016) However, the current body of research provides limited descriptions of what emotional intelligent skills look like in the everyday practice of school leaders, and how they have been supported in the enactment of these skills.

A qualitative case study approach was used to explore how four school leaders understood and enacted emotional intelligence in their practice. Observations, debriefing discussions, interviews and participant reflection diaries provided the material for detailed narrative accounts of the leaders' understanding and enactment of emotional intelligence. Key themes in terms of their enactments of EI in practice were identified. Drawing on models of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1998; Mayer & Salovey, 1990), theories on emotional regulation (Gross, 2014), as well as models of conflict management (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979) and literature on leading change (i.e., Fullan, 2011; Issah, 2018), this study investigated how these four leaders (Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal and Head Teacher), ranging in seniority and leadership experience, understood and applied emotional intelligent skills in their individual contexts.

This research inquiry responded to the need for greater understanding of the nexus between emotional intelligence and school leadership practices. The findings support the premise that emotional intelligence is highly relevant for effective leadership in educational environments. A key conclusion drawn from the study's findings was that a leader's management of their own and others' emotions influences the ways in which they present and facilitate organisational change in their context, as well as how they approached and managed conflict. The findings present practical illustrations of the leaders practice and point to specific areas of professional learning for middle leaders as well as senior executive positions, including greater opportunities for mentoring and professional development in emotional intelligence.

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Ken, your calmness and measured responses throughout this experience were invaluable. Your way of thinking and behaving provide me with balance.

I am truly grateful to you both, your expertise and your professionalism made this happen.

Certification

I, Kelly Louise Norwood declare that this thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the conferral of the degree Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Kelly Louise Norwood

15th December 2021

List of Names or Abbreviations

AITSL- Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership

AP- Assistant Principal

DP- Deputy Principal

EI- Emotional Intelligence

ER- Emotional Regulation

EV- External Validation

EQ- Emotional Quotient

EQ-i- Emotional Quotient Inventory

HT- Head Teacher

MSCEIT- Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test

NSW- New South Wales

OECD- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PD- Professional Development

PDP- Professional Development Plan

PL- Professional Learning

SEF- School Excellence Framework

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Part One

I was first introduced to the notion of leaders requiring an emotional skill set when studying Health Science. Subjects explored the affective skills of managing individuals and teams and considered the role of emotion in professional conflict, communication, and the creation of organisational vision.

My postgraduate studies in Education afforded me a new context in which to consider leadership. Through the lens of both parent and teacher, I have reflected on school leadership, observing the internal and external pressures on schools and their leaders. These have included policy changes, parent and community demands, staff conflict, and staff and student trauma, and which have been managed with varying degrees of success by the school leaders. The performance and capacity of leaders has been central to determining the level of emotional impact that these pressures have on teachers, community stakeholders, parents, and students. It is these emotional reverberations that have challenged me to think more deeply about what knowledge, skills and strategies are required of school leaders, what capacities are they drawing on as they perform their roles and how are these skills developed or harnessed by school leaders?

In Part One I provide the background to the study, presenting its purpose and direction. Chapter 2, presents a review of the literature on emotional intelligence and school leadership, including policy directives and current attempts to embrace emotional capacities in professional learning. In the final Chapter I provide an explanation of the research design and I argue for its contribution to knowledge.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

We live in an increasingly interconnected world which is facing profound challenges, including an accelerating environmental crisis, rapid technological change, new patterns of globalisation and aging population trends (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, [OECD], 2019). Such a world has produced a range of new social and political forces (Limerick et al, 2002), which are particularly evident in education systems. Within these spaces there is unprecedented change and continuous reform. Schools and their leaders are acutely aware of these political and social challenges, ranging from government funding shortages to disciplinary policy changes. This in turn has created new challenges and accountabilities for schools (Mulford, 2008), with implications for the nature, purpose and work of school leaders (Day et al, 2007; Hallinger, 2003; Pont et al, 2008). School leaders are expected to manage an increasingly complex set of demands related to school autonomy, new curriculum inclusions, advancements in technology and policy changes that shift the focus of teaching and learning. School leaders are expected to both nurture sustainable school cultures that seek to preserve core educational values and identity, whilst simultaneously embracing innovation and change imperatives (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Mulford & Johns, 2004). As Preston et al. (2013) suggest, contemporary school leadership requires leaders who are able to juggle diverse responsibilities, including resources, professional development of staff, accountability, change initiatives and stakeholder relationships.

While leadership development has historically been aimed at developing specific skills (Mumford et al., 2007; Tonidandel et al., 2012), Holmberg et al. (2016) suggest leadership should focus on "broader capacities" in response to the need for roles to be more flexible (p. 155). They and others (Doe et al., 2015; Dabke, 2016; Hopkins et al., 2007; Prati et al, 2003) argue that leaders' capacities need to go beyond the academic and rational, to recognise the role of emotions in leadership.

Alongside the more general recognition in Western scholarship of the role of emotions (see Matthews et al., 2003), scholarship in leadership research has increasingly focused on the relationship between leaders' cognitive and emotional abilities and their capacity to lead (e.g., Mayer, 2000; Matthews et al., 2003; Oatley, 2004). This includes arguments, such as those from Vlăsceanu (2012), that leaders who can effectively display and manage emotions and who can accurately identify and understand others'

emotions, are better equipped at understanding the dispositions of their employees and therefore better equipped for leading.

Like leadership scholarship more widely, educational leadership research and policy has taken up the argument that the capacities of school leaders are both fundamental to school success and constitute a broader set of skills (Copland, 2003; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Harris, 2013; Levin & Fullan, 2008). Singh et al. (2007) claim that the traditional technocratic leadership focusing on academic skills conflicts with the visionary people-centred approach of modern organisations. According to Fullan (2001), the most effective school leaders are those who combine intellect with emotional intelligence and Day (2000) argues that successful school leaders balance external and internal needs by nurturing their critical thinking and emotional intelligence.

In Australia, this argument for a broader skill set is reflected in policy by the inclusion of relational and emotional management skills in the Professional Standards for Teachers and in the Professional Standards for Principals (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL], 2018). The Teacher and Principal Standards symbolise an analysis of effective contemporary practice aiming to capture a broad set of skills constituting quality teaching and leading which are independent of context (AITSL, 2018). In their Australian Guidelines for Leadership Development, leaders' requirements and professional practice refer to personal qualities, including social and interpersonal skills, as a feature of professional practice (AITSL, 2018). In response to the question, "what are the capabilities of leaders in schools" in their document "Leading for Impact", AITSL concludes that,

High-performing leaders consistently demonstrate sophisticated personal and interpersonal qualities, including:

- self-awareness and personal wellbeing
- self-management, including emotional intelligence, empathy and resilience
- social awareness
- relationship management.

They apply these qualities and skills to understand and respond to culture and community, develop strong relationships, inspire and challenge others, and manage difficult situations and conversations. The development of future leaders should emphasise the growth of these skills over time and from early in their careers (AITSL, 2018, p. 8).

Further attempts by government and policy makers to embrace this shift include the New South Wales Government, which in 2018 launched the “Teacher Success Profile”. This document stated that in order to be considered for employment, all new teacher graduates “must show superior cognitive and emotional intelligence, measured via a psychometric assessment” (NSW Government, 2018, p. 1). In the frequently asked question section, the emotional intelligence component is explained as follows:

The emotional intelligence assessment will require you to answer questions related to resilience, conscientiousness and creativity to help identify how you engage, relate and communicate with others (NSW Government, 2019).

Although there is now a broadened focus to include leadership skills indicating emotional intelligence (i.e., emotional and social awareness, interpersonal skills and empathy) in educational leadership research (see Dabke, 2016; Doe et al., 2015; Hopkins et al., 2007; Parrish, 2011; Prati et al., 2003) and policy (AITSL, 2018; NSW Government 2018), there is limited research on how these affective skills are translated into leadership practice in schools. Additionally, a great deal of the existing research on the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership, utilises quantitative methodologies aimed at scoring emotional intelligence, through self-report scales (see Wong et al., 2010) or assessed by Emotional Competencies Inventories (see Boyatzis et al., 2000). There are limited qualitative studies providing insights into what emotional intelligent skills look like in the everyday practice of school leaders. Alvarez-Hevia (2018) argues that the emotional intelligent discourse is complex and multifaceted and needs to be studied in a more exhaustive, comprehensive, and above all critical way. Such knowledge could be used to provide insights into school leadership, supporting decision making around policy and informing decisions about professional learning centred on developing interpersonal capacities among teachers and leaders.

The study reported in this thesis addressed this gap by investigating how emotional intelligence was enacted by four school leaders as they operated within their individual and different school contexts. Adopting a qualitative multiple case study design, this research inquiry responded to the need for greater understanding of the nexus between emotional intelligence and school leadership practices. The outcomes from this research will add to the existing literature on emotional intelligence in school leadership, developing our understanding of how emotional intelligence is enacted by school leaders, and how leaders’ view emotional intelligence as a means of support in their leadership. The research inquiry was guided by the following questions:

RQ1: How do school leaders understand emotional intelligence and its purpose in their roles as leaders?

RQ2: How do school leaders apply their emotional intelligence to their various leadership roles in their schools?

RQ3: How can school leaders be supported to enact emotional intelligence in their professional practice?

1.2 Background

The literature on emotional intelligence can be complicated, as it contains a range of terminology, including emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995; Salovey & Mayer, 1990), emotional literacy (Steiner & Paul, 1997), emotional quotient (Cooper, 1997; Goleman, 1995;), interpersonal intelligence (Gardner & Hatch, 1989) and personal intelligences (Gardner, 1983). However, proponents of the concept largely agree that the components of emotional intelligence include self-awareness, self-regulation, relationship management and social awareness (Brackett et al., 2011; Goleman, 1996; Salovey & Mayer 1990; Zins & Elias, 2007). Supporters of emotional intelligence propose that by employing emotional awareness and effectively managing emotions, an individuals' ability to manage environments and relationships and transcend the difficulties and conflicts they encounter is enhanced (Moore, 2009).

The relationship between the impact of emotional intelligence on performance has been widely investigated in a number of contexts, including the workplace, outdoor education, and schools. Studies by Fineman (2000) and George (2000), for example, found that emotions played a key psychological aspect in determining thoughts, motivations, and behaviours of employees in the workplace, while Abraham (2000) concluded that emotionally intelligent employees were more committed to organisations and the interpersonal facet of emotional intelligence supported job satisfaction and reduces stress. In the context of leadership research, Rosete and Ciarrochi, (2005) claim that leaders with high levels of emotional intelligence are more likely to achieve successful business outcomes and Vann et al. (2017) argue that individuals with higher emotional intelligence scores used more behaviour-focused natural rewards, and constructive thought while leading.

In the context of educational leadership research, there has been a plethora of studies investigating the relationship between the contextual and situational factors influencing school leaders' emotions. For example, in a study of Flemish-Belgian educational leaders, Kelchtermans et al. (2011) found that the leaders experienced high emotional levels of stress because they were expected to act as school gatekeepers who needed to balance multiple stakeholders' demands. These demands produced

ethical dilemmas as they were caught in a web of conflicting loyalties. While many of the studies investigating the consequences of contextual demands on leaders' behaviour point to adverse effects (see also Friedman 2000; Ackerman & Maslin-Ostrowski, 2004), others point to the ways emotional displays from school leaders are positive and supportive. For example, Maresca (2015) used qualitative methods to investigate the leadership practice of three experienced US principals. Her findings indicated that these leaders saw EI as an expertise that allowed them to establish trust and build relationships to support school improvement.

Similar findings were reported by Cherkowski (2012). Her qualitative case study indicated that the principal's compassionate, caring behaviours toward teachers affected the teacher's passion for their job. Similarly, Slater (2011) reports that when the principals in her study adopted emotionally supportive behaviours, fears and anxieties in the staff were reduced, enabling effective collaboration. In a large quantitative study of 123 teachers in the United Kingdom, Brackett et al. (2010) found that principal support played a mediating role in the relationships between secondary school teachers' emotional regulation (ER) ability and the teachers' job satisfaction.

Educational scholars have increasingly pointed to a leader's emotional intelligence as a key element for effective leadership (Blasé & Blasé, 2004; Brinia et al., 2014; Fullan, 2004; Moore, 2009), and scholars (see Goleman, 1998; Bar-On & Parker, 2000) have demonstrated that emotional intelligent abilities can be developed. However, there are still limited research findings which provide qualitative descriptions of these abilities, explicitly describing how emotional intelligence is understood and applied in school contexts. Furthermore, as Jennings and Greenberg (2009) argue, despite the growing interest and increased recognition of the potential benefit of emotional intelligence, training programs aimed at developing teachers' personal emotional intelligence abilities are still limited. This research inquiry will provide knowledge that could contribute to leadership training programs, by demonstrating how emotional intelligence is understood and enacted by school leaders.

1.3 Significance of the Inquiry

This inquiry addresses the demands of school leadership in an increasingly complex school system. It addresses the need to support current leader development and potential leader candidates by describing examples of how and when leaders applied emotional intelligence in their practice. It has the potential to make significant contributions to knowledge on how emotional intelligence is employed by school leaders

more generally and specifically in the localised school leadership context in Australia.

- i. For leaders - it can provide insights into school leadership at different levels of leadership. It is now acknowledged the role of a school leader is changing, from providing solutions for dependent users to designing environments, networks and platforms through which people can collaboratively devise their own individual solutions (Mulford, 2008). This inquiry can support leaders in understanding how emotional intelligence can support their leadership which “occurs through the complex network of relationships and interactions among the entire staff of the school” (Scribner et al., 2007 p. 68).
- ii. For leader candidates - it can provide examples of what can be accomplished, by generating insights into the link between leadership and emotional intelligence. With the significant growth in the complexity and span of what they are expected to do, leader candidates need to be supported to build their capacity.
- iii. For policy makers - it can promote new directions for thinking about professional learning. It will broaden understanding on the flexibility, dispositions and capacities required of school leaders and the learning needed to develop these.
- iv. Emotional intelligence and educational leadership scholarship – it will contribute to the research that is needed across the spectrum of leadership positions within Australian schools to understand how to provide support and guidelines for leadership practice. This research can help to create a process of meaning and shared teacher actions (Su et al., 2017) and ensure that professional accountability measures do not standardise or oversimplify leadership (Dunn, 2005).

1.4 Methodology

The study employed a qualitative approach in the form of a multiple case study methodology (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2009). The qualitative approach provided the means to understand how emotional intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 2004) was enacted by four school leaders as they operated within their individual school contexts. Purposive sampling strategies were utilised to select leaders across the spectrum of school leadership positions. The participants enabled the construction of four different perspectives of how school leaders understood emotional intelligence and enacted it in their roles as leaders. Data for the research study were collected over a period of five months, gathered from field

observations, debriefing discussions of these observations and interviews with the participants. Additionally, the participants kept a reflective diary, where they were asked to record an event in their week focusing on the emotional elements. The four sets of data provided a rich description of the school leaders' practices (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 2006). Throughout the data collection, I interacted with the data to identify and organise patterns, themes, and categories (Creswell, 2013) related to the research questions and the theoretical frame of emotional intelligence (Mayer et al., 2004). Data analysis first involved the construction of cases. Each case was explored independently, with individual patterns emerging within each case. An analysis of the data was then undertaken to determine the relationships between the sub-themes across the four cases.

1.5 Overview of Thesis

The thesis is organised into three Parts. Part One introduces the research study, reviewing the current scholarship on emotional intelligence and educational leadership and presents the research design. Part Two explores the four case narratives, describing each of the participants and the themes that emerged for each of them. Part Three reports on the findings from the cross-case analysis, responds to the research questions and discusses the implications of the research study and future directions for further research and professional development for school leaders.

Part One

Chapter 1: Above

Chapter 2: Review of the literature

This chapter reviews the literature with the aim of locating the research in the broader context of what is known about emotional intelligence and school leadership. The chapter explores the contemporary understandings of emotional intelligence, including, emotional intelligence models and common characteristics of the emerging theories. The chapter then explores the literature on school leadership and the frameworks which underpin leadership education and professional practice in NSW. The chapter examines elements of school leadership practice including reflective thought and emotional intelligence and school leadership practice.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter outlines the design of the inquiry. It discusses the methodology used in conducting the research and justifies the inquiry's design. It then describes the research participants, and explains the

methods used in data collection. The analytical procedures are then presented and explained. Finally, the limitations, ethical considerations and trustworthiness of the inquiry are addressed.

Part Two

Part Two comprises four case studies based on an analysis of data for each participant. The four school leaders' practice is examined through the lens of the theoretical frame. Each case study concludes with an interpretative summary.

Chapter 4: Lou

Lou was a Head Teacher in a large secondary school in New South Wales. She had just over two years' experience in this role and had been a teacher for 18 years

Chapter 5: Pat

Pat was a Principal in a large secondary school with over 25 years' experience in school leadership. She had been Principal for five years in her current school.

Chapter 6: Elle

Elle was an Assistant Principal of a primary school, with over 15 years' experience in this role in two different schools.

Chapter 7: Will

Will was a Deputy Principal in a primary school. He was new to the role and the school, although he had held leadership positions for over 15 years.

Part Three

Chapter 8: Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings in relation to the supporting literature and the research questions presented in the introductory chapter. Analysis across the multiple case study is used to make connections between cases in order to respond to the three research questions.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

The final chapter answers the third research question, identifying possible implications of this study and future areas for research in school leadership, professional learning, policy and emotional intelligence theory.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The chapter begins by positioning the inquiry within the theoretical lens of emotional intelligence, exploring the contemporary understandings of emotional intelligence, including, emotional intelligence models and common characteristics of the emerging theories. From this perspective emotional intelligence is conceptualised as a cognitive ability associated with emotional awareness and regulation in oneself and in others (Salovey & Mayer, 1997). Literature related to leadership is then considered to explore how leadership and then subsequently school leadership has been researched and understood prior to this inquiry, including the evolution of leadership theories. This section reviews how emotions and emotional awareness have become increasingly important in leadership practices. Finally, the narrower focus of the role of emotional intelligence in leadership and school leadership is examined. The literature provides various descriptions of what skills a good leader requires, however, there is little research explaining how it is incorporated into school leadership practice. This research inquiry aims to address the application of emotional intelligence by leaders in their schools.

2.2 Theorising Emotion

The study of emotion has traversed disciplinary boundaries, including education, cognitive, neuro and evolutionary psychology and philosophy. Scholars have attempted to answer a number of philosophical questions, including the relationship between emotion and consciousness (Oatley & Duncan, 1992; Pinker, 2018; Roseman et al., 1994), the makeup of an emotional feeling (Lambie, 2000; Oatley & Duncan, 1992; Roseman, et al., 1994), the relationship between emotion and other intellectual and bodily phenomena, such as instinct, motivation and attention (Damasio, 1999; Mandler, 1984) and the cultural influences on emotion (Kleinman, 1980; Mesquita & Frijda, 1992; Scherer & Wallbott, 1994). As Matthews et al. (2002) have pointed out, “the secret of human happiness and fulfilment has been debated since ancient times without arriving at a satisfactory resolution” (p. 3). Aristotle’s concept of emotion has been particularly influential for early modern theories (Scmitter, 2016). He embraced the idea of mind and body. Acknowledging the cognitive and physical elements of emotion, he defined emotion as “that which leads one’s condition to become so transformed that his judgement is affected,

and which is accompanied by pleasure and pain” (cited in Solomon 2008, p.6). Aristotle’s account of emotions and organisation of human capacities served as the catalyst for century long debates (e.g., James, 1884; Lange, 1922 vs Bard, 1928; Cannon, 1928) on understanding the physiological changes (i.e., emotion-specific physiological response patterns) associated with emotions and the causality of these emotional responses (Schmitter, 2016).

In 1884, the philosopher William James challenged common presuppositions at the time, which were based on Darwin’s (1872) evolutionary theory. Darwin argued that the experience and expression of emotion enabled adaptive reactions to survival and reproduction related threats and opportunities (cited in Scherer, 2000). James’ theory of emotion proposed that physiological reactions are triggered by external stimuli, with the consequent emotional reaction dependent on a person’s interpretation of these stimuli (James, 1884, cited in Solomon, 2008). He argued that the emotion came after the physiological response. In 1897, this theory was challenged by Wilhelm Wundt, one of the founders of modern psychology, who argued that introspection clearly demonstrated that the emotion comes first, resulting in a physiological and behavioural consequence (Southworth, 2014). Wundt categorised human emotion on a two-dimensional plane of pleasure and arousal and Wundt’s grouping established the underpinning for contemporary research into human emotion (Gendron & Feldman-Barret, 2009). These theories exploring the relationship between physiology and cognition attempted to conceptualise the fundamental elements of human emotion.

The contrasting viewpoints of these early psychologists and philosophers, alongside contemporary affective neuroscience findings which envision an interacting network system that both receives and generates the experience of emotion (cited in Pace-Schott et al., 2019) have contributed to current thinking in psychology and have implications for emotion theories, especially to the development of the construct of “emotional intelligence”. Among the most popular contemporary conceptualisations of the nature of emotion have been theories suggesting the existence of basic or central emotions such as anger, fear, joy, sadness and disgust (Izard, 2009). The theorists (e.g., Ekman, 1994; Izard, 1994; Plutchik, 1980) in this tradition suggest that, during evolution, several major adaptive emotional strategies developed. Many of these discrete emotion models are derived from Darwin (1872), who used several key emotion terms and demonstrated for each of these, their functionality, evolutionary history and their universality, including species, ontogenetic stages and cultures (Scherer, 2000).

Darwin’s claim of the universality of emotions has influenced scholars (see Buck, 1988; Ekman,

1972; Izard 1994; Matsumoto et al., 1988; Turner & Stets, 2005 as cited in Lim, 2016) to expand research from the cognitive and non-cognitive components of emotion to the cultural influences on the expression of emotion (Tsai, 2021). Scholars adhering to evolutionary explanations (Buck, 1988; Izard, 1994 cited in Lim, 2016) argue for emotion as a universal construct with a large part of emotional experience biologically based. Scholars, such as Ekman (1972), argue that emotion is fundamentally genetically determined and facial expressions are interpreted in the same manner across cultures, with similar emotions experienced in similar situations (see Matsumoto & Hwang, 2017). However, more recently Turner and Stets (2005) have argued that culture influences emotion in various ways, including how emotion is felt and expressed. For example, on the basis of his review of historical and empirical scholarship on emotional arousal, Lim (2016) argues that emotions are not only biologically determined but are also influenced by the cultural context. From his comparison of studies of Western and Eastern cultures, Lim concludes that:

findings consistently support differences in emotional arousal between West and East.

Westerners value, promote, and experience high arousal emotions [such as excitement, anger, or anxiety], more than low arousal emotions [contentment or sadness], whereas vice versa is true for Eastern cultures (p. 107).

More recently, Scott et al. (2020) have argued that the consideration of individuals' emotional origins and destinations are essential concepts that must be integrated into theory and research on emotion. For example, as there is a diverse range of emotions that individuals experience daily and the emotional journey they undertake when regulating their emotions is unique, they argue that a combined lens of emotional distance and emotional direction may provide more comprehensive explanations on the impact on well-being and performance (Scott et al., 2020).

While most theories of emotion focus on different components of the emotion process and tend to be driven by different theoretical preoccupations, Scherer (2000), in his review of psychological models of emotion, concludes that most current theorists subscribe to a multicomponent definition of emotion, including physiological arousal, motor expression, and subjective feeling. These components are often extended to include motivational factors and the cognitive processes that are involved in evaluating the eliciting events and the regulation of emotional processes (e.g., Buck, 1993; Ellsworth, 1991; Frijda, 1986; Scherer, 1993).

2.3 Emotional intelligence

The battle between proclaiming the importance of emotions and denying their critical role is an enduring one in Western thought (Salovey et al., 2001). Salovey et al. (2008) point out that philosophers and psychologists have glorified analytic intelligence throughout much of Western history. Intellect and emotion have been researched as two separate psychological processes, with emotions often considered to be inferior, even to interfere with thought processes (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Plato was said to consider emotions a source of embarrassment and prevent one from seeing clearly, however like Aristotle, he considered wisdom to include the component of emotional capacity and awareness (cited in De Sousa, 1987). It was not until the late twentieth century that it was suggested that emotional capacities might be a form of intelligence (e.g., Sternberg, 1985; Sternberg & Detterman, 1986).

In his review of the historical origins of emotional intelligence research, Bar-On (2006) references Darwin's (1872) influence on the scientific work on emotions in the nineteenth century, Thorndike's (1920) concept of social intelligence and Weschler's (1940) exploration of the impact of non-intellective factors on intelligence. However, Bar-On (2004) largely attributes contemporary interest in the relationship between emotion and thought to Gardner's (1983) concept of multiple intelligences, specifically the interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences within it. Gardner viewed intelligence as "the capacity to solve problems or to fashion products that are valued in one or more cultural settings" (Gardner & Hatch, 1989, p. 5). According to Gardner (1999), "interpersonal intelligence denotes a person's capacity to understand the intentions, motivations and desires of other people and consequently, to work effectively with others" (p. 43). By contrast, "intrapersonal intelligence involves the capacity to understand oneself, to have an effective working model of oneself— including one's own desires, fears and capacities—and to use such information effectively in regulating one's own life" (p. 43). These two intelligences proposed by Gardner, capture the critical importance of emotional awareness, the underpinning of emotional intelligence, that is, one's ability to recognise their own as well as others' emotions and using this knowledge to successfully navigate the emotional experiences and exchanges of life.

Building on Gardner's work, Mayer, Salovey and colleagues developed the concept of "emotional intelligence" and are generally recognised as being most influential in the construct's scientific origin (Ziedner et al., 2008). These researchers were the first to publish extensive accounts of emotional intelligence in psychological journals (e.g., Mayer et al., 1990; Salovey & Mayer, 1990), and

they remain prolific contributors in the scientific literature on emotional intelligence (e.g., Mayer et al., 2000; Mayer & Cobb, 2000; Mayer & Geher, 1996; Mayer & Mitchell, 1998; Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Salovey et al., 2001; Salovey et al., 1995).

Salovey and Mayer (1990) concentrated on identifying emotional intelligence as a distinct form of intelligence involving emotions. They went on to define emotional intelligence as “the ability to perceive accurately, appraise and express emotions, the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotions and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth” (p. 10). In 1990, Mayer and Salovey argued for the redefinition of human intelligence “to include the ability to monitor one’s own and other’s feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and use this information to guide ones thinking and actions” (p. 189). In their more recent work, Mayer et al. (2000) describe emotional intelligence as the effective integration of emotion and thought and suggest a hierarchical four-branch model of emotional intelligence to include the perception and expression of emotion, use of emotion to facilitate thinking, understanding of emotion, and management of emotion in oneself and others. This hierarchical model proposes that individuals possess levels or states of emotional capacities that are demonstrated in actions and conversations. The notion of emotional levels provides a frame in which to identify and analyse the different emotional capacities of the school leaders in this inquiry, considering their individual contexts and practices.

Emotional intelligence is now being widely researched, with scholars agreeing that the evidence supports the use of emotional intelligence as a conceptual lens for viewing human behaviours (see Murphy, 2006; Mayer et al., 2000). Research into emotional intelligence has brought to the forefront the role of affective skills in the workplace (Goleman, 1998) and has highlighted the importance of emotions and emotional competencies to outstanding performance in many occupations and professions (Roberts et al., 2007; Boyatzis, 2008).

However, the construct is not without its critics (see Zeidner et al., 2008). One important criticism is centred on how the construct is defined in the literature, with variations in the theories and measures that are sometimes quite dissimilar from each other (Davies et al., 1998). For example, Goleman’s (1995) definition of emotional intelligence “includes abilities such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one’s moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathize and to hope” (p. 34).

Goleman's definition of emotional intelligence appears to represent all those positive qualities that are excluded from the notion of intelligence, this then prevents thinking about the construct as similar to traditional forms of human cognitive abilities (Zeidner et al., 2008). This has led to a tension between his definition and several others in the literature (such as that of Mayer & Salovey, 1997). According to Roberts et al. (2001), Goleman's conceptualisation of the biological and psychological background of emotional intelligence, identifies open-ended traits. These traits are described as functionally independent, however, are all clustered together to define this one construct (Roberts et al., 2001). Boyatzis et al. (2000) suggest that empirical studies fail to confirm Goleman's theoretical grouping or provide consistency among the studies using this definition.

Another major criticism of emotional intelligence theory is directed at the attempts to measure the construct (Conte, 2005). Ziedner et al (2008), for example, argue that there are significant issues with the assessment of emotional intelligence including confusion on whether the different measures of emotional intelligence are assessing the same underlying construct. However, amongst proponents of the construct, there is a consensus in relation to the most influential emotional intelligence measures designed so far (see O'Connor et al., 2019; Dimitriades, 2007): the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT); the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory/Emotional Competency Inventory; and Goleman's Clusters and Emotional Quotient Inventory.

The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test, which is an ability-based test measuring emotional intelligence through an individual's abilities to perceive, comprehend act on, and manage emotional information (Mayer et al., 2003), and the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) and Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI), which describes a cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that impact intelligent behaviour (Bar-On, 1997), are based on trait or mixed models of emotional intelligence. These emotional intelligence measures draw on both cognitive ability and personality theory to include social and emotional concepts and the personal aspects linked to behaviour (Boyatzis et al., 2000). Goleman's Clusters and Emotional Quotient Inventory, on the other hand, is based on personality theory, with emotional intelligence regarded as a competency.

There are additional models surfacing, which are comprised of different elements and introduce differences in how these elements correlate with each other. These include: The Emotional Skill Assessment Profile (ESAP) (Nelson & Low, 2003); Wong and Law's (2002) Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS); and Drigas and Papoutsis' (2018) Pyramid of Emotional Intelligence. The Emotional

Skill Assessment Profile (ESAP) is an instrument designed to provide a profile of emotional intelligence skills. It is used to quantify emotional intelligence by assessing several areas, including leadership, empathy and self-esteem (Nelson & Low, 2003). The Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) has 16 items and four subscales; the emotional intelligence score from the scoring of these items is claimed to predict external criterion variables such as life satisfaction. The Pyramid of Emotional Intelligence is based on a Nine-Layer model of emotional intelligence that includes features from both the ability and trait emotional intelligence models. The model has a hierarchical structure beginning at self-awareness and self-management; it then rises through various levels including social awareness and management to the universality of emotions and emotional unity. Each layer affords individuals the opportunity to cultivate significant emotional, cognitive and metacognitive skills which are important resources for personal and professional life and interpersonal relationships (Drigas & Papoutsis, 2018). Although many of the differences in the composition of the inventories and models can be attributed to the orientation or focus of the researchers, these discrepancies feed the argument that the construct remains unclear and not empirically supported.

Pfeiffer (2001) argues that for the construct to be an intelligence it should explain the mental process of emotion by relating the elements, as opposed to treating the elements as clusters - Goleman's model - or competencies - Bar-On and the ECI model - or as abilities - Mayer and Salovey's model. Like Pfeiffer (2001), Razzaq and Aftab (2016) posit that a logical model that accommodates thought processes from awareness to application and evaluates emotional management would offer a more holistic definition of emotional intelligence. Additionally, Petrides et al. (2003) point out that many of the models introduced have been disconnected from empirical evidence, with this evidence being produced only in a theoretical manner.

In their review of 'state-of-the-art in research involving this newly minted construct', Zeidner et al. (2008) distinguish between "what is known from what is unknown in relation to three paramount concerns of EI research, i.e., conceptualisation, assessment and applications" (p. 64). They report that there are promising descriptive accounts of attributes of emotional intelligence, such as, self-awareness, empathy and effective coping skills. Their report also highlights areas of application of the emotional intelligence construct in both academia and educational contexts, with educational researchers embracing the possibility that the concept of emotional intelligence may provide tools for tackling social problems, and the academic community agreeing that a significant personal quality may have been underestimated

(Zeidner et al, 2008).

However, their report also details problems with the construct, arguing that distinguishing emotional intelligence from intelligence, personality and emotion itself, presents serious conceptual and empirical problems (Zeidner et al, 2008). In this review Zeidner and colleagues (2008) report that it is unclear if emotional intelligence suggests explicit or implicit knowledge of emotion. They state that it is unclear if emotional intelligence assumes not only perception and use of emotions but also an underlying idea of meta-emotional regulation ability.

Additional criticisms of the construct center on the degree of value the theories add to research, because of their similarity to existing scientific theories. Bar-On (2007) and Landy (2005) suggest that the sub-components of emotional intelligence theories often correspond with theories on resilience and personality. This criticism specifically targets the mixed model theories (e.g., Goleman, 1995), as these theories are broader and incorporate variables connected to aspects such as personality and behaviour.

Although the debate on the role of emotion in intelligence continues, it appears that the pendulum has swung toward a view that analytical intellect may have been over-estimated at the expense of emotions (MacCann et al., 2020). Ziedner's et al (2008) review reveals that there are various measures of emotional intelligence and its constituent attributes that have sufficient reliability and validity to justify their use as research instruments, notably the MEIS/MSCEIT (Mayer et al., 2000) and the EQ-i (Bar-On, 1997). Other scholars (see MacCann et al., 2020; Mayer & Salovey, 2001) consider the construct of emotional intelligence an important element to appreciate with regards to understanding the emotional aspects of human interactions and relationships and Ziedner et al.'s (2008) review claims that an "explicit understanding of EI as a focus for real-world interventions may improve existing practice and suggest new techniques for hitherto intractable problems". (p. 28). This study takes up Ziedner et al.'s (2008) call for an "explicit" and "real-world" approach of understanding by identifying and describing the enactment of emotional intelligence by school leaders, providing examples and descriptions of emotionally intelligent action and responses to authentic contexts and situations facing leaders.

Emotional intelligence was first popularised in empirical research as a conceptual tool in studies investigating the role of emotional intelligence in the workplace and in relation to leadership in management research. In workplace research, the focus has primarily been on the relationship between performance (e.g., Cote & Miners, 2006; Pekaar et al., 2017; Sy et al., 2006), job satisfaction (e.g., Çekmecelioglu et al., 2012; Kafetsois & Zampertakis, 2008; Lee, 2018), workplace relationships (Lopes

et al., 2003; Zomer, 2013) and emotional intelligence. However, in both sites the association between emotional intelligence and management/leadership has been an enduring preoccupation. For example, over the last twenty years researchers have attempted to highlight the link between effective leadership and emotional intelligence by using various emotional intelligence measure, including those described above. As a result of this research (e.g., George, 2002; Kerr et al., 2005; Lone & Lone, 2018; Mayer et al., 2001; Prati et al., 2003; Wong & Law, 2002), there is a growing body of evidence supporting the premise that emotional intelligence has a profound impact on leadership effectiveness. A more detailed examination of emotional intelligence and leadership is discussed below.

2.4 Leadership

Philosophers and theorists have continued to grapple with the leadership paradigm for centuries, with leadership discussions appearing in the works of Plato and Caesar, in stories of Biblical patriarchs, Egyptian rulers and Greek heroes. Narratives have been passed down through history and cultures conjuring highly romanticised and emotional ideas about the courage and value of leaders. Solomon and Higgins (2010) point out that the evaluations of leadership in the past emphasised the individual, (usually) his personal characteristics and exercise of power and authority. Kezar et al.'s (2006) book, which reviews advances in leadership paradigms and theories, highlights how contemporary theories are moving towards relational competencies, such as, capacity to build trust, demonstrate authenticity, empower team members, support collaboration and encourage team cohesiveness.

A review of leadership literature reveals the existence of countless theories (see Bass, 2008; Burns, 1978; Fullan, 2001; Gronn, 2000; Lambert, 1998; Little, 1995; Kouzes & Posner 2007; Northouse, 2007; Spillane et al., 2001; Timperley, 2005; Walumbwa et al., 2008) and a universal acceptance and appreciation for the importance of leaders. However, Bass (1997) asserts that “leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth” (p. 7).

Aristotle, again, is one of the early writers who was interested in leadership. According to Galton and Eysenck (1869) his argument that people were born with characteristics that would make them good leaders is the foundation of the trait model of leadership (cited in Derue, et al, 2011). Trait theories describe a particular set of inherent abilities such as personality or behavioural characteristics that are shared by leaders (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). Despite the critics of the theory (see below) and the development of other theories that seem more in tune with the times, the trait theory of leadership persists

particularly in the media, popular opinion and academic scholarship (see, for example, Zaccaro et al., 2004).

Critics of the leader trait paradigm (e.g., Jenkins, 1947; Mann, 1959; Stogdill, 1948, cited in Hoy & Miskel, 2005) reject the notion of leaders being born. Rather they argue that leadership can be learned and that leaders in fact, can be trained. Scholars, such as Hemphill and Coons (1957) and Stogdill (1963), shifted their focus away from the trait model to establish a behaviour paradigm of leadership scholarship and research. The challenge then was to identify the dimensions of leader behaviour. Beginning with a list of a thousand or more dimensions, a research team at Ohio State University narrowed the list down to two fundamental behaviours of a leader. These behaviours were task focused and people focused (Stodghill & Coons 1957). Grint (2005) points out that this provided frameworks for leadership development that supported leaders who led in times of challenge, change and uncertainty. These frameworks included: Fiedler's (1967) 'Contingency Theory', which looked at situational elements in order to determine the appropriate leadership style for different contexts; and Hersey and Blanchard's (1969) 'Situational Theory', which focused on followers, rather than wider workplace circumstances, suggesting that leaders should change their behaviour according to the type of followers. Contingency and Situational theorists argue that successful leaders adapt their leadership style to match their present circumstances. These leadership models presented the possibility that leadership could be distinctive to each environment or circumstance (Horner, 1997).

A natural extension of contingency theory was the idea that followers were a key element in determining how leaders should behave, i.e., that any understanding of leadership should consider the nature of the leader-follower relationship (Salas-Vallina, 2020). Two models of leadership have been associated with the assessment of the relationship and exchanges that exist between leaders and their followers in pursuit of organisational goals: transactional and transformational theories of leadership.

Transactional leadership is characterised by managerial behaviours (Bass, 1985), that is, behaviours that are reactionary, low level, task specific and policy driven. Brymer and Gray (2009) also note that transactional leadership is contingent upon self-interest motivation. The leader follower relationship is dependent on a system administered through a hierarchical structure of reward and punishment. According to Stone et al. (2004), although considered effective at times, it typically does not produce positive references from followers. Transactional leadership focuses on control, not adaptation (Tracey & Hinkin, 1994). Burns (1978) argues that transactional leadership practices lead followers to

short-term relationships of exchange with the leader. These relationships tend toward shallow, temporary exchanges of gratification and often create resentments between the participants. Scholars (e.g., Yukl, 2013; Yukl & Mahsud, 2010) criticise transactional leadership theory because it utilises a one-size-fits-all universal approach to leadership theory that disregards situational and contextual factors of organisational challenges. The behaviours associated with this style of leadership do not lend themselves to a progressive vision but rather focus on day-to-day operations and the endorsement of the status quo (Yukl, 2013).

Zahed-Babelan and Rajabi (2009) researched the relationship between leadership styles and level of emotional intelligence of the heads of university departments. On the basis of their findings, they argue that the characteristics of transactional leaders are in contrast to the characteristics of individuals with high levels of emotional intelligence; that is, transactional leaders focus on managing organisational goals with little concern for developing the relationships and emotional connections within the organisation.

Transformational leadership, which aims to create a positive change in followers with the end goal of transforming them into leaders (Bass & Avolio, 1997), challenges traditional bureaucratic, hierarchical leader-follower relationships. Rather than the control of followers, the transformational leader seeks to convince followers to transcend their self-interest for the sake of the organisation (Brymer & Gray, 2006; Stone, et al., 2004). Bass and Avolio (1997) propose that transformational leadership consists of four components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. These four components combine to make leaders transformational figures, where they share a vision, inspire followers, mentor, coach, respect individuals, foster creativity and act with integrity (Bass, 2008; Bass & Riggio, 2006). The transformational leadership model sees followers emulating the leader and advocates followers aspiring to leaders themselves (Brymer & Gray, 2006), with Palmer et al. (2001) claiming that the inspirational motivation and individualised consideration components of transformational leadership are significantly correlated with the ability to both monitor and manage emotions in oneself and others.

In the context of educational scholarship and research on leadership, these various theories have had their different proponents. However, contemporary scholars argue that the multiplicity of leadership activities in schools and the tasks expected of contemporary educational leaders are too numerous for one person to adequately address (Fullan, 2001; Mangin, 2007). Educational institutions are in a constant state of flux and leaders are expected to engage in collaborative styles of leadership with multiple

stakeholder groups (Waldron & McLeskey, 2010). This has led to the popularity of ‘distributed’ leadership styles as a representation of effective educational leadership. Distributed leadership encourages “a shift in focus from the attributes and behaviours of individual ‘leaders’... to a more systemic perspective, whereby ‘leadership’ is conceived of as a collective social process emerging through multiple actors” (Uhl-Bien, 2006 as cited in Bolden, 2011, p. 251). Distributive leadership thus becomes “not something ‘done’ by an individual ‘to’ others, or a set of individual actions through which people contribute to a group or organization... [it] is a group activity that works through and within relationships, rather than individual action” (Bennett et al., 2003, p. 3 as cited in Bolden, 2011, p. 251-252).

Champions of distributed leadership (see Camburn et al., 2003, Copland 2003, Gronn, 2003; Spillane et al., 2004) argue that the theory is positioned to support leaders through the process of school change, curriculum and instruction changes, expectations around the use of evidence-based practices in basic skill areas and with classroom and schoolwide behaviour management practices. Waldron and Mclesky (2010) argue that distributive leadership leads to increased teacher trust and buy-in for change initiatives as well as increased student achievement. Scribner et al., (2007) note that “decisions are not made by a single individual; rather decisions emerge from collaborative dialogues between many individuals, engaged in mutually dependent activities” (p. 70), which “occurs through the complex network of relationships and interactions among the entire staff of the school” (p. 68).

Clarke and O’Donoghue (2017) point out that because educational leadership is undertaken in a diverse range of contexts, it can vary significantly. The desired leadership style is often dependent on the existing school culture and the strategic direction of the school. For example, based on her research with teacher leaders, Mangin (2007) argues that distributive leadership is not successful in schools where an understanding of a distributed leadership style is limited. Regardless, distributed leadership has significant relevance to this study of school leaders and leadership positions and educational leadership research more broadly. “Distributed leadership means mobilising leadership expertise at all levels in the school in order to generate more opportunities for change and to build the capacity for improvement” (Harris, 2013 a, para 3).

Parrish (2011) notes in her own research on leadership in higher education settings, that leadership in this context is uniquely different to leadership in other settings. Parrish’s (2011) mixed methodology research, argued that leadership should not be reserved to those at the top of the hierarchy, but “exercised by everyone across the institution.” (p. 30). With findings also supporting the premise that

emotional intelligence is highly relevant for effective leadership in higher education.

In the context of education, Clarke and O'Donoghue (2017), argue for the need for leadership research to take more account of context. They point out that “the amount of empirical research on leadership of educational organisations and especially of schools, which has stressed the importance of being sensitive to context, is not great.” (p. 167) and suggest attending to scholarship outside the field of education studies, for lessons on the “broad issues that can arise for school leaders in distinctive contexts” (p. 167). The study described in this thesis attempts to capture the contextual factors which influence leaders' enactment and use of emotional intelligence capacities, by observing participants in their natural environment.

Although there is an appreciation for individual leader traits and behaviours in leadership literature, and an acknowledgement on the impact of contextual variables, much of the research into educational leadership (see Brinia, et al., 2014; Maulding et al., 2010; Roffey, 2007; Stephens & Hermond, 2009) has narrowed its focus to include only executive leaders (i.e., Principals). This does not reflect how leadership is distributed in and across schools to support school quality. The study described in this thesis thus included other formal leaders (including Deputy and Assistant Principals and a Head Teacher) to acknowledge the distinction between the various leadership positions within a school.

2.5 Educational leadership, emotions and emotional intelligence

As pointed out above, the relationship between leadership and emotional intelligence has been a key focus of workplace leadership and organisational research. In the context of education, research on this relationship gained momentum in the 1990s. Although scholars and researchers had acknowledged that emotions were relevant to teachers' work in terms of morale, stress, motivation, empowerment, and the emotions of learning to teach (see Nias 1989; Rosenholtz 1989; Noddings 1992; Hargreaves 1994; Acker 1995; Dinham 1995; Woods & Jeffrey, 1996), the emotions associated with leadership and particularly the voices of leaders had until recently been essentially overlooked in research and literature. As Cherniss (1998) remarked over a decade ago, “increasingly, schools are providing students with opportunities for social and emotional learning ... we must be equally concerned with the social and emotional learning of our school leaders” (p. 28).

As numerous scholars have pointed out, societal changes in the late twentieth century have transformed the school into a more dynamic and complex institution (Stronge et al., 2004), requiring

greater social and emotional awareness from leaders and teachers (Hargreaves, 1998; Herbet, 2011; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Zembylas, 2009). Given these increased changes and complexities, there is an increasing recognition of the importance of school leadership in supporting change and providing for educational equality (Pashiardis, 2009). This has resulted in research efforts designed to discover what educational leaders do that actually impacts schools and student achievement (Cotton, 2003).

With the widespread acceptance that leadership requires skills beyond the cognitive and academic, including the resilience to deal with crisis and challenge (Allison, 2012), the capacity to communicate effectively (Harris 2007), to inspire, motivate and collaborate with colleagues (Humphrey, 2002) and the ability to develop trust and cohesion within teams (Kezar et al., 2006), there has been an increasing use of the concept and tools of emotional intelligence in research associated with leadership and school effectiveness (e.g. Ciarrochi & Mayer, 2007; Harris, 2007; Herbert, 2011; Scott, 2003).

Much of this research (e.g., Ayiro, 2009; Brackett, et al, 2010; Chen & Guo, 2018; Hackett & Hortman, 2008; Reed, 2005; Stone et al., 2005; Wong et al., 2010) used emotional intelligence inventories to understand and quantify leadership characteristics, with the purpose of identifying those emotional competencies associated with effective leaders. As discussed above, there are various validated measures used in the research and measurement of emotional intelligence (e.g., Mayer Salovey Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT), Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i), Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI)). These inventories measure emotional intelligence in one of three ways: self-report measures which reflects an individual's self-concept; informant measurement which explores how others perceive an individual; and ability or performance measures. These more popular measures of emotional intelligence have been taken up in educational research which has aimed at quantifying and identifying emotional capacities of school leaders (e.g., MSCEIT, ECI and Wong Emotional intelligent scale (WEIS))

Although the studies using inventories have been quantitative, there has been a growing number of both mixed method studies (e.g., Chen, 2020; Cliffe, 2011, 2018; Corcoran & Tormey, 2012; Parrish, 2011; William, 2008) and qualitative studies (e.g., Beatty, 2000; Cherkowski, 2012; Chen & Walker, 2021; Johnson et al, 2005; Maresca, 2015; Roffey, 2007; Slater, 2005; Strickland, 2013) researching the link between emotional intelligence and school leadership. The qualitative studies have used observations, site visits and a variety of interview techniques to investigate the emotional experiences of educational leaders. Researchers using these approaches argue that listening to conversations in any

organisation can provide powerful indications to the overall quality of the culture and climate and answer questions about experience, meaning and perspective (Alvesson, 1996; Bryman et al, 1988; Conger, 1998). Qualitative measures can provide rich, thick descriptions of emotional intelligence (Beatty, 2000), provide the means to capture leaders' own perspectives on the emotional intricacies of leadership life (Loader, 1997) or the emotional labour of leadership (Blackmore, 1996).

Beatty's (2000) study of the emotionality of educational leadership is one such example. Her study asked experienced school leaders to recall key moments in their lives as leaders. Her study was designed to investigate the associations between an individual's philosophy of leadership and their experience of emotions in leadership. Each of five participants shared in 35–45 minutes of focused reflective conversation, exploring leadership as it has been part of the participant's life, from early experiences of other leaders or in being a leader themselves. Participants were guided in recollecting a specific occasion of a meaningful association between emotion and leadership. Additionally, written reflections were invited and the researcher took observation notes. Her study revealed some of the mixed emotions of leadership, such as the excitement and passion of leading, however, they also described the anxiety and vulnerability this produced.

In another qualitative study conducted in six Australian schools over six months, Roffey (2007) investigated the effect of principals' values and styles on establishing a caring and inclusive school community (also termed emotional literacy). Data were gathered from principals, teachers, students and school counsellors, via interviews and surveys. Results indicated that the process of developing a caring school community begins with the values and vision of school leaders. However, Roffey also found that much more was needed to turn this vision into reality, including the inter and intrapersonal competencies of the leaders and the ways in which they interacted and managed stress.

In a more recent article, Chen and Walker (2021) describe how “emotions hover like a shadow over the lives and work of school principals” (p. 1). Their study investigating how emotional experiences and emotional labour strategies changed over different career stages, attempted to capture the emotional trajectory of “excellent principals” (p. 1). Chen and Walker's (2021) findings demonstrated a dynamic pattern of prominent emotions and emotional labour, which surfaced in each stage or phase of principalship. The principals shared how their emotions related to tasks, professional experiences and their emotional awareness have shaped their leadership.

While not specifically focused on emotional intelligence the body of work from Cherkowski and

her colleagues (e.g. Cherkowski & Walker, 2016, 2018; Cherkowski & Schnellert, 2017) have examined the impact of emotions and organisational wellbeing. Noting educators' "wellbeing is central to establishing and sustaining learning environments within which all students may learn and grow their capacities and skills" (Cherkowski, 2018, p. 67). In 2012 Cherkowski used a qualitative case study to explore teacher commitment. The case study took place in a small elementary school in Canada which was purposely selected based on the belief that the school "was moving in the direction of establishing a learning community culture within the school" (p. 59). Three teachers and the principal were invited to participate based on their interest in the study. Data were collected through participant observations, three long interviews, and participant journal entries. Cherkowski used a "positive organisational" scholarship lens to "notice and explicitly frame compassion and other human emotional capacities within the role of school leadership" (p. 63). She argues that viewing school organisations through this lens "broadens our understanding of the importance of establishing meaningful human connections within the complex webs of relationships that make up a school organization" (p. 63). Cherkowski (2012) explored the "messiness of being human" and concluded that for the teachers in her study, the principals' authentic expressions of emotion "of deep care and compassion" were an important influence on their "renewed desire to focus on their commitment to their work and an improvement in their craft" (p. 57), specifically the desire to "grow and learn within a professional community" (p. 57).

In an interpretive study more specifically focused on EI, and one closely related to the study described in this thesis, Maresca (2015) sought to understand the phenomenon of principals' use of emotional intelligence to influence their school communities. To this purpose she conducted in-depth interviews with three experienced Massachusetts principals to determine how they understood EI and to identify the EI skills and strategies that her participants regarded as essential in their roles as school leaders. Her findings indicated that participants generally understood emotional intelligence as enabling them to build relationships and establish trust for the purpose of improving their schools. Additionally, the principals considered various skills as essential in achieving this purpose, including demonstrating openness, positivity, respect, inclusivity, active listening, self-reflection and emotional management. Maresca's (2015) study focused on experienced principals understanding of EI, where the study described in this thesis explores participants across various leadership positions and with a range of leadership experience.

2.6 Summary

This chapter has reviewed literature relating to school leadership, emotional intelligence and the relevance of emotional intelligence to school leadership practice. The theories of leadership and their link to emotional intelligence have provided a framework for discussion around educational leadership and the role of change in schools and school systems. Efforts have been made by scholars (see Elmore, 2000) to clarify the application of leadership theory in educational settings and the work of Fullan (2008) and Cherwoski (2018) have provided insights into how effective leadership must exist in a school to ensure that continual improvements are occurring. Scholars (e.g., Kin & Kareem, 2019) note that attention should be given to the emotional dimension of educational leadership, arguing that rational models of leadership simply do not reflect the contemporary educational landscape.

The research findings described above offer a valuable glimpse into the largely uncharted territory of the importance of emotional capacities in leadership and point to the importance of further explorations of the role of the emotions in leadership, the importance of school contexts and leadership development. However, the majority of studies in the area of EI and school leadership are quantitative in nature (e.g., Brackett, et al, 2010; Chen & Guo, 2018; Wong et al., 2010) or rely primarily on interviews for principals' perceptions of emotional intelligence. The study described in this thesis draws on both interview and observational data as well as reflective diaries to understand not only leaders' understandings of EI but how they enacted EI in their roles as leaders in their different schools.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology used in this inquiry and begins by restating the purpose of the study and outlining the research questions designed to achieve this. An argument is made for the utility of a case study design to explore in greater depth the experiences and practices of four school leaders and the emotions associated with leading in the complex and dynamic environments of schools. The chapter then details the locus of the inquiry and the four participants are introduced. Next the phases of the research design are described, including the methods of data collection and data analysis and the steps taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings.

3.2 Research questions

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand how school leaders understand emotional intelligence and demonstrate it through their professional practice in their schools. The study was guided by three research questions, each of which builds on the one before:

RQ1. How do school leaders understand emotional intelligence and its purpose in their roles as leaders?

RQ2. How do school leaders apply their emotional intelligence to their various leadership roles in their schools?

RQ3. How can school leaders be supported to enact emotional intelligence in their professional practice?

3.3 Research Design

This inquiry used a multiple case study methodology (Creswell, 2003; Yin, 2009), where each leader is taken to be a single case. The descriptions of each case in Part 2 of the thesis are based on my analysis of observations of the leaders practice, my discussions with the leaders about their practice following my observations, final interviews and the leaders' writing in reflection diaries. Creswell (2013, p. 97) defines case study research as "a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a *case*) or multiple bounded systems (*cases*) over time". A case is deemed bounded when the

study requires a limit in terms of the number of participants involved, the scope of the setting, or the timeframe for observations or interviews (Stake, 1995). Case studies have a particular utility in many areas of education by providing valuable information through rich anecdotal study (Nath, 2005). By using a case study design, I aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being explored in real life contexts and from the perspectives of the participants (Yin, 2009). Qualitative understanding of cases requires the researcher to experience the activity of the case, as it occurs in its contexts and in its particular circumstance (Stake, 2006). As Yin (2012), points out, qualitative case study research is not about arriving at one truth; case studies are not intended to generalise “from samples to universes” (p. 18), “rather they build theoretical premises which function as tools to make claims about situations similar to the one studied” (Wikfeldt, 2016, p. 4).

Multiple-case study research is the study of several cases in order to inquire into a particular phenomenon (Stake, 2006) and illustrate an issue (Creswell, 2013). This study explored how four school leaders (Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal and Head Teacher) understood and enacted emotional intelligence in their practice, each leader representing one case. School leaders’ meanings of emotional intelligence (EI) and their enactment of EI in their practice as leaders is a complex and specific phenomenon. A multiple-case study design provides the means to collect a range of differing forms of information for each case in its differing school context. This, in turn, provides the means to explain the phenomenon through the generation of rich descriptions and participant insights (Anderson et al, 2014; Yin, 2012). Creswell (2013) suggests that qualitative researchers typically choose no more than “four or five cases” (p. 10). However, Creswell (2013) also warns that researchers need to be careful as the study of multiple cases can dilute the overall analysis. For this study, four cases have been chosen in order to observe participants across the spectrum of senior leadership roles in schools (i.e., Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal and Head Teacher).

According to Yin (2009) the design for the multiple-case study should replicate the design used for the individual cases. When the study is designed as a qualitative multiple-case study, the individual cases should be studied to learn about their complexity and situational uniqueness (Stake, 2006). The individual cases are presented in Part Two, with each case comprising a chapter. In Part Three, Chapter Eight, I explore the similarities and differences between the cases in order to identify the differences in the participants awareness and understanding of emotion in their leadership roles. This examination of similarities and differences allowed me to describe and explain how and when the leaders enacted

emotional intelligence, as well as what skills the leaders tended to select.

In qualitative research, the researcher is considered as the central instrument of data collection (Merriam, 2009). This means that it is critical that researchers are honest and transparent about their own subjectivities, allowing readers to draw their own conclusions about the interpretations that are presented through rich examples of data. This requires information about the researcher's background (work and personal experience), how this situates them in the field of research (networks, associations etc.) and motivations for conducting the research (Stake, 1995). In Chapter One, I explain my motivation for conducting the research, in this chapter I explain how my experience as teacher assisted in both participant recruitment and methods of data collection and analysis. As a teacher I had a network of colleagues whom I was able to approach to discuss my interest and intended area of study. Through this network, I sought advice on possible participants and insight into the types of leadership exchanges I should observe and the manner in which I should gather data from participants. This included the length of time I would need to adequately capture authentic leadership displays. The methodology was also guided by my experience as a teacher, educational researcher and as a parent of school aged children. These roles and school experiences have provided me with numerous opportunities to observe school settings, teachers, leaders and other key stakeholders of schools. My shared background also helped me in building relationships, establishing the rapport and trust with the participants needed to be able to engage directly with the participants in their contexts and access instances of leading as they occurred.

Data collection in the natural environment was an important element of this inquiry, acknowledging that in the real world, environmental constraints and context influence behaviours and outcomes. The natural environment of the school provided time boundaries that also guided this research. For example, data were collected within the school day, in the school term, and at the convenience of the four school leaders. I observed the participants as they performed their leadership roles, in their individual contexts. These contexts included the social process of influence (Barker, 2001), e.g., facilitating executive meetings, staff meetings and professional learning experiences, including staff mentoring and growth coaching. The observations occurred over a period of three and a half months (see Appendix C for details).

In qualitative research, the research process is emergent (Merriam, 2009). Emergent designs propose that the initial plan for the research process may alter after the researcher enters the field and begins to collect data. In this inquiry, I decided after my initial observations of 'Pat' to collect further data

in the form of discussions of practice. I realised that if I were to understand how school leaders made sense of the exchanges I was observing and how they were navigating the emotion influencing these exchanges through their demonstration of emotional intelligence, I needed the leaders to unpack the observation for me. I wanted to record their interpretation of the observation. After describing to my supervisors how the first observation had led to a debriefing discussion, where ‘Pat’ had provided additional insight and context to the exchange that had taken place, post observation discussions were included as a formal component of the data collection process. This was an invaluable addition, with each leader providing contextual details about the exchanges and promoted active reflection-on action (Schon, 1983).

3.4 Participants

To recruit participants who met the criteria of school leaders (not only principals), purposive sampling strategies were used for the selection of information rich cases (Palinkas et al, 2015). Patton (2002) explains that purposive sampling emphasises key variations, as opposed to commonalities, which helps to provide insights into the significance of variation across cases. As a first step, I sought out the most obvious category of school leaders – school principals. This was both to include these senior leaders as participants and to obtain permission to research with other school leaders in their schools.

With the permission of the University of Wollongong’s Ethics Committee and the New South Wales (NSW) State Education Research Applications Process (SERAP), which approves research in NSW Government schools, I contacted six principals by email, the names of whom were obtained through colleagues. An initial letter was sent to these Principals advising that I wanted to recruit participants for my study who held formal leadership positions i.e., faculty head, year coordinator, assistant principal or principals (themselves) and whom they considered might be interested in reflecting on their leadership through the lens of EI.

After the research inquiry was explained four principals agreed to be involved in varying capacities, one principal accepting the invitation personally and the other three offered to suggest other possible participants, based on the criteria I had given them. This further layer of recruitment involved the principal’s providing information on other ‘information-rich cases’ (other school leaders) in their schools. The criteria were communicated via email and included: being in a formal leadership position; those leaders who the principal considered had an understanding and appreciation of emotional intelligence in

their roles as leaders; and those on their staff who were interested in leadership development initiatives. As Patton (2002) points out, this sampling approach is particularly useful for capitalising on expert wisdom, identifying studies that are highly valued by different stakeholders. This sampling yielded six possible participants, across four schools, with different responsibilities and different years of experience in leadership positions.

I sent these six potential participants and their school principals' emails with information and consent forms (see Appendix I and J). Four of these school leaders agreed to be involved and provided written consent (see Appendix J), to participate in the study. Additionally, their school principals provided written consent to allow me to observe the participants in environments where other teachers, staff and students might be present.

School contexts are inherently different from one another and Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) note that case studies are responsive to changes during the study and to the needs of the stakeholders. As I was immersed in each context, I developed an understanding of how to adapt, as well as an appreciation of the contextual differences and how this had an impact on the leadership behaviours of the participants. Participants from across both primary and secondary environments were included. This was beneficial, as it provided an avenue to consider the differences in structure, size, and program delivery and the impact of these contextual differences on the ways the leaders understood and enacted emotional intelligence in their leadership.

Table 3.1

Participant details

Participant	Age/ Years' Experience	Leadership Title	Leadership Roles/Additional Responsibilities	Setting
Pat (F)	Age: 53 Teacher: 29 Leader: 25	Principal	Member of the Secondary Principal Council/ Mentor for Lead Accreditation	Secondary
Lou (F)	Age: 40 Teacher: 18 Leader: 2	Head Teacher	Learning & Well-being/ External Validation Coordinator Beginning Teacher Liaison	Secondary
Elle (F)	Age: 52 Teacher: 30 Leader: 14	Assistant Principal	Learning & Support Leader/Stage 3 Leader	Primary
Will (M)	Age: 38 Teacher: 17 Leader: 14	Deputy Principal	Instructional Leader for Pedagogy & Assessment	Primary

3.4.1 Pat

At the time of the study, Pat was 53 years old and Principal of a large regional secondary school

in NSW. Pat had over one hundred staff at the school and had been Principal at this site for over five years. Prior to this position, Pat had been Principal in a Sydney secondary school for two years. Pat had 29 years teaching experience and for 25 of those she held leadership positions. Pat was enthusiastic to join the research, discussing her own interest in emotional intelligence and the role it played in her leadership practice when I contacted her. Pat shared that she engaged with mindfulness and meditation to support her emotional awareness. Data were collected from Pat over a period of five months. Pat was observed five times in a range of contexts. Table 3.2 below details the contexts of participant observations. After the first observation, Pat initiated a conversation about the meeting, where she offered reasons as to the tone and direction of the discussions. This prompted my decision to explicitly invite her to discuss her practice, including her emotions, responses to colleagues and the strategies she was employing, after each observation. In all our conversations, Pat was particularly open about the exchanges she had with staff and how her emotions were engaged. As well as these informal conversations, she participated in an interview and completed 15 personal diary reflections.

3.4.2 Lou

Lou was 40 years of age at the time of study and was one of three Head Teachers leading the learning and support faculty within another secondary school in regional NSW. Head teachers are typically employed in secondary schools and their role as head teacher is an opportunity for the teacher to continue to grow their understandings about leadership, while simultaneously continuing to develop their teaching expertise. Lou had been in the Head Teacher position for two years, with just over 18 years teaching experience. Lou shared that her interest in the research study was linked to her leadership aspirations. Lou was responsible for coordinating the school's external validation process and facilitating the mentoring program for early career teachers. Lou was also driving the BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) initiative, which served as part of her lead accreditation process. Throughout data collection Lou shared that she had pursued leadership positions because of her interest in professional learning and mentoring. Her focus was on mentoring younger teachers in the early stages of their career. Lou was currently pursuing the 'Lead' accreditation as part of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and disclosed that she was applying for the upcoming deputy position. Data were collected from Lou over a period of five months. She was observed five times in a variety of meetings and scheduled events, including school meetings and at a Leadership Development Conference. Immediately after each observation, there was a discussion of practice. These discussions of practice with Lou remained as

formal exchanges, where I posed questions to elicit further detail on the observation. Lou participated in an interview and completed seven personal diary reflections. As part of her Lead accreditation, Lou was mentored by an experienced Principal and had engaged with professional learning linked to this process (i.e., gathering evidence of leadership, effective communication and conflict resolution).

3.4.3 Elle

At the time of the study, Elle was an Assistant Principal in a small regional primary school. Assistant principals are typically employed in primary schools. They play a key role supporting the principal and, as the leader of a group of teachers, leads the professional growth of their team. She was 52 years of age, with 30 years of experience as a primary school teacher. She had been in Assistant Principal in the same regional area for 16 years. Elle's leadership portfolio included leading Stage Three (years five and six), coordinating learning and support and sports coordination. Data were collected from Elle over a period of five months. She was observed four times in a variety of meetings and scheduled events, both in-school and off site. Immediately after each observation with Elle, there was a discussion of practice, which were conversational in nature. Elle would often compare her exchanges with staff to her similar experiences as a parent. Elle participated in a formal interview and completed eight personal diary reflections. Elle shared that over the years she had participated in several courses focusing on personality and professional relationships. However, she indicated that she had no formal leadership professional development.

3.4.4 Will

Will was 38 and had been newly appointed as Deputy Principal in a coastal Primary school. In the Australian context deputy principals are accountable to the principals. They support the leadership, management and improvement of their schools. Will was new to both the leadership position and the school, receiving the appointment earlier that year. At the start of data collection, Will had been in the position for three terms. Prior to that he had 14 years' experience as an Assistant Principal, in two different schools further up the coast. In total, he had 17 years' experience as a teacher, stepping up to leadership roles after only two years of teaching. He had travelled internationally for professional development and had been involved in research studies with 'world renowned' educators, who had inspired him to develop his leadership style, focusing on transformational behaviours. Data were collected from Will over a period of five months. He was observed four times in a variety of meetings and scheduled events at his school. Immediately after each observation, there was a discussion of practice,

these discussions were initiated by me, where I posed questions on the observations and sought clarification on Will's management of meetings and responses to his colleagues. Will participated in an interview and, over the period of five months, completed 10 personal diary reflections.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

As indicated above several different data collection procedures were employed to address the research questions. These included observations (captured through field notes), debriefing discussions (written up as field notes following each informal discussion post observations), interviews (recorded) and reflection diaries (leaders written self-reflections on experiences/encounters). A complete audit trail of the data (Appendix C) details the data collected and the assigned codes that allowed data sources to be identified throughout the thesis.

Data collection involved firstly observing the participants and discussing these observations. On completion of these observations and discussion of practice, the participants were interviewed and their reflection journal was collected.

3.5.1 Observations

In the collection of observational data in educational contexts, Creswell (2013) argues that researchers need to become immersed in the setting in order to better understand the participants' practices. The purpose of this study was to explore enactments of practice, observing how leaders understood, used, and navigated emotion in their roles. I engaged directly with the school leaders observing their practice in their individual settings (see Figure 3.2) Observations allowed me to describe my own interpretations of what was happening (Creswell, 2013) and enabled me to collect data about how leaders used emotional intelligence in their roles. While I was observing each leader in their various interactions with colleagues and staff members, I endeavoured to record these observations using field notes. These notes were guided by the theoretical frameworks described in Chapter Two, so that I attempted to capture: the leaders' displays and/or reference to emotions; evidence of emotional regulation or management; and demonstration of support or empathy to their colleagues.

The participants were asked to nominate four or five leadership events that were convenient for me to attend and observe. A timetable of observations was negotiated with each of the participants based on these nominated events. The leadership events recommended by the participant were diverse and included: executive and faculty meetings, professional development initiatives/meetings, a Leadership

Development Conference, a mentoring meeting and a sports competition (Figure 3.2). I recorded the data during the observational sessions on a template (Appendix E). As mentioned above the template focused on reference to emotions, including direct quotes, leader behaviour (including how formal they were in exchanges, their responses and reactions to colleagues) and their questioning and comments to others in attendance. The template was divided into five-minute increments to support my capturing ‘chunks’ of the leader’s behaviour.

As discussed above the observations were diverse, some occurring onsite, others in different external locations. This meant that my role in each observation was different, depending on both the location and the participant. For the majority of the observations, I was introduced by each participant at the start of the observation, sitting at the back as a silent observer. However, Pat on three out of her five observations invited me to participate in the activities (i.e., mindfulness meditation, goal setting, growth coaching initiatives). In these instances, Pat considered me an active contributor to the activity, taking notes as I participated.

Table 3.2

Participant Observations

Participant	Role	Observation 1	Observation 2	Observation 3	Observation 4	Observation 5
Pat	Principal	Senior Executive meeting	Executive meeting	Leadership Development Initiative Conference + Mentoring Meeting	Secondary Principal Council Meeting	Staff Meeting
Will	Deputy Principal	Leading Literacy Professional Dev’t Meeting	Leading Numeracy Professional Dev’t Meeting	Intentions/ assessment/ feedback Executive Meeting	Professional Development (Pupil Free Day) – presentation on strategic direction	
Elle	Assistant Principal	Learning and Support Meeting	Classroom management – lesson delivery	Inter-school sport competition	Informal discussions with colleagues - IT intro	
Lou	Head Teacher-Learning & Well-Being	Professional Learning Team Meeting	Mentoring Beginning Teachers Meeting	Leadership Development Initiative Conference	Beginning Teachers Meeting	Staff meeting - External Validation

3.5.2 Discussions of Practice

As discussed above, it became apparent that the participants could provide valuable contextual detail to the observations. Therefore, on the completion of each observation, a debriefing discussion took place with each school leader. The length of these discussions of practice varied significantly, depending on the leaders' availability and the questions I had regarding the data I had collected. The discussions of practice occurred as informal conversations providing the participants with the opportunity to provide context and offer further detail to my observations. These discussions were often initiated by the participant who would use me as a sounding board to process what had occurred in the meeting ("Talking like this after these meetings, lets me evaluate what just occurred", Pat D-2). Other times I would pose questions as a catalyst for an exchange, for example, I asked "how did she decide what the meeting will cover?" She responded: "I decided that the teachers would have preferred to understand the reporting system at this stage" (Lou D-3) or the reason for facilitating a discussion in a certain manner ("Whether it's them understanding that I appreciate what they're up against, or it's me just allowing them to have a voice, they can feel they have contributed to the decisions and the school's direction" Will, D-3). During the discussions I took detailed notes which were used to supplement the observations, providing additional context for the participants' leadership practices, including their intentions and perspectives on the interactions and behaviours they were having with others.

3.5.3 Interviews

The interviews were intended to explore teachers' beliefs and knowledge of emotional intelligence and how emotional intelligence is demonstrated in their leadership practice. Before I completed data collection at each school and after completing the observations and discussions of practice, I conducted an interview with each leader in order to capture the leaders understanding of emotional intelligence and their interest in the role of emotion in their practice. The interview structure was created to allow the participants to reflect on their journey into leadership, as well as exploring what and who may have influenced their practices and professional development. Following Creswell's (2013) advice, I began with researching questioning techniques, to ensure the questions were structured to elicit rich and valuable information. I field tested the interview questions with my supervisors at the time and with other doctoral candidates.

As mentioned above the final interviews were conducted after I had completed all observations

and discussions of practice of each school leader. They were scheduled at their convenience and took place in their offices. The interviews ranged from approximately 20 minutes to 40 minutes long and were framed by ten questions (see Appendix G for the interview protocol). Interviews were digitally recorded on my laptop and my phone, using audio note (a software program, which creates a page on which to scribe/write the transcript).

During the interviews, I tried to create an environment where the discussion was relaxed and engaging for the school leaders as they shared their ideas and perceptions (Creswell, 2013). As I had already spent a number of days with each participant, in a variety of settings, a good rapport had been established with each participant. All the school leaders were engaged and indicated they were interested in the research and possible outcomes for future professional learning. All participants demonstrated an interest in the questions, spending time formulating their responses.

3.5.4 Reflective Diary

At our first meeting, I invited all the participants to keep a reflective diary. The participants were asked to reflect on the emotional aspects of their experiences as a leader by recording their feelings and responses to exchanges and encounters in their roles as school leaders. As explained by Robinson and Clore (2002), this data method is focused on capturing participants' moods and emotions very close to their occurrence, thus reducing the probability of retrospective biases. The aim of the reflective diaries was to provide participants with flexibility, allowing participants to select what they wanted to say and how they would like to say it (Bouma & Ling, 2004; Creswell, 2012), without the time or structural constraints of an interview. This method was another means to gain insights into the participants' perspectives on their roles and emotions as leaders. Each participant used their diary to record their thoughts and evaluation of situations or exchanges they encountered. Often, they recorded details about conflicts and difficult conversations, with other entries detailing their successes and plans for future exchanges. The reflective diaries were intended to provide a source of data from which to explore how the leaders navigated emotion and understood their leadership behaviours and the impact these behaviours had on others. The participants were provided with a diary which I had created to facilitate reflections. The diaries included illustrations of contemporary artwork on mindfulness and quotes about emotional intelligence from contemporary literature (See Appendix H). These were not intended as prompts and were on separate pages to the participants' writing. They did set a context around emotional intelligence

as an idea to be taken up in the diary.

The diaries were collected after the observations and interviews were completed. The participants diaries varied considerably in the number and length of entries. Pat used her diary extensively. The entries were often prompted by her reading and she recorded emotions, thoughts and her successes as a leader. Lou's entries were generally brief, reflecting on her emotions and the initiatives she was attempting to implement into her context. These entries were mostly dot points or concept maps. Elle, wrote narratives on conversations she had with colleagues and parents, describing her own and others' emotions. Will's entries were similar to Elle's recording conversations he had with staff or parents; he also reflected on his role in producing successful outcomes from these conversations.

Table 3.3

Participant reflections recorded

Participant	Number of Reflective Diary Entries
Pat	15
Lou	7
Elle	8
Will	10

3.6 Methods of Data Analysis

3.6.1. Theoretically informed coding

In the first stage, utilising both Goleman's and Mayer and Salovey's models of emotional intelligence, I established a short list of five codes for initial coding. Mayer and Salovey's (1997) notion of emotional levels and Goleman's (1998) inclusion of empathy on his expansion of Mayer and Salovey's model provided a framework with which to identify and analyse the different emotional capacities of the school leaders and their enactment in their practice. Additionally, using the two models allowed me some flexibility with variations in the terms I could use to capture the affective skills I was coding. The codes were as follows: self-awareness (SA); self-regulation (SR), internal motivation and perspective (IM), empathy and balance (EB), and social skills (SS) (see Table 3.4).

To begin coding I decided on how these categories would look in terms of each of the participants' practice as leaders. It was useful to engage with the items in quantitative measures of EI. A common aspect in many of these measures is the focus on emotional "competencies" which can theoretically be developed in individuals to enhance their professional success. The majority of measures include facets relating to: (1) perceiving emotions (in self and others), (2) regulating emotions in self, (3)

regulating emotions in others and (4) strategically utilizing emotions. The measures often use a Likert scale, posing questions are about emotions or reactions associated with emotions and to the extent that one agrees or disagrees, e.g. “I know when to speak about my personal problems to others”; “I find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of other people”; “I am aware of my emotions as I experience them”.

For this inquiry I decided that: self-awareness would be indicated by actions or talk where the leaders’ focus was on their own emotions (e.g. “I meditated this morning- your thoughts control your emotions, so controlling your thoughts is imperative”); self-regulation by the leaders’ demonstrating a sense of control over their reactions (e.g. “We must work with these feelings, use them and help each other through this”); internal motivation and perspective by action or talk pointing to organisational skills (“I have this vision to create a platform that celebrates the self-efficacy in each teacher”); empathy and balance by the ways the leader responded to colleagues (e.g. “I try to support them in an emotional way and get others to support them to get them out of that concern”); and social skills by indicators of the leaders ability to foster collaboration. The field notes from observations and discussions of practice, transcripts from the interviews and copies of the reflective diary entries were coded against these five codes. At times the text was coded with multiple codes thus demonstrating an overlap and connection between the codes, highlighting the complexity of emotion intelligence and its enactment in leadership practices.

Table 3.4

Initial codes

Code Name	Code
Self-Awareness	SA
Self-Regulation	SR
Internal Motivation & Perspective	IM
Empathy & Balance	EB
Social Skills	SS

Note. Adapted from Goleman’s (1995) and Mayer and Salovey (1997) models of Emotional Intelligence.

The second stage of coding involved the further coding of data under each of these codes to form subcodes (see Table 3.5). This process involved my re-reading the data collected for each of these codes and identifying sub-codes that captured in a more nuanced way the participants’ understandings and enactments of EI.

Table 3.5*Codes and Sub-codes*

Code Name	Code	Sub-code
Self-awareness	(SA)	Recognition/understanding of emotions Realistic self-assessment Sense of Self/Identity/Confidence Reflective Practice - Reflection in action
Self-regulation	(SR)	Redirect disruptive emotions Suspend Judgement Reflective Practice- Reflection in action
Internal Motivation and Perspective	(IM)	Curiosity for learning Optimism/positivity Organisational commitment Evaluation before action -Reflection on action Inquiry based project Mindset
Empathy	(EB)	Understand emotional makeup of others Appropriate responses to others Building and supporting talent Desire to soften negative emotions in others Interaction processing Mentoring Reflective Practice- Reflection on action
Social Skills	(SS)	Managing r/ships & emotions Build network /rapport Leading expertise Conflict resolution Collaborative practice Vision Reflective Practice- Reflection on action

In this next level of coding, it became evident that reflective practices (that is, thinking about what they did and said) were evident in the talk and actions of the participants coded at all the first level of codes. I coded the ways this manifested in relation to self-awareness and self-regulation as ‘reflection-in-action’ and in relation to internal motivation and perspective (IM), empathy and balance (EB) and social skills (SS), as ‘reflection-on-action’. For Dewey (1933) and scholars following his lead (e.g., Munby, 1989; Schön, 1983), reflection was considered as special form of problem solving. Posner (1989) argues that experience with no reflection leads to superficial and poor problem solving. For Schon (1983), professional growth begins when a person starts to view things with a critical lens, by reflecting and doubting his or her actions. Reflection-in-action involves using analysis of observations, listening, and feeling to problem solve as is it occurring (Donaghy & Morss, 2000). Reflection-on-action involves stepping back from the situation after it has occurred, to consider what is now known about the situation, including awareness of emotions, assumptions and knowledge. By understanding all these factors one can identify what changes they should make in future situations (Donaghy & Morss, 2000). Although both

types of reflection are critical for professional practice and growth, the capacity to undertake reflection-in-action is conceived as the most complex and demanding kind of reflection, as it calls for multiple forms of reflection and perspectives to be applied during an unfolding situation (Densten & Gray, 2001).

What became evident as I analysed the data across both observations and conversations was that reflection was an integral aspect of each leader's daily practices. In addition to actively participating in reflective practices such as the diary and the discussions of practice, the leader's awareness, and ability to regulate their own and others' emotions required a process of constant reflection. Reflecting on the emotions, the context, the history underpinning the exchanges and relationships and the goal and visions they were working towards, provided the leaders with a scaffold to guide their leadership responses.

3.6.2. Constructing the Cases

To construct each case, I read through all collected data with the research questions in mind, to determine how each participant enacted emotional intelligence in their practice. Each case introduces one educational leader and provides details on how the leaders understood and enacted emotional intelligence in their practice. Each case focuses on exploring the behaviours and actions of the participants, capturing their responses and attitudes to the various experiences they encountered. These included: how the leaders considered the impact of emotion on their day-to-day responsibilities; how they navigated emotional exchanges with colleagues including conflict; how they reflected and responded to trauma; and how they used emotional knowledge to guide staff in change initiatives and the professional development process.

Each case was explored independently, with individual patterns or themes emerging within each case. While there are clear similarities in these case patterns (described in table 3.6), they are subtly different reflecting different emphases in the participants' leadership behaviour and preoccupations, including the levels and enactment of emotional awareness, as well as the vocabulary they employed in describing emotional intelligence.

Table 3.6*Emerging case patterns*

Participant	Case Patterns
Pat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Awareness and management of emotions in practice ii. Positive mindset and supportive relationships iii. Reflecting on and managing the practice of leadership
Lou	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Awareness and understanding emotion in action ii. Emotional intelligence as a way of thinking and behaving iii. The role of emotion in leading change
Elle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Awareness and acceptance of emotion ii. Establishing 'real' cultures and relationships through emotion iii. Reflection and emotional understanding
Will	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Managing change through emotional awareness and understanding ii. Emotional regulation to support conflict management and relationships iii. Reflecting on leading

Each participant spoke of and demonstrated emotional awareness. The leaders linked awareness to either their management, understanding, acceptance or evaluation of emotions in themselves and others. Each participant spoke of relationships within their contexts, however the theme of relationships and its connection with emotional understanding and knowledge emerged differently across the participants. Reflective practice emerged across all four cases, with participants acknowledging their contemplation of experiences and practices.

Each of the cases include direct quotes from participants or from observational records. These quotes appear in quotation marks, either in brackets or as stand-alone quotes and are labelled by a series of letters and numbers indicating the participant, the source of data and the response number.

Table 3.7*Data representation*

Source of Data	Label
Observations	O
Discussions of practice	D
Interview Question	IQ
Reflective Diary	RD

Some examples of labelling are presented below:

Label (O-1) represents Observation 1

Label (RD-2) represents Reflective Diary, entry 2

Label (I-Q7) represents Interview, answer to Question 7

3.6.3. *Cross-case analysis*

In multiple case studies, it is helpful to analyse data relating to the individual component cases first, before making comparisons across cases (Yin, 2009; Stake, 1995). For example, considering what parallels could be drawn, what inconsistencies there were, and what had led to these inconsistencies or variations in leadership behaviour and understanding and enactment of affective skills.

In the cross-case analysis, I reviewed each case's emerging themes, checking the possible themes against the dataset, to determine if they told a convincing story of the data across each of the cases. Analysis across the cases explored the similarities and differences in the participants descriptions and language on EI. I analysed participant understanding and application of emotional intelligence in their leadership, identifying three key themes in terms of their enactments of EI in practice. Consequently, in addition to comparing and contrasting participant's behaviours and responses against each other, the cross-case analysis involved further extensive references to Salovey and Mayer's (1990) four-branch model of emotional intelligence and Goleman's (1995) competency mode of emotional intelligence. Further analysis identified key elements in the participants leadership development and avenues in which to support professional leadership learning. These findings are presented in Part Three of the Thesis.

3.7 Trustworthiness of the Inquiry

Angen (2000) notes that designing "effective interpretive research requires that we do something meaningful that furthers our understanding and stimulates us to more informed and hopefully, more humane thought and action." (p. 392). The basis for evaluating the quality or trustworthiness of a study becomes an "open-ended, always evolving, enumeration of possibilities that can be constantly modified through practice" (Smith, 1990, p. 178 cited in Angen, 2000). Validity from an interpretive perception develops into a moral question that must be addressed from the inception of the research endeavour to its completion (Creswell, 1998). Therefore, the researcher's values are inherent to all phases of the inquiry process (Creswell, 1998). The validation of qualitative research is increased if the researcher spends

extensive time in the field, provides detailed thick description and establishes a close rapport with participants. Lincoln et al., (2011) recommend “prolonged engagement” between the researcher and the participants so understandings of the site and trust with the participants, can be established. The natural environment of the school provided time boundaries that also guided this research. For example, data were collected within the school day, in the school term, and at the convenience of the four school leaders. The use of multiple data sources in this inquiry (i.e., observations, discussions of practice, interviews and participant reflections) allowed for the comparison of data. Engaging with and comparing multiple sources of data was important to this research study to capture the experiences and contexts of the participants and investigate their understanding and enactment of emotional intelligence.

Remenyi (2005) noted that the “story is used not only to describe a phenomenon, but also to place it in its context and to explain the relevant adjacent or interconnecting issues and relationships.” (p. 138).

Through the multiple lenses of “active listening, narrative processes, language, context and moments” the individuality and the complexity of these participants stories are highlighted (McCormack, 2044, p. 219).

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Mertens (1998) identified a set of ethical principles for researchers that take account of the sensitive nature of educational research. Some of these ethical considerations were observed in relation with this inquiry.

- i. informed consent,
- ii. confidentiality and respect of privacy
- iii. vulnerability of participants

Each is discussed within the context of this research.

3.8.1 Informed Consent

Prior to commencing the inquiry, I obtained ethical approval from the University of Wollongong Ethics Committee (2016/957) on 20 December 2016 (Appendix A). I also gained ethical approval from the school system in which the research was conducted (Appendix B). To ensure all participants were informed of the aims and expectations of the inquiry an information sheet was provided to the school principal and school leaders. Informed consent to participate in the inquiry was obtained from the participants (Appendix J). and their school principals.

3.8.2 Confidentiality

All information associated with this research study is considered as sensitive. Of particular importance is my obligation to think through the ethical implications of the study (e.g., the risk of inadvertently breaching anonymity or confidentiality and potential harm to participants) and to ensure that potential participants are provided with sufficient information to make an informed choice about joining the study (Stake, 1995). Only one supervisor and myself had access to the raw data and we took responsibility for managing the protection and safekeeping of this information. No information was shared with the participants' colleagues, supervisors, or their Principals at any stage, respecting the confidentiality of the participants. Additionally, the hard data collected were stored on password protected computers. The school leader participants were all assigned pseudonyms before coding, analysis or reporting of the data to ensure confidentiality and avoid potential harm or criticism.

3.9 Limitations

Although the case study approach allowed for a more in-depth analysis and insight into four leaders' enactment of emotional intelligence in the Australian context, it is acknowledged that future research should aim to diversify participant sampling and explore the cultural and gender nuances in the enactment of EI in greater detail.

3.10 Summary

This research study adopted a multiple case study approach which enabled an in-depth investigation of the research questions using multiple sources of data. The choice of methodology was justified as the most appropriate for addressing the research questions. This approach enabled me to build detailed descriptions of the four cases within the boundaries of the school leadership context in which they were observed. Data collection methods captured the perspectives of the leaders and how they understood emotional intelligence. The analysis of these leadership experiences, framed by the theory of emotional intelligence, provided insights into how and when emotional intelligence was applied in their leadership roles. The following chapters (Part 2), present the four individual cases.

Part Two

Part Two is comprised of four chapters, with each chapter providing a description of an individual case study. Each chapter begins by introducing the educational leader, their leadership position and describes their understanding of emotional intelligence. The chapters focus on exploring the behaviours and actions of each of the leaders, capturing their responses and attitudes to the various experiences they encountered in their leadership roles. Each chapter explores the cases independently, with individual patterns emerging within each case.

CHAPTER FOUR

LOU

Head Teacher, Learning and Support, Secondary School

Background

At the time of the study, Lou was 40 years of age, with just over 18 years teaching experience. She was one of three head teachers (HT) leading the teaching and learning within a large secondary school and had been in this position for two years. Lou was responsible for coordinating the school's external validation (EV) process and facilitating the mentoring program for early career teachers. The EV process "provides an assurance to the school and system on the progress being made by the school in terms of student learning and welfare, teaching programming and quality, and school leadership" (NSW Government, 2019). The process is aligned with the expectations articulated in the School Excellence Framework (SEF). This Framework underpins the NSW Department of Education's approach to planning and reporting. It "assists schools to engage their communities in identifying strategic directions, decide on improvement measures and assess their progress" (NSW Government, 2019). As part of this approach, "schools will conduct an annual self-assessment and every five years, they will undergo external validation in which their self-assessment is validated by a panel of peers" (NSW Government, 2019). Lou was responsible as HT of teaching and learning for overseeing and collating the school's evidence. This evidence should provide "descriptions of high-quality practice across the three domains of learning, teaching and leading" (New South Wales (NSW) Government, 2017, p. 1). Both qualitative and quantitative data from a range of sources are required. This can include both school-level data (i.e., internal surveys or classroom observations) and system-level data (i.e., NAPLAN or the HSC).

Lou was also driving the BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) for students' initiative, which served as part of her attempt to gain the next level of accreditation ("Lead" in the Australian Professional Standards for Teaching). "Lead teachers must demonstrate that they are innovative, exemplary teachers with a breadth of educational experience and a wide sphere of influence" (NSW Government, 2019, para 7) As part of the accreditation process, the candidate needs to implement a program successfully into a school (NSW Government, 2020). Obtaining this accreditation would support her application for the upcoming deputy principal position.

For Lou, pursuing a leadership position was a result of her interest in professional learning and mentoring. Her particular interest was in mentoring younger teachers in the early stages of their career. This intention was evident in Lou's self-reflection diary. In response to the visual prompt "Mind full /Mindful" (Appendix H), Lou wrote: "Most influential factor - how can I support new teachers more?" (RD-3).

Data were collected from Lou over a period of five months. She was observed five times in a variety of meetings and scheduled events, including school meetings and a Leadership Development Conference, which is an annual conference promoting "Lead" accreditation. Immediately after each observation, there was a discussion of practice, when I was able to elicit further explanations and clarify my interpretations of my observations. As with the other participants, at the completion of the observation data collection, I conducted a formal semi-structured interview, using the questions outlined in Appendix G. Lou completed seven personal diary reflections. My analysis of the data collected from these different sources revealed three distinct patterns in the ways Lou understood the role of emotions in her work and how she enacted EI in her role as Head Teacher. These will be discussed below under the thematic headings:

- i. Awareness and understanding of emotion in action
- ii. Emotional intelligence as a way of thinking and behaving
- iii. The role of emotion in leading change

Before moving on to a discussion of each theme, as with the other leaders, I need to comment on Lou's prior knowledge of EI. In response to Question 4, Lou indicated that she was familiar with the term and provided the following description: "EI is about the way you work with people, using your interpersonal skills to work with people to get a better outcome" (I-Q4). Lou's response captures the interpersonal element of EI, that is, possessing an awareness of others' emotions. However, her definition does not include the intrapersonal skills of EI - an awareness of your own emotions. Despite this absence in her definition, my observations of her practice and her other comments during the research indicated that for Lou, her interpersonal skills, including being aware and understanding emotions in order to support how she interacted with others, were key elements of her practice and experience as a teacher and leader. However, Lou had not participated in any targeted professional learning on emotional intelligence, nor read any specific literature on the subject.

4.2 Awareness and understanding of emotion in action

As discussed in Chapter Two, Mayer and Salovey's theory of emotional intelligence expands on Gardner's theories of interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence, which describe "the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations, and desires of other people" and "the capacity to understand oneself, including one's own desires, fears and capacities" (Gardner, 1999, p. 43). These two intelligences proposed by Gardner and then expanded upon by Mayer and Salovey (1990) in their theory of emotional intelligence capture the critical importance of emotional awareness. In relation to my study, this emotional awareness would be indicated by actions or talk where the leaders' focus was on their own emotions. As detailed in Chapter Three (Table 3.5) the emotional awareness subcodes included: recognition and understanding of emotions; a realistic self-assessment; self-efficacy and reflection in action.

For Lou, awareness of her own emotions was an essential attribute for carrying out her current role. For example, she described how, to maintain her "emotional composure" under stress (D-2), she needed to be "acutely aware" (D-2) of her own emotions. Lou saw this emotional awareness as critical in her current role, as often her responsibilities involved introducing and implementing change processes with her colleagues, many of whom, as Lou explained, were not comfortable with change ("They become anxious with any changes", D-2). This created an instability in the environment, where she experienced a number of unpleasant interactions with her colleagues when she attempted to inform them of the changes necessary to meet accreditation requirements. These unpleasant interactions included aggressive criticisms and demands for further explanations. Although these were not intended to be a personal attack on Lou, I often observed this to be the outcome in these exchanges. Lou said that she dealt with these kinds of exchanges by focusing on controlling her own behaviour and responses ("I acknowledge other's emotions, but I don't bow to them", I-Q7).

As HT for teaching and learning, Lou was responsible for guiding teachers in the new accreditation procedures. She needed to understand the new requirements and effectively communicate this information to her colleagues. In 2016, Talbot researched teachers' responses to the changes in accreditation and professional learning that Lou was required to communicate to her colleagues. Talbot's results pointed to the challenges teachers faced understanding and meeting the evidential expectations of accreditation and the extensive demands, in terms of time and energy, to meet these requirements. Lou was faced with delivering these new demands and dealing with her colleagues' concerns and complaints.

Lou had to effectively communicate the current requirements of teachers' setting professional learning goals, against a prescribed number of externally determined priorities, as presented in the professional standards (AITSL, 2018) and to produce evidence of learning aligned with these goals in five-yearly cycles (AITSL, 2018). This was a difficult task as several major reviews of research literature concerned with teacher learning (i.e., Borko, 2004; Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Timperley & Alton-Lee, 2008) found little evidence that professional learning opportunities make a difference to student learning outcomes or teachers' work. Convincing teachers of the necessity of complying with system requirements, when they are not convinced that they would make a difference, complicated the task of rolling out the required changes. This lack of evidential support, as well as the demands on teachers' time and energy, may have served as the catalyst for the exchanges I observed when Lou was communicating this information. Convincing staff of the importance of this information and the need to act was therefore critical. For this to be successful, Lou needed to manage the emotions her colleagues expressed in ways that allowed her to effectively communicate the information, remain calm and acknowledge the anxiety it caused. Both observing Lou and through our discussions of her practice, there was evidence of Lou demonstrating this awareness and self-regulation.

On several different occasions over the five months, I spent in her school, Lou described how she had been questioned/challenged by colleagues when she informed them of the new guidelines and expectations with accreditation and professional learning. Examples of this were also witnessed during the observations. For example, in one all-staff meeting that I observed, Lou described the changes to professional development and accreditation to her colleagues. On hearing these changes, Lou's colleagues voiced their concerns, complaining and demanding that Lou draft responses to the Teacher's Federation (the key public sector teacher union in NSW), articulating their concerns about the unrealistic demands (certainly not Lou's responsibility). Despite considerable provocation ("How much more do you expect us to do?" O-5; "Why do we need to do this?" O-2), Lou remained calm and spoke professionally throughout the meeting, where she implicitly acknowledged their feelings of frustration ("I understand you all have lots of questions" O-5).

Following the meeting, in discussing her practice, Lou shared how she was "a little frustrated", both on her own behalf and for the staff. Lou could understand the staff's anxiety over the new requirements, however, she also suggested that their claims that school funds and time spent on areas of professional learning were not equal, were unreasonable ("They don't understand how the funds are

allocated for professional development, how we select the learning opportunities. They think that our budget can cover all of their areas of interest” D- 5). Lou explained how her understanding of the staff and her own frustration throughout the meeting underpinned how she managed the situation, including the time she allocated to explain the new guidelines, ensuring this was adequate to answer questions and provide further clarification.

Lou explained that again many of the staff were resisting expectations by not collecting evidence of practice and arguing that these demands would lead to additional work and pressure for them. They questioned Lou over the process by asking questions such as, “How is this going to benefit me?” (O-5). In the discussion of practice following this observation, Lou described how she listened to each complaint and concern and then attempted to provide a calm and supportive answer which appealed to their professional practice. I observed these measured responses in the meeting (for example, to a complaint about the process of validation, she responded, “External validation is a valuable process, as it builds a culture of assessment practice - so our future decisions are informed by evidence”, O-5). This response and others that I observed, suggest that Lou was using an approach that appealed to the teachers’ professional identity whilst also attempting to alleviate their fears that this was an assessment of their practices or abilities, or that it was additional work.

In none of the meetings that I observed did Lou display any exasperation or imply judgement in relation to her colleagues’ comments, behaviours and emotions. As her comment below indicates, Lou was not only aware of their emotions, but demonstrated an understanding of her colleagues’ emotions so that she could fulfil her role as HT: “I try to support them in an emotional way and get others to support them to get them out of that concern” (I- Q7).

In another example, Lou demonstrated emotional awareness and understanding in the context of her mentoring role. Lou was responsible for establishing a mentoring program for beginning teachers. She met with beginning teachers at her school once a month to share their experiences, discussing how they were going with workloads, IT, parents, students and general emotional health. Facilitating these meetings meant that Lou needed to demonstrate an awareness of the stress levels among the beginning teachers and help them manage this. An example of this awareness was captured in an observation where Lou was facilitating a beginning teachers’ meeting. These meetings served to introduce early career teachers to the administration side of teaching, including governmental and school specific administration, as well as providing a space for questions and comments and a sharing of their

experiences. In the following quote from the meeting, Lou highlights to the early career teachers the importance of their being emotional aware of their understanding situations, so they can navigate it more effectively.

If you feel you are in a situation that you need help with, you need to have that conversation, be mindful of your situation, you need to be aware of what you are feeling in order to do something about it. (O-1)

The above excerpt demonstrates how Lou explicitly provided guidance on how the beginning teachers could navigate events, by being aware of their own emotional responses to a situation. In the discussion of practice, following this meeting, Lou stated that her awareness and understanding of the early career's teachers' emotions (based on previous experiences of early career teachers) supported not only how she conducted the meeting, but this awareness decided what the appropriate inclusions should be, ultimately changing the agenda to focus on supporting the teachers where needed. For example, before this meeting she had decided that "the teachers would have preferred to understand the reporting system at this stage" (D-3), so Lou abandoned her initial agenda to allow the meeting to address this instead.

In the discussion of practice following this observation, Lou emphasised that flexibility in leading was essential ("Being approachable, be responsive to context"). The way Lou talked about flexibility resonates with the way flexibility is described in the EI literature (e.g., Mayer & Salovey, 1990; Kashdan, 2010; Kobylinska & Kusev, 2019). Here flexibility is described as the ability to adjust emotions and behaviour to changing situations and conditions; the utilisation of emotion is taken to facilitate flexible thinking and motivate action (Mayer & Salovey, 1990).

In her reflective diary, our discussion of her practice and in my own observations of Lou, she demonstrated an awareness of her own emotions and the necessity of understanding and managing these for successful outcomes in her various leadership tasks. For example, when observing Lou, I recorded she would pause before responding, rather than reacting. In her reflective diary she frequently commented on her emotions: "I'm really happy with the orientation program I designed" (RD-4); "I am proud of this program" (RD-4); and in the discussions of practice, "I am pretty frustrated at the moment" (D-5); "It's not always easy to just listen" (D-3).

Lou suggested that her awareness of her own emotions supported her when considering plans of action, further improvements or changes that would be effective in her leadership role. Lou often spoke of and wrote about maintaining a "calm" (D-2) exterior with clear focus ("Have a clear focus/direction",

RD-3). As described earlier, at no time did I observe Lou losing her composure, however her references to actively concentrating on calmness would suggest that a continual emotional awareness was required to achieve this. This was particularly evident in the way Lou used emotional self-reflection to regulate her own emotional behaviours and responses to ensure her emotions did not hinder her actions. An example captured in her reflection diary spoke of how she successfully managed what could have been a difficult situation with a beginning teacher:

I am pretty frustrated at the moment - instead of using open communication and coming and seeing me, a beginning teacher took a concern straight to federation. I made sure I did not let emotion, or 'why could they not have come to see me' get in the way. I recognised my emotion, spoke to an unbiased ear, did not use names, just context, and this conversation helped me to separate the emotion, person, and what is really happening. Once I did this, I was able to address the situation in a professional and fair way (RD-3).

Lou's reflection points to how her ability to reflect on and understand her emotion afforded her the opportunity to unpack a situation, exploring ways in which to address, navigate and solve a potential conflict. The theory of EI posits that those who possess an awareness and understanding of emotion are then equipped to navigate situations more effectively (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Interestingly this was quite a lengthy entry for Lou, who unlike the other participants generally only recorded key words or thoughts, in dot form or through a concept map entry. Through the process of reflection, Lou could explore different perspectives, visualise possibilities and solutions and as a consequence employ an appropriate response.

4.3 Emotional intelligence as a way of thinking and behaving

Mayer and Salovey (1997) describe EI as comprising of four domains: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. Within each domain are various competencies, learned and learnable capabilities that support performance. These include competencies such as empathy, having a positive outlook, self-control, achievement, influence, conflict management, teamwork and inspirational leadership (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2017). These competencies frame the way in which leaders operate or perform their roles in addition to how they think about their emotions.

The second theme "Emotional intelligence as a way of thinking and behaving" extends the

previous theme of emotional awareness and understanding. Lou used the concept “way of thinking and behaving” in her reflection diary to describe her leadership practice: “I’m looking at and thinking about the situations and how I have reacted, and my behaviour towards others” (RD-6). I have used the phrase to focus specifically on the following EI competencies self-regulation and empathy. These competencies were evident in Lou’s actions I observed, including her sense of control over her reactions to others and to challenging situations and how she reflected on her leading others. Analysis of the data identified these were the EI competencies which were most prevalent in Lou’s leadership and encompass the specific behaviours including: the redirection of disruptive emotions; suspending judgement; appropriate responses to others; and demonstrating a desire to soften negative emotions in others (Table 3.5). Lou wrote in her reflection diary that in leading others her “way of thinking and behaving” was about being emotionally aware, demonstrating an understanding of others’ emotions as well as self-regulation in attempts to build the capacity of others. This attitude was evident in observations, in Lou’s communications with colleagues and in the attention and support she gave to modelling difficult exchanges and mentoring beginning teachers.

In her final interview, Lou described how, as a leader, she aimed to develop her own “way of thinking”. In EI terms this involved assessing the emotional environment and responding appropriately to manage the emotions that some of the changes she was instigating generated. In the following quote from her interview, Lou shares that her idea of practice was prompted by thinking about the emotion and behaviours of others and devising plans and strategies to soften the negative emotions they are experiencing and support them in their teaching:

Emotions is what drives every aspect of my work because I definitely use emotions to gauge how people are reacting to situations, if they need any assistance ... I use emotion and emotional intelligence to talk to people in different ways, to get a different response (I-Q3).

This interview response demonstrates how, from Lou’s perspective, her leadership was underpinned by her capacity to recognise and utilise the emotional knowledge she collected and is also an elaboration on her understanding of EI.

As indicated above, recognising her own emotions and those of others was integral to how Lou practised her role as a leader. In this section, I explore how Lou used this knowledge of emotion to guide her establishment of frameworks which supported her staff by: redirecting disruptive emotions (“We are

all definitely involved, with different levels of support”, O-5); suspending her judgement (“I made sure that I did not let emotion or ‘why could they not just have come to see me’ get in the way”, RD-3); and responding appropriately (“I know you all have a lot of questions”, O-5). As she said in one post observation discussion, the programs that she set up were about providing support and building the capacity of staff, with a particular emphasis on beginning teachers (“supporting everyone to appreciate we are part of a bigger picture” (D-1)).

It was evident that much of Lou’s leadership practice was focused on supporting others. Many of her diary entries reflected on these programs and attempts at supporting and building the capacity of the team:

Initially concerned that this was not taking off very quickly, but it is gaining traction...it is a subtle, yet effective supportive system (RD-4).

A program aimed at fostering and supporting a strong and positive work environment (RD-5).

How can I support these teachers? (RD-3).

This sentiment was also supported in our discussions of her practice, where Lou shared that she felt by creating a connected environment, “where everyone felt secure and comfortable, the everyday would be smoother” (D-1), the school would function effectively and negative emotions would be relieved.

An important role of a leader is to establish a culture in which the followers are aware of how valuable they are to the team/organisation and where there is a high level of trust. This was evident in Lou’s comments to her staff (“We are already a school achieving excellence”, O-5; “People who are selected as team leaders, will be heavily supported”, O-5). However, Lou also was aware that building trust within the team was going to be critical. So, part of her lead pursuit, she implemented her own initiative, “Time 4 You”. Lou’s program was guided by the emotional and support needs of her colleagues, where, if feeling overwhelmed, a teacher could request some time off a class to talk with a colleague over a “cuppa” (RD-5). The teachers could go offsite to the local coffee shop with a voucher supplied by the school: “The whole program is just about giving people the opportunity to ... debrief” (IQ-7)

In the discussion of practice after my first observation of a meeting with Lou and the beginning teachers, where she was providing details of the importance of the beginning teachers programs and the “Time 4 You” initiative, Lou added that the program “creates an environment of trust and cooperation,

where the team members feel empowered as members of the team and their place in the team is valued” (D-1).

Largely, the data revealed that Lou’s “way of thinking and behaving” was about creating a connected and supported team through the ways she demonstrated and modelled skills in self-regulation and empathy towards her colleagues: “In terms of the team, I try to embed EI in my team members by modelling. I get them to reflect, getting them to become leaders themselves” (I-Q7). According to Parrish (2015, p. 12), the capacity of leaders “to responsibly manage themselves”, that is, “to keep disruptive emotions and impulses under control” and provide “a positive role model for others and foster relationships that are considerate and professional in interactions with others” was a key emotional intelligence trait identified by the leaders in her study. Lou’s leadership practice was framed by her own emotional management and ability to consider others in exchanges.

Lou’s leadership was one which aimed to build the capacity of others by creating a supportive environment where she shared how she approached tasks and responsibilities (“Choose one or two additional tasks and do them well”, O-1). Lou also advocated for other more experienced teachers to also support teachers in their responsibilities (“Let’s make it less work for them”, O-2).

My observations and discussions with Lou suggested that, in her “way of thinking and behaving”, she was very self-reflective. She described how she considered how to best accommodate the emotions of the role “redirecting disruptive emotions and responding appropriately”, considering how she could think and operate as a leader to “suspend judgement” and support her colleagues. Her valuing of these attributes is made explicit in the following interview response where she describes the characteristics of “an effective leader” which includes the emotional intelligent skills which were evident in her own leadership:

[S]omebody that is approachable and somebody that is relatable, and somebody who will deconstruct, unpack the situation, and make you see quite clearly through your own self, through your own discussion, reflection. They don’t go that is what the problem is, they make you see it yourself, so that self-realisation (I-Q8).

4.4 The role of emotion in leading change

Leading successful change in educational contexts is characterised by leaders removing barriers to employee success, both personal barriers linked to emotion, as well as professional barriers such as the

time and resources necessary to carry out a change initiative (Fullan, 2001). In her role, Lou was dealing with strong emotions. In my observations of her and in our discussions, it was evident how she anticipated these emotions and tried to alleviate these, with the goal of assisting staff to improve their practice. Lou acknowledged that leading required a range of steps and this was captured in her diary entry recorded in dot points under a heading “Leading Others”:

Building capacity; Being approachable; Have a clear focus/direction; Have a team, do not do it alone; Milestones, goals, break into achievable steps; Be responsive to context and emotions-plans need to be fluid/flexible, but not necessarily stopped (RD-4).

This reflection is an example of how Lou spent time thinking on the emotions associated with teaching, schools and the constant state of change they are experiencing.

Throughout the observations, Lou demonstrated a positive attitude towards developing practice through change. The observations and discussions revealed she was mindful to respect the interests and capacities of her colleagues and identified that some individuals require greater support in achieving such endeavours, such as pursuing accreditation. She also believed in modelling and aligning with organisational direction in her own professional practice by participating in the programs and initiatives that she was encouraging others to do. For example, she explained in her interview that by pursuing higher levels of accreditation herself, she was better equipped to support staff through the emotional demands of these changes:

Two reasons I did this, one, if I am encouraging people to do accreditation, I thought I should get the experience myself, and two, definitely interested in self-reflection on my career (I-Q3).

Literature (e.g., Bass, 1999; Fullan, 2001; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Seemiller & Murray, 2013) points to how the language that leaders use in their roles to support professional practice and change is crucial. This language was evident in my first observation, where Lou was facilitating a beginning teacher meeting. She employed encouraging language when guiding them through the setting of their professional learning goals (“It is ok to refine your goals, to make them more achievable” O-1). In this observation, Lou was attempting to create an environment where staff were supported by removing barriers that were likely to generate frustration. Lou described how she would specifically plan for questions, and would invite suggestions for future agendas, “what would you like to visit in the next meeting?” (O-1).

In my second observation (O-2) of Lou at an executive meeting (Principal, Deputy Principals and Faculty Heads in attendance), Lou sought the assistance of other leaders within the school in creating an environment where the staff were supported by the removal of barriers that were likely to generate frustration, such as supporting staff in seeking approval for professional development opportunities. She encouraged the leaders to understand their role in removing the barriers to successful process and change, where she described it as supporting teachers in “starting out strong” (O-2) Lou asked that they support teachers in the new accreditation demands, by sharing the administrative aspects, “Let’s make it less work for them.” Lou also proposed that when implementing change, it was important to provide staff with the opportunity to voice their concerns (“They need to be able to ask questions”).

My observations and discussions with Lou indicated she was passionate about programs that could support a better future for the school and the teachers in it. In addition to pursuing her own “lead accreditation”, where the focus was on implementing a new program into her school context, Lou admitted in one of our discussions of her practice, that she spent a lot of time considering programs which would support early career teacher’s inclusion into school environments (“I have got lots of ideas that I would like to work on with a particular focus on new and beginning teachers”, (D-1); “Supporting them in their new environment and in their new roles”, D-1)). These ideas involved supporting the emotional well-being of teachers (“making sure they understand there is support”, (D-1)). Lou was leading the schools early career teacher’s orientation program, “Beginning Teachers”, designed to mentor beginning and early career teachers. The program involved explaining school procedures, such as attendance and behaviour policies, in addition to governmental frameworks, professional development and accreditation. As described above, “Time 4 You” was also a program Lou had created, “aimed at fostering and supporting a strong and positive work environment” (RD-5). This program involved providing staff with a coffee voucher so that they could invite a colleague out for a coffee to check in on how they were feeling. Lou wrote in her reflection diary: “I am proud of this program! I love that a ‘let’s have a cuppa’ really means ‘Are you ok, I am here for you’” (RD-5).

These two programs focused on establishing a strong and positive work environment, through staff acknowledging and understanding the emotional impact of school environments. Lou described how the idea behind both of the programs was that by the teachers communicating how they were feeling, they could visualise how they could support themselves and each other in finding solutions to any challenges. It was evident that Lou was always considering how to support teachers and encourage a positive school

culture, as this was her focus across the data collection and included not only the beginning teachers but new teachers to the school. In describing her responsibilities in her interview, Lou explained the orientation program she facilitated for new teachers. Its purpose was to ensure that:

new staff know how the school works, considering how big and complex our school is. We run [the program] before the holidays finish in January, then we have a four-week program, then I touch base with those teachers once per term, until they integrated into the school (I-Q2).

It was evident that Lou acknowledged that teachers need to be supported with policy and program changes as well as with their everyday practice. The initiatives described above were Lou's attempts to support teachers emotionally by building their capacity and creating a positive work culture to support change process. It might seem that Lou appears to be the ideal model of a leader in terms of her support and the care demonstrated towards others. Lou always remained calm and responsive to her colleagues' emotions; however, this approach may not have always supported Lou in her leadership. There was evidence of her colleagues sidestepping Lou's position and not taking their concerns to her directly (which was the correct process) "...instead of using open communication and coming and seeing me, a beginning teacher took a concern straight to federation" RD-3). Which may suggest that her colleagues did not always appreciate her approach to leadership. Lou's consistent 'calm' approach may have also emboldened her colleagues, where they felt confident to question her and her leadership decisions. As evidence above, their behaviour and questioning of Lou was sometimes in a manner that would not be tolerated by some leaders.

CHAPTER FIVE

PAT

Principal, Secondary School

Background

Pat was 53 years old at the time of the study and was Principal of a large secondary school in a regional area. Pat had over one hundred staff and had been Principal at this site for over five years. Prior to this position, Pat had been Principal for two years in a major Australian city. Pat had 29 years teaching experience, for 25 of those she has held leadership positions. Pat was enthusiastic about the opportunity to be involved in my research, accepting the invitation immediately. Pat saw her participation as an opportunity to present her leadership practice, and what she considered an example of successful leadership, to others.

In describing herself, although she did not use the terms, Pat seemed to be articulating the intentions of a transformational leader. For example, she described her focus as guiding and mentoring teachers to reach their potential (“we have to build capacity of young people”, I-Q2); and establishing her school as “a platform that celebrates the self-efficacy of each teacher”, RD-8), through encouraging and modelling perseverance (“success is all about GRIT”, D-2). In her reflections, Pat wrote about how she wanted her staff to “understand their voice is powerful” (RD-12) and “we [teacher’s] have purpose” (RD-10). She regularly commented on the role of schools in building community (“successful schools build hope, in parents, kids and teachers”, I-Q5; “we need to build community”, D-1).

Pat regarded herself as an informed leader, referring often to the literature she was reading (e.g. “The Change Leader”, by Fullan (2011); “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People” by Covey, 2004) and various materials on mindfulness and growth coaching. Throughout the discussions of her practice and in her interview, Pat would employ language associated with this leadership and self-improvement literature. For example, “Begin with the end in mind” (Habit 2 of Covey’s book) and “Reality - what is really happening” (Michalowska, 2014) were both comments made in our discussions together. This language can be found in literature describing ways to be successful and effective within organisations. Pat described this literature as providing strategies for managing the process involved in leadership decisions and the importance of unpacking situations and contexts. Although Pat was enthusiastic about participating in my study, her interest in EI seemed to be more related to her general interest in leadership

and recent ideas about mindfulness circulating in that field. Like all of the participants, Pat did not specifically refer to any EI literature or professional learning with this specific focus at any time in the study. However, discussions of EI are widespread in current leadership literature and popular discourse so it is not surprising that common understandings of EI have permeated leadership discourse and that Pat seemed to be confident in talking about EI in relation to her own practice. For example, when asked specifically about her understanding of EI in her interview, Pat responded as follows:

I describe [it as] the ability to be able to, I don't know if empathise is the word, but to actually understand the other person, in other words being able to understand but also how you interact with that person, your own ability to control and understand your own emotions (I-Q4).

Pat's response aligns with the tenets of EI theory. The quote indicates that she is aware of both the interpersonal and intrapersonal elements of EI. Pat's understanding of emotional intelligence was also evident in other discussions when Pat described how the complex role of leadership required that she negotiate between the emotions of her staff, students, other community members including parents, her mentees who were completing accreditation, colleagues on the secondary principal council meeting, who were angry over the departments new plan for additional directors, while at the same time managing her own emotions. Additionally, Pat described how she had to manage the demands of organisational tasks, staffing, finances, professional learning, accreditation and policy demands, external validation, HSC, NAPLAN, involving different groups of people:

I feel somewhat overwhelmed by the lack of uninterrupted time ... It is questioning my ability to manage my time, but I know I am a great time manager. [I have] made the time to celebrate our hard work, pressured and rushed. Principals are so very much on high response, high stakes, high pressure constantly. The never-ending barrage of stuff has certainly been coming thick and fast. Staying positive (RD-14).

While Pat might not have had a technical knowledge of EI, it was clear that Pat was very aware of the ways she was negotiating emotional reactions in the context of the people and tasks she dealt with daily.

As discussed in Chapter Three, I collected data from Pat over a period of five months (Table 3.2), with five observations in a range of settings. Immediately after each observation Pat participated in a discussion of her practice and on my last day at the school, I conducted the final interview with her.

Additionally, Pat completed 15 personal diary reflections, more than any other participant. Data analysis

resulted in several distinct patterns in the ways Pat enacted emotional intelligence when navigating the complexities of her role as a school leader. These will be discussed below under the following headings:

- i. Awareness and management of emotions in practice
- ii. Positive mindset and supportive relationships
- iii. Reflecting on and managing the practice of leadership

5.2 Awareness and management of emotions in practice

As indicated in Chapter Two, EI is defined as an awareness of a person's own as well as others' emotions and how this knowledge is used to successfully navigate experiences and relationships in life (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Pat's awareness of the role of emotions in her practice and how she managed these surfaced in different ways throughout data collection. For example, in her interview and post observation discussion, Pat often spoke of the range of emotions she experienced in her leadership role and described emotional awareness as an important feature of her leadership and identity as a leader. For Pat, this was tied specifically to her commitment to mindfulness through meditation. She described how she promoted the practice of mindfulness amongst her staff as a means to promote "staff vitality" (I-Q4). Mindfulness has been linked in the literature to emotional intelligence. For example, Brown and colleagues (2007) posit that regularly practising mindfulness meditation enhances the ability to understand emotions and can contribute to the development of the ability to detect and understand the emotions of others. In their review of neuroelectric and imaging studies of meditation, Cahn and Polich (2006) found that those who regularly practised mindfulness could significantly enhance their ability to regulate their emotions. In another study of mother-infant relationships and 'synchrony', Feldman and colleagues (2007) found that those with a higher level of mindfulness tended to recover from emotional distress more quickly. Additionally, Davidson and Goleman (2017) argued that training in mindfulness helps develop more positive and adaptive emotional profiles. These findings align with how Pat described the ways she used mindfulness to deal with the multiple frustrations of leadership and manage her own emotions in order to effectively work with people to achieve her goals. In her final interview, she described how she used techniques such as meditation to manage her negative emotions in order to achieve the outcomes she wanted:

Emotions in work - always. I meditated this morning - your thoughts control your emotions, so controlling your thoughts. A certain amount of emotion but you can't be

ruled by them or [be] over emotional. Having emotion and heart and caring is important, but pretty much I can be a cold hard bitch ... so you are aware of your emotions, because some people frustrate me to death and I would really like to tell them to go get stuffed, but again it's about controlling them [emotions]. One thing I can't control is I get very excited about things (I-Q3).

My first observation of Pat in her role as leader was a good demonstration of the role emotions played in her actions and relationships with both staff and students. The observation was of a meeting with her executive team (three Deputy Principals). The first item on the agenda was a memorial to be held for a teacher who had passed. Her way of managing the discussion around this item demonstrated her awareness of the necessity of negotiating her own and others' emotions in what was potential a very emotionally laden item as well as a potentially distressing event. Pat began the discussion of the agenda item by explaining that her main concern in relation to the memorial to be held was the impact it might have on students and staff, particularly because it would coincide with the release of the American teen drama series, "13 Reasons Why". The memorial was to be held for a teacher who had taken his own life and the teen series explored the topic of suicide. Pat shared with her staff her concern that the television series was likely to intensify the students' feelings and further confuse their understanding of suicide: "This is going to confuse them more; the Netflix series actually glorifies suicide" (O-1).

In this meeting with her senior executive team, Pat explicitly acknowledged the impact of her own emotions on her ability to navigate the emotions of others. Pat shared that her own emotions had interfered with the emotional support she felt she should have provided to the late teacher's family: "I know I should have kept in regular contact with her, however I often found myself making excuses not to" (O-1). This comment to her deputies suggests that Pat didn't know how or felt uncomfortable expressing her emotions to her colleague's family. This disclosure did not seem to be acknowledged by the others present, none of whom responded. Pat seemed to pause and then moved to the next item on the agenda (an upcoming professional development for the senior executives). No concrete decisions or plans were made about the memorial at this meeting. It is hard to interpret emotional intelligence in the events here. It may have been that the other members of the executive were uncomfortable with such a frank disclosure of emotions from their principal, or they simply had nothing to contribute. However, it did seem unusual that there was neither a response, nor any decisions made about the actions that needed to occur. Perhaps the deputies were not used to initiating a response in this context and tended to be

relatively passive participants in these meetings.

This next item being discussed resulted in Pat making further reference to her emotions. Talking about the compulsory professional development she was attending, aimed at upskilling executives on changes to professional development requirements, she said: “What will make me really cranky is if we go up and it’s a waste of our frigging time” (O-1). While her Deputies seemed to listen to this expression of emotion, again they did not contribute or offer similar emotional expressions. Pat’s colleagues sat quietly. I couldn’t read the expressions on their faces which seemed to remain impassive. Later in the meeting Pat spoke of her emotions again, when she was informed by one of her deputies that other staff are able to edit the school’s electronic calendar, which organises the school’s important events, “that’s got me a little worried” (O-1). However, again her deputies didn’t respond.

The above examples indicate the nature of Pat’s awareness of her own emotional responses and point to her capacity to express her own emotions, though not necessarily for the purpose of achieving outcomes. However, I found it difficult to determine from my observation, the kind of impact her disclosures had on her colleagues, despite Pat’s comment (“We are all feeling this”, O-1). In terms of EI theory, this leaves uncertain whether these instances were evidence of emotional expressions that achieved the outcomes she might have hoped for – e.g., building solidarity, managing her colleagues to achieve her goals.

Following the meeting, in her discussion with me, Pat reflected on how intense it was for her. She described how her own emotions were heightened (“I have so many feelings about this memorial”, D-1) and said that she felt that her executives were also managing their own emotions; they were still grappling with their grief, anger and despair at losing a colleague. Pat explained how she believed that it was critical for her as a leader to navigate these emotions, in order to maintain the functioning of the organisation: “We must work with these feelings, use them and help each other through this” (D-1). Pat described how her reflections on the emotions experienced in relation to the teacher’s suicide had prompted her to evaluate her practice (“What could I have done differently?”, D-2). These reflections led her to ask whether she needed to re-think her leadership, to ask whether they had adequate practices in place for self-care and teacher well-being.

In this same post-observation discussion, Pat also spoke of the need for teachers to be aware of students’ emotions, that often their exposure to certain experiences in life and through the media had a far greater impact than teachers realise, and as teachers they needed to support students in managing these

emotions (“We really need to be on top of this one, it is no good pretending we don’t know what these students are watching” (D-1). Pat’s actions and comments in the meeting and the following discussion session demonstrate how she was able identify her own emotions and reflect on the complexity and multidimensional nature of her emotions in her context. However, within the meeting Pat did not invite any similar expressions of feelings or invite her colleagues to raise issues that might have been concerning them. Whilst self-awareness is critical and serves as the foundation for the other EI competencies (Goleman, 1990), according to Sunindijo et al. (2007), social awareness is essential for effective job performance, whenever the focus is on interactions with people. Socially aware individuals have an ability to put themselves in “someone else’s shoes” (Kirkpatrick, 1985, p. 112 as cited in Issah, 2018), sense their emotions, and understand their perspective, thus enabling them to interact effectively with different types of personalities (Robbins & Hunsaker 2009).

A second example from an entry in her reflective diary provides an example of the way Pat recognised and managed the emotions of her staff. In the following quote from her diary, she describes a conversation she had to have with a staff member, as a result of his emotional outburst. This quote points to her analysis of the situation – he “hit ‘overload angry’” and the reasons for this.

Today was the 6th difficult conversation with a staff member who essentially hit ‘overload angry’ at people on issues. His delivery is terrible. While he often has valid points, they are masked by his spitting anger. We have talked several times before. He is always receptive to my advice, but often reverts back when pressured (RD-5).

Following this quote, Pat wrote, “I needed to remind this staff member of his emotional reactions and displays of frustration” (RD-5). Pat seemed to recognise his feelings and that his emotional reactions were not helping him make his “valid points”. While it is not clear how she has counselled him, she does write that he is “always receptive” to her advice but struggles remaining calm. However, her comment that this was the 6th conversation with this staff member suggests a considerable level of patience and understanding from Pat.

Pat wrote frequently about the times she recognised individuals were experiencing emotions and displaying emotional behaviours that required her consideration (“Today’s staff meeting was a little intense for a number of staff”, (RD-9)). Pat never elaborated on the catalyst for this tension, nor did she record in her reflection if she intervened or provided support for the staff. Unfortunately, there was

limited evidence during my observations and discussions with Pat of ways in which she supported her staff's emotions or used her assumptions about their emotions to engage or counsel staff.

Perhaps the one exception was when I observed Pat using emotional awareness as a concept to guide her mentoring of two teachers applying for Lead accreditation. The observation occurred at the Lead accreditation conference (O-3), where I was invited to observe Pat's meeting with the teachers. At one point in the meeting, Pat questioned her mentees on how they were managing leading a team initiative. One of her mentees shared that she had been continuously challenged by her team and that significant conflict had surfaced. The mentee suggested that she had "given up" listening to them and their concerns. Pat led a discussion with her about recognising and managing the emotions of her team; she pointed out that "ignoring the team members concerns would not lend itself to a successful or sustainable team initiative" (O-3). In the discussion of practice following this observation Pat spoke with me about the current accreditation and professional standards underpinning leadership development, comparing this to her development as a leader. Pat shared that she originally believed the standards were going to provide teachers with opportunities for leadership training on professional relationships and the affective elements of leadership. However, she commented that the focus seemed rather to be on "the administrative process rather than the skillset required of leaders" (D-3). Pat shared that assisting leaders to reach these standard benchmarks placed little emphasis on what she believed to be the important skills of relationship building ("In my role, it's all about relationships" (D-3)).

Pat also understood her role as leader to include assisting others to establish control of their thoughts in order to control their emotions. Each executive meeting, which included faculty heads and executive staff, started with a mindfulness activity. Pat explained to her staff in my second observation (an executive meeting) that "mindfulness meditation is a mental training practice that teaches you to slow down racing thoughts, let go of negativity, and calm both your mind and body" (O-2). The mindfulness activities were led by one of the staff whose role included growth coaching sessions to staff. Her techniques involved a breathing practice and awareness of body and mind.

I observed that Pat, in her role as principal, needed to constantly consider the diverse emotions expressed and experienced by those around her – staff and students. Pat saw this as key to leading, that this skill of emotional awareness really was key for her to navigate her daily leadership responsibilities. However, the nature of this investigation meant that I was unable to determine the impact of this awareness and her expression of it on achieving outcomes.

5.3 Positive mindset and supportive relationships

As discussed in Chapter Two, “transformational leaders motivate followers to achieve high levels of performance by transforming followers’ attitudes, beliefs and values, as opposed to simply gaining compliance” (Rafferty & Griffin, 2004, p. 330). Bass (1990) argues that, when leaders broaden and elevate the interest of their employees and generate an awareness and acceptance of the organisations mission, “they can stir their employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the organisation” (p. 21). The sub dimensions of transformational leadership identified by Bass (1985), highlight the importance of leader support and demonstration of positivity and optimism by the leader. These include: individualised consideration, where the leader attends to each follower’s needs and provides support; inspirational motivation, where leaders are optimistic about follower ability to meet goals; idealized influence, where the leader provides followers with a sense of vision and mission; and intellectual stimulation, where the leader supports and collaborates with the followers. Palmer et al (2001) in a study assessing the emotional intelligence of 43 managers, found that the inspirational motivation and individualized consideration components of transformational leadership are “linked with the ability to both “monitor and manage emotions in oneself and others” (p. 8). Furthermore, Brief and Weiss (2002) note that when transformational leaders’ express emotions such as excitement and enthusiasm they energize their followers. “Transformational leaders use strong emotions to arouse similar feelings in their audiences” (Kumar, 2014, p. 2). While Pat did not specifically identify as a transformational leader, the way she talked about her relationships with her colleagues, particularly her senior executive, suggested that her focus was on guiding and transforming their leadership: “I work on my other leaders’ confidence to do their work, I think they haven’t had the opportunity for good mentoring, which is something they need to be a good leader” (I-Q7).

This was particularly evident in her talk and behaviours that demonstrated her commitment to a positive mindset and supportive relationships as the driving force behind her leadership. For Pat managing her emotions in order to display a positive mindset was explicitly associated with her practice of mindfulness. As she explained when asked about the ways she managed emotions in supporting the work of her team in the interview:

We do our little bit of mindfulness. People might say, ‘she’s a little bit Doris Day-ish’, but I really think we focus on the positives, watch our words become our

actions, which is around appreciative inquiry, focus on what's working, not what's not working (I-Q6).

As pointed out above, while Pat had not participated in any specific EI training, she was very conversant with mindfulness discourse and practice, and her management of her emotions was integrally connected with this concept. This translated into a focus on solutions, that is, understanding and evaluating the areas where the school was achieving as an organisation, and determining how they could utilise those successes in other areas. For example, in talking about the school's plan with her executive, she said, "We are doing some things really well; we need to look at why and then attempt for this to happen in other areas" (O-2).

In another example, Pat described how she understood her staff needs and the demands of the contexts in which they worked. She used the concept of a "tool bag" of skills to explain what her staff needed to function well as teachers. Referencing a Vitality Project at another school, designed to assist students be strong and resilient, she suggested the same idea could be applied to teachers. The following quote describes the tool bag she envisaged:

... as a teacher, what are our tool bags, what do we need, basically we are breaking down the tools of pedagogy, relationships, the tools of mindfulness and the environment. So, you know these aspects ... and how other people are made up (I-Q4).

Further evidence of Pat's commitment to positive mindset was her use of the concept "asset-based thinking". Pat made no reference to how she had embraced this concept, however, "asset-based thinking" seems to have some popularity in the education leadership literature as an antidote to "deficit thinking" or a focus on what is wrong. According to Cramer and Wasiak (2006), the essence of "asset-based thinking is about looking at yourself and the world through the eyes of what is working, what strengths are present, and what the potentials are." (p. 10). Pat described how asset-based thinking and focusing on what is working in her environment drove how she tackled her leadership responsibilities, by enabling her to focus on what mattered ("Mindfulness and having a positive mindset allow me to keep refocusing", D-2).

Pat's intention to inspire a strong emotional connection that synergizes the working relationship between people on the team was evident in her interview responses. When asked about the "role of emotions" in her work, her response included the following:

Role of emotions in collaboration and teamwork- it's about buy in, hope. Successful

schools build hope in parents, kids and teachers. I have to heart to get somewhere (I-Q3).

Barth-Farkas and Vera (2014) note that transformational leaders create a vision for their followers and guide the change through inspiration and motivation. Pat's references throughout her interview to "buy-in", "hope" and "heart", are evidence of how she made connection between emotion and leadership influence, how she could inspire her team to align with the school vision. Whilst this rhetoric aligns strongly with the philosophy of emotional intelligence and transformational leadership, a more extensive study would be needed to identify how this was enacted and to what extent Pat and her own positivity created "hope" within the school community.

Throughout the data collection and particularly in the interview Pat spoke of her responsibility as a leader to develop supportive relationships and how she focused on maintaining a positive mindset towards her role:

It's about coming back to that passion, I am always pulling everything back to why we are doing this. Yes, it is about ticking boxes, but it is also about aligning and inspiring, leading learners. You need to get buy in from people, it's about ideas, how do we build buy in, and make people feel they want to be part of something, creating a future (I-Q2).

In her study of the relevance of emotional intelligence for effective academic leadership in higher education, Parrish (2011), indicates that the ability of leaders to inspire and guide others was the second most significant emotional intelligence trait identified by her participants for academic leadership. Parrish (2011) describes this as being "able to positively influence, motivate and direct others to achieve to their full potential and thereby meet the needs of the institution and situation or circumstance" (p. 14). Additionally, Pat's descriptions of her practice and her focus on "aligning and inspiring" conforms with the attributes of transformational leadership in relation to the sub-dimension of idealized influence, where the leader provides followers with a sense of vision and mission.

Pat's commitment to supportive relationships was further evidenced in the context of her mentoring role. In the data collected around the observation of the mentoring session with the two teachers at the Leadership Development Conference, Pat revealed her passion for the practice of mentoring future leaders. Pat described her mentoring as a structured way in which she could provide supportive relationships to future leaders and model her positivity when navigating leadership roles: "I

can help them to focus on their strengths” (D-4). In this third observation, Pat indicated to her mentee that she was aware of the challenges she faced implementing a new initiative into school and introduced the notion of risk-taking to offer an explanation as to why the mentee’s colleagues might be apprehensive in implementing her initiative: “They are probably thinking, what are we going to do if something fails?” (O-3). In this observation Pat listened to her mentee and seemed to reserve judgement on how the initiative was stalling, choosing instead to offer words of encouragement: “Great to see you have gathered some data to reiterate where you are at”. Pat then offered measures to her mentee to address the problematic team members she was complaining about, explaining the need for “explicit conversations” and how to structure the meeting and expectations to “manage emotional team members”: “You need to have an agenda for the meeting and stick to it”. This advice was followed with “You need to build a relationship with them and try and understand why” (O-3).

In our discussions after this observation, she described how she had been fortunate to have mentors in her leadership journey, suggesting that this made a significant difference to her as a leader. The following comment from Pat links the role of a mentor with advocate, describing the creation of an opportunity or a platform to have a voice: “I was encouraged to stand up and advocate for change. There was never a time, where he told me to just go along if I didn’t agree” (D-4). In contrast to her own experience Pat explained how teachers are often discouraged from standing up and advocating for change. Pat described how staff often believe avoiding conflicts in relationships is a positive, because conflict is associated with the disruption of collaboration and team cohesiveness. However, Pat argued that this wasn’t the case, that conflict and the questioning of programs and processes in a positive way was critical for growth and development. Pat described how she attempted to encourage opportunities for critical dialogue by being a “mindful listener”. When I asked Pat how and why she described herself as a “mindful listener”, her response was “I am mindful and open when listening” (D-2). She also described how she had provided explicit feedback on a task that she had set her executive members. This task involved writing about what leadership looked like in their respective faculties (“I give specific explicit feedback; I want to hear their voice”). This openness to teachers’ responses, however, was not always evident in my observations of her practice. For example, there were several instances where Pat did not respond well to staff challenging or questioning her decisions. Rather her initial reactions and responses appeared to be more defensive, than open to feedback on her decisions and practice. For example, when several members of staff, in one of the staff meetings I observed, queried additional administrative tasks,

Pat's immediate response was to point to the staff as the issue ("We need to address issues with staff performance, PDP (Personal Development Plan) presents us with that opportunity to have that conversation" (O-2). What this suggests is that like many people, including experienced leaders, enacting one's values and best held intentions is not always so straightforward in practice.

In contrast to her reaction to the implied criticism of her decisions in the staff meeting, in her mentoring sessions with her mentees, Pat encouraged them to engage in consultations with stakeholders in order to build investments on their part to contribute and perform ("You need to have open dialogue with your team to understand how they think things should happen", O-3). In this context, Pat passed on her passions and beliefs about capacity building and relationships as core elements of leadership.

5.4 Reflecting on and managing the practice of leadership

This particular theme was prompted in part by Pat's extensive use of the diary. Pat completed 15 entries (Table 3.3), which was considerably more than the other participants. Pat used the diary and notion of reflection to make sense of her day and her role as a leader. Her entries often described her achievements and responses towards the different audiences she encountered as a leader. Her reflections were quite detailed and at times provided insights into her doubts about the concept of emotional intelligence. The reflection below was prompted by Pat's engagement with a book called "Thrive" (by Arianna Huffington):

I had never given weight to such a concept as "Intuition". However, it really made me consider EQ and intuition. Are they such higher levels of understanding? How and what is intuition - that hunch, vibe, insight. What do we know about such a "fluffy concept?" (RD-3).

By coupling intuition and EI together she seems to be suggesting that EI might also be a 'fluffy' concept, or at least suggests that she hasn't considered these concepts as supporting her leadership. However, Reed-Woodard and Clarke (2000) assert that the effective use of "EI allows individuals to heighten intuition, gain insight into complex challenges, and motivate themselves to act" (Nasri et al., 2015, p. 199). Intuition is described as the "capacity to sense messages from our internal store of emotional memory – our own reservoir of wisdom of judgement" (Goleman, 2000, p. 160).

For Schon (1983), professional growth begins when a person starts to view things with a critical lens, by reflecting and questioning his or her actions. Reflective practices encourage the generation of

multiple perspectives that challenge teachers and leaders to excel in complex and uncertain environments (Densten & Gray, 2001). Mayer et al. (2003) define “emotional facilitation” as “the ability of emotions to support thinking, by signaling important environmental changes, changing moods to help individuals see different perspectives and to assist with different forms of reasoning” (p. 99). “Emotional facilitation of thinking” is the second branch in Mayer and Salovey’s (1997) branch model of Emotional Intelligence and Helyer (2015) proposes that it is often only through reflection that an individual can pinpoint how they have employed “emotional facilitation of thinking”.

Although the number of entries and the nature and wording of some entries (e.g., “Take time, reflect, pull the torch up to get a larger view of the picture”, RD-4; It’s times like these I miss teaching...as I reflect on teaching RD-2), suggested Pat embraced the idea of self-reflection and journaling, Pat didn’t keep a diary or professional journal outside of this research study. However, as explained above Pat wrote extensively in the diary, with entries detailing her achievements as a leader, the books she was reading, the thoughts she had on various concepts and her activities outside her role as a leader. The following two quotes exemplify Pat’s interest in well-being.

I am refreshed to arrive at school from a 40min surf. 8 Waves, three people, 6am start, in the water by 6:15am. As I arrived at work, I am listening on Audible a book called “thrive” essentially unpacking strategies around living a balanced life, body and mind...(RD-3).

I heard today the idea that when we are well rested (get enough sleep), our ability to be “contained, thoughtful and make considered decisions” is statistically much higher. While this makes absolute sense, and know the statistics tell us, then why as leaders do some of us push these limits. The last week I have focused on being in bed @ or before 10:30, get a minimum of 6 hours sleep which is easier said than done (RD-5).

Pat acknowledged that our discussions of her practice also allowed her to reflect on the meetings and contexts she experienced as a leader (“Talking like this after these meetings, lets me evaluate what just occurred”). This reflection-on action saw her consider what was now known about the situation, including her awareness of her and others’ emotions, her assumptions and her knowledge about what she thought her next step would be.

At times Pat’s entries were somewhat cryptic, clearly prompted by her reading,

however, not always explained or clearly linked to a specific experience or her role as a leader:

“Surfing at the edge of chaos” was a term that Professor Michael Cavanagh used to describe how “change” evolves. That we have to be in this zone to move from the comfortable and steady to the evolved and sophisticated, or me (sic) may say out of chaos, comes control. Today maintaining the energy and dignity to move beyond the status quo is ever evolving. I reflect on what is needed to evolve, often edging chaos (RD- 9).

However, Pat’s reference to “chaos” may be about the dynamic and complex environment she is leading and how it arouses intense emotions. She writes that for her “out of chaos comes control”. Although it is not clear if this is control of emotions or the situation, or the change happening, or all three combined.

Below is another example of where Pat’s reflection hints at an element of chaos or in this instance a “spiral” of emotions and the complexity of her context and her leadership:

I know I take conflict head on. A staff member who I spoke to on Monday evening and has been of great concern. Attended school prior to school, not ready for work, picking up exam papers. He stomped around angry, aggressive towards HT, DP such words as “She has been riding me for 18 months” On hearing this I have gone to see the teacher. My question “What is going on Nathaniel?” response (sic) aggressively, “I am not talking to you” and proceeded to walk past me. I let him go, I reported immediately to health and safety. This teacher I have endeavoured to support him (sic), however, have had to raise many areas of concern- From conduct- i.e., swearing at staff, to failing to follow procedures. It is at these times that the focus on what is ‘right’ is pivotal. Leadership and dealing with staff is a spiral of Micro/Macro (RD-7).

This reflection also highlights Pat’s perspective on what is “right”, suggesting that her support for a colleague in this instance, must align with her larger responsibilities as principal, considering both the micro (staff, students and community) and macro (policy and legislation) elements of school leadership.

Leadership scholars (i.e., Bass, 2008; Burns, 1978; Fullan, 2011; Kouzes & Posner 2007; Yukl, 2013) acknowledge that developing as a leader is an on-going process. As Eubanks et al. (2011) note, leaders are expected to make sense of vast quantities of complex information and determine the

appropriate courses of action. In turn, the selected course of action may “become an impetus for criticism” when others disagree (p. 6). They argue that leaders need to be able to acknowledge and celebrate their successes, as well as listening to feedback and critiquing their decisions. According to Eubanks et al. (2001), this involves the development of capacity, both personal capacity and professional capacity. In her diary Pat not only wrote about difficulties but also about her strengths and achievements as a leader. For example, in the following quote she describes her perceptions of her the qualities of her NAIDOC (National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee) speech and the impact that it could have had on her audience:

The challenges today were multi- however the rewards fabulous. NAIDOC assembly and celebration. My speech was essentially a great myriad of ideas about cultural competence, while the execution was not as best as I had hoped, I felt inspired that I don't rehash ideas, that I am innovative, researched and interesting. I always feel I get people to think a little (RD-14).

Pat's entries often included a positive evaluation of her practice, where she reflected on her ability to connect with colleagues and students:

The day is absolutely full, from hosting (local Member of Parliament) to Principals awards to speaking with Year 12 with Constable Hunt. The preparation of what I need to say which gives vision. I was very surprised how my speech at the awards hung together and the themes of “gratitude” and growth mindset continued to year 12 meeting, which was to talk and explain “No muck up day” of any kind. They got it! I appealed to the notion of what “gratitude” looks like and how “muck-up day” was one of the furthest parts from Gratitude. #Gratitude (RD-8).

Throughout her diary, Pat made references to torches and lights, using metaphors “shine a torch” and similes “like a flashlight”, suggesting that as a leader this “light” supported her navigation as a leader and assisted her to maintain focus:

keeping the focus, like a flashlight, close to the subject, as we pull back it shines wider, picks up the edges. Leadership is like that, the focus the “reach” on the wider individual placed beyond the reach and support her in understanding her impact as a leader (RD-4).

These were interesting entries, as suggested above, often cryptic and without much context. They do,

however, provide written evidence of the language and manner in which she spoke throughout the observations, discussions of her practice and in the interview, often addressing her staff with hashtags comments (#gratitude) and one-word directives of what they needed (“GRIT”).

Pat described an effective leader in her interview response as someone with “strong beliefs”. This resonates with other comments in the data where Pat seems to value being decisive (the focus on what is ‘right’ is pivotal, RD-7), passionate, excited and perhaps sometimes difficult and confronting (but pretty much I can be a cold hard bitch, I-Q3). As indicated in Chapter Two, the role of the principals has become increasingly complex (Holmes et, 2013). As schools have transformed into more dynamic and complex institutions (Strode et al., 2004), the scope and complexity of principal roles has continued to develop. Pat’s description of an effective leaders to include “strong beliefs, “highly intelligent” and “social intelligence”, would support leaders to have knowledge on administrative processes, skills at problem solving and interpersonal skills (Robinson, 2010).

How principals conduct themselves can have a substantial influence on both daily tasks and big picture visions (Fullan, 2002; Leithwood, et al., 2008; Robinson, 2010; Eacott, 2011; Holmes et al, 2013). For Pat the mindfulness discourse and practice were the lens through which she understood emotional intelligence and supported her in her reflection and management of her emotions, her attempts at being supportive towards her staff and in her efforts to fulfill her wider responsibilities. Pat demonstrated passion and enthusiasm towards the practices that appealed to her. She appeared uninhibited when expressing her own emotions and although encouraged others to reflect and share, did not always seem to create exchanges or contexts where they felt comfortable to do so.

CHAPTER SIX

ELLE

Assistant Principal, Primary School

Background

At the time of data collection, Elle was an Assistant Principal, she was 52 years of age, with 30 years of experience as a Primary school teacher. She had been in Assistant Principal roles in the Illawarra (South of Sydney) region for 16 years. Elle's current leadership portfolio included leading Stage Three (years five and six), coordinating Learning and Support (a program "which aims to provide direct and timely specialist assistance to students in mainstream classes with a disability and/or additional learning and support needs" (NSW Government, 2019)), and sports coordination. Elle's school had a diverse population of students, with many non-English speaking families. Elle stressed that this influenced how the teachers communicated with the families and the types of support they provided: "we really need to think of the information we are communicating to parents and how we are doing it" (D-1). Elle's leadership role involved liaising between teachers and parents, (specifically the parents of students with additional learning needs). As an AP at a medium sized school, Elle also had teaching responsibilities, sharing a Stage Three (year five) class with another teacher.

Data were collected from Elle over a period of five months, during which I observed her four times in a range of settings including meetings and scheduled events at school and an off-site (external) sports excursion. Elle considered these events and meetings to best represent her leadership roles and was reluctant to schedule further observations, as she was concerned with her availability due to family commitments. Immediately after each observation with Elle, there was a discussion of her practice. These discussions offered further explanations and clarity to the observations. Elle participated in a formal interview and completed eight personal diary reflections (the suggested amount). These reflections were short paragraphs and were generally professional reflections on exchanges between colleagues or parents, where Elle provided some context and details on the emotions present, her own and those of others. Data analysis resulted in the identification of three main ways in which EI was enacted in Elle's Assistant Principal role. These will be discussed below under the following headings:

- i. Awareness and acceptance of emotion
- ii. Establishing "real" cultures and relationships through emotion

iii. Reflection and emotional understanding.

Prior to discussing Elle's enactment of EI, as with the other leaders, I will comment on Elle's prior knowledge of EI. In response to Question 4, Elle like Pat and Lou, indicated that she was familiar with the term and provided the following description: "I would say emotional intelligence is being able to read people and be able to respond in a certain way that is most appropriate to their need. Yeah, I think that's it, to be able to read people and respond to them" (I-Q4). Elle's response like Lou's, focuses on the interpersonal element of EI, that is, possessing an awareness and understanding of others' emotions in order to respond to them. Despite the absence of the intrapersonal components of EI in her definition, my observations of her practice and her comments during the discussions of practice indicated that Elle understood the importance of intrapersonal skills, such as self-awareness and emotional regulation, in supporting how she interacted with and led others. Additionally, like the other leaders in the study, Elle had not participated in any targeted professional learning on emotional intelligence, nor read any specific literature on the subject. Elle's understanding of EI appeared to emerge from her acceptance of differences in the emotional makeup of people, and the skills she then required to communicate and collaborate with the diversity in people she came in contact with.

Throughout data collection Elle emphasised that her leadership focus was on ensuring that the school (and staff team) remained dedicated to "all" students' learning and that she needed to support her colleagues to achieve this. Elle also stressed that her leadership intentions were focused on establishing environments where teachers and students understood learning, including the curriculum and syllabus. Elle spoke of sharing the expectations of the school with staff, students, and parents, "everyone needs to understand what we are doing" (O-1) and shared in one of our discussions of her practice, that whilst the big picture is important, it is all the details that need attention: "Understanding the detail is key" (D-4).

6.2 Awareness and acceptance of emotions

As discussed in chapter two, models of EI describe awareness of emotions as a fundamental element (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). During data collection with Elle, her need for and demonstration of emotional awareness was identified across the data, with Elle using the discussion of her practice to share examples of how often she relied on emotional awareness ("We are surrounded by emotion and difference; I need to know what's happening all the time" D-1). From my observations, Elle presented as

a calm and responsive leader, her comments and her actions suggested that she valued emotional awareness and understanding as not only a leader, but also as a teacher. She described her “awareness and acceptance of emotions”, including its impact and its purpose, as what framed her leadership. Elle’s interview response, quoted below, to the role of emotions in her work, indicates her acceptance that emotions are part of the everyday environment of schools, presenting a challenge but also underpinning school culture:

I think emotions within the school setting is something that is always a challenge with teachers, and you could be a person, in a school setting, who can be over emotional or under emotional. For me, the emotions are what set the scene in the classroom and sets the scene in the school, helps to create that culture within a school setting (I-Q3).

The importance of acknowledging, accepting and addressing the impact of emotion on her school and those within surfaced across all the data. In her interview, this was made explicit by Elle’s proposition that learning to understand and anticipate people’s emotions was fundamental (‘imperative’). In the following quote Elle responded to the question: “What is role of emotions in collaboration and teamwork?”. She considered the idea of professional learning in these areas, and then described how her awareness of emotion guided how she interacted with people:

I think it’s [EI] really important, I think it’s imperative, I think it’s imperative in teaching, I think it’s imperative in the context of schools, because everybody’s personality is so different, and you need to be able to know how some people think and act, and sometimes you need to be able to know why. Why they think and act that way, that is not making a judgement on them, but it’s just saying ... and for me it just makes me think about that when I go to approach them, and deal with them (I-Q5).

Elle’s interview response again emphasises the challenges presented by others’ emotions. Elle’s response implies that as a leader, she is required to employ different strategies for different people and different experiences, and these differences are grounded in emotional differences.

When asked ‘How do you think emotional intelligence can help you lead your team?’, Elle described how she managed her emotions, prompted by a potential conflict situation (“some undermining going on”, I-Q7), by reflecting on her own emotions and those of the others involved in the situation:

The stage I am working with now it's quite complex. I have three other people [Stage Three teachers] all have very different ways that their emotions, which for me, it's almost like having your own children, when you are going from one to the other and reading how. So, I have one that is probably really emotional, almost over emotional. One that is quite manipulative, and one that is quiet and laid back (I-Q6).

Elle responded to next question on how she thought EI could help her lead her team, with an example from her stage:

I had a situation with one of them the other day, and there was undermining going, and I felt agitated and really, really, annoyed, and it was through an executive meeting that I found out what was going on, and I said, I will go and speak to them about that, but I could feel myself, I was really, and I was lucky there was another person in the room, because it gave me some time to take some deep breaths, rethink how I was going to deal with the situation, rather than go in, and take it head on to start with, so I find I try to use that emotional intelligence to think things out first, before I go in (I-Q7).

Similar to Pat and Lou, my observations of Elle occurred both in the school, including staff and executive meetings, and outside of her school environment, at an inter-school sporting competition. Each observational context was different, with different groups of people, including other teachers, parents and children, contributing to the interactions in each context. It became evident that Elle's leadership role was very diverse (learning and support, stage three and sports coordination) and as a result, so was the mixture of people and emotions that Elle faced daily. She referenced the emotions she recognised in these different contexts. For example, the emotions of a colleague ("she was visibly upset"), as a consequence of issues with a new technology program being implemented; of a parent ("she was frustrated that she had to repeat herself, that we were not communicating the information to the speech therapist", RD-2); and of students ("Its ok to be disappointed with the result, however we need to try and think about the positives which happened as well", O-4). This last comment was Elle's response to the students in the car, which I was also travelling in, when travelling back from the basketball game she had organised. This last comment is a reminder, that for educational leaders' emotional awareness is not just about interacting with adults. They also have the complex task of responding appropriately to children and adolescents' emotions.

Elle's awareness and acceptance of emotion was a theme that also surfaced in her reflection diary. In the following quote, Elle is reflecting on how she managed an incident in her role as learning and support coordinator:

Keeghan's mum rang the office in a very agitated angry state as Keeghan had been sent out of class and arrived at the car very upset. Keeghan's mum came in still agitated. I let her speak about what had happened. I then filled her in on the events that had led up to his removal. We talked about how to support Keeghan in these situations and then I invited Keeghan to talk. We talked about using strategies etc.

Keeghan's mum left very happy and so did Keeghan (RD-5).

This example again highlights how, for Elle, dealing with conflict begins with recognising and accepting the emotions expressed by others in order to address these and then move forward. Her diary entries also provide examples of Elle's awareness of her own emotions and the ways in which she expressed these in her leadership role. In the following quote, she describes how she managed her emotions by expressing her disappointment at a colleague's actions. The colleague had expressed criticisms to others over decisions Elle had made and had attempted to disrupt the changes Elle had implemented. The following excerpt from her diary indicates that from Elle's point of view, her addressing of the issue had had a good outcome (even though she recognised she was still angry):

When I went to Eilish, I spoke to her about Stirling's conversation and expressed my disappointment that she hadn't come to me if things were worrying her, or she wanted to have a different direction ... I'd really appreciate her honest feedback. The meeting finished well (even though inside I was still angry) (RD-6).

My observations and discussions with Elle revealed that she considered emotional awareness and an accepting of her own and others' emotions as an integral part of teaching and leading. Elle argued that it is the acceptance of emotion, which is critical, as attempting to alter, fix or pass judgement on other's emotions is counterproductive to moving forward. Elle noted that her individual approach to leadership and relationships was underpinned by her ability to address each person's individual needs and emotions: "for me it just makes me think about that when I go to approach them or deal with them in different ways" (I-Q5).

6.3 Establishing “real” cultures and relationships through emotion

The second pattern emerging from my analysis of the data collected with Elle was her conviction that emotional capacities were important in establishing genuine school cultures and relationships and that leaders played a key role in establishing and fostering these. Fullan (2014) proposes that principals must use the elements of “capacity building”, “collaborative effort”, “pedagogy”, and the “capability to make decisions” for the benefit for the organisation, to “develop a culture that will positively promote student achievement and wellbeing” (p. 68). These elements require emotional capacities: social and emotional awareness and management to support capacity building and collaboration; and self-awareness and management to develop pedagogical practice and assertiveness to problem solve and make decisions. Although Elle was not a principal, she saw herself as having a role as a leader in impacting the school culture. Part of the way she sought to approach this was through emotional understanding and knowledge of her own as well as other’s emotions. As evident in the excerpts included below, Elle was concerned about the culture of her school and the impact of others’ behaviour and emotions on the development of the school’s culture.

Among the issues Elle raised about the culture within her schools was the damaging effect of relationships where she and others were unable to trust some of her colleagues or the information that they shared. As indicated in the quote above Elle was working with one colleague whom she described as “quite manipulative”, who tried “very hard to manipulate the executive team, takes something to one of us, and then to the other, to get what she wants” (I-Q6). This left Elle uncertain about the information she was receiving from this colleague and how she should deal with it. This uncertainty led to Elle and other staff being “wary of working together”, which in turn affected the capacity of staff to establish genuine, trusting relationships within the school, impacting the overall culture and effectiveness of collaboration among the staff.

Although Elle’s intentions and ways of working with her colleagues suggest the characteristics of a transformational leader, Elle’s comments suggest that fostering collaboration in her school context was not an easy task. Despite these admissions in the interview, there were instances where Elle nonetheless encouraged collaboration within her team and between others. For example, in my first observation of Elle, a learning and support meeting, Elle directed her staff to consult with the other professionals involved (for example, psychologist and occupational therapists). Elle wanted her team to establish ways to collaborate over student learning needs. She encouraged her staff to draw on their

various expertise of these professionals, an important element of which would be to gain insight into what plans and supports they were putting in place for the student (“Let’s find out exactly what the parents have discussed with the OT and psychologist”, O-1). Although Elle did not display frustration at her team in the meeting, in the discussion following this observation, Elle appeared concerned that although the expectations to communicate with these professionals as well as the parents, was made clear in earlier learning and support meetings (“I have asked them a number of times to communicate with the parent” (D-1)), her staff had failed to follow her instructions.

In a further extension of the conflict described above with her colleague, and the challenges of working with three colleagues in her team who were very different from each other, Elle expressed her frustration at the way her team’s behaviour got in the way of the kind of collaboration that would benefit all:

The problem is surface collaboration, so even though they are collaborating they are still very much about getting what they want. ... and not because it will benefit the collective, but to make them look good (I-Q6).

From an analysis of the data collected for Elle’s case, it became clear that Elle actively tried to discourage self-interested behaviour over the interest of the collective. As Deal and Peterson’s (2016) emphasise in their book “Shaping school culture” the work on building school cultures has to come from within the school and the leader plays a major role in this process. From Elle’s perspective, the management of emotions and the actions associated with those emotions was an essential element in developing her school’s culture. As she pointed out in her interview (Q-3), “For me, I think emotions are what set the scene in the classroom and sets the scene in the school, helps to create that culture within a school setting”. However, for Elle, the emotions that were influencing her school environment were often not productive. For example, Elle frequently made comments about her colleagues focusing on negatives, or their attempts at manipulation, or “surface collaboration”. She described how they seemed to be “focusing on pointing out the barriers to collaborating and working as a team” (D-2). Further evidence for her concerns over the schools’ culture was captured in her diary where she reflected on instances where members of her staff would attempt to cause disharmony: “Lola had some concerns about stage 3 but had not directly come to me to discuss. She went directly to the acting Principal and other staff members” (RD-6). She also wrote about her attempts to foster a more positive culture within her school by focusing on ways forward, as opposed to focusing on the issues or behaviours of her colleagues she didn’t agree

with: “I thought it was best to focus on the ‘goal setting’ for Kevin rather than take him to task about his comments; no good would have come from confronting him about the comment” (RD-7). This last diary entry is indicative of Elle’s tendency to engage the relational components of EI, demonstrating an awareness of her social context and using this knowledge to encourage more positive discussions and cultures. These relational tendencies also aligned with Elle’s proclivity to focus on the positives of situations, “we need to support the staff member by being positive ... not reinforcing the negativity” (RD-3), and as well as through supporting her colleagues in identifying the positives of their practice. For example, in her diary, she wrote about how she had discussed with a beginning teacher all the positives that could be taken from a lesson which did not go to plan.

Callula prepared an excellent lesson; however, it did not go to plan; it became a little chaotic and very noisy. After the lesson, [in the] recess break we debriefed. I first asked her how she thought it went; she was upset. I reinforced to her that there were many positives to the lesson, planning, resources etc. We discussed how important reflection was and talked about what she would change if she did the lesson again, how she would pre-empt behaviours, instructions etc. I gave her lots of positive feedback and reinforced to her that she is a beginning teacher (RD-4).

At the same time, Elle noted that while focusing on the positives was important, it could also lead to a false sense that everything is working, that it was important to “seeing the big picture” (I-Q8). This big picture mindset was echoed in Elle’s interview response below, where she spoke of the complexity of working with others and the importance of focusing on the strengths of colleagues to foster collaboration. In discussing the value of professional learning, she described how the young teachers coming into a new workplace needed courses that would assist them to work collaboratively with others so that they:

understand they are coming into a workplace which is really complex, really complex with the structure of the classroom but really complex they way you have to work with people, and you are not going to get on with everybody, but you can learn to work collaboratively and to also look for the strengths of people, and not dismiss weaknesses but focus on their strengths (I-Q9).

Elle believed her emotional awareness and acceptance of emotions supported her in establishing “real” relationships with colleagues and with her students. This contrasted with how she described her principal, who Elle felt rarely demonstrated his emotions:

When he is dealing with things that... but one thing I don't think he does do very well, is he doesn't let enough of himself be seen. He is a really good boss, and I like that department stand, but I think he needs to be more open. As a leader you need to be able to show people you have that caring, nurturing side as well...I get on really well with him and he is very warm with me (I-Q8).

Elle commented that because he didn't express himself with all the staff, they may not consider him approachable:

I have noticed he probably isn't with everyone and I think that's something that you need to make sure that there is that balance... that everyone feels that value (I-Q8).

This interview response from Elle provides insight into how Elle's own capacity to recognise how the expression of emotions impacts the relationships and school culture. Suggesting an individual's ability to demonstrate awareness and regulation of emotion supports them in establishing genuine 'real' cultures and relationships within the school.

6.4 Reflection and emotional understanding

Gill (2014) argues that reflective practice allows practitioners to become emotionally aware. He suggests that to develop EI, you must work upward from a strong foundation that begins with reflection. Elle's comments in her interview, discussions and particularly in her diary demonstrated how comfortable Elle seemed to be with reflecting on both her own and others' emotions and the realisation of these emotions in action. For example, unlike Lou's entries, which only really focused on her own emotions, Elle's diary entries also included comments about her perceptions of the emotions her colleagues were expressing ("came in still agitated", RD-5); "Lola had some concerns", RD-6) and how as a leader she navigated those emotions in their conversations by attempting to understand why they were feeling as they did ("I gave her lots of positive feedback and reinforced that she was a beginning teacher", RD-4); ("I listened to her concerns and enquired about how she knew", RD-5); ("After the lesson, recess break we debriefed", RD-4).

Elle spoke explicitly of her practice of reflecting on behaviours and emotions to develop a deeper understanding of the experience or conversation she had had, but also to provide her with "thinking time", time in which to prepare how she was going to respond to her colleagues. The following extensive interview response captures how she reflected on her emotions and how her awareness of

emotion initiated a process of thinking about how to approach the situation. Elle used this process of reflection to regulate her emotions and ultimately guide her leadership:

For me, knowing how I have to understand each one of them [stage 3 colleagues], and that I have deal with them in different ways, because I think I am fair across the board, but just make sure I am reading how they are feeling at the time, what the situation is that is happening, and myself not getting emotionally invested in each. That's probably the wrong word, it's not that I am not emotionally invested in them, but not letting my emotions override how I deal with them. I had a situation with one of them the other day, and there was undermining going, and I felt agitated and really, really annoyed, and it was through an executive meeting that I found out what was going on, and I said, I will go and speak to them about that, but I could feel myself, I was really cranky, it gave me some time to take some deep breaths and think how I was going to deal with the situation, rather than go in, and take it head on to start with, I try to use that EI to think things out first, before I go in (I-Q7).

This interview response points to the role of emotional reflection and management of emotions in Elle's leadership and as a member of a team. With similar responses captured in the discussions of practice ("I tend to not to respond to her quickly or straight away, I often say, I need to go and think about that" (I-Q6)), Elle's practice of reflection and her "thinking time" meant she could evaluate possible outcomes of the exchanges ("I try to use that EI to think things out first before I go in"). Through reflection, Elle had time to frame a response, unique to the situation and appropriate to the behaviour and emotions demonstrated by her colleagues ("I thought it was best to focus on the 'goal setting'", RD-8).

Elle's commitment to EI and advocacy of professional learning in the construct is captured in her interview response below and is indicative of her leadership practice:

I found it very valuable, because I could reflect on myself I could reflect on other people, that doesn't say that everybody does that and I think especially with young teachers coming through it is something they need, to understand they are coming into a work place which is really complex, really complex in the structure of the classroom but really complex they way you have to work with people, and you're are not going to get on with everybody but you can learn to work collaboratively and to also look for the strengths of people, and not dismiss weaknesses but focus on their

strengths (I-Q9).

Elle's knowledge, understanding and enactment of EI was evident in her self-awareness and reflective practice and how she viewed both as important in assisting early career teachers in navigating the complexity of educational environments, including developing collaborative practice and focusing on the strengths of individuals. Like Lou, Elle presented a calm and responsive leadership style. Her emotional awareness allowed her to adapt how she approached others as she actively considered her own and others' emotions. Also, like Lou, this calm and responsive approach, potentially created situations where her colleagues challenged or "undermined" her leadership.

CHAPTER SEVEN

WILL

Deputy Principal, Primary School

Background

At the time of data collection Will was 38 and had been newly appointed as Deputy Principal in a large coastal Primary school. Will was new to both the leadership position and the school, receiving the appointment earlier that year. At the start of data collection, Will had been in the position for three terms. Prior to that he had 14 years' experience as an Assistant Principal, in two different schools. In total, he had 17 years' experience as a teacher, having been appointed to school leadership roles after only two years as a teacher. In his interview Will described how he had opportunities to travel internationally for professional development programs and had been involved in research studies abroad. Although he didn't elaborate on the specifics of these opportunities, he did note that they had inspired him in his development as a school leader.

Will was one of two Deputies and therefore the traditional responsibilities of deputy, including leading school change, were divided between the two leaders. In the interview Will described his responsibilities as follows:

student and staff welfare, instructional leadership about pedagogy, how we should be teaching, systems and structures within the school. What's working and evaluating those things, for example, programming (I-Q2).

Will was managing some significant changes to instructional design and curriculum implementation, and he admitted throughout the data collection that this created uncertainties amongst the staff, who were confronted by the changes. Data were collected from Will over a period of five months. He was observed four times in a variety of staff meetings and scheduled events, but unlike the other participants these observations were all on-site, in his educational setting. The observations of Will tended to be more formal than with the other participants. Unlike Pat, who announced my presence to her staff and colleagues and insisted that I participate in the activities during my observations (i.e., the mindfulness meditation and the conference activities), Will did not introduce me to his colleagues and I sat quietly at the back of the room with little to no interaction with the staff. Immediately after each observation, there

was a discussion of practice, which offered further explanations and clarity to the observations, however, again, Will remained restrained and the exchanges were less conversational than with the other participants. Will tended to be very formal in his answers; rarely disclosing personal opinions or evaluations of his colleagues. Throughout the five months, Will completed ten diary reflections, more than most of the other participants and these reflections were where Will more openly discussed other colleagues, parents and students, including his perceptions of the emotions they were expressing in interactions with him and others. Like Pat, Will's entries detailed experiences he had as a leader, including emotional situations and conflicts. The diary was collected at the time of the formal interview which took place when the observations and discussion of practice were completed. Will was more candid and relaxed with his responses and evaluation of his colleagues during the interview. Analysis of the data collected from these different sources revealed three distinct patterns in the ways Will understood the role of emotions in his work and how EI was evident in his enactments in his role as Deputy Principal:

- i. Managing change through emotional awareness and understanding
- ii. Emotional regulation to support conflict management and relationships
- iii. Reflecting on leading

In explaining his understanding of EI, Will, like all the leaders, indicated that he was familiar with the term and provided the following description:

EI, it's all about understanding situations, understanding people, trying to understand people's personalities, having a mesh of those understandings, so you are able to move forward in any given scenario. What might work for one personality type won't work for the next, it's also how I conduct myself - flexibility in interaction, based on my awareness. Having your wits about you all the time, show passion towards learning, but don't show aggression. If I want people to be emotionally intelligent, you have to role model that, that becomes the standard. Playing a game, pop back in their court, you can only ever control how you respond. Be mindful of how I respond, ethical and moral (I-Q4).

For Will, EI was about being able to assess and respond quickly and successfully to unforeseen circumstances ("having your wits about you") and to different interpersonal dynamics ("trying to understand people's personalities"). His response also suggests that EI is about demonstrating appropriate emotions for different contexts ("passion but not aggression"). He then shifts to focus on the development

of EI in others means modelling appropriate expressions of emotions in ways which are ethically desirable (“ethical and moral”).

His response aligns with key components of EI theory. He acknowledges the relational elements of the theory, as well as the intrapersonal skills of emotional regulation. Despite his extended response to Q.4 and the confidence with which he spoke about EI, like the other leaders in the study, Will had not participated in any targeted professional learning on emotional intelligence, nor read any specific literature on the subject. Will’s comments above, my observations of his practice, and his comments during the discussions post observation, align his practice with elements of transformational leadership, such as “individualised consideration” (Bass & Avolio, 1997, p. 135), where the leader attends to each follower’s needs and provides support. Will described how he provided time and opportunities for his colleagues to contribute and how he saw the value in highlighting positive outcomes and motivating people to his course of action: “often when decisions are made, people who can see a positive outcome, their emotions align more positively” (I-Q5). Kouzes and Posner (2007) suggest that effective leaders take into account the needs and values of followers to create shared values and therefore a common course of action. In line with other components of transformational leadership, Will’s interview response suggested he valued “inspirational motivation”, by modelling desired behaviours, such as EI: “If I want people to be emotionally intelligent, you have to role model that, that becomes the standard”. Observing Will revealed that he did model effective regulatory skills when interacting with colleagues, he maintained the “calm” approach, despite admitting his annoyance in the discussions of practice following the observations.

As indicated above, Palmer et al., (2001) found a significant correlation between inspirational motivation and individualised consideration and the ability to both “monitor and manage emotions in oneself and others” (p. 8). This regulation of emotion surfaced as a critical element of Will’s leadership and one that he prided himself on. As Jacobs and colleagues (2008) suggest, leaders are best able to understand and support others if they know their strengths, weaknesses, emotions, and have the capacity for self-management. This seemed to be an important tenet of Will’s leadership in relation to emotional intelligence, particularly in relation to self-management.

7.2 Managing change through emotional awareness and understanding

Chrusciel (2006) argues that “organizations look to leadership for ways to deal with the demands and new challenges of a changing environment” (p. 649). This usually requires the leadership to evaluate their current practice and propose more creative approaches. This evaluation of current approaches was central to Will’s role. For him this evaluation involved “how we should be teaching, [and] systems and structures within the school”. Pritchett and Pound (2005) conclude that a lack of clarity of the unknown associated with change will raise the anxiety levels of staff and influence their behaviours. So as a leader managing significant changes, it was critical that Will demonstrate emotional awareness and understanding, to support his colleagues with the change.

As was the case with the other participants, the data analysis pointed to Will’s perception and understanding of emotion as one of the key themes of his talk and practice in relation to EI. However, compared to the other three participants, Will’s talk about emotional awareness appeared to be more subtle, or more implicit. He did not highlight the idea of emotion or feelings in either our discussions of his practice, nor in my observations of him interacting with staff. Nor did he bring attention to emotions expressed by colleagues or use language about emotions when he was conversing with colleagues. Rather he seemed somewhat suspicious of explicit emotional expression or of being guided by emotions; he seemed to move around emotion, even commenting in the interview that “if I lose that rationality, you can make decisions that aren’t the best, so I try and take the emotion out of it” (I-Q3).

However, it became clear that Will was aware of the emotions around him. As Wolff et al. (2002) conclude from their longitudinal study of leader emergence in self-managing teams, although a task-focus was indeed important to change, there is an identified need to apply emotional intelligence in order to build the “team’s sense of belonging, support, and optimism” (p. 22), so that emotional issues do not detract from the team’s progress toward completing the change process. Will’s diary detailed numerous reflections, where he focused on the emotion, his own and others, evaluating them first, before deciding on his response. For example, in the following quote from his diary, he demonstrates an awareness of his context, commenting on the strategies he used and hinting at his own emotional regulation skills and resulting emotion:

I had to discuss library issues with the library staff. They raised several issues that I listened to and promised I would look into by designing a survey to gauge staff perspectives. I listened to all problems with current timetables. I didn’t necessarily

agree but remained objective and understanding. I felt it was a good outcome that suited both parties. They felt listened to. In particular I had to speak to one staff member as she raised the issues via e-mail and included all staff members. The e-mail was addressed to the leadership team. She understood that it was inappropriate and said it would not happen again. I was happy with the outcome and the way I handled the situation (RD-2).

This reflection aligns with Will's comment in his interview, that he was aware that the staff had undergone "a lot of change recently" and so could understand his colleagues' concerns. In the diary entry above, Will describes how his awareness and understanding of his staff guided his management of the situation, his decisions about what was needed to move forward, how he could support staff with the changes and importantly placate them.

Will's appointment was one of the changes that the staff were dealing with. How Will assessed this and what that may have meant for his behaviour was difficult to determine from the observations, however, Will was aware of this additional layer of change for his colleagues, "they are getting to know me as well". In his interview, he noted that: "When people don't get their way, they become highly emotive, based on fear of the unknown" (I-Q). Again, these comments provide evidence of his awareness, understanding and appreciation of the emotions associated with change and the importance of navigating these for change to be successful. Will suggested that his ability to get staff to align was a result of coming to know his colleagues first and adapting his approach to each: "What might work for one personality type won't work for the next, it's also how I conduct myself - flexibility in interaction, based on my awareness" (I-Q4).

Moore (2009) suggests that during the change process, leaders can use emotional information to build trust and procure cooperation from their staff, demonstrating empathy and understanding for the loss that people experience during change. This use of emotional information was evident frequently in observing and conversing with Will. In the first observation of Will (Leading Literacy staff meeting), there were several examples where Will demonstrated awareness and an understanding of the staff's emotions (as well as an ability to regulate his own emotions) and then used this information to facilitate the meeting. For example, several teachers were disengaged with the content, conducting separate conversations amongst themselves as Will was talking. Will stopped what he was saying and calmly said: "Whatever actions and decisions we make here today, we acknowledge that implementing these changes

will take time and you will be supported (O-1).

Will later discussed this comment in the discussion of practice, explaining that he recognised that the teachers were concerned with additional workloads, resources and unfamiliarity with the new pedagogy and so had developed strategies to manage meetings which involved supporting his staff's emotions, regardless of how "unproductive" they were being from his perspective ("I draw it up [as] pros and cons and then let them speak and then move on", D-3). Further examples were evident in other post observations discussions ("I need to let them have their point and use this information to know how to move" D-3).

Will was faced with the challenge of dealing with the different staff needs in a "positive and collaborative manner" (Blandford, 2000, p. 23), He explained that leadership was about setting up a highly collaborative environment. Will was guided by the concern for interactions and actions that would benefit the greater good rather than any individual's particular wants, including his own. To this end in response to the question: "What are ways you manage emotions related to supporting the work of your team?", Will described how he sets up a meeting to best get an outcome that will benefit the majority: "You're not going to get your way; I'm not going to get my way - but we're going to get ours" (I-Q6). Concluding his answer to this question, Will summed up his approach to managing resistance and supporting colleagues to move forward: "... because you can't force an issue, but you can build conditions and opportunities and the rest is up to them (I-Q6). As indicated above these conditions included providing opportunities for staff to express their opinion (and possibly vent their emotions). For example, following a professional development meeting he was facilitating on strategic direction Will explained this strategy:

Whether it's them understanding that I appreciate what they're up against, or it's me just allowing them to have a voice, they can feel they have contributed to the decisions and the school's direction (D-3).

On observing Will, listening to his responses in the discussions of his practice and interview and reading his reflections, it was evident that Will's emotional awareness and understanding, supported him with leading the change that was occurring in his context.

7.3 Emotional regulation to support conflict management and relationships

The second pattern emerging from the analysis of data covers the ways Will's leadership centred on emotional regulation and the impact of this on his relationships with his colleagues and how he managed conflict in his environment. Throughout the data collection it became evident that Will placed great weight on emotional regulation in himself and others. For example, the following quote suggests that while he thinks that it is important to know how you are feeling, he does not think that it is appropriate to display emotion especially in interactions with colleagues. This quote also suggests that as a leader his personal desire or goal is not what is important, but rather, he needs to be able to manage his own emotions/wants ("my own ego") to achieve the best outcome for the collective (the school).

We all get emotional, and we all get angry and feel different things in different ways, but in a leadership role, it's not letting people see that, but having strategies myself to process and deal with that, in ways you know I catch ego sometimes my own ego coming in, and it is putting that at bay too (I-Q6).

The need for emotional regulation was also valued in others. Again, in response to Q.6, Will described emotional intelligence as important because "people need tools to support and regulate themselves before they can support anyone else" (I-Q6). This is also evident in his response to Q.5, which asked about the role of emotions in collaboration and teamwork, "some people don't have emotional regulation and they can't control it, they blurt it out". This last response suggests that Will saw any expression of emotion as a lapse in self-regulation.

The need to regulate one's emotions and the link this has to managing conflict is a recurrent theme throughout the literature, beginning with Aristotle, and later refined by Hochschild (1983), Salovey and Mayer (1990), Cohen (2005), Naqvi (2009), and more recently, Schaubroeck and Shao (2011). As the quotes above indicate, Will described the "emotional labour" (although not surprisingly did not use that term) he engaged in in his interactions with staff, although the focus of his conversations with me seemed to be primarily on the censorship of any possible negative emotions "for me it is that calm approach" (I-Q3).

Will demonstrated a sensitivity to other's emotions and appreciated that school staff were navigating a range of emotional experiences each day. Responding to the interview question on the role of emotions in your work, Will shared: "Staff have to deal with irate parents, who are highly emotional, because they are advocates for their child" (I-Q3). Conflict with and between the school members is an

inevitable outcome of school leadership. A key aspect of Will's role was the management of conflict on many levels. For example, with his own staff, which was captured in his diary reflection: "Fed [Federation/Teachers Union] member disputed the procedures. I listened to her point of view and calmly reminded that it was a policy since 2012" (RD-8). Will also spoke of the diverse relationships that teachers needed to foster but also navigate, which were often laden with emotions, with parents. Will wrote in his reflection diary an example of one of the conflicts he was managing:

A father was at frustration point, over the treatment of his son and some of the outcomes the school put in place for his behaviour. There were several issues raised and his emotions were heightened. I listened to his concerns and made suggestions when necessary. We agreed upon future actions. I felt the outcome was great for all parties, we got to understand each other and plan actions for the future to support each other. I felt I had nurtured the meeting empathetically (RD-3).

There is a complex interaction between establishing and maintaining positive relationships and governance of educational environments, which leaders are responsible for and Will's' diary entry portrays the steps that Will demonstrated in managing conflict. These included listening to the parents' concerns, participating in a negotiation of some sort (although the terms of this negotiation are not clear) and a vision for moving forward. Although the reflection again highlights the attention Will places on self-regulation, he also acknowledges the need to nurture the meeting based on the emotional needs of others.

Although Will appeared to regard any emotional displays of his own as lapses in self-regulation, there were numerous instances where he recognised the importance of displaying empathy and emotional understanding to others expressing emotion, in order to resolve conflict and support relationships and the school's culture. In response to the interview question on the role of emotions in his work, Will noted that for him:

This job is highly emotional, you're dealing with people all the time, and for me it is that 'calm' approach, trying to take the emotion out, its empathy and understanding of it [emotion]. When making decisions based on emotion it can lead you down the wrong path, but you have to be considerate of the whole background, if I lose that rationality, you can make decisions that aren't the best, so I try and take the emotion out of it...it's just trying to listen, so they are heard, agreement and understanding, then you can move forward. Tool belt of questions so you can ask questions and dig

deeper (I-Q3).

Although my observations and discussions produced examples where Will appeared to avoid references to emotion, the interview and reflection diary revealed that his leadership required him to think about the range of different emotions exhibited by his staff and other school members (such as parents). In the interview Will talked about how emotion and importantly his management of emotions, supported him with his management of conflict and relationships. Will described these various emotional skills in the interview as “having your wits about you all the time, show passion towards learning, but don’t show aggression” (I-Q4).

Will shared in the first discussion of his practice, that his leadership was in a challenging phase. Will expanded on this idea in his interview response on how he managed emotions related to supporting the work of your team “because we have had so many changes” (I-Q6). Will was new to the school and new to a senior executive role. Will had to learn a great deal about his colleagues and context in a short time. Responding in the interview to the question, ‘How can leadership skills be enhanced through professional development, such as EI?’, Will said “you have to have that ‘tool belt’ to deal with different kids or different adults, it’s about applying different strategies” (I-Q9).

Will spoke of empathy and understanding in response to the interview question on how EI can help lead a team:

For me I suppose I have been able, through EI, ... to develop an awareness. It’s not an out of body experience but it’s kinda I’ve, always maintain an awareness what it might look like in somebody else eyes. That’s helped me been able to maintain that and it’s Keeping true to myself, and knowing as a leader model that intelligence, that seems to regulate me, that’s always in the back of my mind and I try aspire to be a really good leader. So, if I’m a good leader, that how I should act and that’s what I keep in the forefront (I-Q7).

His response spoke of an awareness of how it “might look like in somebody else eyes” and with this awareness, Will could use EI, specifically strategies in emotional regulation to manage conflict and support the development of supportive relationships within his school context.

Will’s responses focusing on emotional regulation for relationship and conflict management reflect similar strategies to those of Elle, diffusing conflict by first listening to others’ concerns and navigating colleagues or parents’ emotions. The use of EI skills to manage conflict and support

relationships within a school requires both intrapersonal skills, for example, emotional awareness and regulation. These intrapersonal skills support the development of effective interpersonal skills, such as management and empathy of the emotions expressed by others. The different facets of EI skills are intertwined, a relationship exists between the development and demonstration of the skills.

7.4 Reflecting on leading

Johnson (2002) suggests that “[t]hrough reflection, one reaches renewed clarity on which one bases changes in action or disposition” (p. 76). Explored in chapter two the importance of reflection was established by Dewey (1933) and scholars following his lead (e.g., Schön, 1983; Munby, 1989; Posner, 1989). These scholars have argued the importance of reflective practice, however Rodgers (2002) notes in her article that although often cited in educational literature, an understanding of the process and purpose of reflection is often absent. Using Dewey’s earlier writings, Rodgers (2002) presents the following criteria in her article to support understanding of the process and purpose of reflection:

- Reflection is a meaning-making process that moves a learner from one experience into the next with deeper understanding of its relationships with and connections to other experiences and ideas.
- Reflection is a systematic, rigorous, disciplined way of thinking.
- Reflection needs to happen in interaction with others.
- Reflection requires attitudes that value the personal and intellectual growth (p. 845).

Will’s references to reflection were a little different to the other participants. They appeared more outwardly focused than those of the other three leaders. Pat used the notion of reflection to make sense of her day and her role as a leader, similar to the first criterion of a “meaning-making process” (Rodgers, 2002, p. 845), while Lou and Elle tended to reflect on their own behaviour, emotions, and decisions to further improve their leadership, which align with the fourth criterion of personal growth. However, Will tended to reflect on the leadership behaviour of others, to guide his development (“He is someone I try to aspire to be, he is at all levels”, I-Q8). This third theme, “reflecting on leading”, was constructed both from Will’s acknowledgement on how he reflected on his mentors or role models leadership and how through this reflection on others, he evaluated his leadership, as well as the self-reflective practices evidenced in his diary (“Again we created understanding and a positive outcome”,

RD-6). In his interview response below, he describes his practice of reflecting on other leader's behaviours and styles of leadership. This outward "reflection-on-action" provided a guide with which Will modelled his leadership.

Well, they say you're a reflection of the five people you surround yourself with, you know what I mean, so if you want to be successful, align yourself with successful people, and learn their traits. and it's really interesting. Pockets of people sort of gravitate towards one another they become that and feed each other (I-Q5).

A further example of this outward reflection guiding his own leadership was captured in his interview response describing an effective leader Will had encountered and considered demonstrated emotional intelligent characteristics:

His interactions with others, his leadership style is authentic, open minded, open minded to changes, open minded to listening and evaluates a lot of performances but in that open mindedness. 'So this is what we do now, where is your evidence and your research if we are going to change something?' ... Spending time with him, his generosity, as in time, as in guidance, in helping others make connections, capacity building...he's wanting to give back, so that the impact it has had on me, to give back if I'm going to give you time, you have to give someone else time. I've loved it with him. He is truly honourable in all facets (I-Q8).

Although reflecting on others featured in his interview responses, Will's diary entries revealed that he was also able to reflect on his own emotions and experiences ("I was happy how I diffused a situation", RD-4; "It was great to help out with a positive outcome, earning the trust", RD-6) as well as on the emotions of others' ("A father was at frustration point" RD-1; "The Father (sic) walked away happy", RD-2; "A mother came in visibly upset", RD-3). Although these reflections on emotions were like the other participants reflections in some respect, Will's entries appeared to be more of a record of the event, as opposed to a thought or evaluation of his own practice, or a way for Will to make sense of the event, although it is difficult to determine if this was because of Will's propensity to be formal.

Overwhelmingly what did appear to be the catalyst for Will's "reflecting on leading", was the process of reflecting on the leaders that had shaped him. He appeared to evaluate his practice through this reflection, a reflection-on-action. However, it was a reflection on others' actions. He appeared to ask himself: "Was he demonstrating similar leadership qualities as these leaders he admired and observed?" In

his interview response, Will commented on his development as a leader (“I actually travelled overseas and did some studies that prompted me to not only develop my teaching but my leadership”, I-Q1). Will described how his observations of successful leaders early in his career journey guided his development and provided him with a lens with which to reflect. Responding to the interview question on how leadership skills can be enhanced through professional development, he said:

There is definitely a need for it. The sad thing is I think that people need to have that self-awareness first before they then go and get it done. Tapping into people who are EI to steering people that aren't very emotionally intelligent in the right direction... You have to have that tool belt, especially to deal with different kids or different adults. It's about applying different strategies in that time. Because some teachers only have one tool and if you are going to constantly use it, you need to broaden yourself, instead of blaming others. So that's where so many adults are not equipped, so there is definitely a need for it to be taught (I-Q9).

Despite Will's acknowledgement that he saw his own development as a leader as being influenced by others, in his reflection on their actions, he noted the importance for individuals to have genuine experiences themselves, in order to develop their own leadership and be able display genuine leadership behaviour and responses. He noted in the discussion of practice that leaders need to “first unpack and evaluate a situation, they need to be aware of context, dynamics, motivation, how others perceive things and the mood of everyone” (D-2) before they could lead. Although not necessarily describing the process of reflection, this unpacking and awareness would require leaders to engage in reflection-in-action. As Donaghy and Morss (2000) note, reflection-in-action involves using perceptions of context and culture, listening, and feeling to problem solve as is it occurring.

The importance of reflection for professional practice and its link to emotional intelligence has been documented earlier, however it is also worth noting that Stanley (2017) wrote that “self-awareness is key to the development of emotional intelligence, as it allows us to recognise the feelings we have and become aware of our mood and the thoughts that are driving our mood. Both reflection and emotional intelligence help with the development of insight and self-awareness” (p. 267). The participants revealed that developing self-awareness was a result of both reflection-on-action. This was particularly evident in Will and Pat's leadership, as well as reflection-in-action, which was more evident in Lou and Elle's leadership behaviours. Although the focus of their reflections was at times different, the outcome of

engaging in reflective practice was their developing self-awareness of their emotions

Part Three

Part Three of the Thesis includes the discussion chapter, where I present the results of the analysis across the cases, linking these results to current scholarship on emotional intelligence and leadership and respond to the first and second research questions. The final chapter answers the third research question, identifying possible implications of this study and future areas for research.

CHAPTER EIGHT

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

Education systems around the globe are experiencing unprecedented change resulting in new challenges for schools and their leaders. Consequently, the nature and purpose of leaders' work in school contexts is continually evolving (Day et al, 2007; Hallinger, 2003; Pont, Nusche & Moorman, 2008). New challenges include the broadening of education outcomes beyond academic achievement (Duckworth & Yeager, 2015) and the revolutionary changes brought about by technology (Zhao, 2018). As Kin and Kareem (2018) note, the emotional aspects of educational leadership require more attention than has been the case in past decades of leadership scholarship as the "rational models of leadership simply do not reflect the contemporary educational landscape" (p. 469). Therefore, the implications for what is required of leaders appear to be a combination of both emotional capacities and intellect (Preston et al., 2013). This is reflected in the burgeoning body of educational leadership research, which has taken up the argument evident in the broader leadership literature (e.g., Doe et al., 2015; Dabke, 2016; Hopkins et al., 2007), that the capacities of school leaders are both fundamental to school success and constitute a broader set of skills (Copland, 2003; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Harris, 2001; Levin & Fullan, 2008). Although there is now a broadened focus to include emotional intelligent leadership skills in policy (AITSL, 2018; NSW Government 2018), there remains limited research on how these affective skills are translated across the spectrum of leadership roles. Additionally, there are limited illustrations of practice which detail what emotional intelligent skills may look like in the everyday practice of school leaders. As such, the motivation for this study has been to investigate how leaders understood emotional intelligence and how these leaders applied emotional intelligence, as they performed their roles in their individual contexts.

By developing a better understanding of the emotional complexity of school environments and the relational challenges faced by school leaders, the study described in this thesis aimed to determine the ways leaders understood and demonstrated emotional intelligence, with the intention of supporting current leaders and potential leader candidates in using emotional intelligence in their roles. In Part 2 of the thesis each case study introduced one of the educational leaders who participated in my research. It

then described the affective and relational skills they understood to be important to their leadership and documented how, from my observations and their commentary on their practice, they enacted emotional intelligence in their specific role in the school. In this chapter I present the results of an analysis across the cases, link these results to current scholarship on emotional intelligence and leadership and respond to each of the research questions.

8.2 Understanding Emotional Intelligence

Emotional experiences pervade individuals' daily life, as emotions are expressed towards others, can be reactions to the emotions of others, or elicit emotions in others (Fisher & Van Kleef, 2010). Individuals need to appraise and regulate their own emotions and they need to keep track of the emotions of others, to facilitate the interaction and achieve the desired outcome (Pekaar et al., 2020). Therefore, understanding emotions and emotional intelligent skills is necessary for successful enactment of emotional intelligence. Although the language can vary around "abilities" (Mayer et al, 2000) and "competencies" (Goleman, 1998), the key theorists in the area commonly associate EI with four attributes: **self-awareness** - recognising your own emotions and how they affect your thoughts and behaviours; **self-management** - controlling impulsive feelings and behaviours and managing your emotions; **social awareness** - empathising and understanding the emotions, needs, and concerns of other people; and **relationship management** - developing and maintaining relationships (Mayer et al, 2000; Boyatzis et al, 2000).

In practical terms, this means being aware that emotions can drive our behaviour and effect people both positively and negatively and being able to regulate those emotions in order to relate effectively with others. The construct includes multiple facets and as the definitions and descriptions highlight, EI is a blend of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills (Goleman, 1997). I assumed that, at least to some extent, leaders' enactment of EI would be influenced by their prior knowledge and understanding, as well as the value they attributed to the construct, so the first research question aimed to determine how and to what degree the construct was understood by the school leaders. Exploring the elements of the construct with which the leaders were familiar and how they understood these elements provides the means to identify potential avenues for developing understandings of EI that can productively assist current and aspiring school leaders.

RQ1. How do school leaders understand emotional intelligence and its purpose in their roles as leaders?

Research question one was intended to capture participants' understandings of the construct of emotional intelligence. The answer to this research question emerged primarily from an analysis of the participants' responses to question four in the final interview. This interview was conducted at the end of my field work in each school and participants were asked to explain emotional intelligence in their own words. Further evidence of the participants' understanding of EI was sourced from listening to participants' responses during discussions of their practice, other interview responses and analysing their reflective diary entries.

Although none of the participants indicated that they had participated in formal training or professional learning on EI, their responses suggested that they were all familiar with the concept and with some of the elements that constituted the concept in theory. This familiarity is not surprising given the popular uptake of EI in education and educational leadership discourse. Alvarez-Hevia (2018) suggests that the popularity of ideas associated with emotional intelligence derives from its ability to associate itself with other influential discourses such as neurology and cognitive psychology. Whilst some scholars (see Damasio, 1996; Landy & Mayer, 2005) argue that the concept of EI is just a resurgence of these discourses and others, Edwards et al. (2016) suggest it is a superficial or decorative use of neuroscience and psychological explanations. Despite this criticism, the construct of EI has resulted in an attitudinal shift on the role of emotion in learning (Hascher, 2010). This shift in the education field, acknowledges how emotions impact the power dynamics that govern knowledge, define positions, and manage possibilities (Alvarez-Hevia, 2018) and has repositioned the importance of understanding emotion and possessing affective skills. Goleman's proposition of a link between educational success and emotional and social competency has been influential in the growing interest in the emotional realm and its implications for education, for example, within Australia the inclusion of emotional intelligence in the Professional Standards. The familiarity with which the participants described the concept and the ease and confidence with which they described the construct's components is therefore not surprising.

8.2.1 Language

The language the leaders employed to describe the construct provided insights into both their knowledge and understanding of EI and the likely ways in which they were introduced to, and were engaged by, the construct. For example, Pat defined EI as “the ability to be able to empathise and understand the other person”; Lou said, “I use EI to talk to people in different ways”; Elle defined it as “knowing how I have to understand each one of them”; and Will as “flexibility in interaction, based on my awareness”. In these responses to question four, the leaders employed language which described the interpersonal elements of EI, that is, how they used EI to relate to others, through their awareness of others’ emotions and expectations. However, the participants also identified the intrapersonal element, that is, the component of emotional awareness, (“so you are aware of your emotions” [Pat]; I needed to be aware of my own feelings”[Elle]; “Be mindful of how I respond” [Will]). While there were commonalities in how each of the leaders described EI (e.g., understanding others and using emotions to interact with others), there were also differences that seemed to reflect both the positions in the school and their own dispositions.

As head teacher of teaching and learning, Lou was responsible for coordinating the school’s external validation process and facilitating the mentoring program for early career teachers. For Lou, emotional awareness and specifically empathy and the relational aspects of EI was a critical element in carrying out her responsibilities as a school leader, which involved introducing and implementing change to her environment. Lou described her leadership as being guided by her recognition and understanding of her colleagues’ emotions and finding ways to assist her colleagues to support each other.

My conversations with and observations of Lou suggested a person with considerable empathy for others. This was evident in the emphasis Lou placed on the interpersonal elements (social awareness and relationship management) in her descriptions of the construct. In her response to Q.4, she described emotional intelligence as way of guiding how she worked with others, “EI is about the way you work with people, using your interpersonal skills to work with people to get a better outcome” (I-Q4). In later conversations and interview responses, her use of language such as “emotional composure” (D-2), which was how she described her self-management and her acknowledgement that she needed to be aware and understand emotion in order to support colleagues with change, “I try to support them in an emotional way” (I- Q7), suggests Lou understood her own emotional awareness and management as well as the awareness and management and support of others, as key elements of EI, in very similar ways to how it is

described in the various models of EI (i.e., Mayer & Salovey, 1990; Goleman 1995).

For Elle in her assistant principal role, her understanding of the relational aspects of EI were also what was most evident in her talk about her leadership practices. For example, in her response to Q.4, Elle described EI as being “able to read people and be able to respond in a certain way, that is most appropriate to their need”, and in a discussion following an observation, she stated, “we need to accept that people are different from ourselves and therefore feel different and react different” (D-3). The identification of difference was important to Elle and surfaced multiple times throughout our discussions (“We are surrounded by emotion and difference; I need to know what’s happening all the time”, D-1). These remarks demonstrate how Elle understood the diversity of people, emotions and behaviours that comprised her environment. She spoke of the importance of understanding this difference to support relationships (“knowing how I have to understand each one of them and that I have deal with them in different ways”, I-Q7).

A key theme of Elle’s talk about EI was the impact of emotion on relationships and therefore the schools more widely: “the emotions are what set the scene in the classroom and sets the scene in the school, helps to create that culture within a school setting” (I-Q3). She considered understanding the relational skills of EI and knowing how to get along with people as “imperative” (I-Q5), as this understanding or knowing, allowed her respond appropriately.

Whilst Lou and Elle’s definitions of EI focused on the interpersonal elements, their use of particular language in their responses, discussions and reflections, indicated an understanding EI beyond the interpersonal. For example, there was evidence of their self-awareness and understanding of the role of their own emotions in the way they described how they managed situations. For example, in her reflection diary Lou wrote about how she was feeling about her colleague’s behaviour, acknowledging the importance of understanding and managing her emotions:

I recognised my emotion, spoke to an unbiased ear, did not use names, just context, and this conversation helped me to separate the emotion, person, and what is really happening. Once I did this, I was able to address the situation in a professional and fair way (RD-3).

This reflection implies an understanding of the intrapersonal components described in the theories of EI. These elements of self-awareness and self-management require an understanding your own emotions (Mayer & Salovey, 1997) and the impact they can have on both your behaviours and reactions, as well as

the impact they have on others. The theory of EI proposes that this self-awareness, combined with the relational skills that Lou and Elle described in their interviews, equip people to navigate situations more effectively (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Goleman, 2001). An understanding of the intrapersonal elements and the idea of self-management based on awareness of your own emotions was also demonstrated by Elle in her interview, where she noted that “I find I try to use that emotional intelligence to think things out first, before I go in” (I-Q7). So, although Lou and Elle focused their description of EI on relational capacities, there was evidence that they both understood and valued the intrapersonal components as well.

Somewhat different ideas on EI were expressed by Pat and Will, who held more senior leadership positions, Principal and Deputy Principal respectively. They both described the concept in ways that were close to the theory, however, they were less likely to talk about elements of EI outside their interview or unless specifically prompted to do so. For example, Pat’s description of EI in the interview captured both the inter and intrapersonal elements. She described it as the “ability to be able to I don’t know if empathise is the word but to actually understand the other person, ... your own ability to control and understand your own emotions” (I-Q4). Pat saw EI through the lens of her passion for the practice of ‘mindfulness’, a passion she tried to communicate to her staff, so that questions about emotions often led to references to mindfulness and positive thinking, rather than the components identified in EI theory. For example, when asked about the role of emotions in her work (I-Q3), her immediate response was to reference how she had meditated that morning. For Pat, her meditation was about controlling her thoughts in order to control her emotions (the opposite position to EI theory - “Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought” (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p 5). Below is Pat’s response:

Emotions in work - always. I meditated this morning - your thoughts control your emotions, so controlling your thoughts. A certain amount of emotion but you can’t be ruled by them or [be] over emotional. Having emotion and heart and caring is important, but pretty much I can be a cold hard bitch ... so you are aware of your emotions, because some people frustrate me to death and I would really like to tell them to go get stuffed, but again it’s about controlling them [emotions]. One thing I can’t control is I get very excited about things. I get very excited when we are doing things, and it’s almost my mind is running too much quicker, but I have come to the conclusion, that’s part and part of my personality trait and can’t change that and I get excited things and which I can’t

not be, and, in my role, it is quite helpful (I-Q3).

For Pat, the language of positive psychology seemed to be a means to guide her thinking and practice; it seemed to be language that she was both more familiar with and more committed to and which suited her entrepreneurial and proactive leadership style. When extending on her own explanation of EI, Pat drew on practice implemented by a colleague (a positive psychology style Vitality Project - to assist students in managing negative emotions), again referring to “mindfulness”. Pat explained that, as teachers, “we need” a “tool bag”, “tools of pedagogy ... relationships, the tools mindfulness and the environment”. She concluded her response to Q.4 with a comment again pointing to the interpersonal aspects of EI: “So, you know these aspects, so I think about my ability to understand those contexts about how person is made up and how other people are made up” (I-Q4).

Will’s interview response captured both elements of self-awareness “how I conduct myself” and the interpersonal, “it’s all about understanding situations, understanding people” (Q.4). He talked about the importance of EI as a way of facilitating his actions, “so you are able to move forward in any given scenario”. His talk about EI in his interview and his other comments also suggested that utilising EI was about being strategic, “having your wits about you all the time, show passion towards learning but not aggression”, and controlling his own emotions especially in contexts where others may have difficulty doing so. But he also talked about being empathetic and several times referred to the importance of modelling EI so that others could behave in more constructive ways. This was demonstrated particularly in his answer to the question, “How might emotional intelligence help you lead your team?”:

For me I suppose I have been able, through EI, I have been able to develop an awareness- it’s not an out of body experience but it’s kinda, I’ve, always maintained an awareness what it might look like in somebody else’s eyes. That’s helped me been able to maintain that and it’s keeping true to myself, and knowing as a leader, model that intelligence, that seems to regulate me, that’s always in the back of my mind and I try aspire to be a really good leader. So, if I’m a good leader, that how I should act and that’s what I keep in the forefront (I-Q7).

At the same time compared to Lou and Elle, there was a detachment in the way that Will spoke about emotions. While for Elle and Lou, recognising their own and other’s emotions was a way of supporting colleagues in making changes and dealing with conflict, Will seemed more wary of the capacity of emotions to shape action. For example, in the interview, he talked about the dangers of “making decisions

based on emotion; it can lead you down the wrong path”, explaining that “I try and take the emotion out of it”.

As the only male participant, Will’s understanding of the construct provides a different perspective for us to consider. Although there is a growing body of research (see Arteche et al, 2008; Bar-On, 1997; Craig et al, 2009, Dunn, 2002; Meshkat et al, 2017) which attempts to measure the differences in EI between males and females, there is an absence in research exploring the differences in their understanding of the construct. Caruso and Salovey (2004) state that “women may have a slight advantage in the hard skills of emotional intelligence” (2004, p. 23) and in her study of male and female non-verbal emotional skills, Byron (2008) found that emotional perception was more highly valued and was an ability expected of females. My research focus was on demonstrated capacities, as well as their understanding of EI. Will’s commentary on EI and his attitude and understanding of the role of emotions in his leadership may be explained by the enduring Western gender stereotypes that women are emotional, whereas men are rational (Shields, 2002). Will spoke of EI as being a factor which assisted him to navigate, or even avoid emotion altogether (“take the emotion out of it”), whereas the female participants appeared to understand EI as a way to accept and better understand their own as well as others’ emotions.

The four leaders in this study tended to focus on describing the impact of emotions on their interactions and relationships, as opposed to identifying the broader impact of emotional intelligent skills on their leadership. The findings suggest a more literal understanding of the construct, focused on emotion. This understanding of EI was concentrated on the process of evaluating the emotions experienced or expressed within their contexts. In contrast, Maresca’s (2015) findings led her to conclude that the principals in her study largely understood emotional intelligence as the ability to facilitate a school community’s thought processes regarding any proposed initiative. The participants described the adaptive work they did within their schools, which seemed to align more with the cognitive abilities of EI. Similarly, in his study of educational leaders, Strickland (2013) found that his participants, who ranged from principals to school directors, considered that it was the emotionally intelligent behaviour of the leader that shaped the working climate and promoted more effective communication. Maresca (2015) and Strickland (2013) report that their participants’ understanding of EI moved beyond emotional awareness, to describe the more complex cognitive capacities described in Mayer and Salovey’s model, such as a more conscious regulation of emotion to enhance emotional and intellectual growth.

In my study, each leader’s language describing EI focused on different elements which reflected

both their own subjectivities and their positions in their schools – two aspects which were not, I suggest, unrelated. In their talk and as will become evident from the next section, Elle and Lou focused more on the relational components of EI, such as empathy and support of others, while Will and Pat focused more on the management of emotion, as though they understood emotions to be obstacles rather than facilitators of action. This contrasts with the participants in Maresca’s (2017) study whose understanding appeared more complete, linking relationships and trust and EI abilities. For example, they understood that any successful attempts at school improvement stemmed from their having emotional intelligent abilities. Contrastingly, the participants in my research study didn’t share a broad understanding of emotional intelligence, rather they embraced the construct in ways which were meaningful to them and fitted with their subjectivities, roles and leadership styles.

It is important to note that the leaders’ understanding was not informed by professional learning, and therefore the gaps in their understanding of the construct and importantly their understanding of the role of EI in their leadership is understandable. At times throughout the research study the leaders demonstrated various skills attributed to emotional intelligence, such as listening, being inclusive, being positive, being self and socially aware and self-reflective (Mayer et al, 2001; Goleman, 2001), and these behaviours provide additional evidence of their understanding. How the leaders applied EI abilities or competences in their practice as leaders will be discussed further in the next section.

8.3 Applying emotional intelligence to leadership: RQ2. How do school leaders apply their emotional intelligence to their various leadership roles in their schools?

Mayer and colleagues (2000) describe EI as the ability to effectively integrate emotion and thought. These emotional capacities are then demonstrated in actions and conversations; for example, in how well leaders manage themselves and others, through actions such as displaying empathy and compassion towards others, or by demonstrating flexibility in their actions and attitudes, evident in how they communicate with others (Liman et al, 2019). Successful leaders can inspire and motivate others with the words and actions, which are responsive to the needs and emotions of those they lead (Issah, 2018). According to Serrat (2017), emotionally intelligent actions and conversations promote a positive work climate, in which people turn challenging opportunities into successes. As Kouzes and Posner (1995) write, “true leaders tap into people’s hearts and minds” (p. 40).

Drawing on previous models (i.e., Mayer & Salovey, 2003; Bar-On, 2006; Goleman, 1998; and

Petrides & Furnham, 2001), Drigas and Papoutsis' (2018) nine layered model of EI includes features from both ability and trait constructions of EI. Their model is an emotional–cognitive based approach to the process of developing emotional intelligence, and as individuals move from one layer to the next, they are said to be closer to “emotional unity” (p. 45), EI in its fullest extent. They describe EI as “the rudder for feeling, thinking, learning, problem-solving and decision making” (p. 45). Drigas and Papoutsis (2018) propose that by moving through to the higher level’s individuals are afforded the opportunity to cultivate significant emotional, cognitive and metacognitive skills, which are important resources for personal and professional life, including interpersonal relationships. Their model is a more structured evaluation than the earlier models of Mayer et al. (2000) and Goleman (2001), indicating levels of emotional intelligence that people may be at, or operating within (Drigas & Papoutsis, 2018). This allowed me to consider both the participants’ understanding of emotional intelligence, as well as the level they may be operating within in their enactment of emotional intelligence. As each school environment or context is unique, and everyone has different subjectivities, wants, needs, and ways of showing their emotions, different leadership roles require different emotional capacities and skills. As Aristotle wrote more than 2000 years ago, “anyone can become angry - that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way - this is not easy” (cited in Ratcliffe, 2016, p.13). It is through practice, that those purposeful, emotional and social skills enable us to put our general understanding of well-being into practice in ways that are suitable to each occasion. Thus, the second research question focused on describing what elements of emotional intelligence surfaced in the leaders’ practice, as well as how they described and reflected on what skills they implemented in their roles.

As Goleman and Boyatzis (2017) argue, the application of emotional intelligence in leadership practice involves developing a balance of the interpersonal and intrapersonal elements of these models. They argue that aspiring leaders need to develop all the learnable capabilities of EI to achieve outstanding performance. Goffee (2004) has made similar claims, noting that if emotional intelligent skills are developed disproportionately, they can interfere with relationships and ability to lead. Davis and Nichols (2016, p. 1) consider a “dark side” of emotional intelligence, noting that uneven profiles of self-perceptions or emotional skills contribute to lower levels of emotional awareness and management. To explain further, if someone is extremely self-aware but short on empathy, they might come off as self-absorbed. Alternatively, if someone is excessively empathetic, they risk losing their sense of self. As Goleman and Boyatzis (2017, p. 3) claim, to demonstrate EI, all the capabilities need to be developed in a “balanced” way. These insights

prompted various questions when looking at how school leaders applied EI in their leadership practice. Was there a balance of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills? What was the impact on well-being and staff interactions with purposeful application of emotional skills? Were the leaders aware of their application?

With the widespread acceptance that leadership requires skills beyond the cognitive and academic (Allison, 2012; Harris 2007; Humphrey, 2002; Kezar et al., 2006), there has been increasing use of emotional intelligence to research educational leadership (e.g., Beatty, 2000; Brackett et al., 2010; Cherkowski, 2012; Hackett & Hortman, 2008; Johnson et al., 2005; Maresca, 2015; Parrish, 2011; Reed, 2005; Roffey, 2007; Slater, 2005; Strickland, 2013; Wong, Wong & Peng, 2010). Although, as highlighted in earlier chapters, a great deal of research has focused on measuring EI (e.g., Brackett, Palomera, Mojsa-Kaja, Reyes & Salovey, 2010; Hackett & Hortman, 2008; Maresca, 2015; Reed, 2005; Wong, Wong & Peng, 2010), there is a growing body of research (e.g., Cherkowski, 2012; Johnson, Aiken, & Steggerda, 2005; Parrish, 2011; Roffey, 2007; Slater, 2005; Strickland, 2013) which has used qualitative methods to examine the role of emotions and emotional intelligence in leadership. Qualitative data can provide rich, thick descriptions of emotional intelligence in practice (Beatty, 2000) and a way in which to capture leaders' own perspectives on the emotional intricacies of leadership life (Loader, 1997). These qualitative research findings offer a valuable glimpse into the essentially unmapped domain of the importance of emotional capacities for school leaders. However, there is limited research on how emotionally intelligent skills are enacted by school leaders, particularly school leaders other than the principal. In the following sections, I examine how the leaders in the study employed EI in their different school contexts and positions within those schools.

An analysis of my observations of the participants in action in their leadership roles, supplemented by data from the leaders' descriptions of and reflections on their practice, pointed to three main themes in the way the participants applied emotional intelligence in their roles as leaders. The first two of these themes capture two key elements of EI application which manifested in their leadership practice - emotional regulation and managing and working with conflict – and the third captures a major responsibility and challenge for the leaders in my study and for leaders in contemporary leadership literature - leading change. These key themes effectively encompassed the leaders' application of EI in the data collected for this study, while at the same being indicative of the roles and challenges facing school leaders.

8.3.1 Emotional Regulation

Mayer and Salovey (1995) define emotionally intelligent people “in part as those who regulate their emotions according to a logically consistent model of emotional functioning” (p. 197). Managing emotions, as described by Mayer et al (2016), also referred to as “self-regulation” (Goleman, 1998) and later “self-management” in Goleman’s revised competency model (2002) is viewed as a key tenet of emotional intelligence. Salovey and Mayer’s ability model describes reflective regulation of emotion as “being able to reflectively monitor and regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 11). Goleman’s competency model (2002), which divides EI into personal and social competencies, describes self-management as a personal competency involving “managing one’s internal states, impulses, and resources” (p. 4). Additionally, Goleman’s social competencies (i.e., social skills and empathy) include a focus on understanding and managing the emotions of others.

Both models describe the relationship between the ability or competency’s development and emotional intelligence. Salovey and Mayer’s (1997) original model arranges the abilities hierarchically, from basic psychological processes, such as perceiving emotion or emotional awareness, to the more psychologically complex - the management of emotion. Goleman (1998) argues that each of the four dimensions of his model (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management) are the basis on which other learned competencies are developed. So, by drawing on Goleman’s notion of relationship management, we can go beyond self-management, to managing the emotions of others. Both models emphasize that individuals need to demonstrate awareness and understanding of emotion to develop the ability to regulate or manage their own emotions, as well as the emotions of others.

In keeping with the focus on EI, I have primarily used Salovey and Mayer and Goleman’s understanding of Emotional Regulation (ER). However, the interest in emotional regulation and self-management has antecedents in the work of Hochschild (1983), who wrote about ‘emotional labour’. For Hochschild, ‘emotional labour’ was about having to “induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others” (1983, p. 7). She argues that when at work individuals often exert considerable emotional self-control (see Hochschild, 1983, cited in Kobylinska & Kusev, 2019). This interest in the impact of emotion on behaviour has formed the groundwork for extensive research in this field, in particular the work of Gross (e.g., 1998; 2002; 2014; 2015). This research has emerged in parallel with the growing body of research into emotional

intelligence. Kobylinksa and Kusev (2019) describe Gross's (2014) theory of emotional regulation as one of the most influential in the field. His definition is considered particularly useful to combat the difficult issue of organising the potentially unlimited number of emotion regulation strategies. Gross defines emotional regulation "as a process by which people control what emotions they have, when they have them and how they experience and express them" (Gross, 2014, cited in Kobylinksa & Kusev, 2019, p. 2). This is consistent with EI, as noted in the research findings from Pena-Sarrionandia et al. (2015). Firstly, Pena-Sarrionandia et al. (2015) note that individuals with high levels of EI mould their emotions from the earliest possible point in the emotion trajectory and have many strategies at their disposal. Secondly, individuals with high EI, regulate their emotions successfully when necessary but they do so flexibly, thereby leaving room for emotions to emerge. As Oplatka (2017) argues, it is important to expand our understanding of when, where and how school principals and leaders display or suppress their emotions, and as John and Gross (2007) point out, the extent that people utilise reappraisal or suppression has implications for their affect and the quality of their relationships with others.

Although the extent to which I can specifically comment on the emotional regulation of the leaders in my study is limited by both the duration and nature of my data, both my observations and the leaders' reflections revealed that each of the participants recognised the importance of and valued, emotional regulation and self-management in their leadership. Through their descriptions of EI in response to interview question four or in their reflections, the participants identified the importance to them of the intrapersonal elements of EI including self-awareness and self-management. Their description of EI also placed emphasis on the interpersonal skills required, such as the role of relationships in leadership.

As the principal of a large secondary school, Pat was responsible for a range of key tasks including adhering to governmental policy, including school reviews, managing school improvement, managing the finances and resources of the school and promoting the school to the wider community. This required interacting with staff, parents, governmental bodies and the community. My observations of Pat revealed a focused and confident leader. With regards to emotional regulation, my observations and Pat's explanations of her actions, suggested that she seemed to value being in control of her emotions: "A certain amount of emotion but you can't be ruled by them, [become] over emotional" (I-Q3).

Like Pat, Will highlighted the importance of emotional regulation when asked about emotional intelligence in his interview or when talking about emotions in leadership more generally. Like Pat, Will

referenced emotional regulation in terms of control, but in a much more reflective way. For example, in his interview he made the comment that “people need tools to support and regulate themselves before they can support anyone else” (I-Q6). In response to another question, he said, “For me, this job is highly emotional, you’re dealing with people all the time, and for me [it] is that calm approach, trying to take the emotion out” (I-Q3), and again in another response, “We all get emotional and we all get angry and feel different things in different ways, but again in a leadership role, it’s not letting people see that, but having strategies myself to then process and deal with that” (I-Q6). The range of managerial responsibilities Will had as Deputy Principal, required effective organisational and communication skills and as Will explained a “calm approach”. His capacity to manage his emotions was evident in my observations, where he remained calm in meetings despite colleagues’ disruptive behaviour, such as talking over the top of him (0-1).

Elle and Lou could be described as “middle leader(s)”, who, like the school middle leaders in other Australian studies (e.g., Day & Grice, 2019; Edwards-Groves et al, 2018), had a major responsibility for the quality of learning and development. Although Elle and Lou didn’t specifically mention emotional regulation in their interviews or reflections, observations of their practice revealed calm and responsive leaders, who were skilled at regulating their own emotions and the emotions of others.

Elle, as a teaching Assistant Principal, was a part of, as well as led, a diverse team of people. Her commentary in interviews and discussions, indicated her awareness of the emotional complexities of her school environment. Elle’s understanding of the diversity of her team and her role (“We are surrounded by emotion and difference; I need to know what’s happening all the time” D-1), appeared to frame her emotional regulation. My observations of her engagements with her colleagues, students and staff from surrounding schools, indicated a capacity to remain calm, even in challenging situations.

As Head Teacher for teaching and learning, Lou’s role was centred on supporting early career teachers, to navigate both their new environments and teams and policy and accreditation. To do this successfully, Lou needed to have a high degree of self-control so that she could influence her colleagues and specifically the beginning teachers. In my observations of Lou’s meetings with colleagues, her control over her emotions, including suspending judgments, was evident despite instances of considerable provocation from colleagues. She described this practice as a “way of thinking and operating” (D-5). Lou suggested that her focus on a “way of thinking and operating” was about remaining calm and remaining measured

when speaking or addressing her colleagues' questions throughout the meetings, where she implicitly acknowledged their feelings of frustration. In her interview, Lou described how she used EI as a way of self-management. "I would definitely try to embed EI in my team members - by using the practice, they see my way, so modelling" (I-Q7). Lou, like Elle, remained calm and composed when managing colleagues' frustrations, complaints and uncertainties.

While individual discussions with the participants, as well as my analysis of their diary reflections, revealed leaders who were experiencing a range of emotions, during my observations of the leaders, each demonstrated an assurance in managing their emotions. James (2019) notes the significance of staff managing their emotions in establishing a positive school culture. Whilst there was evidence of emotional sharing (i.e., Pat), there were no extensive outpourings of emotion or explosive emotional exchanges. However, my observations and analysis suggest that the different approaches used by the participants to control or manage their emotions produced different consequences for each of them. These different approaches included how and if they were effectively expressing their emotions for their self-care and/or how their own emotional regulation, positioned them to recognise and manage the emotions of others and provide support.

Two different strategies of emotional regulation are captured by Gross (2014): "cognitive reappraisal", "which is aimed at modifying the emotional meaning and impact of a situation that elicits the emotion" (Gross & John, 2013, cited in Kobylinska & Kusev, 2019, p. 2) and "expressive suppression", which is focused on "inhibiting emotional expression" (Gross, 1998, cited in Kobylinska & Kusev, 2019, p. 2). These strategies have a significant impact on the individual experiencing the emotion. For example, the consistent use of reappraisal strategies is more likely in individuals experiencing and expressing more positive emotions (John & Gross, 2004). On the other hand, those with the propensity to use suppression strategies tend to experience and express more negative emotions (i.e., anger, fear, resentment, frustration and anxiety).

As Megías Robles et al (2019) point out, whilst the definitions of emotional intelligence suggest that one of the key tenets of the construct is the ability to successfully regulate emotions, these definitions do not specify the processes used by individuals regarded as having high levels of emotional intelligence. To address this gap in research, Megías Robles et al (2019) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and the use of cognitive reappraisal and/or expressive suppression. Their examination of this relationship empirically revealed that higher emotional intelligence abilities were linked to the greater use

of cognitive reappraisal strategies and a reduced use of expressive suppression strategies for regulating emotions (Megías Robles et al, 2019).

From my observations, I would suggest that Will and Lou were most likely to consistently employ reappraisal strategies. They tended to modify the way a situation was evaluated, to decrease the emotionality of the situation and so deal with the situation constructively. Lou shared that she “acknowledged others’ emotions, but I don’t bow to them” (I-Q7). For Will, this evaluation meant considering the context he was in and using what Goleman and Boyatzis (2017) describe in their competency framework as “self-control”. While he recognised that emotions were a ‘normal’ response to difficult situations (“we all get angry and feel different things in different ways” I-Q6), like so many people in the workplace (see Shields, 2002), Will held to the belief that there was no place for the display of emotions at work (particularly negative emotions); he seemed to see himself expressing emotions in this context as a weakness, a form of ‘egoism’ as likely to lead to wrong actions. However, Will did not appear to suppress emotions, rather he reappraised the situation to alter emotions. He considered this reappraisal as taking “the emotion out of it.” Will’s regulation of emotions supported his completion of tasks as Deputy Principal, and this ‘self-control’ provided a model for an environment where emotional regulation was highly valued. My observations and Will’s own reflections all point to Will presenting “a logically consistent model of emotional functioning” (Mayer & Salovey, 1995, p.197) in relation to emotional regulation.

Like Will, Lou appeared to employ reappraisal approaches to emotional regulation. However, unlike Will, who was focused on controlling his own emotions, Lou’s process of emotional regulation appeared to be generated from her attention to interpersonal skills. Lou described herself as focused on supporting others (“I try and support them in an emotional way” I-Q5) and leading in a way that encouraged others to do the same (“and get others too as well” I-Q5). As Cutili (2014) argues, the use of cognitive reappraisal strategies allows individuals to implement and produce interpersonal behaviour that is appropriately focused on social interaction. She notes that this is then perceived by the others as emotionally engaging and responsive. My observations of Lou revealed a leader who was calm and responsive in her reactions. She understood that the way she managed her emotions, would impact the learning and development of others, arguing that it was about “being approachable ... responsive to context” (RD-4).

John and Gross (2004) argue that reappraisal strategies involve controlling the emotion-generative process before emotional response tendencies have been generated. As Śmieja and Kobylińska (2011) propose, the controlling of emotional-generative process, requires the adequate perception, facilitation, understanding, and regulation of emotion abilities (Salovey & Mayer, 2004). This link to Salovey and Mayer's ability model suggests that individuals with higher emotional intelligence abilities should be able to regulate their emotions from the beginning of the generative process. However, it also suggests that those with lower emotionally intelligent abilities would rely on suppression strategies, because of a reduced capacity to regulate them earlier in the process.

Gross's (2002) 'expressive suppression' is a response-focused strategy that emerges once an emotion is already under way and after the behavioural responses have already been produced. These strategies therefore may be expected to require repeated efforts to manage emotional responses, as they continually arise, challenging the individual's resources. This appeared to be the case in my observations of Elle. For example, although she always remained calm within the meetings and events I observed, the discussions of her practice, diary and interview, revealed how she was really struggling with the behaviours of her colleagues. Elle appeared to be suppressing her emotions out of her desire to be supportive of others. Her attempts to change the culture within her school meant she appeared to be almost trapped in a cycle of emotional suppression. For Elle this meant little opportunity to employ the alternative reappraisal strategies.

The strategies of emotional regulation Elle employed became more apparent in our discussions of practice when Elle revealed the extent of her frustrations and the frustrations and discontent amongst the staff. Elle spoke of the behaviours of her colleagues and the culture within the school. She described her efforts as a leader as being "undermined". These admissions after the observations gave new insight into the extent of Elle's ability to manage her own emotions in her leadership role. This was also explored in the interview, where Elle described how she "was really, really annoyed", but "took some deep breaths". In the reflection diary entry describing the staff meeting, Elle said explicitly that she "needed to be aware of [her] own feelings"), highlighting that Elle had already generated emotional responses.

Gross (2002) argues that the use of suppression strategies decreases not only negative but also positive emotional expression. He also points to the increased cognitive resources that are required from suppression approaches (compared to reappraisal). Suppression requires continuous self-monitoring, to ensure emotions are being suppressed. For example, my observations and Elle's comments suggested that

Elle seemed to need to frequently focus her attention on suppressing her emotions as they developed in her current context. Although there are situations where suppressing is the best or the only option of emotional regulation (e.g., time, context, and social situation norms, McRae et al, 2011) and given that this process modifies emotion-expressive behaviour without reducing the emotional experience itself, problems surface with the disproportionate use of suppression strategies. For example, in their study into the emotional fabric of school leadership in primary schools in the Republic of Ireland, Brennan and Macruairc (2011) found that for their participants a tendency to engage in expressive suppression could increase the impact of particularly negative situations. Most of the principals in their study identified high levels of emotional management in their practice and they noted that one example of the ways in which the principals in their study managed their emotions was through:

a tendency to regulate and bury emotions by putting on a brave face arduously in the workplace setting. As a result, the emotional experience had a more negative and damaging potential as a result of the inauthentic nature of the leadership practice (p. 143).

Notably, emotion suppression can also be adaptive; for example, the ability to conceal one's emotions may be important to maintaining relationships and employment (Gross & John, 2003).

In the time I spent with Pat, she did not seem to use strategies of either reappraisal (or reflection), or suppression of her own emotions. Rather, she appeared to focus on establishing control over her context and staff. Like Will, she expressed her concern with being overly emotional (“you can’t be ruled by them, be over emotional” I-Q3.). However, my observations suggested that unlike Will she seemed very open to expressing her emotional responses about events and people to her executive and in her discussion and reflection diary with me. As Gross (2014) points out emotions do not need to be regulated or modified all the time. Perhaps Pat felt safe in expressing her emotions in these contexts, particularly in her diary where she expressed her frustrations with some staff members. Also, her references to “surfing” and “meditation” recorded in her diary may be evidence of alternative strategies, such as those identified in Pollock et al’s. (2014) survey, where principals managed their emotions by exercising or participating in activities intended to achieve a better work–life balance.

As acknowledged earlier, emotion regulation is not aimed at eliminating emotions from our lives (Koblinska & Kusev, 2019; Gross, 2014), but rather at using them in a flexible manner and as Mayer and Salovey (1995) have argued, using them intelligently. Schutte et al (2002) point out the ability to

understand and regulate emotions allows individuals to maintain more positive moods and higher self-esteem; that is, they are more “able to resist situational threats to positive mood and self-esteem” (p. 5). Additionally, Caruso and Salovey (2004) argue that being an effective leader does not happen in the absence of emotion. Pat’s willingness to express emotions was evident on those occasions when I observed her. In my discussions and interview with Pat, she also made many references to her wanting to support her colleagues to express their emotions (“I want to hear their voice”; “I work on my other leaders’ confidence to do their work”).

As the various models of EI (i.e., Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Goleman, 1995) suggest, demonstrating awareness of others’ emotions as well as understanding your own emotions is a skill which is connected to your ability to then regulate yourself and your emotions. However, although Pat reflected on staff’s emotions on occasion in her diary (“his spitting anger”), she seemed less confident in the capacity of her colleagues to express emotions, or perhaps in her own capacity to deal with these constructively. For example, Pat never shared how she provided support, rather she reflected on how she “needed to remind this staff member of his emotional reactions and displays of frustration” (RD-5). Furthermore, Pat explained in the first observation her failure to support her colleague’s wife, “I often found myself making excuses not to” (O-1). In their literature summary of the emotional aspects related to educational leaders, Berkovich and Eyal (2015) describe principals’ reactions to crises and tragedies:

Leaders reported that times of crisis exacerbate specific, different types of fears that characterize leadership experiences: fear of failure, fear of change or stagnation, fear of being criticized, fear of being dismissed, and fear of losing one’s professional identity. (p. 137)

Crises and tragedies can incite fear and this includes the principals who are tasked with managing situations when they occur at a school. The need to react in the moment and the negative emotions, such as fear and sadness associated with these events, can influence how principals manage their emotions and act. Brennan and Macruairc (2011) note that the quality of staff relationships and the emotional climate of schools influence the emotional experience of principals and therefore their practice, which in turn affect the quality of staff relationships and the emotional climate of schools. However, as Maresca (2015) acknowledges, there is little evidence that principals (and leaders more widely) are given the necessary direction to develop the emotional capabilities needed to influence the functioning of schools effectively.

What seems essential, as is the case for leadership more generally, is possessing and flexibly

employing a diverse set of emotion regulatory response options. Individuals also need to understand and appreciate the relative expense and benefits of using any given regulatory strategy in a particular situation (Kobylinksa & Kusev, 2019). Emotions are a central feature of workplace experiences and the tasks and interpersonal demands faced by leaders often arise because of the emotion laden contexts. Humphrey (2012) argues that leaders may need to consciously transform their emotional experiences and expressions to exercise influence over followers. Many domains requiring effective leadership, including ethical dilemmas, interpersonal conflicts and organizational crises (Connelly et al., 2014) call for appropriate emotional management from leaders.

Will was the most obvious example of how he used his assessment of others' emotions to manage relationships in order to achieve the outcomes he wanted. For example, Will used his appraisal of situations to assess, acknowledge and support the emotions he anticipated from his audience when he was presenting changes associated with new curriculum initiatives. Will regularly described the importance of the personal competency of self-management; however, I would argue that his emotional regulation emerged as a part of a social ability, aligning more with the integrated abilities of Mayer and colleagues (2004) model of emotional intelligence. As explained in earlier chapters, this model doesn't separate interpersonal and intrapersonal abilities, rather it understands emotional management as a complex psychological ability, involving both personal and social abilities.

There were many instances in his reflection diary where Will described instances of the more social aspects of emotional regulation. These instances occurred in contexts where he was called upon to support his colleagues with personal issues or in dealing with "irate" parents. In his role as a change leader, he was also called on to manage the emotions of staff who were reluctant to accept and embrace the changes he had introduced to the school. These examples captured in the diary and which were evident in my observations of Will's meeting with his staff demonstrate the interplay between Will's emotional regulation and the social competencies described in Goleman's model (i.e., his adeptness at inducing desirable responses in others).

In my observations, I noted how he allowed colleagues to express frustration, he acknowledged their feelings, offering responses that aimed to reduce their concerns or provide solutions to their frustrations. He described how he achieved the outcomes that were required by demonstrating empathy and providing staff with the space to have their say: "Whether it's them understanding that I appreciate what they're up against, or it's me just allowing them to have a voice, they can feel they have contributed

to the decisions and the school's direction" D-3).

As suggested in Part 2, Will privileging of rationality and the suppression of his own emotional expression in the workplace resonates with characteristics that have been described for the traditional masculine leader. However, Will's focus on reserving the expression of his emotions in the workplace is supported by scholars such as Gooty et al., (2014), who point out that leaders may need to manage their emotions to facilitate performance on day-to-day tasks, such as parents and staff interactions, like those described by Will.

Pat on the other hand, freely expressed her emotions to me and in the contexts where I observed her interacting with staff. She seemed, however, to be unaware of how her own her emotions were impacting her ability to provide support to others. As described in Part 2 of the thesis one example of this was in my first observation, when Pat was meeting with her executive leaders. In the context of the preparations for their colleague's memorial, Pat shared a range of emotions when describing how she had reacted to the Netflix release "13 Reason's why". As Mahfouz et al (2019) point out, principals often experience substantial job-related stress (such as Pat's loss of a colleague to suicide), yet they often lack the guidance and resources necessary to develop their own social and emotional competencies, that could help them respond appropriately. This indeed seemed to be the case in this situation for Pat, particularly when none of her colleagues seemed able to respond in ways that might have been helpful - that is, they sat quietly and did not respond to her sharing of her emotions.

It was clear from her comments in response to specific situations that Pat did not always find it easy to respond positively, or to understand that sharing her emotions might not be productive. For example, in her executive meeting, she made the following comment on the organisation of a required Professional Development Day, dealing with proposed changes to the accreditation for teachers: "it will make me cranky if it's a waste of our frigging time" (O-1). On one hand, this could be interpreted as her freely expressing her feelings, but on the other, her negativity and aggressive language, could serve to escalate her teams' emotions. If they agreed with Pat, they could risk criticism later for not embracing upskilling opportunities, or if they disagreed, they risk escalating Pat's emotions. As I had observed in the previous observation, her executive staff did not respond to her emotional sharing.

According to Goleman (2011), self-awareness and self-management of emotions is an important element in leaders' capacity to support their staff. However, in my observations, Pat appeared to labour over supporting her staff and others' emotions, in most instances, she appeared only aware of her own

emotions. For example, she admitted to struggling to support her colleague's family after his passing but did not inquire how her staff were feeling or coping with the loss. Jacobs et al. (2008) point out that leaders can understand and support others when they know their own strengths, weaknesses, emotions and have the capacity for self-management. So, Pat's admission of "I find myself making excuses not to" (contact the colleague's family), or her sharing of her own emotions, could be evidence of Pat sharing her weaknesses and understanding her emotions, however, again it is difficult to determine if these disclosures were part of her attempt to support staff.

My observations of Elle were very different from those of Pat. Elle was calm and demonstrated a capacity to suspend judgment (Goleman, 1998). Whilst, like Pat, Elle was feeling a range of frustrations, she maintained a focus on supporting her colleagues by regulating her own emotions and frustrations. Elle's acceptance and understanding of emotions more widely and of the impact of emotion on school contexts was clear. Elle responded in her interview that "emotions are what set the scene in the classroom and sets the scene in the school, [they help] to create that culture within a school setting".

Like the middle leaders described in Day and Grice (2019) and Edwards-Groves et al.'s (2018) studies, Elle and Lou saw their roles as supporting others to improve their teaching. For example, in her reflection diary, Elle described how she supported staff members by providing positive feedback and encouragement. In relation to a colleague who was taking on the school's information technology role, she explained "we need to support the staff member by being positive ... not reinforcing the negativity" and to a beginning teacher who was struggling with behaviour management, "gave her lots of positive feedback and reinforced to her that she is a beginning teacher". Edwards-Groves and her colleagues (2018) note that these middle leaders' impact directly on the quality of teacher learning and development. Elle and Lou both understood how the ways they managed their emotions would impact the learning and development of others, with Lou reflecting in her diary that it was about "being approachable... responsive to context" (Lou- RD-3). As argued in the research literature (see Goleman, 2011; Connelly et al., 2014; Gooty et al., 2014), an individual's emotional regulation positions them to support colleagues. My research would suggest that despite the differences in the processes employed, emotional regulation supported Elle and Lou in their leadership, as well as Elle's role as a classroom teacher.

Kobylinksa and Kusev (2019) suggest that effective regulation should be founded on an extensive repertoire of strategies, as well as being context sensitive. This argument would suggest that a combination of emotional regulation strategies is needed, particularly in complex roles such as

educational leadership. To support this flexibility with regulatory strategies and emotional intelligence more broadly, the style of leadership again surfaces as an important factor. Khalili (2017) notes that transformational leaders display a combination of strategies. These include, but are not limited to, inspiring, motivating and treating their followers with individualised consideration. This includes assessing followers' motives, satisfying their needs, and treating them as full human beings. My observations of and discussions with Lou, Will and Elle would suggest that they regularly demonstrated these attributes of transformational leaders.

Pat, although confident in describing the importance of emotional regulation, did not appear to differentiate between emotional expression and regulation. Her focus appeared to be talking through her own emotions, sharing these with her executive and with me. Additionally, as reported in her diary, she didn't appear to have established effective emotional regulation as an expected practice from her colleagues. Rather Pat's leadership appeared to align more with transactional leadership where the leader rewards or disciplines the follower with regards to performance (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

8.3.2 Managing and working with conflict

As Darling and Walker (2001, p. 230) suggest, “[i]ndividual goals, expectations, values, proposed courses of action and suggestions about how to handle a situation”, along with “changes in technology” and “shifting of power”, make conflict in organisations inevitable. Conflict is inherent to any institution and schools are no different; conflict resolution and management is a key task for the school leaders. As Silva and Dota (2013) point out, “conflict episodes are part of the everyday life of any school, which makes teachers need to work with conflict rather than against it” (p. 69, as cited in Valente & Lourenco, 2020).

In the previous section, the consideration of the emotions of others was discussed as a form of emotional management. In this section the focus is on a particular form of the leaders' relationship with others – one which is characterised by potential or actual conflict. As Valente and Lourenco (2020) argue, “the development of teachers' capacity for emotional regulation increasingly represents a crucial component for the improvement of their interpersonal and professional relationships” (p. 2). It could be argued that this is particularly the case for relationships involving conflict. In their research on intercultural communication Ting-Toomey (1999) found that emotional expression is a primary component of conflict management. Jordan and Troth (2002) suggest that effective and appropriate

conflict management relies strongly on an individual's skills in self-management, and the ability to find constructive solutions.

In their review of empirical studies examining antecedents in the management and mitigation of interpersonal conflict, Almost and her colleagues (2016) identify several common themes. These include a lack of emotional intelligence, poor communication, lack of support from colleagues or management and role ambiguity as common causes of conflict in organisations, specifically care and health services. Other research examining the relationship between emotion intelligence and conflict (i.e., Ellis, 2010; Goleman, 2002); Hopkins & Yonker, 2015; Khosravi et al., 2020; Shih & Susanto, 2010; Valente & Lourenco, 2020) generally concludes that EI is an essential variable for conflict management, as it encourages individuals to consider the adversary's interests, as well as their own. Brackett and colleagues (2021) argue that when individuals manage their emotions by decreasing their intensity, they can re-direct their focus to the situation, as opposed to the activated emotion. For example, this means that emotional regulation allows individuals to objectively view the point of conflict, without dismissing their own emotions.

Goleman's revised model of EI includes conflict management as a competency under relationship management (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2002). It is described as being able to recognise problems as they are developing and take measures to appease those involved. In order to do this, individuals require empathy and skills in listening (Boyatzis, 2009). Furthermore, as Vashisht et al. (2018) point out, regulation of one's own emotion is of central importance in selecting from a wide range of conflict handling styles. This allows individuals to handle difficult people and conflict with diplomacy, encouraging debate and open discussion, and orchestrating win-win situations (Goleman et al, 2002). This management is highlighted by Mayer et al (2004), who reference conflict management as an aspect of complex abilities, such as managing emotions or more specifically emotional relationships. These behaviours are what I attempted to identify across the participants. I asked of the data: Did they demonstrate effective emotional regulation skills in the management of conflict; Were the participants aware of how their colleagues were feeling by listening; and did they them demonstrate empathy?

Research such as Jordan and Troth (2004) and Moeller and Kwantes (2015) has posited that an individual's conflict management style may be affected by their level of EI. Suliman and Al-Shaikah (2006) argue that because of the differing nature of work relationships, employees use different conflict management styles and in turn will enact different parts of their EI. Suliman and Al-Shaikah (2006)

suggest that by using emotional intelligence in conflict resolution, individuals make calm statements of fact, ask questions and listen. The objective of conflict management is for an individual to find the appropriate method to resolve the conflict in a more constructive manner (Lipsky et al, 2003). This occurs when both parties' needs are being met (Corcoran & Mallinckrodt, 2000). According to Suliman and Al-Shaika (2006), processes of conflict management include: "understanding the other person's point of view without judgment; discussing facts as you see them and how they affect you; explaining the outcome you are hoping for and asking for other ideas for solutions" (p. 216).

Much of the psychological and management research draws on Rahim and Bonoma's (1979) model of conflict resolution to compare styles of conflict resolution with various variables, including EI (e.g., Chan et al, 2014; Chen et al, 2019; Jordan & Troth, 2002; Vashisht et al, 2018). Rahim and Bonoma (1978) classify the strategies used to deal with the conflict in terms of how the following two variables intersect: concern for others, and desire to satisfy one's own interests. The success of conflict resolution efforts depends on how well both concerns are satisfied (Johnson & Payne, 1997). In Rahim and Bonoma's model, the different articulations of these two dimensions, self-interest and interest of the others are evident in their five strategies for conflict management: integrating, dominating, obliging, avoiding and compromising. These are described below:

Integrating which involves a high concern for self and others. This involves an open exchange of information, and examination of differences to reach an effective solution acceptable to both parties.

Obliging which involves a low concern for self and high concern for others. Consists of attempts to play down the differences and emphasizing commonalities to satisfy the concern of the other party.

Dominating which involves high concern for self and low concern for others. Is a win-lose orientation or the forcing behaviour to win one's position.

Avoiding characterised by a low concern for self and others and involves side-stepping the issues.

Compromising which involves an intermediate level of concern for self and others and involves a give-and-take to make a mutually acceptable decision, but one in which both parties make a sacrifice (Rahim et al., 2002).

According to Rahim (2003), individuals tend to employ the same types of conflict styles in similar settings and circumstances. This suggests that individuals tend to have a predisposition to one type of style, which may be due to life experience and relationships, cultural background, or personality.

In the following discussion of how the leaders in my study applied their EI in managing conflict, I use Rahim et al.'s (2002) categorisation of conflict management to determine participants' concern for self-and/or concern for others. I also draw on both Goleman and Boyatzis's (2002) and Salovey and Mayer's (1990) models of EI. These models provided me with a framework to identify how the participants' interest in others' emotions, and their attentiveness to their own interests in situations involving conflict, may be an indication of their application of emotional intelligence. For this analysis, I looked first to the leaders' reactions to any negative exchanges or commentary from colleagues. I also considered the steps the participants employed in situations where conflict was present, which were either apparent in the observations and then discussed following the observation or were reported in their reflection diary. Evidence of the participants' ability to understand their colleagues' emotions also contributed to my analysis of how they may have anticipated or addressed conflict. This element allowed me to consider how the participants demonstrated compassion and empathy in their decision making and actions. Finally, in observations where there was an absence of explicit conflict, I sought evidence of whether the leader's actions and behaviours elicited positive behaviours from colleagues, which could provide some insight into how the leaders had more generally been managing conflict.

It is not surprising that during the five months of data collection each of the leaders experienced, engaged in and/or reflected on conflict in their workplace. For example, the participants spoke about interpersonal conflict, such as, colleagues arguing with each other, or colleagues expressing their dissatisfaction with wider school decisions, and conflict with categories of people in the wider community, such as "irate" or "frustrated" parents. Although I noted limited conflict in the context of my observations, the participants described and reflected on the varying forms of conflict they had experienced. However, the differences in how each leader spoke of and reflected on conflict suggested differences in conflict management styles. The differences in their roles in the schools meant that each of the participants was managing different forms or sources of conflict in their environment. Some of the conflict was linked to tasks and some to interpersonal relationships.

Conflict related to tasks was particularly evident in my observations of Lou and Will, where they were dealing with their teams' discontent generated by the decisions made in relation to the implementation of the specific tasks and programs they were leading as part of their roles. For both Lou and Will, their references to conflict in their environments were framed by the changes both were proposing and implementing (which will be explored in greater depth in the next section). Change,

particularly extensive and sudden change, such as, coming in as a new leader in Wills' case, or significant policy and accreditation demands, such as Lou was expected to implement, has the capacity to create conflict. As Mitchell (2005) suggests, whether situations of high discontent come about through improvements postponed or rising expectations, the central feature of conflict formation involves change.

Neither Lou or Will appeared to employ either a dominating, accommodating, or avoiding style in the way they dealt with conflict. As a leader who demonstrated deep empathy towards her colleagues, Lou appeared to favour Rahim's and Bonoma's (1979) "integrating style" to manage the conflict in her environment; that is, she demonstrated a high concern for others and for herself ("I acknowledge others' emotions, but I don't bow to them"). Lou frequently described her own emotions in her reflection diary, ("I am pretty frustrated at the moment"), and queried other's actions ("why could they not have come to see me?"). Her comments to others and her actions revealed that for her, the other people in the conflict were important too. Lou demonstrated an ability and willingness to listen to others. She acknowledged that it was important "to address the situation in a professional and fair way" (RD-3), despite the frustrations she expressed to me in our discussions. Lou's emotional awareness of others (including facilitating support programs), as well as her own, are consistent with both Rahim and Bonoma's (1979) integrating conflict management style and models of EI (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Goleman, 1998).

Will, on the other hand, appeared to employ both integrating and compromising (Rahim & Bonoma 1979) approaches to conflict. When managing conflict with parents, there was evidence of a more 'integrating' style, negotiating to achieve an outcome which was suitable to both parties. For example, Will's 'integrating' style and negotiation was captured in his reflection diary, where Will wrote about successful negotiations with parents:

Parent Issues - a father was a frustration point over the treatment of his son and some of the outcomes the school had put in place for his behaviour. There were several issues raised and his emotions were heightened. I again listened to his concerns & made suggestions when necessary. We agreed that more discussion was needed to occur and there are many past issues being brought up. I scheduled a meeting to raise the issue from a parent and school perspective to discuss them. Then make agreed upon actions. I felt the outcome was great for both sides and we got to understand each other and plan actions for the future to support each other. I felt I nurtured the meeting empathetically (RD-3).

A father didn't agree that his son should have been on detention and came to the school to sit with him at lunch time. I went to collect the child and calmly invited the child & parent to the office to discuss the issue further - he didn't agree that his son should be there - we looked at what behaviours his son could control and how he contributed to the situation. We looked at agreed actions the child could take and listed these along with the consequences for not following these. The father walked away happy, and I was happy how I diffused a situation that could have easily escalated (RD-4).

These reflections are evidence that Will allowed the parents to express their emotions, acknowledged these and then went on to arrive at a solution that all parties were happy with.

However, Will appeared to use a more 'compromising' (Rahim & Bonoma 1979) approach where there were organisational changes which, to some extent, were non-negotiable. In this context, he took a more compromising approach and probably accepted that solutions that did not appease everyone would leave residual conflict. A 'compromising' approach is an intermediate position between concern for self and others (Johnson & Payne, 1997). The following quote: "I've always maintained an awareness of what it might look like in somebody else eyes" (I-Q7), suggests that he attempts to unpack the situation to consider perspective. His compromising approach was made explicit in how he spoke to his staff when describing the change, he was leading, "You're not going to get your way ... I'm not going to get my way - but we're going to get ours" (O-1). Johnson (2003) notes that the compromising leader is less integrating, less dominating, less obliging, and less avoiding. Each person sacrifices something to achieve at least partial resolution of the conflict.

Will reflected on another instance of conflict involving his library staff in his diary around change. For Will the issue was not so much about his staff struggling with the proposed change ("I listened to all the problems with current timetable" RD-2), but the means by which it was communicated ("in particular, I had to speak to one staff member as she raised the issues via e-mail and included all staff members"). Will wrote in his diary that he "didn't necessarily agree but remained objective and understanding" and "promised I would look into it by designing a survey to gauge staff perspectives". Will "felt it was a good outcome that suited both parties." (RD-2) Will expected conflict in his role and seemed confident in his strategies to manage it constructively. He revealed in the interview that he was

guided by the behaviours of the leader he admired, as he saw himself working towards that leadership model:

He is someone I try to aspire to be, he is at all levels. He is a school director, his interactions with people, he treats everyone with respect, he has time for everyone, I walked around his high school the other week and he was out picking up papers because he cares, he models to the kids that's not right, so he picks it up, I don't know if anyone saw it because he was just walking with me. So, it's what I can tell through his actions and does, and his interactions and speaking with staff the input he has had as well, that kind of reinforces the type of person his is. His interactions with others his leadership style he is authentic, open minded, open minded to changes, open minded to listening and evaluates a lot of performances but in that open mindedness (I-Q8).

In contrast to Will and Lou, Elle wrote and spoke more about conflicts between people, involving personal relationships rather than specific tasks. De Dreu and Weingart (2003) suggest that these kinds of conflicts are generally based on differences in terms of preferences, personal and interpersonal styles, emotions and attitudes and this was apparent in the way Elle described her experience of conflict in the context of her school. From Elle's perspective, conflict was endemic to her school context and specifically to her team (Stage 3). She suggested this endemic conflict was undermining her leadership. For example, Elle described how she and other staff were "wary of working together". From her perspective, members of her team were "very much about getting what they want ... and not because it will benefit the collective, but to make them look good".

While I did not observe any overt conflict in the team meetings that I attended with Elle, this may suggest that Elle anticipated the conflict and attempted to defuse it outside (prior to) these meetings or chose not to discuss matters which she anticipated as potentially causing conflict in a team setting. However, the way in which Elle reflected on and discussed these meetings with me suggested the presence of substantial conflict within her context. Below are some examples of Elle expressing how she was feeling about her teams' behaviours:

I had a situation with one of them the other day, and there was undermining going, and I felt agitated and really, really annoyed, and it was through an executive meeting that I

found out what was going on and I said, 'I will go and speak to them about that', but I could feel myself, I was really cranky (I-Q7).

She tends to be one of those people, who tries to catch you on the run, and you give her a quick answer and she thinks, I have got what I need (I-Q6).

One of the few instances I did observe Elle in conflict with another person was in the context of an interschool basketball game. Elle was responsible for the students from her school who were competing against a neighbouring school. I had taken a seat and Elle was standing in front of her students on the bench, when she was confronted by a teacher from the other school who was visibly upset. The teacher expressed her frustration with the absence of arrangements for scoring and refereeing the game. She complained loudly and stated that she was not going to take on the role. Elle attempted to resolve the problem by accepting responsibility for the proposed dilemma and told the teacher that she would organise the scoring and would ask someone at the facility to referee. As noted above, individuals engage in conflict by trying to respond in two dimensions - concern for themselves and concern for others. These require an awareness and understanding of the emotions generated and a capacity for listening to the other, while regulating own emotions. In this instance, Elle remained calm, focusing on de-escalating the conflict. As she explained later to me, she had decided it was not an appropriate time to engage (in front of students and parents). Elle resolved the conflict and calmed the teacher, by solving the problem – she assumed responsibility for the game scoring herself and organised a suitable referee.

Elle's own developed ability to "respond to others appropriately" and resolve the conflict in this instance, demonstrated emotional awareness and regulation. According to Rahim (2002), Elle could be seen as "obliging" the other teacher. This mode can be effective, as it can yield an immediate solution to the issue, as was evidenced in this observation. However, like other conflict management styles, such as "avoiding", where an individual diplomatically sidesteps an issue, postponing an issue until a better time, this conflict management style can prevent matters from being resolved. This can then lead to larger issues within teams and organisations (Rahim, 2002). Although not necessarily the outcome of this conflict, as indicated above this possibility of unresolved conflict, evident from my discussions and interview with Elle was likely to impact her own wellbeing and her capacity to lead effectively.

Her attempts at accommodating her colleagues, or in some instances even avoiding conflict

meant that at times Elle's requests for how she would like things done were not being adhered to. For example, Elle often needed to repeat her requests ("I have asked them a number of times to communicate with the parent [around the student's needs]") and rationalised her avoidance of direct conflict with her colleagues by commenting to me that, "I thought it was best to focus on the 'goal setting' for Kevin rather than take her [Elle's colleague] to task about his comments; no good would have come from confronting her about the comment", RD-7).

In the interview when asked how emotional intelligence could help her lead her team, Elle responded that EI allowed her to:

just make sure I am reading how they are feeling at the time, what the situation is that is happening, and myself not getting emotionally invested in each, that's probably the wrong word, it's not that I am not emotionally invested in them, but not letting my emotions override how I deal with the situation (I-7).

Although Elle suggested in this response that she was mindful about not "letting [her] emotions override" how she managed her colleagues, Elle frequently commented to me and in her diary reflections that she was "frustrated", "annoyed" and concerned for the future of her team "its challenging to work with that type of person". As Kazimoto (2013) suggests, the inability or unwillingness of a leader to deal with conflict may not only lead to negative outcomes but may also undermine the credibility of the leader. This seemed indeed to be the case with Elle, who explicitly described how she felt that she was being "undermined" by her staff.

In contrast to Elle, Pat as a principal of a large school described her way of managing conflict as very direct. This is best captured by her reflection entry, "I know I take conflict head on". Pat shared how as a young teacher she had been encouraged by her faculty head, to "stand-up if she didn't agree" and how this experience had shaped her attitude that conflict was critical for the evolution of the school. For example, Pat described how she attempted to encourage opportunities for critical dialogue as she was a "mindful listener" and by providing explicit feedback on individuals' practice ("I give specific explicit feedback; I want to hear their voice", I-Q6). Although Pat considered "critical dialogue" as important, she also valued conflict resolution skills and associated conflict resolution skills with the development of open lines of communication ("you need to develop conflict resolution skills, effective avenues for communication and so on").

There was evidence that Pat encouraged similar behaviour in the leader candidates she was

mentoring, (“Have open dialogue with your team to understand how they think things should happen”, O-3). This comment suggests that Pat employed a more “integrating” response style to conflict, that is, she seemed willing to express feelings and to encourage the expression of feelings from others. However, this seemed to be an ideal more spoken about than practiced. Other evidence suggests that Pat was often impatient with her staff and possibly uncompromising. For example, Pat’s defensive responses to staff questioning or challenging of her decisions in meetings with her executive and her own comment in her in the interview, “I can be a cold hard bitch”. Following Rahim and Bonoma’s (2002) model, this could be assessed as a “dominating” response.

Johnson and Payne (1997) argue expertise in conflict management depends on the leader’s capacity to direct concerns away from self, to a concern for the welfare and needs of other individuals and the organisation. According to Kuhn and Poole (2000), the degree and importantly the consistency of concern for others determines the depth of expertise in conflict management. They argue that “general and consistent orientation toward the other party and the conflict issues, manifest in observable behaviours that form a pattern and share common characteristics over time” (p. 560). Both research and theory (Chan et al, 2014; Chen et al, 2018; Jordan & Troth, 2002; Vashisht et al, 2018) suggest that a leader’s awareness of others’ emotions, as well as their ability to manage their own emotions influences how they work with and manage conflict and emotions. Lou and Will both demonstrated this capacity in their individual contexts. Despite differences in attitudes towards the role of emotion, both demonstrated effective ways of managing their own emotions, which supported them in managing conflict.

In contrast to Lou and Will, my observations of Pat provided little evidence of her support for her staff’s emotions, rather she appeared to be quite critical of others demonstrating emotions or sharing their frustrations. However, she did not seem to use her assessment of their emotional state to engage with staff or manage conflicts. This was evidenced in my observations, where Pat only spoke of her own emotions and in her diary reflections, where she described how other’s emotions were a barrier for her to engage with staff. She appeared to find this element of leadership overwhelming, noting “that we have to be in this zone to move from the comfortable and steady to the evolved and sophisticated, or [for me I] may say out of chaos, comes control” (RD-9). At the same time, Pat did talk about how she hoped that modelling mindfulness practice would support others to manage their emotional states. Pat said that she believed mindfulness activities should become part of every professional’s routine, describing how meditation allowed her to control her thoughts and her emotions. Perhaps this was her way of providing

support to staff through times of emotional turmoil.

While there has been considerable interest in the relationship between EI, conflict management and leadership (e.g., Almost et al, 2016; Chan et al, 2014; Chen et al, 2018; Jordan & Troth, 2002; Valente & Lourenco, 2020; Vashisht et al, 2018), there remains a lack of clear evidence as to when these variables interact (Harms & Credé, 2010). As noted above the suitable and effective conflict management is dependent on an individual's ability to find constructive solutions and demonstrate skills in self-management (Jordan & Troth, 2006). Furthermore, Lopes et al (2006) argue that emotional intelligence enables leaders to regulate their emotions to cope effectively with stress and adjust to organizational changes and supports leaders to manage conflict constructively (Bodtker & Jameson, 2001). Each of the participants approach to conflict varied and this appeared at least in part, to be directly linked to how they understood, expressed and regulated their emotions, in a "balanced" way. As acknowledged and is evidenced by the participants, the focus on one facet of EI, at the expense of another, can create additional obstacles for leaders.

EI plays an important role in conflict management because constructive solutions may require negotiation which requires an ability to recognise and regulate emotions. On the other hand, individuals with lower levels of EI are more likely to engage in greater use of forcefulness and avoidance, which may signal destructive conflict management (Goleman, 1995).

8.3.3 Leading Change

Educational reform and leading school change have become a critical feature of the work of school leaders. This focus in contemporary schools has led a shift in emphasis in both research and professional development from what to change to understanding how to change. Fullan (2015) suggests that leading change requires the ability to define and communicate a vision that inspires others, with Issah (2018) noting it also requires leaders to support others to adjust their thinking and behaviour. Hauseman (2020) argues that "the very nature of contemporary principals' work depends on the effective management and regulation of emotions" (p. 1). However, Moore (2009) points out that, as teachers have "moved from working in isolation to working collaboratively" and with "increased accountability", there is a growing "emotional toll" on teachers and leaders (p. 22). Additionally, Macruiarc (2012) identifies the need for critically informed and engaged leaders, who are able to position themselves as key negotiators of policy proposals. It follows that being a school leader is a demanding and complex

enterprise, particularly at a time when schools are being granted greater autonomy, while at the same time being under greater scrutiny (Fullan, 2015).

In EI literature, change is described as bringing about a range of emotions, including fear, resistance, frustration and confusion (Wiens & Rowell, 2018). Piderit (2000) suggests that while employees react to change in cognitive, behavioural and affective ways, the affective reactions are often unanticipated or discounted. Educational researchers (e.g., Bridges, 2012; Crawford, 2011; Leithwood & Beatty, 2009) have recently started to examine the ways in which emotional aspects shape leaders' thinking and actions and the impact on staff. This includes the argument that leaders should inject emotion into their communication (Fox & Amichai-Hamburger, 2001) and should establish productive emotional connections with their staff (McEnrue & Groves, 2006) to engage staff in change.

In their qualitative study of how other staff perceive a change leader's emotional intelligence, Smollan and Parry (2011) found that how the leaders in their study leader regulated and expressed their emotions through the change process impacted significantly on others. They noted that change placed high demands on staff, including on the leaders who may also react emotionally to change. They found that leaders who failed to regulate their emotions were considered by their staff to have acted inappropriately, which produced negative consequences for their colleagues' wellbeing and attitudes towards the change. They propose that leaders with high EI are more likely to support their staff by acknowledging their emotional reactions and by helping them to understand and manage the challenges of change (Smollan & Parry, 2011). This is further supported by Crawford (2007), who argues school leaders' emotional understanding of the staff could alter the schools' emotional climate and their ability to manage change more effectively.

Like the differences identified in their management of conflict, the ways the leaders managed change in their individual contexts highlighted the different emotional intelligent skills the participants of this research study employed. As has been indicated elsewhere, my observations of Lou suggested that understanding the emotions of others and the influence of emotion in her context was a focus of her leadership style and the way that she managed the impact of the changes she was charged with introducing and managing. In her interview for example, she described how important it was that she was aware of how others were dealing with change, "just to make sure I am reading how they are feeling at the time, what the situation is that is happening" (I-Q3). This was also evident in the way she introduced information about the changes to professional development hours and accreditation in a staff meeting that

I observed. After presenting the details of the changes she allowed space for staff reactions: “I understand you all have a lot of questions”. After the meeting she explained to me that, “I try to support them in an emotional way and get others to support them to get them out of that concern”.

At the time of this study, the changes Lou was leading involved a significant transformation of teachers’ professional development and professional responsibilities. These included accreditation changes which involve the maintenance requirements to retain accreditation as a teacher in NSW. In the meeting and then again in the discussion with me after the meeting, it was apparent that Lou’s attention was on demonstrating her emotional awareness and understanding of her colleagues’ emotions towards the proposed change.

Moore (2009) suggests that effective school leaders use emotional information – that is, emotional awareness and understanding – to build trust and procure cooperation from their staff when supporting them through change. Emotional information allows leaders to display empathy towards their colleagues, as was evidenced in my observation of Lou. In this example Lou was explaining the changes in professional development and accreditation. She demonstrated an understanding of how her staff were feeling about the proposed changes and what was being required of them. In recognising their concerns, she was able to consider how she could best support them. For Lou this was about “being approachable, be[ing] responsive to context”. These comments were recorded in her diary, as she reflected on leadership during this significant time. Further examples of Lou demonstrating empathy towards her colleagues and the proposed changes were noted after observing her mentoring beginning teachers’ meeting. Considering her colleagues’ reactions to hearing the upcoming accreditation changes, Lou decided to change the agenda and focus for the beginning teachers meeting. This was based on what she felt they needed at the time, “I thought it was best to focus on how to use Sentral” (the school’s administration site), as opposed to further explaining the changes and the accreditation demands and potentially exacerbating feelings of stress.

Lou listened to her colleagues’ criticisms, appreciating their emotions and questions over why the changes were necessary for them (“How is this going to benefit me?”) and attempted to conciliate her colleagues. Further observations revealed Lou spent time advising the early career teachers on looking after themselves when navigating their new responsibilities and the wider changes in the school (“if you feel you are in a situation that you need help with, you need to have that conversation, be mindful of your situation”, O-1). She established the program (“Time 4 You”) to encourage teachers to talk to each other

about their concerns and ensure they felt supported with changes.

Like Lou, Will was charged with managing change in his context, in his case curriculum changes involving the implementation of new literacy and numeracy programs. He spoke in detail in his interview about change including his own role as a new leader in this environment. In the following quote he describes how he had adopted strategies to address low staff levels of morale by building conditions and opportunities to deal with people's fears and uncertainties:

We did a survey just recently, because we have had so many changes, on staff morale and yes it was 50 /50. Fifty percent agreed that it was high, and fifty percent said no its not and so for me that's really good information to have. So, we are having staff drinks at my house this afternoon and it just provides opportunities now, and that's all you can ever do, because you can't force an issue, but you can build conditions and opportunities and the rest is up to them. Whether you get that group that still want to have the negative mindset about it or what. I can only control the opportunities that we give and that's it (I-Q6).

He described the school as being at the "storming" stage of Tuckerman's (1965) team development model, 'storming, norming and performing'. This rare instance of Will evaluating his colleagues suggested a level of compromise on Will's part. His plans and proposed changes were not going as intended, and to resolve the conflicts that had emerged, there needed to be "give and take"- a compromise with how the changes were going to move forward. Will noted that the school was probably on that:

storming stage where we are questioning things about why they have been previously the way they have. So it's in a bit of a storming stage but as a leader, it's about try[ing] to share the whole picture, transparency and understanding on where we are going, and I don't think that had been done really well in the past so there were a few trust issues with staff around that, so it's just about earning trust (I-Q6).

These comments and description of his strategies point to Will's understanding and desire to productively manage how change is impacting his colleagues. In the storming stage, people start to push against the established boundaries, challenging the leader and even the team's mission (Tuckman, 1964). As a new leader, Will needed to develop trust in himself as a leader and in the value of the changes he was charged with implementing, in addition to gaining the trust of his colleagues. As Knight (2009) suggests, leaders who genuinely convey hope, trust and optimism seem to hold the key to unlocking the desired behaviour

of followers. In their model, Avolio et al. (2004) incorporate the intervening variables of hope, trust and positive emotions in relation to leading change. They acknowledged the role of positive emotions and trust in the leadership process. Bryk and Schneider (2002) define “relational trust” as the “series of interpersonal social exchanges that take place in a school community” (p. 41) and is based on four criteria: respect, competence, personal regard for others, and integrity. Bryk et al.’s (2010) work on relational trust stresses that a “leader must have competence and expertise to move a system forward and that he or she needs to be motivated by the interpersonal needs of the group, rather than [intra]personal gain” (p. 62).

Will’s approach to implementing change was centred on allowing his staff to discuss elements of the change openly, voice criticism and ask questions (“they can feel they have contributed to the decisions and the school’s direction”). Foltin and Keller (2012) and Issah and Zimmerman (2016) propose that emotionally intelligent leaders know the importance of this communication and involvement and therefore create an environment of open communication for those to be affected by the change, to encourage them to contribute. The way Will described how it was important for him to be aware of how his colleagues were managing change (“When people don’t get their way, they become highly emotive, based on fear of the unknown”, I-Q5) suggests a level of empathy. In addition, Will also argued the importance of his colleagues understanding that he was aware of their challenges in navigating the changes he was introducing (“whether it’s them understanding that I appreciate what they’re up against”, O-1).

Issah (2018) notes that there are always some followers who are reluctant to participate in the change efforts. The lack of clarity around the unknown associated with change can raise the anxiety levels of staff and influence their behaviours (Pritchett & Pound, 2005). Managing this anxiety, as Will pointed out, “is understanding why they are reacting that way”. In the process of executing change, school leaders must work collaboratively with the staff to realise the change goals (Kin & Kareem, 2019). Will shared that because of the staff grappling with the changes, he had to organise several additional professional learning opportunities, to explain the changes to the literacy programs. It was evident that Will had to learn a great deal about his colleagues and context in a short time and in the interview described EI as providing him with a “tool belt” to do so.

Principals, as the ultimate school leaders, are both expected to initiate and lead change to improve their school (AITSL, 2017; Berkovich & Eyal, 2015; OECD, 2018; Moore, 2009) and are held

accountable for implementing changes that have been adopted by policymakers in the education system (Hallinger, 2018). Cliffe (2018) argues that principals who knowingly or subconsciously make intelligent use of their own emotions and those of others, achieve the positions and improvements that they strive for. So, without question, principal emotions increasingly become one of the key aspects to take a school forward (Arar, 2017).

Pat saw herself as an experienced leader, who was innovative and embraced new approaches to school organisation and to teaching and learning. She considered new initiatives, which ranged from personal passions (mindfulness and appreciative inquiry) to more recognised educational initiatives (such as project-based learning) as exciting and she was passionate about implementing these in her context (“you have to have those ideas and passion”, I-Q2). It became evident in the interview that Pat’s drive to implement new initiatives in her school was about establishing a new reputation for the school as a site of innovation. In her interview she described herself as taking a key role in both her current and previous Principal positions in leading change.

[My leadership positions] were both very much about leading change ... when I came back here it was really about lifting [the bar] ... putting us back on where we were [so] that we were the choice. The choice of the local public school (I-Q1).

In this instance Pat was referring to changing the standing of the school in the community in order to be competitive in the educational marketplace. Radical changes such as those Pat planned to introduce require collaborative discussions to gain the trust of key stakeholders (Fullan, 2011). The principals in Maresca’s study (2015) repeatedly spoke about the importance of gaining the trust of stakeholders, before commencing initiatives for school improvement.

The challenge for leaders is to find creative and systematic ways to support teachers to have evidence-informed professional conversations that respond to the challenges in their context (Carrington et al., 2010). Even if this may not always increase commitment to the change, it can help people come to terms with potential negative outcomes and difficult processes. However, For Pat, this was not easy. In response to the question: What are ways you manage emotions related to supporting the work of your team? In addition to suggesting that “we do our little bit of mindfulness” she described herself as encouraging her staff to focus on positive outcomes. However, in the following quote she also describes how she can be quite hard on her Deputies and goes on to describe the ways in which she provides feedback to her head teachers on a task of writing she has set them.

I can be quite hard, with my Deputies, if you interviewed them, they would say bloody hell, she has these, I guess, high expectations. I try to give feedback; I give them really quite specific explicit feedback ... For example, I have the head teachers writing an article for the Summit Times, I want it to be about what educational leadership is and related to what they think education is and relate it to what is happening in their department. So, it has to be it has to be some sort of idea, so it's really interesting it been a really good way for me to give explicit feedback about their own writing, and their own ideas, and what they have given me, and now they are all starting to stress. Sometimes they give it to me, and I give it back and I say 'where did you copy and paste that from, what's that about, that's not your idea that's not you voice'. I want to hear their voice, so I think getting back to the question, in one way, it is about an interesting thing is am conscious of where they are, and I don't sometimes I don't do that well, I can be a bit harsh and I can really reflect on myself, I don't put the feathers around the feedback and that is something I can always work on, because I could be a bit softer, people always know where they stand with me. I reward good work, but I am always going to say, you can do that better (I-Q6).

Managing the emotional side of leadership undoubtedly becomes very challenging during times of rapid change. According to Wolfe et al (2002), leaders need to build the team's sense of belonging, support and optimism, so that emotional issues do not detract from the team's progress toward completing the change process. Pat described this sense of belonging as "buy-in", about how to "make people feel they want to be part of something" (I-Q2) and in another quote "buy-in" was associated with building hope, "successful schools build hope in parents, kids and teachers" (I-Q5). She described how if she was thinking about bringing in changes, she needed "to have their heart and then their mind".

It is widely established that leadership is a process of influencing others. Leader's shape and mould the values and beliefs of their team. Scholars (e.g., Boyatzis, 2009; Goleman, 2004; 2006; Kerr et al., 2006; Roeste and Ciarrochi, 2005) argue that there is a relationship between EI and leadership effectiveness, with a leader's ability to influence others, which is particularly important when implementing change, determined by their management of their own and others' emotions. It was evident throughout the data collection, that Pat was passionate and she unreservedly expressed her emotions to

her staff. Furthermore, as noted above, open communication with staff during periods of change is critical and Pat prided herself on her explicit feedback and that “people always know where they stand with me”.

Elle was generally less direct in describing or reflecting on change; however, my first observation revealed the emphasis she placed in her staff understanding what was expected to change. In this meeting she explained to the staff, “everyone needs to understand what we are doing”. Referring to the planning process for the school’s students with additional needs, Elle wanted all stakeholders (teachers, parents and other professionals including occupational therapists, psychologists and speech therapists) to understand the planning process for this group of students. She described the need for communication with parents and other professionals. Elle later reflected on this meeting in her diary describing how her colleague had expressed criticisms to others over decisions Elle had made. Elle suggested that her colleague had even attempted to disrupt the changes, or rather directives, Elle had implemented (“there is some undermining going on”). Elle explained that the modifications she was requesting were not new practice or policy, rather they were a change in the practices her staff had lapsed into.

In addition to specific change in her context, Elle reflected on the changes teachers go through during their careers. Although change is often linked to policy and innovation as described above, for Elle, significant change is a result of the different stages of a career (age and experience). For example, new staff who were transitioning into the environment, early career teachers with new responsibilities and older staff who were expected to support the younger staff. Captured in her interview response to the question about embedding development initiatives, Elle spoke of the need for emotional intelligent skills to support teachers at all stages of their career:

I thought it [EI] was really valuable. You can’t make people take it on board, but I think for people coming into the teaching workforce we lose teachers early in their careers and I don’t think it is just about the workload, but I think it’s about the culture within a school. They are like “oh my goodness”, that’s just my opinion. I think the young people coming into work, because they are coming into an older workforce and having to navigate, all the Gen Y’s and Gen X’s they have changed (I-Q10).

Elle expressed concern that the impact on those who need to accommodate these new teachers was not being adequately considered, that these teachers also needed support with this element of change

(i.e., younger staff). Elle suggested that the significant exodus of teachers from the profession raises questions such as: “do existing teachers (of varied ages) feel equally valued?” or “do they feel supported with the significant changes to education?”.

Research (i.e., Darling-Hammond, et al., 2016; Duck, 2007; Le Maistre, & Pare, 2010) has explored early careers teachers transition into the work environment. For example, Dias-Lacy and Guirguis (2017), in their study of the issues facing first year teachers, demonstrated how entering the field of education with unrealistic expectations of what teaching is about can yield negative experiences for new educators. Elle argued that the complexity of educational environments meant that early career teachers were at times unprepared for the challenges of school environments. In her interview she explained how they need “to understand they are coming into a workplace which is really complex, really complex in the structure of the classroom but really complex [in the] way you have to work with people” (I-Q9).

For Elle, EI supported her to navigate these changes in staff, supporting both early career teachers with their transition into the environment, but also supporting older more experienced teachers to support and even accommodate the early career teachers. EI specifically sustained Elle in this endeavour of understanding her staff’s emotions (“for me it just makes me think about that when I go to approach them” Q-5) and helped her to understand “why they think and act that way” (I-Q5).

8.4 In summary

This chapter presented research findings for the first two research questions. The findings revealed the leaders had varied understandings and applications of emotional intelligence. The findings provided evidence on some of the specific ways these leaders applied emotional intelligence in their leadership, in particular, how the leaders attempted to manage their own and others’ emotions. This emotional management then appeared to influence the ways in which they presented and facilitated organisational change in their context and approached and managed conflict. An implication of these findings includes identifying potential areas for targeted professional development and future research focus. The following chapter will provide a response to the third and final research question, examining the implication of the findings discussed in this chapter and suggesting ways for moving forward.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

Introduction

The final chapter begins by first presenting an overview of the main findings discussed in the previous chapter. The chapter then presents the answers to the final research question, as a way of presenting the implications of the study for professional development in the context of similar research on emotional intelligence and educational leadership. It concludes by making recommendations for professional learning opportunities in mentoring and reflection for school staff, specifically leaders, as well as identifying future research avenues and directions.

9.2 Problem

Beatty (2000) asserts that “while writers and researchers do acknowledge emotions as relevant to teachers’ work... the emotions of leadership are virtually unmentioned” (p. 332). To be an effective leader in the highly contextualised environments of schools requires more than academic skills and managerial proficiency. As has been argued throughout this thesis, perhaps what is equally or even more important is the ability to demonstrate emotionally intelligent behaviour. Recently research and policy has embarked on efforts to include affective skills in school leader qualifications, however, one of the most noticeable gaps in these inclusions are the descriptions of the emotional and relational capacities relevant to context and roles. We need a greater understanding of how these skills are understood and applied to school leadership positions, if we are to embrace EI for leadership development. The aim of this qualitative multiple case study was to describe and analyse leaders’ accounts of their understanding, and application of emotional intelligence (EI) within their respective school environments. Through observations, discussions of practice, interviews and the participants’ own diary reflections, it was possible to examine how the participants understood EI and how they used skills in emotional regulation to resolve conflict, manage their teams and lead change. The study was guided by the following research questions:

RQ.1 How do school leaders understand emotional intelligence and its purpose in their roles as leaders?

RQ. 2 How do school leaders apply their emotional intelligence to their various leadership roles in their schools?

RQ.3 How can school leaders be supported to enact emotional intelligence in their professional practice?

9.3 Main Findings

The first two research questions, which were addressed in the previous chapter, investigated the participants' understanding and application of EI in their leadership roles. I indicated on the basis of my analysis of the cases, that the language the participants used to articulate the construct was an effective way to establish their awareness and understanding of emotions and the role of emotional intelligence in their individual contexts. Although the participants' leadership experience varied, there were similarities in how they described EI (e.g., understanding others and using emotions to interact with others). The differences that did surface, appeared to be a result of both their leadership positions in the school and their own dispositions. With two of the leaders focusing more on the relational elements, such as empathy and understanding of others. Whilst the other participants expressed understanding of EI, narrowed in on the management and regulation of emotion.

The leaders described EI confidently, identifying the various components, including, emotional awareness, emotional understanding and management of emotions and overwhelmingly the leaders agreed that these skills supported them to interact with their staff and other key stakeholders (such as parents and carers). The leaders shared their beliefs that emotional awareness allowed them to identify the best way to communicate with others. However, in contrast to other research findings reported in earlier chapters (e.g., Maresca, 2015; Parrish, 2011; Slater, 2011), the participants of this study did not necessarily envision this would result in developing stronger relationships with their colleagues, rather they understood EI as an approach which supported them to avoid undesirable outcomes, such as conflict developing or escalating.

I identified three key themes which effectively encompassed the leaders' application of EI, while at the same time being indicative of the roles and challenges facing contemporary school leaders. These included: leading change; managing and working with conflict; and emotional regulation. All three of these themes had some link to the participants' expressed understanding that uncontrolled or poorly navigated negative emotions impacted the functioning of their school.

The data revealed leaders who were experiencing a range of emotions which required management. What was evidenced in the findings were the divergent ways the leaders used to regulate their emotions. Through the lens of Gross's (2002) work on emotional regulation, my research provided

evidence that some of the leaders approached emotional regulation with strategies which are described as more adaptive and emotionally intelligent, for example, cognitive reappraisal. Furthermore, the leaders' different capacities in emotional regulation appeared to have a significant impact on the interactions in each environment. These findings suggest that context is potentially an important factor when selecting the correct emotional regulation strategy. This aligns with the findings of Kobylinksa and Kusev (2019), who note individuals need to understand and appreciate the relative expense of and benefits of using any given regulatory strategy in a particular situation. The regulatory approaches used by the participants in this study support the idea that possessing and flexibly employing a diverse set of emotion regulatory response options in schools is essential, given the nature of the make-up of these environments.

Using Rahim and Bonoma's (1979) model of conflict resolution, similar differences were identified in the way the leaders applied their EI in managing conflict. Each of the participants' approach to conflict varied and this appeared at least in part, to be directly linked to how they understood, expressed and regulated their emotions. As Jordan and Troth (2006) claim, appropriate and effective conflict management is dependent on an individual's ability to find constructive solutions and demonstrate skills in self-management. Lopes et al (2006) argue that emotional intelligence enables leaders to regulate their emotions to handle the stress and adjust to organisational changes and supports leader to manage conflict constructively. Findings from the research demonstrate how EI played an important role in conflict management, because constructive solutions to conflict required flexible approaches which could only be identified through the leader's ability to demonstrate emotional awareness and understanding of other's perspectives.

Review of the leadership literature described in Chapter Two illustrated the relationship between EI and transformational leadership. It is now widely accepted within the scholarship on educational leadership, EI can be employed to transform others, to move colleagues forward together towards their higher purposes of improving teaching and learning for all students (Bass & Avolio, 1997; Brymer & Gray, 2006). However, the participants in this study tended to reflect on and use EI as a management tool, a way to ensure a smooth(er) ride during their complex and chaotic days. Will in particular seemed to use it to manage conflict and to secure agreement to his planned actions. These findings provide the groundwork for bringing greater attention to the potential importance for understanding EI the role on leadership in a more nuanced way. Research and future professional learning will need to wrestle with the tension between EI as a leadership tool for "transforming self, others, and practices" and EI as "a

management skill for ensuring a smooth, and productive working environment” (Cherkowski, 2022, p. 3)

The leaders’ emotional management then appeared to influence the ways in which they presented and facilitated organisational change in their context. These change initiatives included policy changes in accreditation and professional learning, to improvements in literacy and numeracy practice, the implementation of ICT, as well as collaborative practice with key stakeholders. Wiens and Rowell (2018) argue that change can produce a range of emotions, including fear, resistance, frustration and confusion and often these affective reactions are unanticipated or discounted by leaders (Pederit, 2000). The participants demonstrated an awareness of the emotions associated with change, but again their ability to manage these emotions varied. In each of the participants context, prior to change being implemented, the leaders’ ability to understand others’ emotions towards the proposed change impacted the way initiatives were initially communicated and therefore potentially influenced the success of achieving staff ‘buy-in’.

9.4. Implications: RQ.3 How can school leaders be supported to enact emotional intelligence in their professional practice?

Many school leaders enter into the position with high hopes of having a deep impact, however, they are not always prepared for what they encounter. Earlier chapters have established that school leadership is about understanding how to get people to work together, having a deep understanding of learning, and building the capacity of their colleagues and students. To effectively respond to this research question on how school leaders can be supported to enact emotional intelligence in their professional practice, I have organised the following section in answer to RQ3 into three themes: Leadership development, Mentoring to assist in the development of leaders, Mentors encourage and model Reflection on EI. These are implications of issues raised in the findings presented in the previous chapter.

9.4.1 Leadership development

Leadership continues to be a focal point for school reform, so both policy makers and higher education institutions benefit from research into the skills required of leaders. As Brennan and Macuaric (2017) argue, leaders need to be supported to navigate the complexity of their roles with an appreciation of the impact of emotion in their contexts. Such attention to the emotional aspects of leadership has in the past received little

attention in leaders' professional learning, with a focus more on the technical and rational elements of school leadership (Crawford, 2011). However, as indicated in Chapter 1, there are increasing expectations that leaders connect and collaborate with their staff (Humphrey, 2002). In addition, Patti and colleagues (2015) point out that schools are increasingly implementing social and emotional learning (SEL) programmes into school curricula, where the teacher must model and infuse these skills into the teaching and learning in their classrooms. Therefore, by extension the leaders are also required to model and integrate these skills into their leadership practice.

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2018), which specify requirements for practice across a range of domains, are explicitly linked to expectations that teachers will undertake lifelong professional learning. However, the participants in the study seemed not to be convinced of the efficacy or value of what was currently available in terms of professional development for leadership accreditation. None of the leaders had, at the time of the study, participated in and professional development that specifically involved emotional intelligence. However, both Elle and Will advocated for greater opportunities for emotional intelligence up-skilling for leaders, proposing that emotional engagement was necessary in developing relationships crucial for leadership and teaching. For example, Will argued for the value of "tapping into people who are EI to steer others who are not in the right direction. It should be a mandatory thing in universities, train people in it" (I-Q9).

However, the participants also suggested that they themselves need to drive their development, they needed to create the links to their own learning, to be aware of what they needed and to pursue it. And for Pat, professional development needed to be based in good teaching principles such as project-based learning. In response to the question, 'How can leadership skills be enhanced through professional development with a focus on EI?' she replied:

I would love for teachers to actually do a project ... So if you actually said what does EI mean to you? That's the driving question ... At the end of the day, you end up with an understanding of EI.... It's not the end project but all the processes along the way (I-Q9).

The participants all had ideas about ways to improve professional learning more broadly and viewed emotional intelligence as being an important inclusion for leaders and teacher's development. However, a pivotal finding of my study was that none of these leaders had participated in any systematic learning in EI. Similar concerns about leadership preparation were raised by Parrish (2011; 2015).

Although exploring leadership in higher education settings, Parrish (2015)'s conclusion that leadership positions are often filled by staff who have limited experience in formal management or leadership roles and responsibilities is also relevant to school leadership. In these leadership positions, individuals are appointed often with no formal training and are expected to learn on the job. The participants of Parrish's (2011) research were engaging in explicit activities to develop and appreciate the relevance of emotional intelligence for academic leadership as a part of a wider leadership initiative. Research by Goleman (1998) and Bar-On and Parker (2000) has demonstrated that emotional intelligent abilities can be developed. However, for this to happen, people must be personally motivated, practice extensively what they learn, receive feedback and reinforce their new skills (Serrat, 2017).

Although policy can now argue that they have made attempts to include EI, this research study has identified there remains a gap in leadership development and preparation. This includes current leaders (especially middle leaders) and leader candidates. The leaders in this study demonstrated that their understanding of the construct appeared to be based on popular discourses and vernacular, as opposed to systematic learning. This is despite two participants active involvement in current accreditation processes and all holding formal leadership positions. Furthermore, as evidenced in this research, a general understanding and ability to articulate the construct, does not necessarily equal effective application of the skill set, in times of change or conflict.

The process of preparation was also considered in Maresca's (2015) research. The participants in her study reported their belief that more training regarding emotional intelligence would have better informed and positively impacted both their professional careers and the careers of current and aspiring principals. The participants went on to suggest practical recommendations, comprising of the implementation of emotional intelligent skills and strategies within leadership preparation programs, including mentoring (Maresca, 2015).

Although there is a limited amount of empirical research investigating how to teach or develop EI, Dacre Pool and Qualter's (2012) findings suggest that it is possible to improve ability EI, particularly in relation to the understanding and managing emotion (Mayer et al., 2003). They note that it is imperative that that any EI courses are based on a clear, theoretically sound model of EI, as concerns do exist that very few EI training programmes have been systematically designed, implemented and evaluated (Zeidner et al., 2008).

Furthermore, Gooty et al. (2010) embrace the importance of context, arguing teachers and

leaders require development within their contexts, to appreciate the fundamental mechanisms underlying the influence of emotion-related factors on leadership processes. Similarly, Grant (2007) points out that an educator can acquire and cultivate social and emotional skills through a variety of professional development methods including: training and preparation, classroom instruction, experiential training, and group and individual coaching.

As pointed out in Chapter Two, there can be “a dark side” to the use of EI (Davis & Nicol, 2016, p. 1). As Davis and Nicol (2016) point out, EI may be used as a tool for manipulative ends, motivated by self-serving goals. For example, emotional knowledge may lead to counter-productive behaviour in organisations, such manipulation, bullying or aggression (Cote et al., 2011). Although, as argued above, both Pat and Will used the understanding of emotions to assist in managing their staff, none of the leaders in my study evidenced such behaviour. However, the potential of EI to be used in this way needs to be considered when designing professional learning for leaders around the construct; both the benefits and potential negative uses of EI, need to be understood and appreciated by leaders and leader candidates.

9.4.2 Mentoring to assist in the development of leaders

Since the 1980s, school-based mentoring has come to play an increasingly prominent role in supporting early professional development of teachers and now leaders. A considerable amount of time, energy, funding, and resources have been expended on the development of mentoring programs. The benefits of mentoring that are mostly commonly noted in research findings relate to the provision of emotional and psychological support (e.g., Bullough, 2005; Johnson et al., 2005; Marable & Raimondi, 2007). However, as identified by Hobson and colleagues’ (2009) literature review on mentoring, despite the great potential to produce a range of benefits for mentees, mentors, and schools, this potential is often not realised. They suggest several conditions for successful mentoring, such as the effective selection and preparation of mentors.

Interestingly teachers, especially early career teachers, usually have supervisors who are supposed to observe and give feedback on their teaching and planning. The findings of this study point to a way of observing and discussing the enactment of emotional intelligence post observation. These findings suggest a way in which supervisors or mentors could work with leaders or aspiring leaders around emotional regulation, managing conflict and leading change.

Within this research study, each of the participants referred to their involvement in mentoring in

some capacity. Pat had a formal mentor role, mentoring two teachers from regional areas who were pursuing 'Lead' accreditation. She also considered herself as informally mentoring her entire staff "I think they haven't had the opportunity for good mentoring, which is something they need to be a good leader." She considered herself to be fortunate enough to have a mentor, however, this was an informal relationship with a senior colleague who encouraged Pat "to stand-up if she didn't agree" and pursue executive roles: "you'll be right ... you have been leading the school for years"

Will discussed how his development as a leader and enactment of EI were a result of his opportunities to travel abroad with experienced teachers and an informal mentoring relationship with an admired colleague. He noted that his colleague's behaviour had a profound impact on his development and framed how he behaved as a leader, describing his colleague in terms which clearly point to a person demonstrating a high degree of emotional intelligence. Will considered this relationship to be the most influential on his leadership development, guiding not only his emotional awareness and regulation, but the development of effective communication, and conflict resolution skills. However, this was not a formal relationship from a trained mentor. As the Australian Council of Education Research (2016) argues, a "buddy" system, similar to what Will was describing, is not good enough. They advocate for formal mentoring programs. It appeared that rather than formal mentoring relationships, Will's development was based on his evaluations of others he was around. He responded in the interview "they say you're a reflection of the five people you surround yourself with. If you want to be successful align yourself with successful people and learn their traits."

Elle also mentioned similar links to personal relationships in her evaluation of her leadership development, arguing that her role as a parent was influential "I often relate it to my children, knowing they are each unique and require me to respond differently to each of them" (I-Q5). Elle noted this understanding of diversity and difference was what framed her development. Elle had not been mentored in her career and although she was leading others, including new teachers, she had not undergone formal training in mentoring.

The current literature on mentoring (e.g., Chun et al., 2010; Crumpton, 2019; Duff et al., 2012; Opengart & Bierema, 2015; Webb, 2004) talks about mentors using EI to support and guide others, however a significant gap in the literature is evident, as there is little research evidence on how emotionally intelligent skills can be developed through mentoring. Lou who, although in formal leadership position, still considered herself as in the process of becoming a leader, pursuing the 'Lead'

accreditation. Within this process, she had been provided a mentor, however Lou suggested although he was very accomplished, they hadn't the time or opportunity to develop a relationship and therefore was only a formal and administrative bond. Lou never spoke of this mentor, or shared his name, rather mentioned that in times of conflict or uncertainty she would approach "a trusted colleague" instead.

Although the benefits of mentoring are not being disputed, the effectiveness of programs, established and facilitated at both a school and government level remains unclear. If the focus is on emotional support for new teachers or leader candidates, it can be argued that the mentors own EI development is critical. As Chun et al (2010) argue, several characteristics measured by Emotional Intelligence assessments are positively associated with giving suitable, emotional responses and performing different mentoring functions. Mentoring in varying capacities emerged as something that had supported the leaders in this study, however, in addition to areas of concern with how mentoring practices are facilitated and with what purpose, it is more than just being mentored. Focus needs to be on how mentoring can support in the development of EI among leaders.

9.4.3 Mentors encourage and model reflection on EI

Finlay (2008) describes reflective practice as 'learning through and from experience towards gaining new insights of self and practice' (p. 1). The term 'reflective practice' carries multiple meanings that range from the idea of professionals engaging in solitary introspection to that of engaging in critical dialogue with others (Finlay, 2008). Dewey's ideas provided a basis for the concept of 'reflective practice' which gained influence with the arrival of Schon's book (1983), 'The reflective practitioner: how professionals think in action'. In this seminal work, Schon identifies the ways in which professionals could become aware of their implicit knowledge and learn from their experience. As discussed in Chapter Three, one of Schon's most important and enduring contributions was to identify two types of reflection: reflection-on-action (post thinking) and reflection-in-action (simultaneous thinking).

Schon's argument, since taken up by others (e.g., Herland, 2021; Gregerson, 2017; Stanley, 2016), is that professional practice is complex, unpredictable, and messy. To manage, professionals must be able to do more than follow fixed procedural structures. They draw on both practical experience and theory as they "think on their feet" and improvise. They need to act both intuitively and creatively as they perform their roles. Both reflection-in and on -action allows them to revise, modify and refine their expertise, a continual cycle of development. Gill's (2014) research aimed to assess the nature of reflective

practice and emotional intelligence in higher education tutorial settings. The premise behind the research was that tutorials are guided by learner needs and that by employing emotional intelligence and reflective practice, practitioners are provided with opportunities to support and guide students. Gill's (2014) results indicated that reflective practice enabled practitioners to enhance their emotional intelligence skills, in particular self-awareness. Furthermore, the conclusions from the focus group interviews discovered that practitioners implemented a range of strategies to increase their own emotional intelligence skills and improve reflective practice. Therefore, enhanced emotional intelligence was the result of reflective practice and vice versa.

The design of my study provided the leaders with an opportunity to reflect, both in the discussions of practice and in the reflection diary. This provided the leaders with the opportunities to consider their feelings and behaviours as they related to emotional intelligent practices. An analysis of the data across both observations and conversations demonstrated how reflection was an integral element of each leader's practices. In addition to actively participating in reflective practices such as the diary and the discussions of practice, the leaders' awareness, and ability to regulate their own and others' emotions was underpinned by a continual cycle of reflection. Reflecting on the emotions, the context, the history underpinning the exchanges and relationships and the goal and visions they were working towards, provided the leaders with a scaffold in which to guide their leadership responses.

The research design encouraged and facilitated a way for leaders to focus and articulate their reflections. Although reflecting on action is encouraged for teachers (e.g., learning circles, practice architecture, action research, professional learning communities) few initiatives seem to focus specifically on leaders or middle leaders. None of the leaders in the study described opportunities where they had discussed their leadership practices with peers, and none specifically mentioned opportunities to reflect on their interpersonal or intrapersonal aspects of EI as part of their professional development.

This study revealed that by reflecting on the emotions generated or potentially provoked by their context, linked to conflict, change, trauma, stress, the participants were able to understand different perspectives, and to problem solve and consider alternative courses of action. Reflective practice can be an enormously powerful tool to examine and transform practice. However, reflective practice is not without its problems and has the potential to be harmful to both that persona and/or others. According to Finlay (2008), busy, over-stretched professionals are likely to find reflective practice taxing and difficult. "Bland, mechanical, routinised and unthinking ways of doing reflective practice are too often the

result” (Finlay, 2008, p. 10). All too often the process of teachers and leaders reflecting, may simply “rationalise existing practice” (p. 1).

The study design revealed that when provided an opportunity, as well as some guidance on what the focus of reflection should be, the leaders embraced the practice of reflection, writing lengthy accounts in which they could celebrate their successes (“The challenges today were multi- however the rewards fabulous”; “I am proud of this program!”; “I felt I had nurtured the meeting empathetically”), acknowledge their emotions (“I was happy with the outcome and the way I handled the situation”), unpack their leadership (“Leadership is like that, the focus the “reach” on the wider individual placed beyond the reach and support her in understanding her impact as a leader”; “Have a clear focus/direction; Have a team, do not do it alone”;) and in some instances have a sense of closure (“We talked about using strategies etc. Keeghan’s mum left very happy and so did Keeghan”). As Ghaye (2000) writes, “maybe reflective practices offer us a way of trying to make sense of the uncertainty in our workplaces and the courage to work competently and ethically at the edge of order and chaos” (p. 7).

9.5 Recommendations

The following section proposes a number of recommendations as a result of this study’s research findings. While the importance of emotional intelligence for effective leadership in education and the benefits of incorporating emotional intelligence in leadership have been established in the literature (e.g., Goleman, 2000; Higgs & Rowland, 2003; Maresca, 2015; Palmer et al., 2001; Parrish, 2011; Rosete & Ciarrochi, 2005), limited detail exists on how to incorporate emotional intelligence abilities that are most significant for educational leadership. There is also limited avenues to support leaders to enact EI within their unique contexts and roles, into professional learning, as well as detail on how EI is enacted in school leadership contexts. There are, however, many encouraging avenues which can serve as a framework for future leadership development of emotional intelligent capacities. Similar to the iterative process described by Parrish (2011), this framework would involve leaders reflecting on their leadership roles and practice. This reflection would focus on the awareness, understanding management and expression of emotion; their relationships and support of others; their managerial decisions and the process they went through to arrive at these decisions; and their ability to solve conflict and implement change. By reflecting on their own practice, contexts and experiences, leaders will be able to identify their strengths and design and implement plans to improve their leadership.

The value of EI in organisations and leadership is now widely accepted. For example, Daff et al., (2012) argue EI is highly important in meeting the challenges of organisations. Further research (e.g., Abraham, 2006) has argued that EI enhances individuals to demonstrate empathy and build healthy relationships. Clarke (2010), notes the value of EI in team learning, and Jordan and Troth (2004) argue that EI abilities support conflict resolution. Beatty (2002), Beatty and Brew (2004) and Starratt (2004) have previously all argued for the inclusion of the study of emotional intelligence in principal preparatory programs, with research by Parrish (2011), Maresca (2015), Strickland (2013), identifying which elements of EI are particularly appropriate for the complex environments of education and the leadership of a team. Therefore, I propose the following further recommendations.

As the participants of this research study suggested, how professional learning is approached, including the design and implementation of professional development opportunities, impacts that way in which it is received by educational staff and therefore plays a role in its success.

Recommendation 1: Flexible and varied approaches to professional learning in EI need to be designed which involve opportunities to reflect on practice alone (self-awareness) and with peers.

Similar recommendations were suggested by Maresca (2015), who argues for a combination of coursework, seminars and workshops to study various models of emotional intelligence. She also suggests that models of EI specifically related to school leadership should be developed. Designing an EI model with practical descriptions and problem-solving measures linked to the practice's indicative of educational leaders, could provide explicit teaching of affective leadership skills relevant to an event or context. This also includes the design and implementation of more nuanced mentoring programs, where leaders are provided opportunities to reflect on their practice, as well as support others in developing their practice.

The findings of this study identified a range of specific areas (i.e., conflict, change, gender and years of leadership experience) as target areas for professional learning involving EI abilities.

Recommendation 2: Professional learning needs to be designed to be context specific, with professional learning focused on practical contextualised interventions.

Professional learning opportunities should be designed to address the team/faculty/stage visions. Anderson and Coates (2009) argue that professional needs to be on-going and that those engaging in leadership development have an “overwhelming preference for role specific, practiced based, peer supported and self-managed learning rather than usual one off, formal and generic work-shop based

professional learning (p. 37). In her study of what EI skills were most applicable to academic leadership in higher education, Parrish's (2011) participants were recruited as a result of their involvement in the 'Distributive Leadership Project'. The aim of this project was to trial a leadership development framework, which consisted of formal training, mentoring, networking, reflection and action learning. This project allowed Parrish to investigate EI and leadership development across different higher education institutions. Her findings were able to provide descriptive accounts of how the skills were translated into practice as well as ascertaining which of the EI were applicable to educational leadership and specifically faculty led management. This combination of approaches is what is required in professional learning opportunities for teachers and school leaders.

This research study also identified the need for training in EI to be more widespread across all levels of the school and that prior to becoming leaders, teachers require professional learning in EI. *Recommendation 3:* Professional learning opportunities in EI and leadership skills need to be made available to teachers at varying stages of their career.

Professional learning which begins early in a teacher's career can be used as a foundation to accommodate new positions, tasks and responsibilities. As evidenced by Higgs and Aitken's (2003) research, EI may also be a predictor of leadership potential. This would address some of the earlier research findings, that highlight the problems with leaders being selected without any formal leadership training, specifically in relational and affective skills, or experience in conflict resolution or leading change.

Additionally, this study presented evidence that further attention on the interplay between teaching and leading roles is needed. Professional learning design needs to consider the dual roles of school leaders, as leaders and teachers. Chen and Guo's (2018) study into the impact of principal EI and instructional leadership on teaching strategy revealed that emotional intelligence could be used in the improvement of teaching practice as well as leader effectiveness. There are also links here with years of experience which was identified as significant by Chen and Walker's (2021) study into the emotional trajectory of principals.

We need to consider individual professional development. Targeted areas could include strategies similar to those designed by Gilar-Corbi et al. (2018) in their intervention for teachers in training: "training on perceiving and understanding one's own emotions and others' emotions; identifying and understanding the impact one's own feelings in adopting decisions; expressing one's own emotions

and the stress experienced; and managing emotions” (p. 9)

Recommendation 4: Professional learning in emotional intelligence needs to be designed to support leaders in developing positive coping strategies to help manage the emotional labour associated with their work.

Leaders are often placed in untenable situations, as the behaviours and practices associated with improved group outcomes are also often linked to negative consequences for their own emotional health. EI may be associated with effective identification and processing of emotional experiences, and with effectively regulating emotions to reduce adverse outcomes (Austin et al., 2008; Saklofske et al., 2012). Furthermore, Reynolds and O’Dwyer’s (2008) research, identified strategies for coping with stress were found to be positive and a significant predictor of leadership effectiveness as well.

By exploring both descriptive accounts of school leaders’ application of EI (from reflection diaries), combined with results from EI measures (including followers/colleagues’ feedback), we could potentially provide avenues to individualise professional learning further. Furthermore, if those entering the position considered that their opportunities for ongoing learning were designed to support their practice, well-being and quality of work relationships, as opposed to the widely held belief that it is for accountability and administrative purposes, we may potentially reduce the quantity of teachers leaving the profession. This in turn creates a larger pool of potential leader candidates.

9.6 Limitations of the Study

A case study approach was chosen for this study of school leaders’ enactment of EI, because it enabled an empirically rich, context dependent (Flyvbjerg, 2006) account. The study was designed to contribute to the theory associating EI with leadership in school setting and to provide practical examples, as Flyvbjerg (2006) suggests, to build disciplinary knowledge. As Nath (2005) argues, the purpose of case studies is not about generalising in the traditional sense but about studying the particular in depth to provide insights for practice and professional learning.

I acknowledge that the choice of leaders may have seemed limiting. However, my first preference, in addressing a gap in the literature, was to select leaders who were in different leadership positions in the school, not to focus only on principals. The context in each case was their different schools – both primary and secondary – and their different roles rather than attributes such as gender or ethnicity. While further studies could examine the role of gender (the main differentiating attribute in

Australian schools), this was not the focus of this study, nor were attempts made to generalise about gender differences beyond pointing out what was context specific and may have compared to the literature.

9.7 Conclusion

The leaders in my study had been part of varying leadership journeys. They had participated in different professional learning opportunities, they had been mentored in different ways, and they each focused on different elements of their leadership when reflecting. However, my study has established that emotions have an inescapable impact on how leadership is enacted. My leaders' ability to demonstrate awareness, understanding and management of their and others' emotions significantly impacted their daily practice. For at least one of the leaders in my study, managing emotions also came at a cost to her own health. If leaders are to be able to preserve a sense of self and level of well-being throughout their leadership, then it is therefore important to consider multiple ways in which to support them in their development and daily practice.

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Appendices

Appendix A

University of Wollongong Ethics Approval



UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA

Dear Dr Weatherby-Fell,

I am pleased to advise that the application detailed below has been **approved**.

Ethics Number: 2016/957
Approval Date: 20/12/2016
Expiry Date: 19/12/2017
Project Title: The pervasive theme of emotional intelligence in teachers' development as effective leaders.
Researcher/s: Duursma Anna; Norwood Kelly; Verenikina Irina; Weatherby-Fell Noelene
Documents Approved: Ethics Application
Consent Form V2 - 10/12/2016
Participant Information Sheet V2 - 10/12/2016
Interview Questions V1 - 17/11/2016
Response to review (Amendments Table V1 - 17/12/2016)

Sites:

Site	Principal Investigator for Site
NSW Department of Education - Shoalhaven Region NSW	Dr Noelene Weatherby-Fell

The HREC has reviewed the research proposal for compliance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* and approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with this document. Compliance is monitored through progress reports; the HREC may also undertake physical monitoring of research.

Approval is granted for a twelve month period; extension of this approval will be considered on receipt of a progress report prior to the expiry date. Extension of approval requires:

- The submission of an annual progress report and a final report on completion of your project.
- Approval by the HREC of any proposed changes to the protocol or investigators.
- Immediate report of serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants.
- Immediate report of unforeseen events that might affect the continued acceptability of the project.

If you have any queries regarding the HREC review process or your ongoing approval please contact the

Ethics Unit on 4221 3386 or email rso-ethics@uow.edu.au.
Yours sincerely,

Melanie Randle

Associate Professor Melanie Randle,
Chair, UOW & ISLHD Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee

The University of Wollongong and Illawarra and Shoalhaven Local Health District Social Sciences HREC is constituted and functions in accordance with the NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.

Appendix B

NSW Public Education Ethics Approval (SERAP)



Mrs Kelly Norwood
26 Thomas Street
Milton NSW 2538

DOC17/226553
SERAP 2016580

Dear Mrs Norwood

I refer to your application to conduct a research project in NSW government schools entitled *The pervasive theme of emotional intelligence in teachers' development as effective leaders*. I am pleased to inform you that your application has been approved.

You may contact principals of the nominated schools to seek their participation. **You should include a copy of this letter with the documents you send to principals.**

This approval will remain valid until 19-Dec-2017.

The following researchers or research assistants have fulfilled the Working with Children screening requirements to interact with or observe children for the purposes of this research for the period indicated:

Researcher name	WWCC	WWCC expires
Kelly Norwood	WWC0145840E	24-Oct-2018

I draw your attention to the following requirements for all researchers in NSW government schools:

- The privacy of participants is to be protected as per the NSW Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998.
- School principals have the right to withdraw the school from the study at any time. The approval of the principal for the specific method of gathering information must also be sought.
- The privacy of the school and the students is to be protected.
- The participation of teachers and students must be voluntary and must be at the school's convenience.
- Any proposal to publish the outcomes of the study should be discussed with the research approvals officer before publication proceeds.
- All conditions attached to the approval must be complied with.

When your study is completed please email your report to: serap@det.nsw.edu.au
You may also be asked to present on the findings of your research.

I wish you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Robert Stevens
Manager, Research
9 March 2017

School Policy and Information Management
NSW Department of Education
Level 1, 1 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst NSW 2010 – Locked Bag 53, Darlinghurst NSW 1300
Telephone: 02 9244 5060 – Email: serap@det.nsw.edu.au



Appendix C

Audit Trail

Date	Data Collected	Time	Participant	Code
*April 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Lou	RD
*April 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Lou	RD
1 st May 2017	Participant Observation- Senior Executive meeting	50mins	Pat	O
1 st May 2017	Discussion of Practice	15mins	Pat	D
12 th May 2017	Participant Observation- Executive meeting	50 mins	Pat	O
12 th May 2017	Discussion of Practice	15mins	Pat	D
29 th May 2017	Participant Observation- LST Meeting	30mins	Elle	O
29 th May 2017	Discussion of Practice	20mins	Elle	D
29 th May 2017	Participant Observation- Mentoring Meeting	30mins	Elle	O
29 th May 2017	Discussion of Practice	10mins	Elle	D
30 th May 2017	Participant Observation- Leading Literacy meeting	50mins	Will	O
30 th May 2017	Discussion of Practice	10mins	Will	D
30 th May 2017	Participant Observation- Learning intentions, assessment & feedback meeting	45mins	Will	O
30 th May 2017	Discussion of Practice	15mins	Will	D
31 st May 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Will	RD
31 st May 2017	Participant Observation- Inter-school sport competition	45mins	Elle	O
31 st May 2017	Discussion of Practice	25mins	Elle	D
6 th June 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Will	RD
8 th June 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Elle	RD
9 th June 2017	Participant Observation- Staff Meeting	50mins	Will	O
9 th June 2017	Discussion of Practice	5mins	Will	D
12 th June 2017	Participant Observation- Staff Meeting	35mins	Elle	O
12 th June 2017	Discussion of Practice	15mins	Elle	D
13 th June 2017	Participant Observation -Mentoring meeting	60mins	Lou	O
13 th June 2017	Discussion of Practice	15mins	Lou	D
13 th June 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Will	RD
16 th June 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Elle	RD
19 th June 2017	Participant Observation -Mentoring Meeting Leadership Development Initiative (LDI) Conference	90mins	Pat	O
19 th June 2017	Discussion of Practice	45mins	Pat	D
19 th June 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Elle	RD
19 th June 2017	Participant Observation -Workshop (LDI)	40mins	Lou	O
19 th June 2017	Discussion of Practice	30mins	Lou	D
20 th June 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Will	RD
21 st June 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Elle	RD
21 st June 2017	Participant Observation- Secondary Principal Meeting (VC)	60mins	Pat	O
21 st June 2017	Discussion of Practice	15mins	Pat	D
23 rd June 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Elle	RD
27 th June 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Will	RD
No Date	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Pat	RD
17 th July 2017	Participant Observation- Professional Development- Strategic Direction	60mins	Will	O
17 th July 2017	Discussion of Practice	5mins	Will	D
20 th July 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Pat	RD
22 nd July 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Pat	RD

25th July 2017	Participant Observation- Professional Learning Team meeting	60mins	Lou	O
25th July 2017	Discussion of Practice	10mins	Lou	D
25th July 2017	Participant Observation- Beginning Teachers meeting	60mins	Lou	O
25th July 2017	Discussion of Practice	15mins	Lou	D
25th July 2017	Participant Observation- Staff Meeting/Lunch	60mins	Pat	O
25th July 2017	Discussion of Practice	20mins	Pat	D
28th July 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Elle	RD
1st August 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Elle	RD
2nd August 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	30mins	Elle	I
3rd August 2017	Participant Interview	30mins	Elle	I
10th August 2017	Reflection Diary Collected	N/A	Elle	RD
7th August 2017	Participant Observation- Staff meeting (External Validation)	45mins	Lou	O
7th August 2017	Discussion of Practice	10mins	Lou	D
8th August 2017	Participant Interview	30mins	Pat	I
23rd August 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Pat	RD
24th August 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Pat	RD
25th August 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Pat	RD
30th August 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Pat	RD
31st August 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Pat	RD
5th September 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Pat	RD
5th September 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Pat	RD
6th September 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Pat	RD
10th September 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Pat	RD
14th September	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Pat	RD
14th September	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Lou	RD
15th September 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Pat	RD
18th September 2017	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Pat	RD
No Date	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Will	RD
19th September 2017	Participant Interview	30mins	Lou	I
19th September 2017	Reflection Diary Collected	N/A	1	RD
22nd September 2017	Participant Interview	30mins	4	I
No Date	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Lou	RD
No Date	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Lou	RD
No Date	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Lou	RD
No Date	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Lou	RD
No Date	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Lou	RD
No Date	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Lou	RD
23rd September 2017	Reflection Diary Collected	N/A	Lou	RD
No Date	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Will	RD
No Date	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Will	RD
No Date	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Will	RD
No Date	Reflection Diary Entry	N/A	Will	RD
17th October 2017	Reflection Diary Collected	N/A	Will	RD

Appendix D

Data Code Template

Appendix D Data Code Template

Code Name	Code
Self-awareness (SA)	
Recognition/understanding of emotions (1)	SA1
Realistic self-assessment (2)	SA2
Sense of Self/identity/Confidence (3)	SA3
Self-regulation (SR)	
Redirect disruptive emotions (1)	SR1
Suspend Judgement (2)	SR2
Internal Motivation/Perspective (IM)	
Curiosity for learning (1)	IM1
Optimism/positivity (2)	IM2
Organisational commitment (3)	IM3
Evaluation before action (4)	IM4
Empathy & Balance (EB)	
Understand emotional makeup of others (1)	EB1
Appropriate responses to others (2)	EB2
Building and supporting talent (3)	EB3
Desire to soften negative emotions in others (4)	EB4
Social Skills (SS)	
Managing r/ships (1)	SS1
Build network (2)	SS2
Build rapport (3)	SS3
Leading expertise (4)	SS4

Code Name	Code	Code Name	Code
Self-awareness (SA)		Reflective Practice (RP)	
Recognition/understanding of emotions (1)	SA1		
Realistic self-assessment (2)	SA2	Outcome evaluation	RP1
Sense of Self/identity/Confidence (3)	SA3	Reflection in action	RP2
Self-regulation (SR)			
Redirect disruptive emotions (1)	SR1		
Suspend Judgement (2)	SR2		
Intrinsic Motivation (IM)			
Curiosity for learning (1)	IM1	Inquiry based projects	IM5
Optimism/positivity (2)	IM2	Mindset	IM6
Organisational commitment (3)	IM3		
Evaluation before action (4)	IM4		
Empathy (E)			
Understand emotional makeup of others (1)	EB1		
Appropriate responses to others (2)	EB2	Interaction processing	EB5
Building and supporting talent (3)	EB3	Mentoring	EB6
Desire to soften negative emotions in others (4)	EB4		
Social Skills (SS)			
Managing r/ships (1)	SS1	Conflict resolution	SS5
Build network (2)	SS2	Collaborative practice	SS6
Build rapport (3)	SS3		
Leading expertise (4)	SS4	Vision	SS7

Appendix E

Observation Template

Participant:	Observation No:	Date:	Location:	Type of Observation:
Introduction			30minutes	
10 minutes			35minutes	
15 minutes			40minutes	
20minutes			45minutes	
25minutes			50minutes	


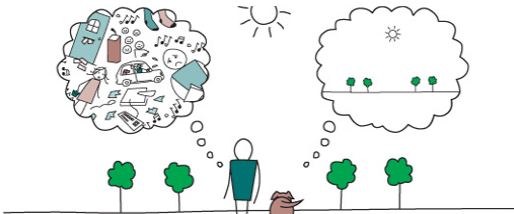

Appendix G

Interview Questions

1. What is your job title, and how many years have you been in this job? What has led you here?
2. What are some of the responsibilities in your work?
3. What is the role of emotions in your work?
4. In your own words describe what you know about emotional intelligence.
5. What is role of emotions in collaboration and teamwork?
6. What are ways you manage emotions related to supporting the work of your team?
7. How do you think emotional intelligence can help you lead your team?
8. Think about an effective leader that you have encountered and describe the characteristics of that individual that are relevant to emotional intelligence
9. How can leadership skills be enhanced through professional development? For example, through training on EI?
10. Within the multifaceted functions of a school, opportunities to lead, display effective leadership, are more frequent than first appreciated, as research has highlighted, to lead effectively, one requires a set of emotional skills. How can development initiatives be embedded to achieve success within these opportunities of leadership, not only achieving set outcomes, but positively impact the culture of the school with effective leadership?

Appendix H

Reflective Diary Template

<p>Everything I do and say with anyone makes a difference~ Gita Bellin</p> 	<p><i>Date</i></p>
<p>What we are today comes from our thoughts of yesterday, and our present thoughts build our life tomorrow~ Buddha</p>  <p>Mind Full, or Mindful?</p>	<p><i>Date</i></p> <p><i>Date</i></p>
<p><i>Date</i></p> <p><i>Date</i></p>	<p>2016 Word of the Year~ Post Truth Objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.</p> 
<p><i>Date</i></p> <p><i>Date</i></p>	<p><i>Date</i></p> <p><i>Date</i></p>

Appendix I

Letter to Principals



UNIVERSITY
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AUSTRALIA

Dear Principal

This is an invitation to participate in a study conducted by researchers at the University of Wollongong. The purpose of the research is to explore the kinds of behaviours that are found to be evident in effective educational leadership. The research will aim to highlight and investigate the connections between emotional intelligence and successful leadership in educational settings. The research findings will provide recommendations for professional development, detailing specific examples of emotionally intelligent responses and approaches in educational leadership. Participants, holding formal leadership positions i.e., faculty head, year coordinator, assistant principal, or principals, are being sought. Recommendations from you, on your colleagues and executive team members will frame participant recruitment and selection.

RESEARCHERS

Kelly Norwood PhD Candidate, School of Education UOW, kln885@uowmail.edu.au.

A/Prof Irina Verenikina, School of Education UOW, irina@uow.edu.au.

Dr Elisabeth Duursma, School of Education UOW, eduursma@uow.edu.au.

WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO DO

If you or your staff choose to be included, a timetable of observations will be negotiated with each participant based on the occasions where leaders have an opportunity to demonstrate their individual leadership styles. Consisting of five sessions, observations recommended by the participant may include morning briefings, executive and faculty meetings, and daily interactions and communication. It is expected that each of the five sessions would take 30 minutes to 1 hour and be spaced over a school term, at the convenience of the participant. On completion of the observations, participants will be asked questions based on what was observed. The data will be collated, emerging patterns or themes will be identified, and these will then be addressed in the semi-structured interviews. The interviews will be framed by 9 questions aimed at capturing the perspectives and opinions of leaders, on how and when they use emotional appraisal and regulation in their roles. The interview will take 45 minutes – 1 hour and will be digitally recorded.

During the data collection, participants will be encouraged to briefly record (1 paragraph) their interactions and relationship exchanges (1 per week) in the context of leadership which reflect behaviours related to EI. This method of data collection will contribute to identifying and exploring the emotional intelligence competencies that the individual participants find critical. These journal entries will be targeting the individual practices that each participant employs in their roles as leaders, including explicit examples of practice.

The observations and interviews will be used to identify episodes of leadership where elements of EI are manifested, and any themes will be identified. The journal entries will provide further insight into current practice, and wield specific examples and practices underpinned by EI.

POSSIBLE RISKS, INCONVENIENCES AND DISCOMFORTS

Apart from the 45-60 minutes of the participants' time for the interview and time required for journal entries, we can foresee no risks for participants. Their involvement in the study is voluntary and they may withdraw their participation from the study at any time and withdraw any data that they have provided to that point. The decision not to participate, or to withdraw from the study, will not affect any current or future relationship with the researchers, the DEC or with the University of Wollongong.

BENEFITS OF THE RESEARCH

The research findings will provide recommendations for professional development, detailing specific examples of emotionally intelligent responses and approaches in educational leadership. The outcomes of this research will add to the existing body of knowledge on leadership and can serve as a means of self- assessment and further professional development, aligning with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011), thus assisting leaders to use emotional intelligence within their practice, and establishing more collaborative and cohesive environments.

ETHICS REVIEW AND COMPLAINTS

This study has been reviewed by the Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Wollongong. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the way this research has been conducted, you can contact the UOW Ethics Officer on (02) 4221 3386 or email rso-ethics@uow.edu.au.

Thank you for your interest in this study.

Kelly Norwood

PhD Candidate School of Education UOW, kl885@uowmail.edu.au.

Appendix J

Consent form for Participants



UNIVERSITY
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AUSTRALIA

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

RESEARCH TITLE: The Pervasive Theme of Emotional Intelligence in Teachers Development as Effective Leaders

RESEARCHERS: KELLY NORWOOD (UOW); DR NOELENE WEATHERBY-FELL (UOW); DR IRINA VERENIKINA (UOW); DR ELISABETH DUURSMA (UOW).

I have been given information about *The Pervasive Theme of Emotional Intelligence in Teachers Development as Effective Leaders* and discussed the research project with Kelly Norwood who is conducting this research as part of a research project supervised by Dr Noelene Weatherby-Fell in the School of Education at the University of Wollongong.

I have been advised of the potential risks and burdens associated with this research, which include the time taken to participate in the semi-structured interviews (approximately 30 minutes) and have had an opportunity to ask Kelly Norwood any questions I may have about the research and my participation. I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, I have been invited to participate and I am free to withdraw from the research at any time. My non-participation or withdrawal of consent will not affect my relationship with the University of Wollongong.

If I have any enquiries about the research, I can contact Kelly Norwood, Ph: If I have concerns or complaints regarding the way the research or has been conducted, I can contact the Ethics Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee, Office of Research, University of Wollongong on 42213386 or email rso-ethics@uow.edu.au.

By signing below, I am indicating my consent to take part in a recorded interview about leader experiences. I understand that the data collected from my participation will be combined with that of other participants and used for a PhD thesis, reports, conference presentations, journal article publications, and I consent for it to be used in that manner.

Signed

Date

.....

.....

Name (please print)

.....