How do teachers perceive mandated pedagogical change and its enactment?

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Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I acknowledge the teachers in state education who are steadfast in their determination to make a better world through learning.

This thesis is the story of ten of those teachers, who have been and remain my colleagues and my friends, and who have allowed me the honour of delving into their personal and professional lives to create their narrative of what it is to teach. This is their story and it is an extraordinary narrative of belief and commitment. It is an honest and refreshing exploration of a teacher's life, into the daily machinations which make this job so interesting, so frustrating, so challenging and so very, very rewarding. Thank you for sharing this with me and believing.

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Dedication

To all the young people in schools, who are much better at change than we are.
Abstract

While there is a substantial amount of critical work that has been produced on the impact of change in schools, there is a gap in the literature around experiencing and managing mandated pedagogical change from a teacher perspective. The study begins with an overview of the background to the structure of school organization in Victoria, followed by an extensive literature review on the key themes of change, policy enactment, school leadership and teacher identity. The methodology explains the research design of the case study, which explores the stories of ten teacher leaders who experience mandated pedagogical change, and investigates how this impacts on their daily work. The data was collected at three levels: an individual narrative, an interview and a focus group discussion. The results were coded and analyzed using Bourdieu’s thinking tools – habitus, field, capital, doxa and illusio – to help reveal and understand what it is that impacts most on the teachers in their practice. The research revealed that in the work around change in schools, the context of teacher practice is not recognized. In practice, this indicated a diminishing sense of professionalism for the teachers and caused uncertainty about their purpose and their identity. It revealed a climate of performativity and accountability in schools today which was supported by current change literature. The possible marginalization and resistance from teachers was revealed to be a consequence of this emergent culture. How this impacts on teachers’ daily practice is a key focus of the discussion and conclusion chapters. School leadership is also considered in a mandated change climate and how teachers perceive the role of leaders in the school. The recommendations suggest some crucial elements that are considered necessary when implementing mandated pedagogical change in schools.

Key words: mandated pedagogical change, teacher identity, professionalism, teacher practice, school leadership, resistance.
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Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Setting the context

Frazer, Dunstan, and Creed (1985) argued that in large and complex institutions such as education departments, a historical perspective is imperative for any real understanding of how change is delivered, understood, and enacted. Since the 1980s, the Education Department of Victoria has mandated a number of classroom reforms which ask that schools and teachers consider pedagogical change and revised practices to improve overall student learning and outcomes. Enacting and sustaining pedagogical change in schools is considered to be a challenging task (Lingard et al., 2003; Degenhardt & Duignan, 2010; Fullan, 2011) and one which relies on strong leadership (Lingard et al., 2003; Gilbert, 2011) and teacher involvement (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2012). The following section reviews the development of the Victorian school structure and the pedagogical and curriculum development changes that schools faced over the past one hundred and forty years. It then narrows the focus to the time period from the 1980s to the present, which is the period of most significance to this research.

1.2 A historical perspective

Schools today are generally recognised by a structure that is underpinned by the 1872 Education Act (The Education Act, 1872). The significance of The Act was that it set up a centralised model of school education which was free, secular and compulsory. Schools today share these same three characteristics. Compulsory attendance at school is a
significant feature of The Act because it recognised the societal benefits of having an educated population: having literate and numerate citizens were seen to be “the way to common good” (The Education Act, 1872). Possible conflict between church and schools was removed with the decision for state schools to be secular – a decision which has remained to the present day. The aim of education for all was to “equip them (students) for citizenship” (The Education Act, 1872, p.1).

The position of the Director of Education, responsible only to the Minister of Education, was first created in 1901 with the first appointment of Frank Tate made in early 1902, a position he held until 1928 (Frazer et al., 1985, pp. 73-74). During the following eighty year period, since the initial appointment of Tate, changes occurred within the system which resulted in a shift from a single source of control to a splintering of levels, alongside a massive increase in the numbers of student enrolments across both the primary and secondary sectors (Frazer et al., 1985). By the 1980s, education had become a significantly large and an increasingly complex organisation, with political and social imperatives requiring multi-tiered management and control.

It could be said that little changed regarding the general purpose of education since the development of The Education Act in 1872. After one hundred and fifty years of compulsory education, there remains significant common ground in today’s educational climate. State education in Victorian continues to be guided by principles which parallel those stipulated in the early days, such as:

• A mandated education for students of a certain age;
• A certain standard of education must be reached in reading, writing and arithmetic, recognised by some form of official certificate or documentation;
• Schooling is secular and compulsory for a required number of hours in the day and days in the year;
• Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring their children attend school;
• Instruction is essentially free.

A key similarity is that schools continue to focus on preparing young people for adulthood and for contributing to their society in a meaningful and productive way. Just as the original act aimed to produce citizens who could make a contribution to society, similar foci exist today. For example, The Melbourne Declaration (2008) was published in 2008, by the then ministers of Education for each state and territory of Australia. This twenty-page document was based on two key goals: promoting equity and excellence in all young Australians, and creating successful learners and informed citizens. The declaration advocated that

As a nation Australia values the central role of education in building a democratic, equitable and just society – a society that is prosperous, cohesive and culturally diverse, and that values Australia’s Indigenous cultures as a key part of the nation’s history, present and future. (Melbourne Declaration for Educational Goals for Young Australians, December, 2008, p. 3)
Since locating the administration of education within a central body, Victorian education continued to operate out of a centralised administration. Although there have been significant shifts and movements in the distribution and locations of these administrators, the decision-making core continued to be located outside of schools themselves (Frazer et al., 1985).

Yates (2009) described the decades of change leading into the twenty-first century, where in Australia politicians shifted their rating of the Education portfolio from one of the lowliest to one of the highest, resulting in an accompanying increase in media attention (Yates, 2009). In this sense, education became a prominent part of the political and economic agendas of both of the key parties in Australia.

This research key foci is the voices of teacher leaders as they are charged with implementing mandated pedagogical changes. Data analysis provides compelling evidence from the change agents (the teachers) that implementing mandated pedagogical change can be problematic. The data suggests that external authorities may not necessarily understand or recognise the complexities of educational change within the classroom.

1.3 Mandated changes to curriculum and pedagogical practices

During the 1980s the drive was for a curriculum framework from which to devise all curriculum programs at the school level (Howes, 2012). This planning culminated in the implementation of the CSF (Curriculum Standards Framework), which was in place until 2000 (Howes, 2012, p. 5). This then re-emerged in its second form, the CSF II, which was ultimately replaced in
2005 by VELS (Victorian Essential Learning Standards). The VELS experienced a transitory stage as the Australian Curriculum was incrementally introduced in schools (Howes, 2012). The VELS was then rebadged as AusVELS, which reflected Victoria’s interpretation of the Australian Curriculum (VCAA website). From 2015, AusVELS was replaced by the Victorian Curriculum, and all key planning documents were provided to schools and teachers via the VCAA website.

According to Yates, Collins, and O’Connor (2011), a difficulty in Australia is “getting a documented sense of what has been going on in school curriculum. The recording and documenting of curriculum across the states is not of a common system and different agendas dominate according to current priorities” (p. 8 – 9). The 1980s was a notable period of change within the education department with the revised emphasis being on delivering a curriculum suitable for a post-industrial economy.

The Curriculum Standards Framework (CSF) along with the emerging VCE (Victorian Certificate of Education) was the alternative to HSC (High School Certificate) and this marked a considerable pedagogical shift and revision of the school curriculum in Victoria. For example, the HSC represented the end of thirteen years of schooling and that end was characterised by external three-hour exams for every subject. In most cases, those exams counted for one hundred percent of the assessment for the year. This grade then determined the students’ capacity to enter a tertiary institution. It was incumbent on teachers to direct students to the exam, to teach exam technique, and to prepare students for that three-hour assessment at the end. Where VCE differed was that at least half of the
assessment became school-based and set and assessed internally. The final exam had less impact on the students’ overall grade, although a score was still given for their overall performance, which would then give them access to further study.

After the CSF was relaunched as the CSFII, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) replaced the Board of Studies as the local curriculum authority (as it remains today), and work began on developing the VELS (Victorian Essential Learning Standards). The VELS was based on the notion of essential learnings for all Victorian students—the focus being learnings that are appropriate and essential for students of the twenty-first century. In terms of international frameworks, Howes (2012) argued that VELS broke new ground in its attempt not only to offer traditional subjects but to align them with interdisciplinary learning and personal and social capabilities. This would naturally call for shifting pedagogy to acknowledge the different direction of learning: rather than the focus being on the teacher as the bearer of facts and knowledge, the revised curriculum had a focus on problem-based learning and inquiry. This would necessarily demand some change in tactics and strategies and arguably, could cause some discomfort for teachers who were more accustomed to a traditional, teacher-led approach.

In May 2009, the national board, Australian Curriculum, Reporting and Assessment Authority (ACARA) was formed, which replaced the National Curriculum Board (Yates et al., 2011, p. 9). Its primary role was to develop the national goals of schooling outlined in the Melbourne Declaration (see Glossary). This would become the National Curriculum (under the then Prime
Minister Kevin Rudd), and was rebranded as the Australian Curriculum. The Australian Curriculum was trialled in a number of schools across Victoria and the implementation of the first four subjects – English, Maths, Humanities and Science – took place in most government, Catholic and independent schools by 2013. Other subjects followed, with a noticeable focus on General Capabilities as being a significant factor in schooling (see Glossary for a full explanation).

By 2015, in Victoria this was rebranded as The Victorian Curriculum Foundation–10 (F–10) which

sets out what every student should learn during their first eleven years of schooling. The curriculum is the common set of knowledge and skills required by students for life-long learning, social development and active and informed citizenship. The Victorian Curriculum F–10 incorporates the Australian Curriculum and reflects Victorian priorities and standards (VCAA website).

The General Capabilities were now just referred to as The Capabilities and the number of these had been reduced to four: Ethical, Personal and Social, Intercultural, and Creative capabilities.

The curriculum structure, content and delivery in schools in Victoria has continued to evolve since the early beginnings of compulsory state education, with a recognisable framework that has remained relatively constant, even while there have been significant shifts and movements in
curriculum and pedagogy. A range of educational changes has been mandated by the Victorian Education Department since the 1980s. In Victoria where this case study is focussed, the changes to the curriculum structure over the past three decades are quite considerable, as explained above. Significant factors in these reforms include changes to assessment and reporting and a shift in the approach to the age- based curriculum to more of a continuum of learning. For example, in providing planning designs and approaches for the introduction of the Australian Curriculum, Mockler and Talbot (2012) contrast traditional with authentic assessment strategies in order to draw reference to the “seamless interaction of pedagogy and assessment” (p. 15). What underpins the philosophy of the Australian Curriculum is that schools and teachers must play an active role in determining what kinds of pedagogies might best suit student learning (Mockler & Talbot, 2012).

An increasing focus on external testing, such as NAPLAN and PAT testing (see Glossary) has added a layer of external accountability to teacher practice. This shift in approaches to assessment reflects a response to changing learner needs and an understanding that assessment practices must align with pedagogy and curriculum. These changes are also in response to wider global imperatives, which are explored further in the next chapter. Alongside these changes are those perhaps more closely associated with responses to social needs, such as: anti-bullying programs; drug and alcohol programs; behaviour management programs, such as restorative practices, which reflect a shift away from punitive ones; driver education and safety; counselling for careers and pathways; leadership for young people programs; social justice and awareness initiatives; environmental
sustainability; technology for the twenty-first century and how to deal with the social impact of that technology, just to highlight a selection of such initiatives that may impact on teachers’ work.

These changes are essentially external changes – that is, they are proposed from external authorities such as the education department. The motivations for the changes may vary from political, to economic, to responses to social needs. The school leadership has the responsibility of passing the change imperatives down to the teaching staff, who enact the changes. How those changes are filtered through the school is largely dependent on how they are interpreted by the leadership team. The resourcing of the proposed changes is also dependent on the school leadership team and the school’s capacity to accommodate and enact change.

Frazer et al. (1985) made the following observation about what was then called the Education Department:

There is no reason to believe that history is considerate enough to repeat itself, nor can we thoughtlessly raid the past to find solutions for today’s problems. But there are times when we fail to recognise that organisations carry with them into the present the marks of past struggles … its history cannot be left in the past because it is part of the present. (p. 107)
Setting the historical context highlights that one of the key elements of school education is that teachers continue to face mandated pedagogical changes.

1.4 Positioning the research

Yates et al. (2011) noted the struggle schools and educators face: “… politicians, curriculum professionals, and academic researchers have all been struggling with quite fundamental broad questions about knowledge, social change, economic change and the role of schools today” (p. 25). At a local level, schools may appear to have more autonomy, as they are generally responsible for documenting their curriculum, policies, and employing staff. However, it has been argued that the level of autonomy within schools is actually minimal. Lortie (2009), for example, suggested that under the leadership of the principal, schools are generally quite limited in their capacity to implement educational change of any real significance. He recognised the importance of the symbolic authority of the principal in the immediate school environment and the community. However, he also identified the state and educational bureaucracy as the bodies who hold the actual power to mandate significant educational change (Lortie, 2009). Yates (2009) also identified significant problems for those who were charged with rethinking education. Problems such as balancing different ways of thinking about knowledge and the focus in today’s world on change and the future were highlighted. Traditionally, teaching was more likely to be seen as an act of passing on information and knowledge. Yates (2009) identified such issues as being problematic for those thinking about pedagogical change, and as
being compelling reasons for ongoing research into pedagogy and curriculum change in Australia.

Further to these obstacles confronting schools is when change is mandated from external agencies, the impact on the teachers and staff in general is further exacerbated. The generally accepted view is that a collaborative approach to school improvement works best (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Wrigley et al., 2012); however, mandated change risks marginalising staff and lessening the opportunity for collaborative work (Bailey, 2000). Bailey proposed that in the development of educational change and reform teachers have not been consulted. She argued that in seeking change, bureaucrats should engage rather than direct teachers (Bailey, 2000, p. 113) and proposed a change process that would work “with teachers rather than on them” (Bailey, p. 113).

In this research, mandated pedagogical change will refer to change that affects teachers in their daily practice. The understanding of pedagogy as the practice of teaching and learning extends to curriculum and assessment as integral components. Curriculum changes in Victoria since the 1980s have been quite extensive and have necessarily meant teachers have had to review their classroom practices as they make decisions about how to incorporate those changes. Assessment procedures have changed considerably as well: a key example of this is national testing of reading, writing and spelling and number (NAPLAN, see Glossary) and the associated benchmarks of student learning (for a definition of Benchmarks, see Glossary of terms). Mandated changes to the curriculum structure in schools are necessarily accompanied by changes to assessment and evaluation practices.
The meaning of *pedagogy* in this research draws firstly on Dewey’s work in terms of defining pedagogy and uses his understanding of this term as a starting point. Dewey’s belief in education as a social process was based on his belief that school should represent real life for young people, that it should deepen and extend their values and experiences from their home life, and that it is through education that society can shape itself and its direction (Dewey, 1897). He believed that any practice in schools that caused the child to become passive or absorbing was a waste; that learning should be an active rather than passive process, and a child’s interest should be encouraged. His presented the view that “education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform” (Dewey, 1897, p. 77). He did not believe in a succession of studies as an ideal curriculum – rather, in the “development of new attitudes towards, and new interests in, experience” (Dewey, p. 77).

Pedagogy in the context of this investigation also draws on the definitions offered by Hudson (2013) and Shulman (1986) as a way to further advance an understanding and application of the term *pedagogical knowledge* (Hudson, 2013; Shulman, 1986). Shulman referred to pedagogical content knowledge as

The ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others …. Pedagogical content knowledge also includes an understanding of what makes the learning of specific topics easy or difficult. (Shulman, 1986, p. 10)
Hudson (2013) extended this understanding beyond the theory to the classroom practice and developed a framework for applying pedagogical knowledge to practice. This framework draws on these specific practices: planning, timetabling lessons, preparation, teaching strategies, content knowledge, problem solving, questioning, classroom management, implementation, assessment, and viewpoints for teaching. This representation of pedagogy will be followed throughout this study in referring to pedagogy within the school at the operational level. On a more global, broader level, the understanding of pedagogy as explained by Wrigley, Lingard and Thomson (2012) is also applied. Wrigley et al. (2012) identified school change as a pedagogical issue: “organisational change must serve pedagogical ends and be pedagogical in approach” (p. 98). Their use of pedagogy here refers to

Educating for human development – helping young people to become more fully human, individually and collectively. Pedagogy is always grounded, although it aspires to a quality and condition of life that transcends its starting point. It expands the individual’s possibilities – economic, social, aesthetic, moral – and helps to constitute a new social imaginary, an imagined better future, locally, nationally and globally. (Wrigley et al., 2012, p. 98)

The term teacher leader is used throughout this research as the teachers who were selected to take part in the research have met particular
criteria (see Chapter 3 for a more detailed description of the selection process). They are all teachers, but they are also leaders in the school. This distinction is based on Gilbert’s (2011) view of teacher leadership. Teacher leaders are recognised by their professional dispositions, which include a deep commitment to student learning, creativity, courage and decisiveness. They are able to mobilise people around a common purpose, and take initiative. They build trust and draw the trust of their colleagues, work collaboratively and influence school culture through relationships. They understand big picture issues and are effective communicators. As teachers, they are experienced, knowledgeable, innovative, and viewed as competent by their colleagues (Gilbert, 2011, p. 23).

The link between school improvement and collaborative practices could be at risk considering the concern raised by Bailey (2000), who referred to the danger of marginalising teachers in the process of change – a danger that would ultimately lessen the opportunities for collaboration and capital growth in schools.

1.5 The Research Problem

A research “problem” is synonymous with “the need for study” (Creswell, 2007, p. 102) and I found that it was clearer to use this terminology when articulating the rationale for the study.

The research will explore potential risks of mandated change – such as loss of teacher autonomy and reduced teacher capital - and the tensions that arise.
The rationale is that teacher voice is underrepresented regarding how pedagogical change is perceived by teachers in their daily working lives. This study aims to fill this gap by providing a voice and establishing perhaps “a new line of thinking” (Creswell, 2007, p. 102). An extensive literature review in Chapter 2 will explore the history of curriculum development, documentation and implementation in Victorian state schools since the 1980s, with a focus on how these changes have been perceived to be successful or otherwise, and what the contributing factors are to success or failure.

1.5.1 Research Questions

In line with Creswell’s (2007) thinking, I adopted research questions that were “open-ended, evolving, and non-directional” (p. 107). My central research question is: How does mandated pedagogical change impact on the professional lives of teacher leaders? In order to be able to answer this question, four sub questions were devised which would “address the major concerns and perplexities to be resolved” (Stake, 1995, p. 17):

1. How do teacher leaders perceive mandated pedagogical change and its enactment?
2. How do teacher leaders manage mandated pedagogical change in their daily practice?
3. In the face of mandated pedagogical change, what is most difficult for teacher leaders?
4. In the face of mandated pedagogical change, how do teacher leaders reconcile their experience and knowledge regarding teaching and learning?
1.6 Significance of the study

1.6.1 Why it is important.

In Lingard’s words, “a sustainable depth of change based on improving student outcomes is only likely to occur when teachers are involved in influencing the change process” (Lingard, Hayes, Mills and Christie, p. 38). As highlighted by Wrigley et al., (2012), the pedagogical change dilemma impacts schools and teachers in their planning, in their daily work, in teacher development – in short, it is a constant and it is an unresolved issue in schools. For change to be successful and sustainable, there must be a compelling and convincing case for change; often this is the very core of the dilemma. The literature on change in schools raises some strong arguments which support teacher participation and ownership in the change process (Gilbert, 2011; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). This study seeks to provide new knowledge about how this translates into the reality of everyday work in schools.

If teachers’ capital is diminished, then they have less opportunity to develop the professional capital – human, social, decisional – which is vital for whole school improvement and student learning outcomes overall (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). The participants in this case study have reported that their professional capital is diminishing in a change climate and this has been one of the more difficult aspects of change for them. This is coupled with what they perceived as less teacher autonomy and greater teacher resistance. The study is important, therefore, in exploring these negative effects of change.
1.6.2 The potential risk

The importance of the study is embedded in the notion of change being crucial, inevitable, and vital to school improvement – but often difficult, frustrating, and limited in its success. Thus I began the research with a tentative theory about change in schools: the teachers, as change agents, were integral to the change process, and it was through them and by listening to them that increased and improved understanding of implementing mandated pedagogical change in schools could be achieved. The literature on change itself was plentiful but there appeared to be a gap in the literature when mandated pedagogical change was considered from the perspective of the teachers.

This research will follow this line of thinking, and trace the possible ramifications when there is a risk of teachers being marginalised in the change process. It will explore how teacher resistance emerges in a climate of mandated change. This resistance, rather than suggesting teachers are averse to change of any description, offers reasons that consider the complexity of teachers’ work. Resisting change is a measured and considered response when proposed change will not, in their professional experience, produce improved outcomes for students. When teachers are resistant to change, it becomes problematic for school leadership to build professional capital within the school. The onus is on the leadership team to ensure teachers have the right conditions for change and that change that comes from outside of the school can be filtered and managed so that professional capital and knowledge are not compromised. If teachers are not
given agency in the change process, then the risk that they will be marginalised and that resistance will occur is very real.

1.6.3 How this study will add to new knowledge

Bascia and Hargreaves (2000) suggested that “there is certainly not a shortage of research on how to manage educational change” (p. 14) yet educational reform remains elusive, leading them to pose the question: “Why do reform efforts repeatedly fail to engage teachers’ commitments and expertise, or fade from the limelight after their early promises?” (Bascia & Hargreaves, 2000, p. 15). This question about the problematic nature of enacting educational change is at the core of this investigation.

Fullan (2010) suggested that problems associated with change have one thing in common: “they are mired in inertia” (p. 1). What this inertia is actually about is crucial to understanding why change is so often ineffective and so frequently not taken up by teachers. This study will explore how locating change inertia just with the teachers is short-sighted in the broader change climate. Instead, at the crux of the issue is teachers’ very considered and deliberate questioning of change when it is imposed from outside and when they have not been considered in the process. The “inertia” is in fact resistance that is measured and deliberate because it is the way that the teacher leaders can exert their professional identity.

The passivity that is suggested by inertia is reflected in schools when teachers avoid change. The teacher leaders report the tensions that arise when some teachers passively resist change and teacher leaders’ loyalties are stretched. The teacher leaders recognise that often the teachers who resist change most openly are those who can cause this tension among staff.
The inertia is more about the potential conflict between teacher leaders’ habitus and the field, where they are charged with the role of pedagogical change agent. Relatively very little is known about how teacher leaders reconcile their sense of professional purpose, which is intertwined with habitus and capital, and which then interacts with the demands of the field. This lack of knowledge in this area can lead to claims of inertia as suggested by Fullan and elaborated on by Schein (1992), Senge (1999), and Goleman (2011). What is problematic about these claims is oversimplification, which can lead to teachers being considered change-averse.

This research will follow the course of thinking (Gitlin & Margonis 1995; Rubinson, 2002; Evans, 2013; Terhart, 2013; Clement, 2014; Lukacs & Galluzzo, 2014; Thornberg, 2014) which suggested that those who resist change often do so for good reason and those reasons are a significant contributing factor to understandings of the change process.

1.6.4 Positioning the researcher

My interest in mandated pedagogical change and how teachers perceive and respond to change initiatives emerged from my Masters’ research, completed in 2011. This was a case study of how restorative practices were implemented at two schools, and how teachers were responding to the change in the way they worked with young people. Datum was collected through surveys at the two schools represented in the study. This was followed by semi-structured interviews with fifteen teachers of varying roles and ages, and with a roughly even distribution of gender and experience across the two schools. The findings from that research noted that change was troublesome for many teachers. There was evidence that to
be effective, teachers needed to feel some degree of ownership and autonomy over the change. A common theme was that sustaining long-term change appeared to be problematic.

This prompted my ongoing research into why change was often ineffective, short-lasting, and caused disruptions and distractions in schools. I focussed on the group of teacher leaders because of their extensive knowledge and experience of mandated pedagogical change. I explored reasons for resistance to change beyond the notion that teachers were averse to new ideas. I considered how teachers were marginalised through change when their capital was undervalued and how this caused tension and prevented the growth of professional capital in schools.

1.7 Thesis outline

1.7.1 Introduction to Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Bourdieu was chosen as the key theorist for this investigation into mandated pedagogical change and its impact on teachers. Theoretically, the study draws attention to the notion of different types of capital – economic, cultural, social and symbolic - and how amounts of capital can be advantageous (or not) for those playing the game. Bourdieu argued that a field involved people as players. Each person brings with them to that game their capital, their leanings/dispositions (habitus), and their illusio. The concepts of doxa and misrecognition complete the analysis tools.

1.7.1.1 Bourdieu’s thinking tools

The concept of capital within this study is understood as the things with a perceived value that a person brings with them into their field, and
which will then bring to that person social and cultural advantage or disadvantage. The concept of *field* is recognised as “a space of play which exists as such only to the extent that players enter into it who believe in and actively pursue the prize it offers” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 19). Capital and field are interconnected to *habitus*, which refers to dispositions, tendencies and leanings, and presents as the way the person understands and responds to social situations. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) suggested that habitus focuses on our ways of acting, feeling, thinking and being. Conceptually, *illusio* is understood in this research as teachers’ commitment to and belief in education and teaching, and their belief in playing the game. References to *doxa* in the thesis highlight what is essentially taken for granted, the things that are generally accepted without question. *Misrecognition* is another crucial element in Bourdieu’s theory. The process of misrecognition allows for social and cultural reproduction (Jenkins, 1992; Grenfell, 2012). Bourdieu likened misrecognition to symbolic violence, a term used to explain how social hierarchies and social inequalities can be produced and maintained (Schubert, 2008). In the school context – and in relation to this research – this is where the risk of marginalization lies.

Bourdieu’s social concepts (capital, field, habitus, illusio, doxa and misrecognition) are inter-relational in nature and need to be considered as such when investigating the complexities occurring in the educational field, where there are ongoing interactions between teacher leaders, school leaders and education department.
The nature of this study – how teachers manage pedagogical change that is mandated from external authorities – called for a study, among other aspects, about the way power is distributed and understood in the education environment. Bourdieu presented power in terms of a person’s place in their field – in this case, their school and the wider educational setting. This was linked to their habitus, their leanings and dispositions; Bourdieu claimed that these were neither fixed nor pre-determined, but rather they shifted and changed according to the field and the perceived capital held by that person.

Theorising in this way allowed me to investigate how teachers’ professional habitus interacts in the field of education, when and how their capital is recognised or not, and how this influences their practice. By examining their professional lives on three levels, the research aims to investigate the change process in a school and how it is perceived by those who are most affected.

The Literature Review revealed that there is a gap in the literature on change and the teachers’ voice is underrepresented. It explores the nature of change in Australia and internationally, and describes the emergent climate of performativity and accountability as one which impacts on how change is enacted in schools. It explores how policy enactment in schools impacts on teacher professionalism and how an emerging managerial leadership style has changed the way schools operate. How teachers reconcile this with their own professional experience is a significant feature of the literature review.

In looking for gaps in the literature on change, this chapter raises the notion of school context as a feature of the change process which needs
more attention, and in particular it suggests that the notion of the context of teacher practice is not explored in current literature. Therefore, that is presented as something that could be considered as a possibility for future research into educational change.

The literature review then considers how teacher wellbeing is affected by change; it explores some of the literature questioning the accountability climate, and offers alternatives for developing teacher efficacy and effective schools.

1.7.2 Introduction to Chapter 3 – Methodology

In Chapter 3 I outline my choice of a case study methodology. The literature on case studies suggested that the case study method would provide the means to interpret the meanings that the participants would bring to the study (Clough & Nutbrown, 2002) and to “retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (Yin, 2009, p. 4). It would also enable me to respond to the research questions. I limited the study to one secondary Victorian state school, and to a group of ten teacher leaders. They were people I had worked with and I had a professional connection and shared experiences, which would facilitate data gathering. This connection was a significant element of the research process. I shared a relationship with the participants which was founded on professional respect and trust, and which developed into friendships over time. Most of the participants had worked with me in the previous research I conducted into implementing restorative practices in schools. During that process, we established the professional boundaries and understandings that are crucial to effective and meaningful research. There were shared understandings that in this process
there would be no judgement of responses and opinions and views would be respected. Participants trusted me, as a fellow teacher and leader in the school, to be honest and respectful. These parameters enabled a depth to the research that may not have been possible with external agencies conducting the research. This was a particularly stressful time for many of the teacher leaders as the school was undergoing significant leadership change. Positions were threatened and some lost, resulting in a climate of mistrust and suspicion. Thus, the understanding that they could be completely frank and candid in their responses was somewhat enhanced by the turbulent climate they were experiencing at the school during the research period. The research provided an opportunity for their voices to be heard and for them to work through the process collaboratively.

The case study was developed through a narrative inquiry, in order to collect the “participants’ storied life experiences” (Clandinin & Caine, 2008, p. 542) in relation to the nature of change when it is mandated by external authorities. I wanted to particularly engage the teachers’ voice on the subject of change to get a sense of how change is enacted in schools in their experience and on their terms. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) argued that resistant teachers might have a story to tell, in light of Bailey’s (2000) comments around marginalisation.

The participants engaged in three different data collection methods to enable as broad a view as possible. Data collection methods included a personal narrative, semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion. These methods enabled me, as the researcher, to learn as much as possible about their professional lives and to understand and make sense of their
world. Craig (2012) referred to this method as “burrowing” – a strategy which would allow for “a concentrated focus on a certain phenomenon” (p. 92). The phenomenon was change and the context was the education field in which they worked.

The aim of the research analysis was to develop new knowledge about the way teachers perceive, problematize, manage, and reconcile mandated pedagogical change. Data analysis engaged Bourdieu’s thinking tools - habitus, capital, field and illusio - as a way of delving into the complexity of a field that is underpinned by power, which is recognised through cultural capital of teachers. Analysis of capital – symbolic, economic and cultural - allowed it to become evident when it was accumulated or diminished, according to the players in the field and the perceived value of their capital.

The teacher leaders in this study were selected through a process of purposive sampling (Merriam, 1998) because of their understanding of school processes, their commitment to ongoing learning for themselves and their students, their intellectual engagement with educational theories and policies and their life experiences in schools.

1.7.3 Introduction to Chapters 4, 5 and 6 – Results and Data Analysis

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 present the results of the data collection and the analysis. Bourdieu’s thinking tools were chosen as the data analysis method. The method was a case study of ten participants, which delved into the storied lives of the teacher leaders who were in a climate of mandated pedagogical change. These chapters explain why it was felt that Bourdieu’s tools were an appropriate means of data analysis.
Chapter 4 references participants by number only. Page numbers from the narratives were not necessary as those documents were only one thousand words each. Chapter 5 references participants by number – for example, P1 – as well as by page number – for example, p. 17. Chapter 5 only references as participant, as in the focus group, the participants were not identified. The rationale for this is detailed in the Methodology chapter.

1.7.3.1 Chapter 4 – Analysis of the written narrative

The written narrative represented the first level of data collection. It was the first opportunity for the participants to present their thoughts on paper about the notion of change and how it impacted them in their work. They were directed to write around one thousand words in length. The teacher leaders did not have any specific guidelines to follow and they were asked to complete the task within about six weeks. This allowed all of the narratives to be produced within a similar time-frame.

At this early stage of data collection, the participants had to be reassured that their work would be respected and anonymous. This was explained to them in a written document which they received beforehand. The fact that this was a non-threatening environment and the participants trusted that I had followed due process in setting up the research allowed their confidence as narrators to develop and they were able to create their stories. Using Bourdieu’s thinking tools enabled the analysis to focus especially on the language in these narratives. The participants’ personal selves, their characters, emerged through the writing and revealed much about their commitment and belief in their work.
This chapter uses each of Bourdieu’s thinking tools to guide the analysis. It explains how the prominent themes were isolated and then tackles each of the themes separately using habitus, field, capital, doxa and illusio as the analysis tools. The themes that emerged at this level were that change was relentless, that it involved loss of teacher autonomy, and that there was a high cost of emotional labour for the teachers during change.

1.7.3.2 Chapter 5 – Analysis of the interviews

The fifth chapter takes the data analysis to the second level. The interview questions emerged from the reading of the narratives and centred on the common themes which arose from their stories. Using Bourdieu’s thinking tools as for the first analysis ensured consistency in the process.

Chapter 5 explains that the participants were asked at the beginning of the interviews if they agreed that the three themes from the narratives were the most prominent ones. The interviews produced the most data, after ten interviews ranging from forty to ninety minutes each. This chapter explains that the transcripts were coded and categorised, noting the recurring themes and looking for patterns. Again, there emerged three main themes: that the teacher leaders experienced a strong sense of moral purpose and social justice in their work, that self-preservation and personal safety were crucial issues for teachers during change, and that targeted resistance to change was a common feature of their experiences in the change process. These themes were then sub-divided into categories that revealed common ideas and thoughts about how change impacted their work.
The analysis in Chapter 5 takes each theme individually and draws on participant responses to explore meaning. It follows the patterns which emerged from the participants as they delved further into their experience of change and looked for ways to explain and understand the events that arose in their school in a climate of relentless change. The interviews enabled the participants to further understand their place in the field and how their capital was perceived by other teacher, the school leaders and the external authorities. It emerged at this stage of the analysis that the teacher leaders had participated in reflexivity. The interviews revealed that their initial purpose and motivation for teaching had not shifted greatly; however, they were experiencing greater understanding of the changing field around them. This is what impacted them the most and in the interviews emerges the sense that the teachers must reconcile what they know and understand about teaching and learning and their position in the broader field of education that is constantly changing. The teacher leaders reveal what are essentially their survival strategies and their ways of processing and managing change.

1.7.3.3 Chapter 6 – Analysis of the Focus Group Discussion

This chapter presents the third and final level of data collection, which was the focus group discussion. The chapter explains how the discussion was conducted over a period of about seventy-five minutes. In line with the previous two chapters, the analysis uses Bourdieu’s thinking tools. This chapter explains that the method was slightly different to the previous two: in this case, it was far more directed, simply because with a group of people, there was more likelihood that the discussion would lose focus and get off track if there were no guidelines. The chapter outlines this process at the
beginning. The chapter starts with the guidelines for the participants, where they were invited to consider the notion of The Game and use this as the analogy on which to base their discussion. They were also given some questions which would help to keep the discussion on track.

Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) used the analogy of the game as a way of understanding field (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 98). By participating in the game, by playing and agreeing to the way that it is played, the participants are demonstrating their belief in the value of the game.

The Game analogy persisted throughout the discussion and kept the focus on how the players, the teachers, are affected by field interactions. Teachers focussed on the rules of the game, the game strategies, how capital was perceived and their beliefs. They also made some attempt to consider how misrecognition occurs in the game. The analysis reveals that the teacher leaders have a robust understanding of the notion of the game and apply the analogy to their work and to their interactions and relationships with other players in the educational field. From their earliest ideas that emerged in the narratives there is evidence in this chapter of the increased capacity to articulate their position in relation to others in the field. This has come about through the process of reflexivity and delving further into where they are positioned in the field. It also exposes their increased clarity in their understanding of how capital is used in schools and how their own capital might be perceived.

1.7.4 Introduction to Chapter 7 – Discussion

The discussion chapter explores the results presented in chapters 4, 5, and 6. This chapter is shaped around the ways that the teacher leaders
perceive, problematize, manage and reconcile mandated pedagogical change. It addresses the central research question and the sub-questions and presents a discussion of the findings from the data analysis.

The discussion chapter places this research in the field of international research on change in schools. It aligns the experiences as reported by the ten teacher leaders during data collection with what the research is saying about educational change. It presents teacher professional identity, which is underpinned by a strong sense of moral purpose as a key theme in the analysis. It explores their commitment to building social capital and linking education with improved societal outcomes. The discussion of the results focuses on how the teacher leaders respond to external imperatives such as standardised testing, uniform curriculum and increased competition between education systems. It raises their concerns that linking schooling with economic policy is not conducive to improving the educational experiences of students, and the discussion delves into why teachers feel frustrated by a system that appears to be reducing rather than increasing their professional capital. They question how this can lead to improved schooling for young people.

This chapter shows how the teacher leaders experience a changing field in education and a growing shift away from their faith in an educational bureaucracy. They hold the authorities responsible for diminished professional capital and reducing rather than increasing teachers' professional efficacy. The chapter raises the notion of personal accountability and how the urgency of continuous testing and measuring has limited their
capacity to be creative and innovative in their work – instead, they are increasingly driven towards meeting standards imposed from outside.

This chapter blends the themes which arose at each level of data collection and considers the overarching research question of how mandated pedagogical change impacts on teacher leaders. It concludes with an explanation and justification of teacher resistance and why this has been demonstrated by the teacher leaders as the most effective means of maintaining integrity and professionalism in a change climate, where accountability and performativity are the defining factors.

1.7.5 Introduction to Chapter 8 – New Knowledge, Conclusion, and Recommendations

The final chapter is divided into three sections. The first section presents the contributions to new knowledge that this research has achieved. It refers to the literature review, where gaps were highlighted and possibilities for new knowledge were explored. This section points to the practice context as being new knowledge – where teacher practice is often excluded from the planning for change process. This research shows that by considering this context and allowing the teachers to have greater agency in change, there is an increased likelihood that the change will be effective and teacher efficacy will be enhanced.

In the conclusion, the investigation shows how teacher leaders as change agents (Fullan, 1993) reconcile the pedagogical changes mandated outside of the school with their own professional habitus, their own ‘feel’ for education and teaching, and their own perceptions of how change is likely to be received and responded to. The conclusion confirms what has been
suggested in the literature – that there is much to be learned from teacher resistance, and that to dismiss it risks misrecognising why teachers do not automatically respond to change initiatives without question. The conclusion provides an analysis of what this means in schools today and what impact this has on student outcomes. It explores the reasons why considering the practice context is integral to understanding change and developing teacher professionalism.

The recommendations take the research results back to the school, to the leadership teams, and suggest how making teachers effective change agents might be achieved. This section also opens the door to future research into change, and directs the focus more onto the teachers rather than the processes.
Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2.1 Uncovering how the concept of change is being understood

Change is a broad topic and in order to have a boundary around this concept, I focussed on mandated pedagogical change. By placing my research within this context, I was able to indicate areas needing further attention in order to add something of value to the field of education. For the purpose of this investigation, the notion of change itself is recognised as being aligned with improvement and

the intellectual engagement with matters of educational policy, pedagogy, curriculum, assessment and theories about learning, alongside a broader engagement with considerations about the purposes of learning in ‘new times’ and the relationships between these ‘new times’, ‘new kids’, and ‘new families’.

(Lingard et al., 2003, p. 39)

Fullan (1993) has linked change to educational and social improvement and suggested a focus on change and growth was an essential component of teaching practice. However, he also recognised that “those skilled in change appreciate its volatile character, and they explicitly seek ideas for coping with and influencing change towards some desired ends” (Fullan, 1993, p. 12).
For pedagogical change to occur and bring about improvement in schools, teachers and teacher/leaders are often encouraged by policy makers and school leaders to be engaged with the process and to understand its intent: in effect, they must be the change agents. Alongside the people who interpret the policy narratives are the entrepreneurs: those who advocate policy within the school, ‘sell’ the policy and generate enthusiasm and support for its implementation (Ball, Maguire, Braun & Hoskins, 2011b). They are the “agents of change” within the school (p. 628). In terms of implementing policy, Ball, Maguire, Braun and Hoskins (2011a) referred to the responsibility of the school senior leadership team to interpret policy as it filtered down to the staff. Their view was that the leadership team was often limited in their capacity to re-interpret policy to meet local needs, and as such they became what they referred to as the “policy enforcers” (p. 633), with little or no room for professional judgement or local knowledge.

Much of the current change literature cites globalisation and an increasingly complex world as compelling reasons for schools to be on a continual change trajectory (Snyder, Acker-Hocevar & Snyder, 2000; Cuban, 2004; Dinham, 2008; Darling-Hammond & Liebermann, 2012). Internationally, schools are compelled by state and national governments to commit to change in terms of review, improvement and ongoing efforts towards bettering the educational experiences for all students (Snyder, Acker-Hocevar & Snyder, 2000; Cuban, 2004; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2010). Fullan (1993, 2010), Fink (2011) and Gilbert (2011) have argued that it is through the evaluation of programmes and practice that teachers become agents of change for educational improvement.
Change is complex and teachers as change agents, while desirable, is also problematic. A number of contributing factors highlight the difficulty in teachers becoming immersed in the change process. In a Swedish study, Lundstrom (2015) referred to examples of diminished teacher autonomy and status in a climate of teacher accountability. Focussing on a group of teachers responding to school reform policies, the study revealed an emerging corporate culture where a shifting focus on test results and school rankings defined quality education. Teachers reported a high level of suspicion about education entering a market-driven culture, where teacher professionalism was diminished and autonomy reduced. While on the one hand teacher agency in change is recommended (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Darling-Hammond and Lieberman, 2012; Lukacs & Galluzzo, 2014), it has also been argued that top-down implementation of change may not necessarily support the building of teachers’ professional capital (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012; Lundstrom, 2015).

Snyder et al. (2000) argued that there has been no time more than the present when the impact of the world at large has figured quite as strongly in the argument surrounding change and innovation in schools. As an external, motivating factor for change, globalisation is perhaps the single most powerful incentive for schools and educational institutions to rethink their processes (Snyder et al., 2000; Cuban, 2004; Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012). The “stable and predictable contexts” (Snyder et al., 2000, p. 4) for which we prepared children in the twentieth century have to a large extent disappeared, leaving the tasks for the schools and school leaders of the twenty-first century far more complex and challenging. Snyder et al. (2000) suggested that “the great challenge for educators is to cease
tinkering with work on the systems of schooling we have known and to instead connect school development in more fundamental ways with current global transformations” (p. 4).

The frameworks for building and sustaining effective schools as proposed by current researchers such Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) and Lingard, Hayes, Mills, and Christie (2003) argue that whole school improvement requires pedagogical change (based on the understandings of pedagogical change outlined in Chapter 1). Change here is underpinned by a collaborative approach that also builds teacher efficacy. Lingard et al. suggested that “a sustainable depth of change based on improving student outcomes is only likely to occur when teachers are involved in influencing the change process” (Lingard et al., 2003, p. 38). Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) referred to high-performing schools in high-performing nations as being characterised by narrow achievement gaps, by the recognition of the professionalism of teachers, and by a public investment in public education. They described this situation as one where teachers are seen as “the builders of their nation” (p. 17).

In current literature, change is generally linked with school improvement (Gilbert, 2011; Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Gilbert (2011) referred to the Concerns-Based Adoption Model for change, which “acknowledges that learning brings change, and that critical to ensuring that learning ‘takes hold’ is the need to support people through the process of change” (p. 6). This model acknowledges that everyone involved in the change process has concerns – this includes teachers, parents and administrators – and stressed that
addressing these concerns is crucial to the efforts of implementing change. The theory behind this model is that as people become involved in the change process, the types of questions that they might ask will evolve over time. Initially, the immediate concerns will be about how they will personally be affected by change. This will shift to a point where there is some evidence that the early concerns are resolved; they will then start to look more outwardly at the impact the change is having. For example, teachers would start to look at the effect on their students in terms of better learning outcomes (Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin & Hall, 1987).

Change is generally considered desirable and a key component of school improvement (Fullan, 1993; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). However, research has also shown that this is accompanied by an often pessimistic view of the experience of generating lasting and sustained change (Levin, 2010; Fink, 2011). There is broad acknowledgement that leading and implementing change is a complex and challenging task (Lingard et al., 2003; Gilbert, 2011). When the change is mandated – that is, prescribed from external authorities – it can lead to a sense of teachers feeling disenfranchised and alienated from the core purpose of their practice, argued Evans (2013).

The focus on change in this study refers to pedagogical change, citing specific examples of changes that have been mandated in Victorian state schools since the 1980s. The 1980s and beyond have been a period of change within the Victorian Education Department, with the emphasis on delivering a curriculum suitable for a post-industrial economy (Howes, 2012). These changes included, just to name a few:
• The Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS),
• The Australian Curriculum and AusVELS,
• The Victorian Curriculum,
• The use of National Assessment Plan – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) testing,
• The My School website,
• The push for improved literacy and numeracy through National Partnerships,
• The drive for a differentiated curriculum,
• The use of technology in the classroom (see Glossary of terms for further explanations).

This study recognised the emphasis on pedagogical change was a relatively recent imperative in Australian schools. It is now generally accepted that “change is all there is” (Dalmau & Neville, 2010, p.69), yet Howes (2012) argued that traditionally, this was not the case. Current literature on change in education and schools emphasizes that there is a compelling argument for change to occur (Dinham, 2008; Degenhardt & Duignan, 2010; Fullan, 2011a, 2011b; Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012). The case for change is based on the premise that schools must review and revise their pedagogical practices, and seek models for teaching and learning that will strive to meet the needs of young people in the twenty-first century (Snyder, Acker-Hocevar & Snyder, 2000; Degenhardt & Duignan, 2010; Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

This research investigates how teacher leaders perceive change that is mandated from a government regulating body (such as the Victorian
Education Department). The research will analyse how teachers reconcile this change with their knowledge and experience. It will produce new knowledge that will contribute to current research on the subject of mandated pedagogical change.

2.1.1 Influences affecting change

Several factors have been identified (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Wrigley, Lingard & Thomson, 2012) as having impact on whether or not mandated pedagogical change can be successfully implemented and sustained in schools. One key factor commonly recognised as a crucial element in the change process is that “sustainable and meaningful change requires the full professional participation of teachers and other staff, extended to recognise the rights of students and parents” (Wrigley et al., 2012, p. 100). Engaging the full participation of teachers and all staff is highly desirable in the change process but is problematic in the everyday busy working lives of teachers. This research will refer to Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus, capital, illusio and field to explore how teachers become involved in mandated pedagogical change and how they perceive it in their work (see below for definitions of these concepts). As suggested in the Concerns-Based Model for change, the immediate concern of a teacher involved in change is how it will affect them personally. In referring to this model I am acknowledging the highly personal nature of teaching (Noddings, 1992; Hargreaves, 1998, 2000; Sutton, Mudrey-Camino & Knight, 2009).

Teaching often becomes an individual pursuit, yet collegiality and collaboration are often cited as being integral to the success of change in
schools (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Wrigley et al., 2012). Time is a second key factor in this context (Noack, Mulholland & Warren, 2013), where proposed change is often accompanied – Fullan (1993) argued – by a sense of urgency and immediacy. This urgent, fast pace of reform involving complex tasks and ongoing work for teachers has been referred to as “intensification” (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2009). This creates obstacles and pressure for teachers who feel overloaded and that their efforts to incorporate and enact change become fragmented. While research (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012) suggests that having collegiate ownership over change and being involved collaboratively in its implementation is indicative of successful and sustainable change, this may not always be practical.

Professional development and learning for staff was also often cited as an integral factor in the successful implementation of change (Gilbert, 2011; Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012; Noack et al., 2013). Gilbert (2011) emphasised teacher learning as having clear implications for change to curriculum and referred to the notion of capacity-building (p. 5) as a key to good educational practice. He defined capacity-building as “becoming more self-sufficient and less reliant on external assistance” (Gilbert, 2011, p. 5), and suggested teachers would have a greater capability for curriculum innovation with heightened teacher learning. Gilbert (2011) identified teacher learning as “a social process sustained by relationships and trust … a personal and interpersonal process that has to engage with teachers’ individual and institutional identity” (p. 5). This points to learning in the context of the school setting as a group, rather than an individual pursuit, as being the ideal model for increasing teacher efficacy and effectiveness. The
notion of trust was also considered by Ghamrawi (2011), who suggested that cultures of trust in schools secured a climate of “dedication to excellence and allegiance to learning that is the crux of teacher leadership” (p. 336). She aligned trust with establishing higher levels of five elements:

Ø Teacher self-efficacy
Ø Collaboration
Ø Commitment
Ø Collective vision
Ø Building a strong sense of belonging to the organisation (Ghamrawi, 2011).

Lack of time has been cited as an obstacle to pursuing the goals of further learning and professional development (Fullan, 2011; Levin, 2011). Ownership of change has been raised as a further obstacle to the successful enactment of change in schools. Angus (1998) referred to teachers as “policy makers or policy brokers in their own right rather than passive recipients of the wisdom of others” (p. 41), in a bid to recognise and acknowledge the role that teachers should be able to play in interpreting and enacting change initiatives. This notion of control was also raised by Kelchtermans (2003), who identified the “locus of control” as an issue for teachers (p. 20). He argued that the less in control the teachers feel about their capacity to determine students’ outcomes, the greater their level of ambivalence towards their work. This in turn has a negative effect on their sense of personal efficacy. Similarly, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) referred to building professional capital as a solid investment in the school improvement process and claimed that “sustainable improvement can never be done to or even for teachers, it
can only ever be achieved by and with them” (p. 45). This reinforced the notion that successful change occurs with and through the teachers most closely involved. These arguments are also presented by Cuban (2004), who stressed the importance of recognising the involvement of teachers in any reforms for their sustainability. He suggested that “without practitioners’ ownership of the reforms, without policymakers’ endorsement of the adaptations that teachers and principals make to these policies, the odds of reforms evolving, sticking and lasting are sharply reduced” (p. 183).

2.1.2 The risk of marginalisation - an unintended consequence of change

Bailey (2000) suggested that teacher marginalisation in the context of school change and improvement, was characterised by a sense of powerlessness, and this sense was lessened or heightened depending on the context. For example, teachers may experience being marginalised for a particular issue such as teaching style, but perhaps less so with regard to their perceived relationships and capacity to work with others. She proposed that a common theme of marginalisation was that it occurred more often than not during the change process (Bailey, 2000).

There is evidence, Bailey (2000) argued, that teachers who are marginalised may go on to suffer the stigma of being stuck, of being resistors, of being problematic in the process of change. In the long term, she suggested, the ramifications of this could result in less likelihood of change being successfully implemented because of diminished teacher engagement and commitment. This argument highlighted for me the moral purpose of teaching, which characterises the motivation for many teachers to pursue this career. The possibility that teachers' own deep beliefs – their
habitus – may be at odds with what they are being mandated to teach requires further investigation. Bailey (2000) found that this disjuncture between opposing realities risked scepticism and ultimately a resistance to change.

The literature reviewed suggested that change could cause friction and tension in school (Blood & Thorsborne, 2006), and has led, in the past, to numerous models being proposed describing responses that might be anticipated during the change process. An example of one of these is the Diffusion Model of Innovation (Rogers, 2003; later adapted by Blood & Thorsborne, 2006, p. 10):

![Categories of Innovativeness](image)


Figure 1: Diffusion model of innovation

This tended to locate the resistance and possible aversion to change within the teaching population. While it could serve as a useful indicator of the likely response to change in schools, and therefore could prepare those implementing the change, there is little evidence to suggest that this model addresses the complex nature of change from the perspective of those most affected by it. It has been suggested that it did not really acknowledge the constraints, restrictions and limitations of schools in the change environment
(Lukacs & Galluzzo, 2014). Lukacs and Galluzzo (2014) recognised that this model focussed on the administrators of change and the external authorities as the ones responsible for implementing the change. In this approach, they suggested, it is implied that the teachers were “passive recipients” of change (Lukacs & Galluzzo, p. 101), and the success of the latter was monitored by those outside authorities’ interpretation of what successful change looked like. In their view, this model included too many variables for the problems associated with change to be located just with the teachers.

2.1.3 Addressing resistance to change

There is recognition that the notion of change and teacher resistance should not be ignored – rather, there are compelling reasons for the resistors to be heard (Gitlin & Margonis, 1995; Rubinson, 2002; Evans, 2013; Terhart, 2013; Clement, 2014; Lukacs & Galluzzo, 2014; Thornberg, 2014). While teachers may be positioned through the resistance and perceived as being slow or averse to considering and enacting change – as the above diagram illustrated – there may be good reasons not to consider this resistance as a binary, in order to appreciate and understand the multiple philosophies underpinning change and resistance.

The concept of professional boundaries as a possible impediment to teachers’ immediate take-up of reforms and initiatives has been raised by Rubinson (2002). Further to this, Thornberg (2014) also acknowledged the existence of professional boundaries. He suggested teachers may question the authority of those professionals who are not immediately involved in schools and the classroom when offering advice and recommendations for pedagogical changes. Situations such as these present the possibility of
mistrust emerging between these different groups of professionals, and impacting on whether or not the teachers might willingly take up the new initiative or have some reservations (Thornberg, 2014).

Discord between administrators and teachers, Telhart (2013) noted, is mostly likely when there is a sense of urgency from authorities outside of the school to implement change. This leads to teacher resistance, stemming from what he described as “an ironic contempt [on the part of the teachers] for ‘the experts’ who seem to be moving like elephants in a china shop” (Terhart, 2013, p. 487). Clement (2014) also highlighted the risk of assuming that teachers would – or should - be automatically and instantly drawn to the change initiative, and indicated that they are more likely to resist. She argued that resistance can also be associated with change overload, along with identifying the unease about the sudden urgency of change and the lack of consultation and involvement, as the most pressing reasons for resistance (Clement, 2014). She also suggested that teachers generally suspected change would be short-lived, as it was felt that mandated change imposed from above and outside of the school was rarely accompanied by a strong focus on sustainability (Clement, 2014).

My investigation into the impact of mandated pedagogical change on teacher leaders will be considered from the perspectives that Clement’s (2014) work identified. This investigation seeks to find out what the impact of mandated pedagogical change has on a group of ten teacher leaders. The case study will explore teacher resistance, marginalisation, and change overload by looking at how teacher leaders reflect upon daily working lives. The findings of this research are significant, as Bailey (2000) argued. The
implementation of mandated change marginalises teachers’ decisional capital, leading to a significant impact on their capacity to work collegiately and collaboratively towards school improvement. In short, the literature review suggested mandated change is likely to diffuse teachers’ capacity to be instrumental as change agents. For effective school improvement to occur, current research (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012) has suggested that teachers need opportunities to work collaboratively, and be empowered to be active instruments in shaping and implementing pedagogical change. The research, however, also needs to consider the professional obligations of the teachers to meet national standards, and how they reconcile these obligations with the implementation of mandated pedagogical change.

2.2 Making comparisons and meeting standards

2.2.1 The importance of research to school improvement

Essentially, the aim of every school is to improve student outcomes (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012; Dinham, 2008; Fullan, 1993, 1997, 2011a, 2011b; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Lingard, Hayes, Mills, & Christie, 2003). Over the years, aligning research with school improvement has led to significant changes in popular beliefs and accepted values about teaching and learning (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Levin, 2010b). Such changes include, for example, the shift away from corporal punishment in all public schools in Australia, support for reading, literacy and numeracy to improve students learning, and adequate nutrition and lifestyle. These are just a few examples of research connecting with education and schools that have led to improved outcomes for students (Morrison, 2007; Yates, 2009; Wrigley, 2011).
This literature review provides a theoretical basis for my research. It places my research within a context that allows it to be aligned with what is currently happening in schools locally, nationally and globally. The following section of the review will articulate the relationship between what is already known about mandated pedagogical change in schools and the change process, and how it informs my case study.

The literature on change in schools is abundant. On a national and international level, change for improved student outcomes and whole school improvement is a priority. The following section of the literature review examines the current climate of accountability and performance in schools. It focuses on how this climate is already known to impact on teaching practice when mandated pedagogical change is being enacted. In this section, the review of current literature is considered from a number of angles and aspects, and from a national and international perspective.

2.2.2 The emergent culture of performance and accountability

Increased accountability for teachers is a relatively recent imperative, and one which has resulted in a considerable amount of literature around the subject. Among those who have considered accountability in terms of school improvement and change are Darling-Hammond (2011); Fink (2011); Perryman, Ball, Maguire and Braun (2012); Mockler (2012); and Sahlberg (2010; 2016). The purpose and practice of teaching has shifted, in this climate of accountability, towards a practice that has become very much aligned with global economies. As an emergent culture and a recognisable shift in the way schools and teachers function, it is a crucial factor in
understanding school operations and what it means to be a teacher in the twenty-first century.

This literature review links mandated pedagogical change to performance and accountability and highlights the characteristics of this emergent culture in schools today. Accountability is visible on a public level via the My School website. In Australia, parents are able to access school results and achievements online (see Glossary for details about My School website) and can use this tool to compare school performance. At the international level, Australian schools are compared according to the OECD-based PISA (Program of International Student Assessment) benchmarks. These data for the comparisons are retrieved from NAPLAN (National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy) testing – nation-wide tests held every year for grades 3, 5, 7, and 9 (See Glossary for full details). Participation is compulsory, unless parents and guardians of students specifically approach the school to request that their child is excused on particular grounds. These may include diagnosed learning difficulties and mental health issues. NAPLAN is coordinated from within ACARA (see Glossary). Within schools, teachers are directed to gather data through PAT (Progressive Achievement Tests) testing, which has a literacy and numeracy focus (see Glossary). PAT testing is delivered online through the VCAA website. Collectively, the data becomes available to schools through SPA (the Student Performance Analyser). Teachers are advised to analyse the data and use it to direct their planning. There is an imperative for schools to manage the data at school level and publish it each year in their Annual Report. Again, this information is available publicly and forms baseline data for the school to set annual goals and targets.
This process of creating and collecting data for analysis at both a local
and international level represents a significant shift in educational priorities in
Australia (Blackmore, 1999; Degenhardt & Duignan, 2010; Mockler, 2011,
2012; Noack, Mulholland, & Warren, 2013; Reid & Thomson, 2003). The
change in schools’ foci from meeting only academic goals to meeting more
complex contemporary society’s needs, coupled with the growth in
international comparisons, puts pressure on schools and teachers to
compete and meet externally imposed standards (Yates, 2009). These
changing foci impact on teachers’ professional lives, as suggested, for
example, by Evans (2013). The continued reliance on high-stakes testing
jeopardised the teachers’ capacity to thrive in a climate where the control
over their classrooms and teaching practice was sidelined by external
administrators (Evans, 2013). For teachers and school leaders, the shift in foci
of school purpose that was characterised by mandated pedagogical change
called for a significant adjustment in pedagogy for teachers and school
leaders (Blackmore, 1999; Cuban, 2004; Fink, 2011). The employees at
schools are still a part of the system that will ultimately decide the standards,
the behaviours and the expectations of schools in Victoria. The system is also
responsible for implementing the performance indicators of individual
teachers. The following section will consider some of the conclusions drawn
in the literature about accountability and how it is perceived by teachers and
schools in relation to mandated pedagogical change – Bourdieu’s concepts
of habitus, capital and field will be used to explore these conclusions.

2.2.3 National and state authority fields

Accountability in schools for teachers is an example of how teachers
may be required to demonstrate evidence that in their practice – their
pedagogy – they have satisfied the requirements in order to meet externally imposed demands. Regular on-demand testing and PAT testing and the creation of the My School website are tools of assessment which may affect how teachers perceive their practice. For example, the mandatory nationwide annual testing NAPLAN may lead to tension for the teacher who is not immediately convinced of the integrity of such forms of assessment (see previous section and Glossary for terms). In reference to Hudson’s definition of pedagogical knowledge (Hudson, 2013), assessment is an integral inclusion in the practice of teaching; however, how that assessment might look and its intention may vary considerably. The subject of accountability through standardised testing is questioned by a number of authors (Day, 2002; Degenhardt & Duignan, 2010; Fink, 2011; Craig, 2012).

In his description of the “accountability bus”, Fink (2011) claimed that as a change model, it “is headed towards the wrong destination educationally, employs a faulty GPS system, and leaves too much road kill in its wake” (p. 4). He proposed the notion that increased accountability often ignored the deeper, societal causes of school problems and did not allow due consideration to factors such as poverty, poor health and lack of resources. Fink (2011) aligned with Cuban (2004) in suggesting that what society demands from schools is not just success in the traditional school subjects, but also success for young people in social and life skills to fully equip them for adult life.

This notion of society demanding more and more from of schools is not new: Blackmore (1999) suggested that “schools are expected only to react to external change, not to be proactive in creating a better society: to
respond to student, parent, industry and government demands and the new work order, and not shape these demands" (p. 8).

Similar comments have been made about the notion of wider societal problems that impact on student and school achievement. Wrigley (2011) claimed that “the relevance of Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital is almost self-evident, in terms of how students’ community-based culture is misrecognised by schools” (p. 65). He suggested that school change needs to be more oriented towards social justice than focussed on leadership and management. This argument was shared by Thomson, Lingard and Wrigley (2012), who seek “other imperatives [than a more competitive economy] for a renewed imaginary about systemic policy and school changes” (Thomson et al., 2012, p. 1). They contrast this imaginary with the performance- and accountability-driven policies that reflect current approaches, and position their alternative theories with Deweyian philosophy (1915) and the legacies of Freire (1970). They acknowledge the enormous impact of poverty on education and they insist that it is unjust economies and societal inequalities that stand in the way of building stronger educational communities (Thomson et al., 2012).

In the United States, researchers are concerned about the narrowing effect of accountability (Snow-Gerono & Franklin 2007), and have referred to Dewey (1915) as a reminder that education must underpin social progress and reform (Dewey, 1915). They have identified tensions for teachers when they are mandated to teach to standards that have been dictated from outside of their immediate environment and with minimal consultation,
tensions which are concentrated around curriculum, instruction and teacher preparedness within this new, standardised environment.

This research taps into this notion, which has been explored considerably in literature both in Australia and internationally. It extends the research to include the voice of the teacher leaders – those professionals in the field who include principal class teachers and teachers who have held positions of leadership throughout their extensive and broad careers. The research triangulates the data from three separate stages and analyses the impact of mandated pedagogical change, from the voice of those most closely positioned to reflect on the effects on the teachers’ professional selves: the teacher leaders in schools.

2.2.4 The Australian position on standards

Government schools are accountable for meeting state education department imperatives and priorities; this has extended to governments focusing on national (for example NAPLAN) and global comparisons (for example, PISA) to determine educational priorities and standards (see Glossary for explanation of these terms).

At an Australian and an international level, the dominant culture seen in schools today could be described as being one of performance and accountability, as identified by, among others, Ball et al. (2011), Darling-Hammond and Lieberman (2012), Kelchtermans (2007), Perryman et al. (2012), and Reid (2012). In Australia, teachers are now obliged to refer to the standards set by The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and to direct their practice to fall within the parameters of these standards. This body focuses on teacher education, school leadership and
teaching. It is the body responsible for developing teacher and school leaders’ standards frameworks (see Glossary for more detail and history of AITSL). AITSL provides the Australian Standards of Teaching, which illustrate and detail elements of high quality teaching. These standards provide the baseline for teachers to work from in preparing their performance and development plans each year. Each teacher is required to discuss and satisfy the requirements of this plan with their school principal in order to be considered for the next level. They are the standards which teachers might be expected to address when applying for their first and continuing positions within the state education system.

2.2.5 Mandated change: A worldwide focus on teacher performance and readiness

The development of world-class schools has become a significant challenge for the twenty-first century and in some places, this challenge is being addressed by way of focussing on the teachers. In countries such as Finland, Singapore and Canada, which are seen as leading the way in progressive education (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012), the shift has very much focussed on expanding educational opportunities for all through the development and provision of world-class teachers. The profession of teaching has been elevated to a higher status than a paraprofession with the continuing education of teachers, to masters and PhD level (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012). Finland, for example, requires high academic qualifications from its teachers and places the “collective responsibility” (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, p. 15) for curriculum planning and design at a local, teacher level. The teachers have a greater responsibility to student learning and assessment and have more freedom and creativity in curriculum
design, a point which was raised earlier as possibly lacking when the curriculum is standardised. Finland has developed “a deeply thoughtful curriculum and [has] provided teachers ever more autonomy with respect to how they approach that curriculum” (Center on International Education Benchmarking, 2015). This situation supports greater creativity and freedom for teachers, while in countries where there is more emphasis on following a mandated curriculum and responding to external change imperatives the opportunities for teacher independence are reported to be limited.

There is acknowledgement that this brings with it its own challenges and obstacles (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012, p. 151). Darling-Hammond and Lieberman also acknowledge the pitfalls in some of the proposed strategies to recognise good practice, such as using standardised tests as a measure of teacher performance. This, they suggest, can have the effect of limiting teacher creativity and narrowing the curriculum opportunities for students (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012).

Darling-Hammond and Lieberman (2012) suggested that governments must have a clear understanding about what they want from teachers and school. While “there may be agreement internationally that the quality of the teaching is a critical element in twenty-first century learning, there is a wide range of views about how to develop it” (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012, p. 151). How teaching is viewed in a country, how teacher preparation is developed, how the teachers are perceived in and by their community are factors that influence teaching as a profession.

Evans’ (2013) study exemplifies what Darling-Hammond and Lieberman suggest: the stultifying effect on teachers’ creativity and freedom
as a result of the narrowing of the curriculum and the increased focus on high-stakes testing and a standardised, mandated curriculum. The study reported teachers “implementing the externally designed curriculum as dutifully as possible” with the effect that they are placed in an “oddly removed and alien situation vis-à-vis their own practice” (Evans, 2013, p. 229 – 330). This review reveals unease about the move towards the standardised curriculum and mandated pedagogical change. The reliance on external testing to form teacher judgement has led to teacher dissatisfaction and frustration with the culture of accountability (Evans, 2013).

For schools to become world-class, change is the key imperative (Fullan, 1993, 1997; Hargreaves and Shirley, 2009) and the place where the change is mostly keenly felt is at the teacher level – from the training stage to the point of entry to the classroom and its associated responsibilities and beyond (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012). There is no doubting the increasing complexity of the nature of teaching, in a world that is continuously shifting and evolving, making more demands, and seeing more uses for schools: “as paid work places, [schools] are integral parts of the economy” (Apple, 2013, p. 19).

One of the key arguments by Apple (2013) is that schools are “places for action” (p. 21). He acknowledges schools as places where identities are built and where social and cultural groups are formed and recognised – or conversely, where they go unrecognised. Apple also argues that schools are institutions where the distribution and recognition of power takes place, making schools dominant features of societies (Apple, 2013). Given these
considerations, Apple was guided by Freire (1970) in the push towards using education to move towards a more equitable society.

This research explores how the “action” is perceived as it becomes a part of the practice of everyday life in schools. Snyder et al. (2000) held the view that it is incumbent on our political leaders at this point to be guided by Dewey’s (1922) notion of a progressive educational thought, and to “free educators to invent more vital forms of schooling to match the conditions of our time … it is time to consider that our schools are at-risk social institutions” (Snyder et al., 2000, pp. 37 - 38). While current literature encourages change and progress in schools, it is important – and thus, the reason for this research – to also know how mandated pedagogical change is freeing teachers to invent more vital forms of school learning environments, or limiting them. This can only be known when focussing on how these changes have been perceived by teachers who are called on in many cases to be the agents of these changes.

2.2.6 Building capital – the challenges of creating a collaborative environment

It could be argued that mandated pedagogical change is challenged by the notion of professional capital. Professional capital is about defining the elements of high quality professionalism and bringing in line the skills and talents of the individuals with those of the collective group. Because teaching falls somewhere between an individual pursuit (within the classroom) and a collective pursuit (as a member of the school community), the threat of isolation can be one element of change that creates some tensions within schools. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) argued that this is why
the transformation of schools can really only occur within the parameters of the whole learning community. Hargreaves and Fullan suggested:

The best kinds of collaborative cultures build the value and compound the interest on professional capital. Individualistic cultures, or superficial and wrong-headed forms of collaboration, undercut the possibilities of developing and circulating professional capital. (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012, p. 106)

They proposed the theory that professional capital is the result of human, social and decisional capital amplifying each other to lead to effective teaching – in particular, in challenging circumstances (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, chapter 5). They defined three levels within professional capital:

- *human capital* as teachers developing their knowledge and skills and growing as individuals;
- *social capital* as enhancing the quality of interpersonal relationships so people learn how to learn from each other and to trust each other with their learning; and
- *decisional capital* as developing the skills, confidence and collegiate trust to make sound judgements and decisions (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, chapter 5).

This appears to be at odds with mandated pedagogical change, which see the implementation of change controlled by the external authorities. In the model represented earlier (Rogers, 2003 and Blood & Thorsborne, 2006), the teachers are presented as what Lukacs and Galluzzo (2014) described as
“passive recipients expected to implement and adopt the experts’ change without question” (p. 101). This model is incongruent with Hargreaves and Fullan’s (2012) definition of building professional capital in a school to enhance effective teaching. The notion of teachers as being change-resistant presents as a challenge to building collaborative environments.

Dinham’s (2008) report on school improvement in a range of Australian schools provided further support for Hargreaves and Fullan’s model (2012). Dinham’s (2008) work focused on the professional learning teams, which had embedded clear goals and targets in their practice and had support from the principals. These were found as key to empowering teachers and making a significant contribution to their professional learning. He noted encouraging results from observing how teacher learning communities enhanced student achievement (Dinham, 2008). He also drew attention to the notion that a mandated community would be less likely to succeed than one which was “encouraged, nourished and sustained in the manner of an organic system” (Dinham, 2008, p. 114). There was also evidence that working together as professionals had the effect of re-energising mid-to-late career teachers (Dinham, 2008, p. 113 - 115).

Research has identified collaboration as a key to school improvement; however, in practice, there are inherent problems in achieving this across the board, as suggested by the literature. One of the reasons offered by Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) for teachers choosing individualism over teamwork is guilt – guilt and uncertainty, and a fear of being recognised as perhaps being not quite up to standard (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p. 109). This sentiment is also expressed by Kelchtermans (2007), who raised the
significance of teacher vulnerability as a condition of their work. Kelchtermans (2007) claimed that education has become a commodity in the international market and the constant push to provide quality education is often at the expense of maintaining teacher identity. He suggested that if the teachers have less of a sense of control over their profession, they could become cynical, disengaged and ambivalent. “If they were not involved as a person, they just would not care” (Kelchtermans, 2007, p. 21). This view that teachers need to feel some degree of control over their professional lives highlights their commitment to their work, to making a difference to the lives of young people. How this making a difference is perceived may provide further insight into the impact of change, especially if there are teachers whose values are connected to education being a social or positional good, and if teaching is understood as an individual or a collective pursuit. An example here in the current school climate is the continuing notion of performance pay – an incentive which promotes individual performance but tends to dismiss the importance of building a collaborative culture. Along similar lines, the My School website (ACARA), which rates schools on performance, represents a movement counter to a collaboration between schools and districts.

Kelchtermans (2007) argued that “the most immediate context for teaching is the relationship between teachers and their students. This constitutes the very heart of teaching and thus of a good education” (p. 24). However, it was also recognised that this possibility is compromised when the teacher is under too much external pressure to reach certain standards imposed from outside the teachers’ immediate control. Mandated pedagogical change presents as a directive from external authorities and
calls for teacher take up and implementation. However, this contradicts Kelchtermans’s argument that teachers must have connection and ownership of their work, as this is what underpins the integrity of their relationships with students and their commitment to their work.

Kelchtermans (2007) raised the notion of “vulnerability” (p. 25) as a state in which teachers find themselves, when their own beliefs are at odds with policies and educational imperatives that are imposed from outside, and over which teachers feel they have limited control. This state of vulnerability is a reality, he argued, that teachers must endure, even embrace, as it allows them to grasp the ethical implications of their relationships with students, and realise the satisfaction that comes with this work. He argued that if policy ignores this vulnerability and this essential quality of what makes good teaching, then this is when teachers can lose faith, feel disheartened and distanced from their job: quality education is less likely to occur (Kelchtermans, 2007, p. 27). This is another area where teachers feel the impact of change: in their everyday work and in the complex relationships that they develop with staff and students.

2.3 Change themes in the literature

2.3.1 Engaging with change policy

In this section, the literature on policy enactment in schools – that is, change in policy as it affects pedagogy – is explored using Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus, field, capital, illusio and doxa. It will explore how teachers are positioned in the field according to their habitus and their ‘feel’ for the game of education. What is important in this analysis is how a teacher’s power (capital) is understood in the field in a change climate.
2.3.2 Policy development – the paradox of enactment

Ball, Maguire, Braun, and Hoskins (2011a and b), produced a series of four papers which explore the hermeneutics of policy, looking at the various complexities in policymaking and interpretation in schools and the sorts of complications that are inherent in policy processes. They referred to the “paradox of enactment” (Ball et al., 2011b, p. 625) for teachers who are engaged with policy development and implementation but often sidelined in the process, either as a result of the prevailing school hierarchy of management or simply of a lack of time and energy. Policies can be regarded as “representations of knowledge and power” (Maguire, Hoskins, Ball and Braun, 2011, p. 597): for example, a behaviour management policy for students would detail what those enacting that policy had identified as being the expected and accepted models for behaviour for young people. Ball et al. (2011b) recognised that there are a number of people invested with implementing change in schools, starting with those who are responsible for “maintaining narrative coherence in relation to policy” (p. 627). These people interpret policy then deliver it at the school level, deciding on what is relevant to the school and integrating it within the school practices in a meaningful and useful way.

Ball et al. (2011a) referred to the policies around standardisation as producing the “technical professional” (p. 612), and suggested that policies that promoted standardised testing limited the scope of teachers. They aligned testing and standardisation with a limited capacity for creativity and originality, and pointed to the lack of intrinsic motivation for teachers and students in this climate of teaching and learning. This aligns with others, for example, Darling-Hammond and Lieberman (2012) and Evans (2013), who
have also cited lack of freedom and creativity as a consequence of mandated changes. Performance, they suggest, takes precedence over humanity in this regime, a culture of performativity which relies on the interpretation of policy from the leadership team to determine how it might be enacted in the school.

In the second paper of the series, Maguire et al. (2011) utilised Foucault’s (1979) discussion of a prison as a model for the discussion of policy formation and enactment in schools. They referred to schools that established the picture of the ‘good student’ through visible attributes such as exemplary uniform and correct behaviour in and around the school. Schools suggested “ways of being” (Maguire et al., p. 602) which indicated what a student must or must not do in order to meet the standards. The good students were the ones who were able to adapt to the culture of attainment and success. In Bourdieu’s terms, their habitus was aligned with that of the school, which had the effect of enhancing their capacity to ‘fit in’ and meet those standards.

The focus in this discussion was on policy discourse, and the authors referred to Foucault’s “understanding of discourses” as a framework from which to define policies as “representations of knowledge and power, discourses that construct a topic” (Maguire et al., 2011, p. 597). They explored policies as expansive, complex strategies that contributed to the “wider social processes of schooling” (Maguire et al., p. 598). In schools, they proposed, policies produced the artefacts that come to define and describe the school, such as the handbooks, the way the school functions,
the appearance and the things that are produced by the school that *make* it that particular, distinctive school.

They raised the notion of good student, good teacher, and good school (Maguire et al., 2011). It was suggested that these constructions were produced and reproduced through their normalisation – that is, according to the school policy. These constructs described the characteristics in students, teachers and schools which were considered most desirable and most likely to contribute to ongoing success and high achievement (Maguire et al., 2011). They proposed that schools create their own version of what and who they are and maintain this through visual and written representations, such as posters, newsletters and school documents – that is, their artefacts. It is these artefacts that they suggested were most closely linked to the process of policymaking and enactment. This, they claimed, enables compliance and discipline (Foucault, 1979), and helps to sustain the shared meanings and beliefs in the school.

Braun et al. (2011a), in their first paper in the series on policy enactment in schools, outlined a framework which highlighted the significance of school context (Braun et al., 2011a, p. 585). It is their contention that the enactment of school policy is highly influenced by school context. They also suggested that context is a somewhat neglected consideration in the literature on policymaking and implementing change. This deficit would be addressed in their paper, suggesting a framework for considering context as part of policy analysis. They proposed four dimensions of context to frame their investigation:

- Situated
• Material
• Professional
• External

Braun et al. (2011) argued that policy was more than just an attempt by schools “to solve a problem” (p. 586). They proposed that policy was a process whereby schools, rather than all adopting a policy in much the same manner, would enact a policy according to their own “take” on policy. Thus, it was proposed that the four dimensions of context were significant in policymaking and enactment in schools. It was the authors’ premise that schools have different “capacities” (Braun et al., 2011, p. 586) for dealing with and responding to policy. Their model proposed a means to investigate further the implications of policymaking, which attested to the “rich underlife and micropolitics of individual schools” (Braun et al., 2011, p. 586).

They suggested that the enactment of policy – or whether it may be ignored or diluted - is subject to a range of variants and considerations. These include, among others:

Ø Whether or not the policy was mandated
Ø How the policy would impact on the school’s operations
Ø The interpretation of the policy
Ø The school environment
Ø The school history

All schools are different, they argued – even like schools harbour their unique characteristics and to consider them as one homogenous group, they suggested, would not do justice to the differences between them (Braun et al., 2011). Their framework considered context to be “an active force” within
the school and allowed these concerns to be considered and questioned. The table below summarises the four contextual dimensions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situated contexts</th>
<th>Professional contexts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• locale</td>
<td>• teachers’ values and experiences and how these impact on pursuing policies, i.e. policy management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• histories</td>
<td>• position of policy actors – for example, new teachers compared with experienced teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• intake – social and academic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>structure of students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material contexts</th>
<th>External contexts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• physical aspects, such as</td>
<td>• external pressures and demands – testing, ratings, tables, and so forth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buildings, budgets, also staffing,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>technology and infrastructure</td>
<td>• support and relationships with other schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Four dimensions of context

(Braun et al., 2011, p. 588)

Situated contexts were aligned with location and illustrated the “active force” of context. For example, the enrolment of particular types of students from particular backgrounds potentially allowed the schools to define themselves by their intake and refer to “students like ours” – developing what Braun et al. called their “institutional narrative” (p. 589). This narrative would enable schools to provide a story for their school, their students, their location and enable them to define, but also be defined, by those characteristics (Braun et al, 2011). It was suggested that these sorts of examples illustrate the active force of context, and its relevance as a dimension worth considering in policy enactment and development.

Professional contexts were considered to be less tangible context variables (Braun et al., 2011, p. 591). These related to the relationships
between the values of the school and the authorities, as well as the relationships within the schools. Teacher relationships was cited as one example where teachers, according to their personal views and values, may agree or disagree with some of the school policies, depending how they are positioned. This illustrated the propensity for different types of context to impact on policy implementation in schools. Using an example of whether or not teachers agreed with a school uniform policy was cited as an illustration of how professional context is very much dependent on who is involved. Teaching staff and their personal views can impact policy (Braun et al., 2011, p. 592).

Material contexts differ widely between schools and budgets and staffing were described as key factors. Budget restraints could often dictate policy and determine whether or not particular programs would be followed within the school, which then had flow-on effects. A major concern for schools was the staffing budget and a range of factors, such as location and local infrastructure, impacted on the calibre of applicants for schools. Budgets varied considerably as well, depending on location.

External contexts referred to pressures and expectations from outside of schools, in particular, the position of schools as compared with competing ones. The four contexts intersected and overlapped and none were considered to be standalone factors. The series attempted to show the overall significance of context in the enactment and implementation of policy in schools, as a dynamic, shifting process. They attempted to show that policymaking in schools and a list of contextual factors that impacted on policymaking could not be exhaustive, due to the complex nature of context.
The intention was to analyse some of these complexities and to underscore some of the realities of policymaking in schools.

2.3.3 Bourdieu’s thinking tools: habitus in action

Bourdieu’s concept of habitus will be used during data analysis to investigate how teachers might respond to and deal with change and policy enactment – whether they feel a part of it, or whether they cannot imagine any other way or whether or not they have the power or knowledge to have any influence. In relation to this study, the teacher’s habitus is their ‘feel’ for what Bourdieu referred to as the game. The game is education, and their field is the structured social space of the school, which is a competitive space where the distribution of power is unequal and where the ongoing struggle is to change or to preserve the field (Lingard et al., 2011). Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) suggested that “when habitus encounters a social world of which it is a product, it is like a fish in water: it does not feel the weight of the water and it takes the world about itself for granted” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 127). In these terms, when a person enters the field of education, their history, their accumulated story will determine their relative power in the field and whether or not they are able to be a dominant player in the game.

For the teachers, their strategies, their moves in the game are their habitus in action. As with a concerns-based theory, Bourdieu’s theory also engages with how a teacher may respond to change or whether they may feel empowered or disempowered by the change process. Their response is directed by their habitus, their perceived place in the field, and importantly, the capital they bring with them into it. In this study, the notion of habitus is
used to explore how a teacher might respond to social structures and situations and how their habitus is enacted in the field. A crucial aspect of habitus is that it can be altered; it is not deterministic. Thus, a student or teacher's habitus can change according to their responses to what is going on around them. In regard to the teachers, this is an important facet of habitus for this study. Bourdieu argued that it is the flexibility of a person's habitus that enables them to play in the field and to cope with its requirements – even if it means changing their strategies (Bourdieu, 1990). In the climate of mandated pedagogical change, the habitus of teachers responds to the changes. As mentioned above, they may be empowered or disempowered; change may give rise to opportunities to develop new strengths through self-questioning and reflexivity. Conversely, significant change that is mandated may also cause marginalisation, and consequently, resistance. This is the risk highlighted in this study.

The importance of the field in this research is that it is the setting where the habitus comes into play and where the teachers interact with each other and with the other players in the game. Habitus and field are fully functional and operational only when in relation to each other. A teacher's professional habitus positions them within the school setting (in the field), allows them to 'become themselves' within that setting, and develop the attitudes and dispositions that they are comfortable with and that they recognise (Lingard et al., 2003). The other players include the school population, but also refer to the external ones such as the educational bureaucracy, the public, the media, and the government. Thus, the school can be regarded as a multi-purpose field. In a climate of mandated pedagogical change, the field is important because it is the place where the
players learn the rules of the game. They learn to use their capital in the field. For teachers, this may be in the shape of networks, or experience, or knowledge. When change is mandated, it impacts on the players and may result in field changes. The importance of field in this research is that it will explore what the impact of these movements is on the teachers.

Throughout the school, from the leaders to the inexperienced teachers, the roles that people play in regard to the enactment of policy in schools is significant in how policies are joined up in an “institutional narrative, a story about how the school works and what it does – ideally articulated through an ‘improvement plot’ of some kind, often very inventive, even fantastical” (Ball et al. 2011, p. 626). Bourdieu’s theory of doxa (a shared belief) allows for the story of how school works to be portrayed and reproduced. Improvement, then, can be accepted or, using Bourdieu’s terms, misrecognised. Enacting the policy can then be rationalised, as its purpose is entwined in a story, a narrative that will align its enactment with school improvement, and suit the purpose of those enacting the policy. In the field, “doxa can take the form of a misrecognised shared allegiance to the ‘rules of the game’ on the part of the agents with similar habitus” (Deer, 2012, p. 117). In the school, those who share the social space in the field can identify with their shared beliefs, and the prevailing strength of the doxa is enhanced (Deer, 2012); conversely, those who do not share the same space could be disadvantaged and somewhat compromised. In this case, this is where resistance may appear.

The capital that the teachers bring with them will also determine how they will engage with the enactment of policy and how this will impact their
professional selves. If the setting in which they find themselves is one which they find familiar and where they are able to identify with and relate to the state of play, then that person is more likely to feel confident and comfortable in that field and more likely to want to retain the status quo. If, however, they are uneasy and unfamiliar with the proposed change through policy enactment, it may have the effect of reducing their perceived power within the school and lessen the influence they feel they may have.

When Bourdieu spoke of capital, he proposed this formula to describe the interactions between the “thinking tools” (Maton, 2012, p. 50), of capital, habitus, field and practice:

\[ [(\text{habitus})(\text{capital})] + \text{field} = \text{practice} \ (\text{Maton, 2012, p. 50}). \]

Habitus and capital are necessarily intertwined and come into play when the person enters the field. Bourdieu pictured capital as each player having in front of her a pile of tokens of different colours, each colour corresponding to a given species of capital she holds, so that her relative force in the game, her position in the space of play, and also her strategic orientation toward the game ..... depend both on the total number of tokens and on the composition of the piles of tokens she retains, that is, on the volume and strength of her capital. (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 99)
Capital and habitus are interrelated. Capital presents itself, for Bourdieu, “under three fundamental species (each with its own subtypes), namely economic capital, cultural capital, and social capital” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 119). Bourdieu added to these symbolic capital, which he presented as “the form that one or another of these species takes when it is grasped through categories of perception that recognise its specific logic … or misrecognises the arbitrariness of it possession and accumulation” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 119).

Barrett and Martina (2012) suggested that while schools may appear neutral, they do in fact “reproduce the structure and distribution of capital among the classes” (Barrett & Martina, 2012, p. 251). The value of different forms of capital in schools impacts both students and teachers. For the teachers, their capital is reinforced if it has perceived value in the field. If its value is negated or challenged, then the teacher’s professional self is somewhat diminished or threatened. In order to play well in the game, the teacher’s capital needs to have value in it and their habitus needs to correlate with the rules. Again, there is the risk of teachers being marginalised and not able to play in the game if they do not know the rules.

McGinty and Gunter (2012) demonstrated how Bourdieu’s concept of habitus and field influenced the drive to change the culture of a school through policy enactment. How this plays out in the field will determine a person’s relative position in it. In terms of policymaking, a proposed policy could have the effect of suiting a teacher or the reverse, making them uncomfortable and causing them to question their belief in the game – their illusio – and thus, lessen their relative power.
Illusio is aligned with an interest, an investment, a belief – it is a state that is directly opposed to indifference (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Illusio occurs in the arena of the field in much the same way as habitus: “each field calls forth and gives life to a specific form of interest, a specific ‘illusio’, as tacit recognition of the value of the stakes of the game” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 117). It helps teachers to define who they are and how they perceive their professional selves. It underpins their persistence and their continued efforts to pursue their work as professionals. Their illusio is what helps to sustain the field and the game. Thus, the teacher with a strong sense of investment in the game (of education) and their purpose as a teacher can either be aligned with policymaking or sidelined, depending on the other players in the field and their intent, and on the teacher’s own dispositions and tendencies (their habitus).

McGinty and Gunter (2012) suggested that policy may be generated and delivered from a central body and appear to have all the hallmarks of a complete and useful agenda; the reality, however, may suggest that the local interpretation of the policy may not in fact be in line with that which was proposed. It may depend more on how the teachers and leaders within the school are positioned and position themselves in relation to the policy and whether or not they will “play the game” (McGinty & Gunter, 2012, p. 229). This can be explained in terms of habitus and field: the policy process is a game and whether or not the schools and the teachers will play that game depends largely on their ‘feel’ for it, whether it rests easily with their beliefs (their illusio).
2.3.4 Pedagogical change: Assessment and testing

Bourdieu’s notion of capital is relevant, in Wrigley’s (2011) argument, as distribution of capital assists in a perpetuation of the status quo: things left unchallenged will not change. Bourdieu described the field as a competitive space, where people are dominated or dominators (Lingard, Hayes, Mills and Christie, 2011) and where the struggle is to change or to preserve the field. Those who hold more capital would be more likely to want to preserve the status quo, in their own best interests. Bourdieu extended his use and understanding of the notion of capital beyond its immediate definition as something of economic/financial value (Grenfell, 2012). For Bourdieu, symbolic and cultural capital contribute to a person’s relative success or otherwise in a field and provide them with either advantage or disadvantage. In schools and in relation to accountability, this applies when a student may perform poorly in standardised testing: this outcome needs to be perceived – by the teacher, the school, and the authorities that imposed the testing procedure – as resulting from reasons other than just academic performance.

Darling-Hammond (2011) added to this viewpoint in the light of the increased reliance of testing in the USA since the 1980s and drew the conclusion that testing alone is not a useful tool to educate young people, nor does it lead to improved schools or greater educational opportunities (Darling-Hammond, 2011). She claimed that

generally, the premise of grade retention as a solution for poor performance is that the problem resides in the child, rather than in the school ….
rather than looking carefully at classroom practices when students are not achieving, schools send students back to repeat the same experience over again (p. 74).

Darling-Hammond referred to “factory-model school designs” (p. 30) as one of the reasons leading to serious inequalities in the American education system, alongside poverty, unequal distribution of resources, and disparities between schools and districts (Darling-Hammond, 2011). She found that when curriculum opportunities in students’ lives were limited, it led to poorer outcomes and minimal academic achievement. Curriculum opportunities include access to higher order problem-solving and questioning, and less reliance on rote learning, worksheets and test-oriented tasks. Students who received those opportunities would succeed regardless of their background or family life (Darling-Hammond, 2011).

The value of testing as an improvement tool has been questioned widely in educational research. For example, in Australia, concerns about education reform policies have been raised by Reid (2012), who has challenged claims from politicians that they are genuine in their attempts to close the achievement gap to result in equity through education. Like Apple (2013), Reid proposed that educational reform has failed to make any real attempts to address the overarching problems of poverty and disadvantage: policy and political rhetoric have focussed on strategies needed to close the gap, rather than showing any real readiness to address what has caused the gaps in the first place. This, claims Reid, highlights the problem of placing too much emphasis on testing regimes such as NAPLAN (see Glossary) as a
measurement of student achievement, because it is narrowly focussed on numerical scores and removes the spotlight from the wider problems of social advantage or disadvantage. Policies generally borrowed from overseas, where, he claims, they have failed, will not be successful in Australia either, because they continue to focus on accountability, rewards and punishments, and not on the inherent societal problems caused by inequity (Reid, 2012).

Educational researchers (for example, Fink, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2013; Fullan, 2011) have argued that assessment and standardised testing can be seen as politically motivated and not always in the best interest of schools and teachers. Fink questioned the efficacy of standardised testing in today’s economy, arguing that the skills of conforming which are emphasized in such assessment are not necessarily the skills that will best equip students for today’s world (Fink, 2011). Fullan (2011) pointed to reasons why some efforts to find a rapid improvement for school system – for example, in response to global comparisons – see policy makers becoming imbued with a sense of urgency and choosing hastily rather than after considered thought and research. Thus, drivers for reform which appear plausible at face value (Fullan, 2011) – such as standardised testing for improved literacy and numeracy – may fall short of their purpose if they are not supported with solid planning and purpose. He suggested that increased emphasis on accountability as a tool for whole school improvement could ultimately be an ineffective, even damaging driver (Fullan, 2011, p. 5).

Mockler’s (2012) approach was to explore the deliberate misrecognition of school and teacher performance in the media in Australia.
Bourdieu likened misrecognition to symbolic violence, a term used to explain how social hierarchies and social inequalities can be produced and maintained (Schubert, 2008). Here, Bailey’s (2011) concerns surface about teacher marginalization in a competitive climate where their performance is under public scrutiny. While research highlights the positive impacts of teacher collaboration and building professional capital together (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012), Mockler’s report raises some concerns about teacher public perception and the fallout of negative reporting. She examined thirty-four editorials published in the Australian print media over a period of almost a year in the months leading up to and including the publication of the My School website. In this analysis, she identified three narratives: distrust, choice and performance (Mockler, 2012). Her contention was that these dominant narratives positioned the My School website and the associated league tables as “the solution to problems of poor performance, ‘bad’ schools and ‘bad’ teachers (Mockler, 2012, p. 2).

These narratives (Mockler, 2012) are examples of Bourdieu’s concept of illusio and misrecognition (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The narrative of distrust which was dominant in many of the articles pinpointed teachers as the cause of poor student performance and “misrecognised” how students’ social circumstances contributed: the teachers were generally positioned as untrustworthy and were presented as being largely driven by self-interest or ideology (Mockler, 2012).

The notion of choice, which Mockler (2012) identified as a dominant narrative in the editorials, can be studied in reference to Bourdieu’s concepts of capital (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Grenfell, 2012). While a number of
the narratives pointed to the website as contributing to greater choice for parents in selecting their child’s school, choice is dependent on capital – economic, cultural, social and symbolic. This is also an example of misrecognition: the website purports to spread further knowledge about schools in order for families to have greater choice. In fact, that choice would necessarily only extend to some families – in this case, those with the capital needed to enact those choices. Families with little or no (economic) capital are very much limited in the choices they are able to make in regard to the educational access and opportunities for their children; thus, Mockler (2012) suggested, there is some doubt as to the validity of the proposition that choice is a factor which favours all families.

2.4 “Rethinking accountability” (Sahlberg, 2010)

While performance and accountability presents as the dominant school culture of the twenty-first century, much of the literature questions the hastiness with which this culture has emerged. Aligning it with a political and economic (rather than educational) agenda, the critics of this emergent culture point to weaknesses and deficits within the approach. Strong arguments emerge from the literature that challenge the effectiveness of testing and standardisation in schools (Ball, 2003; Biesta, 2004; Sahlberg, 2010, 2016; Perryman et al., 2011). The philosophy that underpins this theme in the literature is that schools should build social capital, they should aim to counter boredom in young people, and they should encourage cooperation rather than competition among students and schools. In short, they should consider important learning to be that which is “worthwhile and valued by [the students’] families, communities and nations more than simply
achievement for external expectations or to satisfy policy norms” (Sahlberg, 2010, p. 46).

The literature highlights a possible conundrum for teachers. On the one hand, there is the drive for schools to encourage innovation and creativity (Sahlberg, 2008; Ballet and Kelchtermans, 2009; Fink, 2011) while at the same time there is the pressure to conform to world standards and compete in a global landscape for the highest test results. The dilemma for teachers and schools is how best to respond to the external change forces of the global educational reform movement (GERM; Sahlberg, 2016) and increasing external expectations to achieve and succeed in the international educational stakes played out through standardised testing. Sahlberg (2010) described a situation where teachers and students are caught between two different “change forces” (p. 47). One force focussed on improving education through knowledge and accountability; the other, through placing education and learning into the economic field and using education as a means to improve national economy. He described teachers and students as being caught in between these two forces in a climate where the focus has been reduced to teaching for the test (Sahlberg, 2010).

Sahlberg (2010) called for an accountability system that was broader than standardised testing and which would “support worthwhile learning, increase social capital and thereby help schools to be active players in developing our societies” (p. 58). He proposed doing this by improving and increasing trust in the professionals – the teachers – and in their schools; by including parents and students more in goal setting and improving the quality of education; and by calling on school leaders to embrace
collaboration and networking amongst their school and their teachers, and to discourage competition (Sahlberg, 2010).

A focus on building capital and networks as a whole school improvement strategy would, he suggested, lead to improved outcomes for students (Sahlberg, 2010). Sahlberg identified in the current climate a shift away from a moral purpose in teaching, to schools being affected more and more by productivity demands that promoted efficiency. He cited “measureable outcomes, higher test scores, better positions in school league tables” as the new economies of schooling, which existed at the expense of building social capital and “collective social and human responsibility” (Sahlberg, 2010, p. 48). This, according to Sahlberg (2016), was at the core of what he called GERM (Global Educational Reform Movement), and which he criticised for five key elements:

(i) Standardised testing is low-cost and instant
(ii) A focus on literacy and numeracy for testing has resulted in a decrease in subjects which encourage artistic and creative endeavour
(iii) The process is low-risk and limited in its pedagogical approaches
(iv) It is based on a business model rather than an educational model
(v) There is a punitive element for low-performing teachers and students, which he considers against good practice in teaching and learning

Sahlberg (2016) proposed that these elements posed a significant risk to schools and education systems, which would not lead to significant
improvement but which would, instead, narrow the educational experience of students.

The emergence of accountability as an integral part of global education systems was also raised as a concern by Ball (2003, 2008), Biesta (2004), Fink (2011), and Wrigley, Lingard and Thomson (2012). Ball made this succinct observation about policy in education:

The social and economic purposes of education have been collapsed into a single, overriding emphasis on policy making for economic competitiveness and an increasing neglect or sidelining (other than in rhetoric) of the social purposes of education (Ball, 2008, p. 11 – 12).

Ball called this linking of educational reform practices to the global economy “insistent singularity” (p. 15): moves to modernising education and therefore bringing it in line with the modern, twenty-first century “knowledge economy” (Ball, 2008, p. 17). He considers these moves to be counter-productive for the creation of a more equal and united world, and in fact, as more likely to exacerbate inequalities, which means so many people would not have access to the new, knowledge economy. This impacts on teachers’ personal and professional lives: Ball suggested that working for the global economy drains teachers of the energy for their “first order activities” (p. 51) – that is, the students and the classroom, curriculum development, and so forth – to focus on satisfying external demands for data collection and monitoring (Ball, 2008).

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2.5 Teacher wellbeing – a challenge to performance and accountability

The next section looks at some of the literature that has considered teaching as an emotional profession, and has investigated how teacher emotion could be linked to burnout, loss of enthusiasm, and in particular, teacher resistance. The section takes a teacher wellbeing perspective on the impacts of mandated pedagogical change – in particular, those changes which are underpinned by increased performativity and accountability.

From a teacher wellbeing perspective, Perryman et al. (2011) observed that in England, accountability and a focus on a results-driven approach could be a distraction from the intended purpose of whole school improvement. The league tables which emerged from this drive resulted in an inordinate amount of pressure on the teachers (Perryman et al., 2011). They recognised stress as a significant factor in their study of performance and accountability and viewed this in terms of the personal load this places on the teachers in their work.¹ They highlighted teaching as an emotional occupation (an idea also proposed by Nodding, 1992; Nias, 1996; Hargreaves, 1998, 2000; Day, 2002; O’Connor, 2006; Sutton, 2009).

Sutton, Mudrey-Camino, and Knight (2009) understood that teachers deliberately employed emotion regulation strategies as part of their attempts to feel and look professional. In particular, teachers played down negative emotions as much as possible, preferring to staying positive and hoping to appear more effective. Sutton et al. (2009) revealed that there is

¹ Further in the research, this will be an area to pursue with the participating teacher leaders to investigate whether or not this is a factor in their own work.
inconclusive evidence around the subject of how much emotion teachers can or should bring to the classroom in order to feel effective. Given the amount of research that considers teaching to be an emotional profession, there is surprisingly little conclusive evidence from the teachers’ perspective on how they feel emotion should be expressed within the classroom. This has appeared as a gap in the literature on the emotional practice of teaching.

O’Connor (2006) focused on some of the more intangible qualities of teachers, such as the capacity to care and have empathy. She aligned emotion with professional philosophies and considered how these positioned the teachers within the school climate. This is habitus and field at work, where the teachers’ identities are often shaped by their personal interests and values. She suggested that teachers were often inspired and motivated by the “ethical and humanistic dimensions of teachers’ work” (O’Connor, 2006, p. 118). Like Zembylas (2003), her position was that these dimensions motivated teachers and formed the foundations of their commitment. However, she also referred to the gap in public policy concerning the importance of teacher emotion (O’Connor, 2006) and called for further research into the importance of caring and emotion in teachers’ work.

Zembylas (2003) also aimed to understand how teachers’ emotions are shaped and formed and how this links to the creation of teacher identity (p. 111). Zembylas (2003) linked defining “appropriate” behaviour to Bourdieu’s habitus (p. 112). Teachers form identity according to tradition and what is acceptable and maintaining these behaviours reinforces them as the norm. Zembylas argued that in the school context, teachers learned “to
internalize and enact roles and norms assigned to them by the school culture" (2003, p. 119) and these actions are also determined by how the teachers see the world and perceive themselves: that is, their habitus. Emotions, he proposed, are very much affected by school culture and climate. Self-esteem (p. 121 – 122) was cited as an example of how teachers can be affected by the general school culture, its view of emotions and the appropriateness of expressing emotion. This, he suggested, was a significant factor in the consideration of how teacher identity was formed and maintained (Zembylas, 2003). This was a view supported by Hargreaves (1998, 2000).

Hargreaves (2000) called for more attention to the emotional dimension of teaching in the climate of school change and reform. Rather than viewing emotion as an indulgence or a diversion, his view was more focussed on emotion in terms of the inter-relations between teachers and the presence of emotional intelligence. Hargreaves observed the distinction in educational change and reform literature between high emotions that could be treated as a “gentle sedative” – such as collaboration, team-building, and so forth (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 837) – and emotion that was a more empowering process in the teaching and learning process. The latter, he suggested, was a more rigorous understanding of the value of emotion in teaching practice.

2.5.1 “The challenge to care” (Noddings, 1992)

The need to recognise caring and nurture in teaching and learning was highlighted by Noddings (1992), who proposed a number of approaches to raise the level of care in education. She highlighted the weaknesses of a
curriculum methodology which reduces to a standard method all approaches of teaching and delivering curriculum. The stance that emerged from the literature was that this disrupted the need to care and to establish relationships – methods which were far more likely to result in student engagement and success (Noddings, 1992). Noddings described a number of definitions of caring as it could be interpreted in schools. She presented the view that without the capacity and the space to care – and the guidance from teachers on how to do so – students would miss a vital part of learning: she described this as the “challenge to care in schools” (Noddings, 1992, p. 20).

The challenge to care went, in Noddings’ view, beyond the academic, prescribed curriculum. She argued the benefits of asking the existential questions of students: “Who am I? What kind of person will I be?” (Noddings, p. 20). She proposed that more attention to care in schools was needed, rather than less.

O’Connor also considered “caring” to be a key characteristic of teachers, in spite of little consideration given to this aspect of teachers in a policy climate (O’Connor, 2006). She aligned with Hargreaves (2000) in the view that a teacher’s personal beliefs and levels of emotion feature strongly in their professional selves.

The professional selves that teachers developed in the classroom were underpinned by their emotional selves and their values and beliefs systems, which in turn were socially grounded (Nias, 1996, p. 294). Teachers are generally passionate about their jobs, suggested Nias; Hargreaves (1998) was of a similar leaning and described good teachers as “passionate about

Teachers’ behaviours and responses were often quite public and this led to what has been described as the “surface acting” used by teachers when they were being observed (Naring, Briet and Brouwers, 2006). This involved acting in particular ways, perhaps not true to the teachers’ feelings but considered appropriate for the situation. This, the authors argued, necessarily took a toll on teachers’ wellbeing, as they felt compelled to hide their emotional state from public view.

2.5.2 Teacher identity

The notion of self, emotion and behaviour in teaching is aligned with teacher role and teacher identity. The increased pressure on teachers to produce results may lead to “a crisis of their sense of professional self-worth and a sense of loss of control” (Perryman et al., 2012, p. 186). This highlights why the relationship between one’s habitus (their dispositions) and one’s place in the field (their perceived power in this competitive space) is an important aspect that requires investigating. Within the current state of play in the field there emerges the teachers’ practice, how they will operate as professionals and as people. Their doxa, their belief in the game, gives them their stakes in it, which Bourdieu called illusio.

While considering change in education to be a reality, Wrigley, Lingard and Thomson (2012) warned against losing sight of hope and authenticity in educational reform in the current drive to place schools inside a competitive market system. They suggested that school improvement policies - which are generally designed to reflect the rapidly changing world
and economy - do not always consider or understand the complex nature of school and young people. They considered it a risk to ignore immense social issues faced by young people if the improvement agenda is too closely linked to political and economic purposes.

Wrigley et al. (2012) linked school change to wider, global challenges, such as world poverty, war, environment and finance (p. 97). Too much focus on accountability and testing, they claimed, trivialises education and does not consider citizenship and community. They argued for educational change that is linked to values of “democratic citizenship and social responsibility” (Wrigley et al., p. 95), where, ideally, schools are connected to their communities, and pedagogy helps young people to become “more fully human, individually and collectively” (p. 98). Bates (2012) described one of the greatest challenges of the twenty-first century as overcoming differences and living together; he saw social justice as a key imperative for schools to cultivate. His reasoning aligned with Wrigley et al. (2012) in their belief that schools must be human and must promote diversity and justice. He argued for schools to become a place where students “would be better served by an aesthetic that recognises students’ life stories and helps them project their stories into futures that can be imagined and perhaps, realised” (Bates, 2012, p. 69).

Thomson, Lingard and Wrigley (2012) expressed some scepticism about the authenticity of an educational reform agenda that is spurred on by a commitment to performance and accountability. Rather than oppose the latter, they suggested that being accountable need not respond to a top-down style of accountability, driven by standardised testing and a regressive
style; rather, it could reflect a society that is more committed to equity, democracy and progress (Thomson et al., 2012).

Ball considered this from the perspective of the teachers’ soul (Ball, 2003). He questioned the decisions around satisfactory performance markers and wondered how these actually represented the value of individual performance for teachers. Ball argued that social processes are too complex to be translated into and understood by numbers; he questioned the impact of a climate of performativity on the soul of the teacher and on teacher identity and sense of self (Ball, 2003).

2.6 The role of leadership in change

School leadership’s function, then, is to mobilize people to change how they themselves work so that they collectively serve better the emerging needs of children and demands of society. (Donaldson, 2001, p. 6)

Leadership featured as a key consideration in the literature around school improvement and effectiveness and the capacity of schools to manage change. Among those who referred to leadership for school improvement include Dinham (2008), Donaldson (2001), Fullan, (2010, 2011a, 2011b) and Ball et al. (2011a). Leadership was considered to be a crucial element in influencing teacher behaviour and attitude (e.g. Pryor and Pryor, 2005) and therefore, in managing change effectively. The emotional labour of leadership was highlighted by Humphrey (2008). This phrase was used to describe how a leader can influence the staff through their emotions, their moods, their empathy, their responses to situations, and so forth. Essentially, it was argued that performing emotional labour constitutes a
superior leadership style because it is more likely to have a positive influence on staff. The techniques included surface acting and genuine emotional expression – displays which would “influence the moods, emotions, motivations and performance of their subordinates or followers” (Humphrey, Pollack and Hawver, 2008, p. 153).

Those in leadership must have the same moral dimensions as teachers (Donaldson, 2001), and their work must be consistently directed towards the improvement of schools and for the benefit of children. Donaldson (2001) argued for a model of leadership that is “a relationship that mobilizes people to fulfil the purposes of education” (p. 41). He proposed that effective leaders must share a moral imperative with teachers for their school work and the leaders must foster this strong relationship, based on moral purpose, in order to effectively move the school forward (Donaldson, 2001, p. 42). He focussed on relationship building as a key feature that characterised effective leadership. Donaldson held school leaders responsible for building a whole staff and school “commitment to purpose” and suggested their role was to identify those strategies which would lead to a robust, cohesive staff with strong values and sense of purpose (Donaldson, 2001, p. 81 – 82).

Fullan (1997) suggested that “the best way to deal with change is to improve relationships” (p. 17). Those who have considered the importance of trust in relationships include Coles and Southworth (2005), Donaldson (2001), and Senge (1990a).Aligned with the thinking that views teaching as a human occupation (Hargreaves, 1998, 2000; Noddings, 1994; O’Connor, 2006; Sutton et al., 2009), Coles and Southworth (2005) referred to trust as a significant driver of effective relationships within schools and a key feature of
successful change. Effective leaders, they argued, foster the trust in their staff and enable change to be enacted in a safe environment, where teachers have the confidence to participate in curriculum innovation (Coles & Southworth, 2005). Similarly, Donaldson viewed leaders as people who value “inter-personal connections” (Donaldson, 2001, p. 47), nurture trust, and build strong relationships in schools that are conducive to successful change. Leaders who share a common ethical and moral foundation with their staff, he argued, were more likely to unite staff and enable collaborative, collegiate working practices in a healthy environment (Donaldson, 2001).

In his study of principals in state schools, Lortie (2009) suggested that school principals, generally, are ill-prepared for the transition from teacher to leader. He stressed the importance for principals to feel trusted and feel that they have a strong and productive relationship with their staff, rather than feel as though they are in such a position of authority that they would simply tell people what to do. Lortie suggested that “trouble” (p. 133) emerged from teachers almost as much as from parents. In this sense, trouble described staff behaviour and staff relationships and responses to school policies and practices. Lortie cited strong and robust relationships as the key to addressing trouble and resolving tensions that arose among staff (Lortie, 2009, p. 141).

Bourdieu’s thinking tools help to explain and understand the relevance of relationships in schools. How teachers viewed and positioned themselves in the field was very much dependent on their capital and the perceived value of their capital. The field was a competitive space (Lingard et al., 2011) and one where the game was played according to one’s capital. A
higher level of capital gave teachers greater access to decision-making and being in the midst of the processes that determined how policies and initiatives were implemented. Capital also suggested more power in this regard. Troubled teachers were therefore perhaps not so much teachers who were causing trouble, but rather were limited in their capacity to have influence in the school processes because they lacked capital. The teacher leaders in this study were revealed to have greater access to leadership and the decision-making process, which was because of the relatively high value of their capital.

2.7 Gaps and limitations in the literature

Gaps and shortcomings in the literature to this point are that the teacher's voice and practice are generally under-represented regarding mandated pedagogical change. There is some consideration of the significance of context and change (for example, Braun et al., 2011), and context has proved to be an important factor in the implementation of change. However, there is little consideration of the significance of the teachers' practice and this appears to be a major gap in the literature. How teachers can be marginalised by change has been referred to in the literature (for example, Bailey), and this is linked to teacher resistance to change. Teacher resistance is crucial to understanding how mandated pedagogical change impacts on teachers and therefore, needs to be further investigated.

This research focuses on the teachers' practice and voice: how teachers perceive mandated pedagogical change and manage it in their daily, professional lives, and it highlights some of the more difficult issues
surrounding change. How this will be done will be explained in the following methodology chapter.
Chapter 3 – Research Methodology and Design

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the qualitative case study methodology chosen and the reasoning behind this decision. It explains how the central research questions and the sub-questions were addressed in the research. It details the three stages of data collection and the analytical approach. The chapter explains the participant selection process and the school setting, and concludes with the limitations to the study.

3.1.1 The choice of methodology: a heuristic case study

A brief outline of the process and the research questions

The literature review on pedagogical change in schools outlined in Chapter 2 indicated that the teacher’s voice is under-represented. A methodology that would enable their voices to be present was the reason behind the choice for a heuristic case study approach. As outlined by Clough and Nutbrown (2002), “a characteristic purpose of a methodology is to show not how such and such appeared to be the best method available for the given purposes of the study, but how and why this way of doing it was unavoidable – was required by – the context and purpose of this particular enquiry” (p. 19). A heuristic case study was chosen to investigate the central question:

How does mandated pedagogical change impact on the professional lives of ten teacher leaders?

This question was addressed by looking at four sub-questions:
1. How do teacher leaders’ perceive mandated pedagogical change and its enactment?

2. How do teacher leaders manage mandated pedagogical changes in their daily practice?

3. In the face of mandated pedagogical change what is most difficult for teacher leaders?

4. In the face of mandated pedagogical changes how do teacher leaders reconcile their experience and knowledge regarding teaching and learning?

The research questions were designed to investigate how change was impacting on the teacher leaders in their professional lives and to gather data at three different levels, aiming each time to go deeper into their responses and explore the effects of change. The four sub-questions focussed on the way that the teachers perceived, managed, problematized and reconciled pedagogical change when it was mandated from external authorities.

This research began with the teachers’ change narratives. These stories were read and coded, seeking the common, recurring themes (the coding process is explained in detail further on in this chapter). The thematic findings were given back to each participant to see if they believed this was representative of their narratives. Ten semi-structured interview questions were developed based on the initial data analysed and cross-checked with the participants (Kayrooz & Trevitt, 2005). The transcripts from the interviews, coupled with the original narratives, constituted the data for the analysis. The emerging themes from the interview data were again cross-checked with
participants, and this completed the triangulation of the process (see Appendix A for the information package sent to each teacher, inviting them to participate in this research). The three stages of data collection enabled a comprehensive analysis of the meanings that the teachers made of their work, and adhered to the purpose of case studies as described by Clough and Nutbrown (2002):

Case studies are often seen as prime examples of qualitative research – which adopts an interpretive approach to data, studies ‘things’ within their context and considers the subjective meanings that people bring to their situation. (Clough & Nutbrown, 2002, p. 18)

Further to this, there was a focus group meeting after the interviews, where teacher leaders were encouraged to co-analyse narrative data and interview data as it was transcribed. They were given an explanation of how their narratives and interviews were analysed in terms of The Game, using Bourdieu’s thinking tools as a way of analysing these results. This explanation is included in the appendices. The teacher leaders were invited to participate in a focus group discussion, and were offered some initial questions to consider in preparing for the discussion.

The focus group aimed to enable the process of reflexivity. For Bourdieu, reflexivity was “an empowering tool for making sense of the social world and acting effectively upon it in a truly informed manner” (Deer, 2012, p. 198). The group dynamic allowed the process of reflexivity to be a
“common and shared effort” (p. 198), which Bourdieu considered to be a crucial aspect of reflexivity, as opposed to a personal, individual pursuit.

3.2 Why a case study?

3.2.1 A bounded study

The central research question asked how mandated pedagogical change impacted on the teacher leaders who participated in the study. In addressing the “how” of this question, I needed to delve into the professional lives of the participants and draw out enough information to be able to reach some conclusions. I needed to collect multiple layers of data to ensure that there was depth and rigour in the process and the participants themselves had multiple opportunities to consider their responses. A case study was the best approach to ensure all these conditions were met.

Creswell (2007) referred to case study research as

A methodology, a type of design in qualitative research … a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) … through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information … and reports a case description and case-based themes. (Creswell, 2007, p. 73)

This research is a bounded study of mandated pedagogical change, and how this change is perceived by a selected group of ten teacher leaders in one school setting. The case is the teacher leaders who are participating in
the study and how they perceive mandated pedagogical change in terms of their practice and their beliefs.

This case study is focused on the “how” (Yin, 2009, p. 2) and the “why” (Yin, p. 2). In this instance, the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon, i.e. mandated pedagogical change. The context is a co-ed secondary state school, with two campuses (years 7 and 8 and 9 - 12) located in an average SES (socioeconomic status) district in coastal/regional Victoria, with a school population of around one thousand students in total. Yin (2003b) suggested that if the contextual conditions are highly pertinent to the phenomenon (change), then a case study is the best choice of method (Yin 2003b, p. 13). An integral aspect of the case study is the way in which data is collected, and the honing of the skills of the investigator in this instance becomes crucial to the task. As the principal researcher, I looked for additional evidence throughout the process, through questioning and the three stages of data collection. I made inferences that were based on evidence from interviews and conversations, reserving any of my own preconceived ideas or judgements. Listening and appropriate questioning were an integral component of the interview process (Yin, 2003b).

I chose a case study method because it allowed me to “retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events – such as individual life cycles, small group behaviour, organisational and managerial processes, neighbourhood change, school performance, international relations, and the maturation of industries” (Yin, 2009, p. 4). This research explored the lives of the ten teachers who agreed to participate in the study and it aimed to
understand their experiences of change as it has occurred and continues to occur in their professional lives as teachers.

According to Yin (2003b), the case study is a research strategy, one that allows the investigation of a topic by following a set of procedures. As a strategy, “it comprises an all-encompassing method – covering the logic of design, data collection techniques, and specific approaches to data analysis” (Yin, 2003b, p. 14). I used an exploratory method, where I posed questions to the participants – the “how and the “why” (Yin, 2009).

The purpose of this case study was “to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the groups under study” and “to develop general theoretical statements about regularities in social structure and process” (Merriam, 1998, p. 29). The understanding of the group was essential for the understanding and analysis of their individual and collective responses to mandated pedagogical change.

Further to this, Merriam (1998) defined case studies according to their special features: particularistic, descriptive and heuristic. Firstly, particularistic case studies focus on the phenomenon. According to Shaw (1978), “case studies concentrate attention on the way particular groups of people confront specific problems, taking a holistic view of the situation they are problem centred, small scale, entrepreneurial endeavours” (Shaw, p. 2). Merriam (1998) suggested that the case study in this sense allows the focus to be on a specific instance, but in doing so it highlights a general problem (Merriam, 1998, p. 30).

Secondly, descriptive case studies, according to Merriam (1998), allow the end-product of the study to be a “rich, ‘thick’ description of the
phenomenon under study” (Merriam, p. 29), where ‘thick’ is an anthropological term meaning the “complete, literal description of the incident or entity being investigated” (Merriam, p. 29 – 30). Further to this, she suggested that a descriptive study can “illustrate the complexities of a situation – the fact that not one but many factors contributed to it” (Merriam, p. 30).

Finally, Merriam (1998) defined a heuristic case study as one that “illuminates the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon under study” (p. 30). This type of case study can help to “explain the reasons for a problem, the background of a situation, what happened and why; evaluate, summarize, and conclude, thus increasing its potential applicability” (Merriam, 1998, p. 31).

I chose the heuristic case study for my research as of the three it was the most appropriate for this type of study. The problem I wanted to investigate was how change was impacting on teachers in their daily work. The case study would enable me to explore the background of the situation, and through the teachers’ stories and the interviews, explore how they perceived mandated pedagogical change.

In the case of this research, the group in question was ten teachers, who participated first in writing their stories, then in interviews, and finally in the focus group discussion. The purpose was to “illuminate the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon under study” (Merriam, 1998, p. 30), to try and make sense of the phenomenon of change as it impacted on this group, and to elicit information and data that would enable this understanding. This would also make a contribution to current thinking and
research on change, and in particular on mandated pedagogical change in school as it is experienced by the teachers.

I chose not to do a collective case study because Stake (in Denzin, 2000, p. 37), described a collective case study as one where the researcher “may study a number of cases in order to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition”. This research is not focussed on a number of cases; rather, the case is one group of ten teacher leaders at one school.

A crucial element of this research was the experience that the participants brought to the study. In writing their stories and then participating in interviews and discussion, these teachers provided an immediate context for the understanding of change in schools and lent to it a sense of reality. Their experiences may challenge some preconceptions about the nature of change and how it is interpreted in schools; their experiences and stories may give rise to new ideas and possibilities; their views and understandings may contradict some current thinking about change. My aim was to collect rich data that would offer an understanding of the complexities of the nature of change and its enactment, as perceived by the teacher leaders. By examining and analysing their responses, new knowledge and understandings emerged, and these are presented and discussed in Chapter 8.

3.2.2 Research design – “Getting from here to there” (Yin, 2009, p. 26).

Yin (2009) suggested that a research design has five important components: a study’s questions, its propositions (if any), its unit(s) of analysis, the logic linking of the data to the propositions, and the criteria for interpreting the findings (Yin, 2009, p. 27).
The research questions asked teachers how change had impacted on their lives, as teachers and as professionals. Teachers were asked to write a narrative about their change experience. This was a stimulus for them to consider how they perceived change and how they managed, problematized and reconciled mandated pedagogical change. These question deal with the “how,” which Yin suggests is integral to case study research questions (Yin, 2009, p. 4), and asked teachers to also consider the “why” of the phenomenon of change, such as why the culture of the organisation can impact on the way change is implemented (Yin, 2009, p. 4 – 5).

The second element, the propositions of the research, is less concrete because of the nature of this research. The teachers were asked, initially, to write their narrative, their change story, which was then analysed looking for common threads and themes. While there were no specific propositions at the start, the aim of the narratives was to generate interview questions, which would enable a focus on the particular aspects of change that would emerge from the narratives as being common to all participants. In Yin’s terms, and in this case, the subject of change is “a topic for exploration” (Yin, 2009, p. 28) and the purpose is to explore how teachers are dealing with change and how it impacts on them and their work.

The third element Yin proposed is the unit(s) of analysis. In defining this and applying it to the current research, there are some problems that highlight difficulties in definitions in case studies. In this research, it is proposed that the unit of analysis – the case – is the small group of teachers in the school, as distinguished from the actual school (as it sits in the broader, wider educational environment), which is the context.
Linking the data to the propositions, the fourth element, followed three distinct stages. The data that was initially collected consisted of the stories the teachers wrote about detailing their change experience. This was used to generate interview questions, which were conducted individually with the participants. The group then came together for a focus group discussion. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 present a rigorous analysis of the three stages of data collection using Bourdieu’s thinking tools.

3.2.3 Ethical considerations

This research was given approval by the ethics committee of Deakin University and by DEECD. The principal of the school gave her approval for the research to be conducted with the staff of her school. The regional director of the Barwon South West region was informed that this research was taking place.

As the principal researcher, there are moral and/or ethical concerns that I have considered.

(a) Consent, confidentiality and consequences are the first considerations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 61). The participants were invited to take part in the research, with a clear explanation that there was no obligation or coercion and they would be able to withdraw at any point, with no need for explanation and no resulting negative consequences. The participants were assured of the confidentiality of their answers. They were informed of the approval from the relevant authorities, including the school principal, to conduct the research. Their willingness to participate or not was entirely their own choice.
(b) The role of the researcher is the second key consideration. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), morally responsible research behaviour involves “the moral integrity of the researcher, his or her sensitivity and commitment to moral issues and actions ... the integrity of the researcher – his or her knowledge, experience, honesty and fairness – is the decisive factor” (p. 74).

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) suggested that these first considerations can form the framework for preparing an ethical protocol. The project has been submitted to and approved by the ethical board, and throughout this process I was required to consider any issues or problems that could arise so I had at least an idea beforehand of possible ramifications of the interview process. Therefore, I had been forewarned and prepared for any sensitive issues which may have arisen. Some of the questions which may be a part of an ethical protocol, such as who would access the interview transcripts and how to disguise the participants’ identities, were explored and answered appropriately in the formal ethics submissions.

Participant anonymity was a priority and referencing was carefully considered to ensure that participants could not be identified. The references to written narratives were to participants by number only, and page numbers not given as the narratives were relatively short. The references in the interviews were given by page number and participant number, while in the focus group discussion referencing, it was just to participants, with page number only.

As there were three levels of data collection stages, the likelihood of participant recognition was increased. The focus group discussion was kept
totally anonymous to minimise the risk of participants being recognised through their comments. It was felt that this was crucial to the discussion being open and honest.

### 3.3 Selecting the participants and setting: sampling

#### 3.3.1 Ten teacher leaders

The participants were ten teacher leaders working at a state school in rural/coastal Victoria, Australia. The concept of purposive sampling was used in selecting the participants because “they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (Creswell, 2007, p. 125). Miles and Huberman (1994) referred to the complex nature of sampling; small samples of people, “nestled in their context and studied in-depth” (p. 27), reflect a purposive sample. They suggested that “sampling is crucial for later analysis” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 27). One strategy adopted for this research is *maximum variation*, which Creswell (2007) described as a common approach in qualitative research because it maximises differences in the beginning of the study and “increases the likelihood that the findings will reflect differences or different perspectives” (Creswell, 2007, p. 126). In this research, this type of sampling is appropriate because while the selected group is homogenous in that they are all teacher leaders, each has their own individual story, reflecting their own individual experiences and roles throughout their careers.

The following table summarises the professional profiles of the ten participants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Approximate years as PCO</th>
<th>Experience in other school</th>
<th>Experience in other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

103
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>teaching</th>
<th>(principal class officer)</th>
<th>leadership experience</th>
<th>schools</th>
<th>professions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>25+</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>30+</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>25+</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>30+</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>30+</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Ten Participants - Professional profiles

A number of factors were taken into consideration in choosing ten teacher leaders to participate in this study. Firstly, they had to have enough depth and breadth of experience in schools to be able to articulate a response to pedagogical change and some degree of understanding of the change process as it had impacted on their teaching career. They needed to be able to draw on situations that they had witnessed over the years where they had to participate in change, willingly or not, and articulate how they had responded to it. They needed to be in the position to understand leadership (through experience), to express how it is perceived by themselves and other teachers, and how it is positioned within school operations. They also needed to be able to reflect on school and organisational culture; an understanding of this comes with experience and insight, which was a criterion for selection. These are what might be considered the ‘professional’ grounds for selection – criteria that may have in some way distinguished these particular teacher leaders from other teachers in the same school. This would also suggest that each of the teacher leaders were invested with a notable degree of symbolic and cultural capital in the school, which marked them as teacher leaders in their own right.
The final factor determining the selection of the participants was that they needed to be willing to invest time and effort in the research. Importantly, it was essential that they would be prepared to offer their thoughts and insights into their work on both a professional and a personal level. The potential for disclosure about grievances, conflicts, personal tensions and professional disagreements established the need for the utmost trust in the researcher and the process, and a deep understanding on the part of the researcher of the emotional nature of teaching (Noddings, 1992; Nias, 1996; Sutton et al., 2009; Naring et al., 2011). My work with the participants at the school over the previous five or six years was the foundation for this trust as we had shared experiences of the typical conflicts, issues, change initiatives and collegiate differences that may be found in any school or large organisation. The participants had all worked closely with me in areas such as curriculum development, student management, whole school organisation, on school camps, and in the celebration of student achievements. In short, we had, over time, developed a mutual, professional respect and high regard for each other. This respect was the cornerstone of the trust and openness shared throughout the research period. The teachers also had the assurance of knowing that at any time they could withdraw from the investigation (see appendix A for notes which teachers received before agreeing to participate in the research).

It is worth noting that when the interviews took place, I had moved to another school and the school in the study had experienced a number of disruptions to staffing, which was causing some concern. There had been a change in principal leadership and there was a revised structure of the leadership team. This caused a situation in the school which is known as
“excess”, where the school must declare a number of staff as being in excess of school needs. This situation often arises when new staff are brought in for specific positions – such as, in this case, leading teacher and principal class positions – and therefore, to accommodate the new arrivals, it becomes necessary to declare a number of staff in excess. This situation generally takes its toll on the whole staff as the teachers in excess are often retained at the school, yet in most cases they are not fulfilling a purposeful role, and (at the department’s discretion) they can remain at the school in this situation for at least twelve months. This was the backdrop to the interviews. The staff made no secret of their dissatisfaction with the department and the school leadership and there was evidence that their capital had been disrupted and challenged by these events.

The school was selected for two reasons. The first was access: I had taught in the school and held various roles there, and had a deep knowledge of the staff and the community; I had also had experience within the leadership team. Secondly, it is a relatively ‘average’ state school, with a socio-economic profile that sits almost exactly in the middle range compared to like schools (this data is available on the school annual report). This meant that the school could be considered a typical case for study and was therefore representative of state secondary schools in Victoria.

As mentioned earlier, the school was a dual campus. Approximately four hundred students were situated at the junior campus – years 7 and 8 – and the remainder were situated in a nearby town, ten kilometres away, at the senior campus. The two campuses rarely came together for whole school events, and thus there was a heightened sense of graduation from junior to
senior because of the necessary shift in campus. The teachers tended to remain at the same campus for extended periods and there was perhaps less communication between the two than might be considered ideal. This was generally explained by the physical distance separating the two campuses, making them seem more like two separate schools.

### 3.3.2 The students

While the students at the school were not interviewed in this research, it is worth adding some information about the school student population. The students were of varied socio-economic backgrounds. It was a fairly typical state school in that regard. There was a significant group who relied to a degree on welfare and support. The school had ancillary staff, such as a nurse and social worker, who were able to access extra support for students. The school had access to state school relief, which is a state-run fund to supply students with uniform and other necessities as needed. The students were generally connected to each other and the school, according to school surveys and reports, although the disparity of the school population did create minor tensions among students. The students travelled from at least seven smaller communities to the school, and thus the school population was somewhat fragmented in that regard and did not reflect one community.

### 3.4 Data collection methods

Three data collection methods were selected for the purposes of designing an iterative investigation into the central research question and the four sub-questions.
Creswell (2007) suggested that “data collection in case study research is typically extensive, drawing on multiple sources of information, such as observations, interviews, documents and audio visual materials” (p. 75). The first stage, which asked the teacher leaders to write their own personal narrative, explored how they responded to change in their daily work and what impact change had on them personally and on their professional selves. This was done in order to identify and analyse the habitus of each teacher leader.

The second stage of the process consisted of ten semi-structured interview questions. The interview questions evolved from the narratives. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, then coded and categorised in terms of commonalities and eventually into themes. The interview questions provided data for analysing the interaction between the teacher leaders' habitus and field interactions.

The third stage aimed to bring together the participants in a focus group for the purpose of discussing data from stages 1 and 2 and analysis. This provided further data that captured the interactive dialogue between teacher leaders, recording habitus and field interactions that emerge when engaged with each other.

The purpose in choosing three separate levels of data collection was to elicit a range of data that could aid in building the case around the complexity of teacher leaders professional lives, with the aim of contributing new knowledge to the field of change.

Using more than one method to collect and analyse data is using the strategy that is described metaphorically as triangulation, where the data is
looked at from several points rather than from just one (Thomas, 2009). As a part of the design of the research, the method of triangulation aims to validate the data that emerges at each stage and critically review it before moving to the next stage. It helps to maintain the “critical awareness” (Thomas, 2009, p. 111) that should be a crucial part of the data collection stage, which enables the researcher to reject or accept the explanations that emerge from analysis of findings. It is also argued by Golafshani (2003) that triangulation is “a strategy (test) for improving the validity and reliability of research or evaluation of findings” (p. 603).

Following this is an exploration of the data analysis process, which used Bourdieu’s thinking tools and followed the process of coding and categorising. That section also includes a detailed explanation why the coding process was used as the best technique to capture the real essence of the data.

3.5 Analysis of each level of data collection

3.5.1 Level 1: semi-structured narrative

Initially, an inquiry approach was adopted in order to generate a baseline of data to work from. This was done through semi-structured change narratives. Participants were each asked to write their own narrative of around one thousand words, revealing their story of how change had impacted on their professional lives, and, to a degree, their personal ones.

Experience-centred narrative research was the method used to invite ten teachers at the school to make meaning of their experience of change through telling their story as a narrative. By working within the experience-
centred tradition, the personal story of each participant can traverse many years and places in the telling, and its analysis will enable a comprehensive interpretation of the rich and complex story that emerges: “Humans are, as a species, *homo narrans*, with an inborn tendency to tell and understand stories” (Andrews, Squire & Tambouku, 2008, p. 44). The tendency to tell stories, to articulate human experience into narrative is “not just characteristic of humans, but what makes us human” (Andrews et al., 2008, p. 43). Current literature proposes that teaching is a very human pursuit (Noddings, 1992; Hargreaves, 1998, 2000) and merging the personal life experiences of the teacher leaders in the study with their professional lives was unavoidable.

This is part of the habitus – the dispositions, the leanings, the tendencies, and the history that people bring with them into the field. Narratives helped to make the personal habitus of each of the ten teacher leaders more transparent and drew forth themes from which to develop interview questions and ideas for discussion in later focus groups. Experience-centred narrative research contrasts with the event-centred Labovian approach to narrative, which is somewhat limited for this research because it is a fixed narrative contained within a personal experience (Andrews et al., 2008). While the event-centred approach defines narrative in terms of events that are recounted, it does not recognise the context. In this particular study, however, context – that is, the school setting and the educational environment - is crucial to the stories that emerge from each individual.
The emerging story is not limited to particular events, but rather draws on experiences that are human in essence, and are examined in the telling. “Being accountable to others – to story our actions and our experiences in socially and culturally comprehensible ways – is crucial to our whole standing as persons, as recognised members of human society” (Andrews et al., 2008, p. 78). Again, this is habitus at work, as the teacher leaders reflected on what has brought them to this point and where they might position themselves within the field. The criticism of Labov’s approach is essentially in its limitations for analysis: “The approach is inflexible and unsuited to narrative approaches that require exploration of meaning, partial constructions, and dialogic features such as talk” (Bold, 2012, p. 19). Integral to this research is the context within which the narrative is created – that is, through the lives of the teacher leaders, how they define and present themselves in their role, and how they are immersed in their professional setting. This is crucial to the emerging story and the analysis had to allow for further exploration of the impact that the context – the school setting and the educational environment – has had on the developing lives of the teachers and how they see themselves within this context. As the stories emerged, it became clear how Bourdieu’s concept of capital – particularly symbolic capital – has informed the telling of the stories. For example, the participants who have been in or are in the role of principal class officer (that is, a principal or an assistant principal), often referred to their understanding of symbolic capital in that role and how that positioned them in the field, in relation to other players. Further to this, Bourdieu’s notion of field also emerged as being a crucial element of the research, which helped to frame the analysis. As explained further on, this research adopted the analogy of The Game, using Bourdieu’s
understandings of how players operate in the field, to provide the participants with a framework to work with in their discussion.

3.5.2 Trustworthiness and credibility of the data

After the analysis using Bourdieu’s tools and coding, the emergent themes were presented to the teacher leaders in order to check for trustworthiness. This was done just before the participants began the interviews. The interview questions – which were sent to them two weeks before the selected date – were constructed using the data generated from the narratives and analysed as a whole. Checking for trustworthiness, or validation, is a crucial part of the data collection process. Merriam (1998) emphasized credibility as one of the most important factors in ensuring trustworthiness and suggested that the researcher needed to ensure that the findings aligned with reality. Shenton (2004) referred to a number of strategies to ensure the credibility of the research. An example of one of those strategies was the researcher gaining access to the subjects in the case study and becoming familiar with the context and organization. In the case of this study, credibility was confirmed through the relationship that had developed between me as the principal researcher and the participants over time, when I worked at the school. While it was difficult to engage a random sample of the group – given my prior knowledge – it was possible to ensure that there were a range of disciplines, ages and life experiences represented within the group. This aided the process of ensuring that they were chosen particularly to represent the greater population of their teaching staff and teachers in general. That is, they were chosen for their capacity as leaders to act as spokespeople for teachers, because they had earned the right to do so and fit the description of teacher leaders (Gilbert, 2011).
Shenton also referred to triangulation as a strategy for ensuring credibility of data and this was the method used in this research, as outlined earlier on. This research included three distinct stages of data collection, each of which had their own distinct characteristics. For example, the narrative – the earliest stage – was written solely by the participants with little or no prompting, and the freedom to respond to the topic of change in whatever form they chose. This contrasted with the semi-structured interview questions, which almost took the form of a two-way discussion, although guided by questions. Finally, the round table (focus group discussion) was the point when each of the participants exchanged their ideas and put into the public arena their thoughts about change. In this setting, they listened to and responded to each other in a relaxed and quite informal – though structured – discussion.

Another strategy suggested by Shenton (2004) to ensure credibility in the research data was to maximize the opportunity for honesty in the participants. This was achieved by making sure they were aware of the voluntary nature of their participation, and giving them the option to withdraw at any time. This was made clear to the participants before data collection, so they were fully aware of these conditions. The participants each signed a document which confirmed their understanding of these conditions.

Member checking is also a useful strategy to employ in order to authenticate the data. After the narratives were analyzed and the themes recognized as being common to the participants’ experiences, each participant was asked individually if they concurred with the conclusions that were reached after the first round of data collection. This exchange took
place with each participant before the formal questions began. From these discussions, many participants asked for clarification of meanings and added some further points to facilitate their and my understanding of the themes. When it was agreed and accepted that the material was authenticated, the interviews would proceed. The next section details the interview process.

3.5.3 Semi-structured interviews

Interviews were chosen as the second of the data collection methods because “they are the most widely used research method in organisational and community research ... interviews allow the researcher to enter into the real-world experience of the interviewee” (Kayrooz & Trevitt, 2005, p. 188). Further to this, the interview has a specific purpose in that it aims to “obtain information and understanding of issues relevant to the general aims and specific questions of the research project” (Kayrooz & Trevitt, 2005, p. 189). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) defined a semi-structured life world interview as “a planned and flexible interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena” (p. 327). In this case, the phenomenon is change. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) suggested that while this type of interview may be likened to an everyday conversation, “it has a purpose and involves a specific approach and technique” (p. 27). In this case study, each interview was transcribed and the recording and the written text together provided the data for analysis. Interviews as part of data collection were chosen as they allow “an interpersonal interaction whereby one person asks
others for their knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours on a topic usually in a face-to-face situation” (Kayrooz & Trevitt, 2005, p. 189).

A key advantage of interviews, according to Kayrooz and Trevitt (2005), is that they enable a rapport, a relationship to develop between the interviewer and the interviewee. A second advantage is “the depth to which topics can be explored can be determined as the interview proceeds” (Kayrooz & Trevitt, 2005, p. 189). While there is a disadvantage to the interview process – namely, they are a labour-intensive and time-consuming technique (Kayrooz & Trevitt, 2005, p. 190) – they nevertheless play a crucial role in developing the relationship between the participant and the researcher. The in-depth interview “assumes there is no such thing as a relationship-free interview”; the relationship becomes “an integral part of the research” (Kayrooz & Trevitt, 2005, p. 191).

In this case study, the relationship that emerged built on an already established professional relationship, and to a large degree, a close friendship. My experience at the school over a number of years meant that many of the experiences of these teacher leaders were shared experiences; this allowed for ease of understanding and eliminated the need for lengthy explanations about situations and people. There was immediate recognition and understanding between the interviewer and interviewee of particular incidents and people, initiatives and changes, references to state wide changes and shifts in education, and so forth. The semi-structured interview approach was selected as it allowed for a conversational approach in order to foster a deeper inquiry into the key narrative themes. This contributed to an easy flow during the interviews, little time wasted on clarification and
explanation that were not relevant to the subject, and an openness and honesty about information and stories shared.

Also, the interview enables the interviewer to have some degree of control over the order in which themes and issues are raised for consideration (Kayrooz & Trevitt, 2005, p. 190). While there were questions to follow, each question was structured in such a way that allowed the respondent to explore ideas in their response and delve a little further each time. Just as the narratives were designed to generate the thinking around change, the purpose of the interviews was to develop this further: to use Bourdieu’s notion of reflexivity to challenge and explore the previous ideas that were laid out in the narratives. By confirming the themes that arose initially, the participants then committed to taking this to another level through the interviews.

We cannot judge either of the feelings or of the character of men with perfect accuracy, from their actions or from their appearance in public policy; it is from their careless conversations, their half-finished sentences, that we may hope with the greatest probability of success to discover their real character. (Castle Rackrent, 1800, cited in Kayrooz & Trevitt, 2005, p. 188)

The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed, with the understanding that the participants all remain anonymous through the use of different names and removing identifiable participants’ responses. The
participants were numbered from one to ten and there was no particular rationale for the attachment of a number to a particular person.

The interviews were at a place and time at the participants' convenience. Participants were advised that the interviews would range from thirty minutes to sixty minutes or longer; the average length of each interview was forty-eight minutes. The ten questions were sent to the participants two weeks before the date of the interview, to allow them the opportunity to consider their answers beforehand. This was an option offered to the respondents and was not considered to be a compulsory part of the process. The participants signed a document approving the recording of the interviews. The taped session was sent to an online service to be transcribed into Word documents.

Following the interviews, the third part of the data collection was organised, which was the focus group discussion. This would complete the triangulation of the data collection: the personal narrative, semi-structured interview and then the group discussion.

The following section analyses the use of the focus group discussion as a qualitative method and explains how this method of collecting data completed the process.

3.5.4 Focus group discussion

A number of conditions need to apply for optimum outcome from a focus group discussion. Much of the literature around the construct and procedures in focus groups discussions focus on the environment that exists or is created (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990; Krueger & Casey, 2000). Focus
groups enable the investigation to drill down further into the individual responses and shared experiences of change and its impact. Morgan (1988) highlighted some advantages of group interviewing, one of which is that the participants’ interaction is between themselves, whereas in the interviews that interaction is solely focussed on the interviewer. Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) referred to group dynamics as a significant factor in the conduct of a focus group and the likely outcomes of the discussion. They referred to “the general pleasantness of the focus group environment” as having an influence over rapport and participation amongst the group (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990, p. 34). Krueger and Casey (2000) highlighted a number of considerations for a successful focus group, one of which was directed at the interviewer/facilitator of the group. This person, they suggested, should “be careful not to make judgements about the responses and to control body language that might communicate approval or disapproval” (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 9). The moderator was advised to keep the conversation on track and try not to let any one particular person dominate.

This focus group discussion was linked to the individual interviews in that the same overall topic was being pursued, although with a somewhat different approach. The discussion took place over a period of seventy-five minutes, at the home of one of the participants. The atmosphere was quite relaxed and informal. The level of respectful and good-humoured interaction within the group was high and there was no evidence of what Kahle (2007) would call “dominant participants” (p. 3), who might have threatened the cohesion of the group dynamic. The participants either still worked together or had done so in the past and this created a high degree of camaraderie.
and collegiality within the group. There was also the shared understanding
that they had been a significant part of a study which was now into its third
year – another common feature which bonded the group together. Overall,
there was a considerable sense of “pleasantness” in the group environment.
However, further to that, there was a clear understanding that this would
form an integral part of the study and so the participants were prepared for
more than a pleasant chat with friends and colleagues. They came prepared
to extend the ideas and thoughts that had emerged in the previous two
rounds of data collection. They were aware that there was a purpose to the
group discussion, that it was well planned and prepared, that it formed a
significant part of the data of which they had provided the basis, and that it
was here that their professionalism as teachers was to be acknowledged and
valued.

Morgan (1988) highlighted potential strengths and weaknesses in
focus group discussions as a qualitative research method. A strength which
was visible in this particular research was that it provided the opportunity for
the participants to extend their discussions beyond their personal narrative
and the interview: the opportunity to reflect and further the discussion was a
crucial part of this research. This was also due to the nature of the research
topic, where together, the teachers are seen as the change agents. The
participants were very much a part of a team and this is how they functioned
on a daily basis. Collegiality was very important to each member and while
teaching may sometimes be referred to as an individual pursuit, it is also very
much a profession in which one’s trust in a group can be a crucial survival
factor.
The material which emerged during the focus group discussion was partly as a result of the questions and a set of guidelines they were given beforehand for the discussion to follow. This strategy eliminated the possibility of the researcher losing control over the discussion, which Morgan (1988) identified as a potential weakness of this method. The participants had been asked to refer to a set of questions and some notes before they began (see Appendices).

These notes presented education as a game, using Bourdieu’s thinking tools of habitus, capital and field. The teacher leaders were asked to consider their own professional role in this analogy of the game and how they interpreted and played within the rules. The notes explained how capital might influence a player’s (teacher’s) capacity to be autonomous in schools, or how it might influence the degree to which they felt they had the capacity to exert any control over their position.

The notes also explained the language that would be used throughout the discussion. This required the teachers to be prepared to engage with this discourse within this particular framework and direct their discussion to the key words. For example, the teachers needed to be clear about the use of the words field and game and be cognizant of how these applied to their teaching practice and their roles as teacher who worked within the education system. They had to be familiar with the use of the word player, as each of them was one in this game. They needed to have a good understanding of capital and its use in this study, and the discussion raised this notion a significant number of times, highlighting the perceived significance of capital to teachers. They needed to be able to apply meaning
to the terms rules, strategies and beliefs. The term misrecognition, which may not have been considered in the Bourdieusian context, was also raised as a point of discussion. Hence, language and discourse were an important feature to consider in this discussion group, and the role of the facilitator was to ensure that each participant was comfortable with the language and was able to participate fully and confidently in the discussion that ensued.

Below are the questions and guidelines sent to participants two weeks before the focus group:

*Our focus group discussion will start with the key question…*

Ø What is your response to my understanding of The Game and your role in it?

*In responding to this key question throughout the discussion, try to refer to the following questions, in no particular order:*

- What are the rules (and for whom)?
- How do you interpret and play by the rules, how do you negotiate the rules for your own purposes?
- What do you recognise as forms of capital and who has what and how is it used, and when?
- How do you maintain or build your capital?
- When do you use a game strategy?
- What are the accepted beliefs?
• What do you see as being points of misrecognition of the other players?

The pre-planned notes, which explained the analogy in some detail, along with the questions listed here, allowed the discussion to be robust and purposeful and have direction. The discussion was an extension of the interviews and narratives in that it was still addressing the same topic, but in this case, there was a slightly different focus. The discussion aimed for each participant to engage in what Bourdieu (1992) referred to as the reflexive process: they were encouraged to look at their own and each other’s responses to change through a slightly different lens.

For Bourdieu, reflexivity meant “that all knowledge producers should strive to recognise their own objective position within the intellectual and academic field” (Deer, 2012, p. 201). This group of teacher leaders participated in a focus group meeting, reflecting and analysing their habitus and place in the field – the social arena – of education. Bourdieu saw reflexivity as a “common and shared effort, aiming at making explicit the “unthought” categories, perceptions, theories and structures that underpin any pre-reflexive grasp of the social environment” (Deer, p. 202). Through reflexivity, he argued, it is possible to revisit one’s habitus, and in doing so, “alter the perception of the situation and thereby our reaction to it” (Bourdieu, 1992, p. 136). In this sense, the participants were capable of changing their initial perceptions of change and its impact, and responding to it in an altered way.
How Bourdieu’s tools were used for the analysis is outlined in the next section. This section also explains the use of The Game analogy in this research.

### 3.6 Data analysis processes

#### 3.6.1 Bourdieu’s tools: habitus, field, capital, doxa and illusio.

Bourdieu’s inter-relational concepts of habitus, field, capital, doxa and illusio provided the theoretical framework for the analysis of the data. The inter-relational nature of these concepts is of particular significance to the analysis of the data. The teacher leaders were asked to relate their experiences in the field of teaching, and how mandated pedagogical change impacted on their professional lives and their teaching practices. They shared these insights firstly in their personal narratives; the interviews and focus group discussion that followed elicited further discussion and analysis of the impact of change. These concepts were used as a framework for analysis of the data because they helped to understand the relationships between the players in the educational field.

The field, explained by Bourdieu as being analogous to a game, is the arena in which the players position themselves. The players are aware of the rules of the game and this is their doxa. Their habitus is enacted in the field — their habitus to a degree determines the way in which they interact with others and the way in which they respond to the other players. Of significance is the notion that to this field, the players bring their capital — which Bourdieu divided into the four types of social, economic, symbolic and cultural. The value of their capital is often determined by the most dominant players in the field. When capital and habitus converge in the field, the
outcome is the players’ practice: how they conduct themselves in their professional lives. It is the teachers’ practice which is impacted on through mandated pedagogical change. The narratives, interview data, and focus group transcripts were analysed to gauge the capital which the teachers brought to this field. This was then used to determine their perceived or actual power and control that they have in the field. How that capital influenced their daily practice was an integral part of the data analysis and contributed to the findings of the research. Bourdieu’s concept of illusio was identified and analysed as a way of demonstrating these participants’ commitment and investment in education (the game). Their illusio expressed their commitment and their belief in education and in the system in which they worked.

Calling for the teachers’ perspectives in this way enabled them to take charge of the process and explore, in their own terms and at their own pace, what change has meant to them in their teaching careers. In this sense, it is a personal as well as a professional undertaking for each of these teacher leaders; inevitably, much of their personal lives has infiltrated the narrative and formed the backdrop for their story. In essence, this is habitus at work, in play: habitus is a person’s dispositions, their leanings, their way of making sense of and understanding the social world – in this case, the field of education (Lingard et al., 2003). By contributing to this research, the participants have agreed to a considerable degree of personal exposure. As stated earlier, trust then was a key consideration during every stage of the research.
3.6.2 What is the Game? Field interactions explained.

Prior to the focus group discussion, the participants were presented with the analogy of the game. It was proposed that the discussion would adhere to these guidelines as a framework to ensure that the discussion was focussed and stayed on a relatively defined course. This is referred to in greater detail in Chapter 7.

Using Bourdieu’s theory, for the purpose of this research, the school presents as a multi-purpose field. To use a sporting field analogy, this means that within the school, the various fields and players are constantly shifting and moving and changing their focus according to the immediate purpose of the game and depending on which particular players are on the ground. This also determines what the rules of engagement will be in that particular time. This is significant in terms of capital (power) and how it is used in the game.

The school field is a dominant feature in the professional lives of the teacher leaders. While they are also impacted by decisions made externally, the general view was that the school (leadership team) interprets those decisions and takes responsibility for their implementation within the school field. Thus, the interaction between the players within the school field has significant impact on the teacher leaders, who speak in terms of their capital – their power – and their relationships with other players as determining factors in the satisfaction and reward they get from their work. These interactions are not constant; they are quite fluid and can shift according to the context.

The following diagram offers a brief summary of the players in the field and their relationships to the teacher leaders. These relationships are
significant because they help to explain the distribution of capital in the field and where the teacher leaders are positioned.

![Diagram: Field interactions of players]

**Figure 2: Field interactions of players**

The field interactions are between the external field, the leadership field in the school and the community field. The school field of teachers and students is impacted by the other fields. The teachers have capital in the school field – particularly in their classrooms. Their capital is recognised by colleagues. They have less capital in relation to the other fields and less decision-making capital. Each of the other three fields intersects and in so doing, they influence the decision-making processes within that field. For example, a decision made at the education department level will filter down to the school leadership team, which in turn will filter it down to the teachers and the students. The reverse does not happen though, and this is what is significant in this study. The decisions at the school field level, by teachers, students and teacher leaders, do not extend back out of the school field into
the community or the external fields. They do, to some degree, extend back to the school leadership team.

3.7 Examining the data – codes and categories

After the teacher leaders completed the written narrative, they were given a list of ten questions which would form the basis of the semi-structured interviews. The teacher leaders were also asked whether they agreed that the three common themes which arose from the narratives were: (i) the relentlessness of change, (ii) loss of autonomy due to change, and (iii) the emotional labour of change. Again, this was to ensure the validity of the research. The interviews then took place and were recorded and transcribed using an online transcription service.

To examine the data collected from the interviews, the process of coding was used, with the aim of identifying the things that stood out in the transcripts, such as particular language that was used, certain conditions or events that were referred to, relationships, interactions, and behaviours (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). This process was used with all of the interview transcripts and similarities were recorded and coded.

Coding and categorisation formed an integral part of ensuring validity and credibility of the data analysis. Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) presented the case for convincing other people of the reliability of one’s research by using the criteria of “transparency, communicability and coherence” (p. 84). Data analysis, they argued, needs to be transparent by clearly disclosing the steps taken to arrive at the destination. In the case of this research, the analysis was undertaken with the process of coding. Secondly, they considered that the data analysis must be communicable –
that is, it must make sense and be able to be understood within the research community. This calls for readability and clarity in the presentation of the data. In this case, this was achieved through the coding process. Coding enabled me to locate and describe the patterns that emerged and allowed for a systematic rather than random approach to the analysis. This in turn made the task of reading and understanding the data clear. The final criteria suggested was that the data analysis needs to be coherent: a story must emerge. This research lent itself to a narrative style given the nature of the material and the often personal disclosures from participants. The stories of the participants were grounded in the data, so that while the emerging analysis was theoretical in its construct, it was also essentially the personal stories that were told which formed the baseline data. Coherency in the analysis of the data was essential to lend integrity to the stories. Coding and categorising ensured that the key themes and concerns were validated in the writing and in the data analysis.

3.7.1 Coding - meanings and definitions

Charmaz (2000) referred to coding as a method which “helps us to gain a new perspective on our material and to focus further data collection, and may lead us in unforeseen directions … coding starts the chain of theory development” (p. 515). Savin-Baden and Major (2013) suggested that “a code should be a meaningful name that provides an indication of the idea contained in the data segment” (p. 422). Saldana (2009) described a code as “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (p. 3). In the case of this research, the data referred to consists of written narratives, the transcripts of the interviews, and the
transcript of the focus group discussion. The code aims to “capture the primary content and essence” (Saldana, 2009, p. 3) of the particular section of data. Charmaz (2001) described this as the first pivotal step in analysis “that moves the researcher from description towards conceptualization of that description” (p. 683).

In this research, the coding system was developed based upon themes, topics, keywords and ideas that were shared by the participants. The system was also based on the theoretical framework using Bourdieu's thinking tools: habitus, field and capital. The backdrop to the coding system was the set of research questions, which asked how the teachers perceived and managed mandated pedagogical change, what was difficult about change (problematizing), and how they reconciled change with their experience and knowledge.

The coding process started with the stand out incidents, events, recounts of stories, and ideas that were presented by the participants, and coding them into categories. For example, by using one of Bourdieu's thinking tools (capital) as a category, this was identified in all of the interviews as an important factor in the lives of teachers in light of change. From this, further properties or concepts of that particular category were analysed in individual transcripts. Thus, a teacher might have referred to their capital as affecting their interactions with others: this would explain how capital is a factor in change, and how the knowledge of having or not having the capital might have influenced their behaviour in certain situations (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Similarly, in the sense of relationships and interactions, leadership emerged as a common category amongst the teacher leaders;
then, the properties that arose from this category could be compared and analysed. A common reflection from the teacher leaders was that there was little vision and direction from the leadership; this in turn generated a particular response which reflected how their behaviour might be affected by what they perceived as a lack of, or inadequate, leadership. Thus, it could be discerned that because the teacher leaders believed strongly that a leader should inspire confidence and direction, a lack in this area would cause a certain behaviour that would impact on their professional and personal lives. From this process, theories were then developed about the impact of leadership on teachers in the face of change: how it is managed or how it is perceived by the teachers to be managed has a significant impact on how it is received and acted upon.

From the coded data, categories were created based on groupings which emerged because of a particular commonality. According to Saldana (2009), coding is a method “that enables you to organise and group similarly coded data into categories or ‘families’ because they share some characteristic” (p. 8). The commonality may not necessarily reflect agreement or common feeling – rather, it is the commonality that the idea is present that is significant. For example, in this research, each of the participants has a view on what they believe good leadership is: although they may not all share the same view, it is the point that they have a view that becomes the matter in common.

Saldana (2009) suggested that in the search for patterns in coded data to create categories, there will be a myriad of factors which will influence the decisions that are made during the coding process. Factors such as one’s
own personal judgement are perhaps one of the key influences on how the coding proceeds. Merriam (1998) stated that “our analysis and interpretation – our study’s findings – will reflect the constructs, concepts, language, models, and theories that structured the study in the first place” (p. 48), which suggests that one’s own personality and dispositions will undoubtedly be brought into the process of coding and will influence the interpretation of data.

While coding enables the process of analysis to proceed systematically, it is not, in itself, analysis – rather, it is a crucial aspect of it (Saldana, 2009), which “links data to the idea and from the idea to all the data pertaining to that idea” (Richards & Morse, 2007, p. 137). The outcome of the coding leads to the development of themes, which is discussed in the following section. The following table illustrates how codes were constructed in this research:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>No. of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PKC</td>
<td>Professional knowledge compromised – feel that their own expertise is not valued</td>
<td>Lack of autonomy</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional conflict</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher identity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mythology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFE</td>
<td>No faith in educational bureaucracy – does not believe the department really know what they’re doing, really know schools</td>
<td>Lack of autonomy</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional conflict</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher identity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLS</td>
<td>Overload for students – the curriculum is crowded with mandatory extras</td>
<td>Professional conflict</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRC</td>
<td>No real change – even though things are supposed to change, in essence, they stay the same</td>
<td>Professional conflict</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mythology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOR – PT</td>
<td>Lack of resources – planning time – never enough time, always rushed</td>
<td>Professional conflict, Mythology</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOR – M</td>
<td>Lack of resources – materials – never enough supporting materials</td>
<td>Mythology, Professional conflict</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FC TA</td>
<td>Formulaic curriculum and technical approach - A prescriptive, contrived, regimented “made to order” curriculum is often recommended but is not practical and TA is about having to teach to a formula, a prescribed curriculum</td>
<td>Professional conflict, Lack of autonomy, Points to tension, Self-preservation, Teacher identity</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>Personal safety – teachers’ health and wellbeing</td>
<td>Self-preservation, Passive acceptance, Emotional labour, Moral framework</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURT</td>
<td>Bureaucratising teaching – bureaucracy coming before creativity</td>
<td>Professional conflict, Tensions, Leadership</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POL</td>
<td>Political motivations – the teacher sees that directives from the department are politically motivated, there is another agenda other than improving outcomes for students</td>
<td>Professional conflict, Tensions, Moral dilemma, Teacher identity</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>Poor leadership – leadership within the school is inadequate</td>
<td>Professional conflict, Impact of leadership</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JS</td>
<td>Job satisfaction – what the teacher gets out of it, the rewards</td>
<td>Self-preservation, Teacher professionalism, Control/autonomy/freedom, Teacher identity</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PKE</td>
<td>Professional knowledge and experience – where they know best</td>
<td>Teacher identity, Teacher professionalism, Self-preservation?</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFC</td>
<td>Conditions for change – what is necessary to be happening in the school in order for any real change to occur</td>
<td>Professional conflict Mythology Self-preservation Relationships</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TP and PO</td>
<td>Teacher professionalism and professional obligations</td>
<td>Teacher identity</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVIT and PH</td>
<td>Personal values in teaching and personal history</td>
<td>Professional conflict Self-preservation Personal conflict Tension Teacher identity</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Categories in coded data

3.8 Limitations to the study

1. It is based on only one school

The ten teachers all come from one school and their most immediate experiences – in all cases for at least the last five years, in one case, the last twenty-five years – are from this particular school. In a sense, this limits the data as the teachers will automatically reflect on their experiences as they have occurred in this particular school. The advantage here is that their responses will be to a common range of outside factors which influence change, and therefore there will be found some degree of continuity in the responses.

2. No students were interviewed

It was felt that interviewing students was not particularly relevant to this study, where the focus is on how teachers deal with change, both as it occurs from within and from outside of the school context. Interviewing students would not have drawn out the appropriate responses from a teacher perspective, which is what this research sought to do.
3. No parents were interviewed

Interviewing parents and seeking their feedback about changes in education would be an interesting research project. In this case however, it is not immediately relevant. The parents would not be able to articulate the impact change has as well as the teachers who work with it and incorporate it into their daily lives.

4. It did not invite a direct response from leadership and other field agents.

A response from leadership – the school principal – might have offered a different perspective on the research and could have been considered. In this case, one of the teacher respondents is the former principal of the school and another is the current assistant principal, so it was felt that this offers a reasonable sample of leadership perspective. Also, two of the teachers hold leading teacher positions, and as such they are able to write their experiences with that in mind.
Chapter 4 – Analysis of the written narratives

4.1 Process of analysis

The purpose of this study was to investigate how mandated pedagogical change impacted on the professional lives of ten teacher leaders. The term ‘teacher leaders’ was defined in the Introduction as referring to those teachers who are experienced, knowledgeable, innovative, and viewed as competent by their colleagues. The Methodology outlined the process by which these participants were selected and how data were analysed.

The research can be identified as having three stages. In stage one, the participants were invited to write their change narratives, in around one thousand words. They were asked to consider how change imperatives impacted on their daily work and lives and how they responded to change initiatives. The methodology of this research was explained to each of the teacher leaders so that they had a clear understanding of the process and ethics (the coded written narratives can be found in the appendices).

This chapter is the analysis of the first round of data collection. As explained in the methodology (Chapter 3), the narratives were analysed with a particular focus on the type of language used by the teacher leaders to discuss the impact that change had on their lives. There were a number of commonalities that emerged in the writing and were noted. These commonalities generally related to the impact that change had on their professional lives, which caused some concerns, and their response to these impacts. The narratives were read and coded according to the most
prominent and common themes that were identified in the teacher leaders’ writing (see Chapter 3 for a comprehensive description of the coding process).

The coding process entailed firstly reading through all of the narratives to get a general, overall sense of the impact of change on teachers, according to this group of participants. Each narrative was then scrutinised more closely, looking for and identifying common factors, which were then coded and re-coded until the most prominent of the themes were isolated. Three themes emerged as being significant in each narrative:

- Relentlessness (of change)
- Lack of autonomy (during the change process)
- Emotional labour (as a result of managing change)

Each narrative was coded according to the following system:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relentlessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of Autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Labour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bourdieu’s thinking tools:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capital (power)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illusio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misrecognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Themes in narratives

The material for the second stage of the data collection emerged from the narratives. Using the common themes as an indication that there were
issues surrounding mandated pedagogical change, a list of ten questions was drawn up to be firstly sent to the participants and then used as starting points for semi-structured interviews (more detail about this process is found in Chapter 3). Before beginning the interviews, it was first confirmed that the themes were as described, thus validating the trustworthiness of the data. The interviews were transcribed and then once again, the coding process was used in order to narrow down the key features of the responses. The ten questions and the findings from the interviews are presented in Chapter 5.

The third and final stage of data collection drew the participants together to conduct a round table, focus group discussion, loosely following some key questions, and using Bourdieu’s analogy of The Game as a framework for the discussion. The results of this are presented in Chapter 6.

In short, Chapters 4, 5 and 6 present the findings of the research, as summarised in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 4 – Narratives (referenced by participant number only – no page numbers)</th>
<th>Key themes</th>
<th>Theoretical Framework – Bourdieu’s thinking tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Relentlessness</td>
<td>• Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Loss of autonomy</td>
<td>• Habitus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Emotional labour</td>
<td>• Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5 – Interviews (referenced by participant number and page number)</td>
<td>Key themes</td>
<td>• Illusio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Moral purpose and social justice</td>
<td>• Doxa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Self-preservation and personal safety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Targeted, guided resistance to change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6 – Focus Group (referenced by participant without the number and page number)</td>
<td>Teacher identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Professional knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>compromised</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Resistance to change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 5: Summary of presentation of findings

Bourdieu’s thinking tools were employed to explore the participants’ responses from a critical social constructionist perspective. Using these thinking tools as the means of analysis led to three key themes emerging. These themes are presented here along with data evidence from the narratives.

The themes provided insight into the key research question: How does mandated pedagogical change impact on the professional lives of ten teacher leaders?

This question is the overarching research question and is the one driving the research. That change is always present in education is a given; it is how it is initiated and implemented and the effect that this has on the teachers and schools, that is under scrutiny here, from the perspective of those who are most affected and should be considered to be the change agents: the teachers. These are represented in this study by the group of ten teacher leaders.

In order to respond to this central question, four sub-questions were pivotal:

• How do teacher leaders’ perceive mandated pedagogical change and its enactment?
• How do teacher leaders manage mandated change in their daily practice?
• In the face of mandated change, what is most difficult for teacher leaders?
• In the face of mandated change, how do teacher leaders reconcile their experience and knowledge regarding teaching and learning?

These questions have been addressed in the narratives, the interviews and the focus group discussion. In various ways, the teacher leaders have responded with their personal perspectives regarding the impact of mandated pedagogical change on their professional lives. They have indicated their views on change; how they personally manage change and then how they see change being managed within their workplace; the issues that arise through the change process; and how they manage change as experienced and knowledgeable practitioners. The teacher leaders all indicated that mandated pedagogical change is problematic and poses challenges and frustration for the teachers. They attributed this to the three common themes, which emerged in the narratives:

• Relentlessness of change
• Loss of autonomy
• Emotional labour

4.2  Theme 1 – Relentlessness of change

The first theme, relentlessness, is derived from the insistence the teacher leaders had in their writing on mandated pedagogical changes being “never-ending”, “constant”, and “repetitive”, and that there was “never enough time” to fully grasp or implement change completely before the next change was upon them. The teacher leaders generally associated the relentlessness of change with “difficulty”, “frustration”, and “a distraction” from what they considered to be the core business of the teaching practice. Change was mostly considered avoidable if possible,
when its immediate benefits were not obvious to the teachers. When change was mandated and the teachers felt there was little opportunity to at least voice an opinion, then the frustration was exacerbated. Relentlessness was therefore a key theme which resonated throughout the narratives as being one of the most difficult aspects of change that they faced in their daily practice.

4.2.1 Field and the players in the field

Bourdieu proposed the notion that education can be thought of as a field, where players take to the field and enter into a game of strategy (Bourdieu, 1992). The players – in this case, the teachers and the various members of the educational community – have an understanding and a belief that education is a relentless game (what might be described as their ‘feel for the game’). This highlights their invested interest, their illusio. By engaging in the game, they confirm their belief in it and their willingness to engage with the rules. Their belief in the game allows them to participate (actively or passively) with the other players. There is an uncontested acceptance of the perceived field reality which teachers recognise as familiar and mostly taken for granted, which is what Bourdieu referred to as their doxa. The field consists of dominant and subordinate players (Swartz, 1977) and these players take up their positions, their roles, according to the amount and type of resources they bring with them. In this sense, the school is a multi-purpose field, where, to use a sporting analogy, the players are constantly moving and shifting their focus according to the immediate purpose of the game and depending on which players are on the field at any one time. This also determines what the rules of engagement will be with regard to context.
The fields within the school consist of a number of players, including the teachers and the leadership team, each of whom has varying degrees of capital and power within the school. They are subject to the policies and programs imposed by the educational bureaucracy, which is an external field. The teacher leaders in this case study have perhaps greater access to the leadership team and a more complex understanding of the vagaries of the external bodies than do other teachers. They are generally well-versed in the change process and have an acute understanding of the impact of change on teachers’ professional lives. The theme of relentlessness emerged as the players in the field interacted with each other and tried to manage the changes that were imposed by external authorities; this was identified as problematic in the narratives. P1 referred to the past fifteen years in Victorian Education:

We have been caught up in initiative after initiative as new governments stamp their authority on the direction of education. We now see the Federal Government providing direction which has introduced a new player into the landscape of education. For teachers, the change seems endless: no sooner have you come to grips with one initiative before a new initiative has been introduced (P1).

This observation was echoed by other participants, who drew attention to the impact that such constant changes have on schools and on the professional lives of the teachers. P2 reflected on the difficulties
encountered as a teacher leader who is conscious of the need to bring staff together and work as a team, but then has to reconcile this objective with a deeper sense of cynicism and mistrust which is attributed to the relentlessness of external changes:

There is a sense of what has gone before has been devalued by the broader community and the Education Department reacts with some restructure devised by the so called experts in education, some of whom have not been near a classroom for years and don’t consider the demographics of each institution. It is difficult to be enthused about the latest initiatives and to engage reluctant staff when you know at some point you are going to have to go through the whole process again (P2).

P7 referred to change imposed by external fields on schools as being attached to a cyclical, political agenda: “we know that school and school system reform is largely governed by election cycles and election platforms...”. This participant also suggested that “… policy changes, educational reforms, dressed up in a range of packages, then become a euphemism for ‘just another thing’ driven by someone new to the portfolio” (P7). This teacher leader proposed the notion that within the field, the players – the teachers – are more or less “acclimatised to the ephemera of policy initiatives” (P7).
Within the field, the aspect of change which the teacher leaders consider to be relentless is largely attributed to the decisions made by the external field, which is the educational bureaucracy.

4.2.2 Habitus

In the field, all the players bring their relative power. The struggle is uneven and the players, whether they are dominant or subordinate, understand that there are many unwritten rules; yet, the game is worth playing, the struggle is worth pursuing (Thomson, 2008). The manner in which the players act in the field is shaped in part by their ‘habitus’ in action. Bourdieu (1990) referred to habitus as a product of history, which explains how it is that individuals can embody rules and behaviours without explicit instruction or direct rules. Rather, their behaviours, their dispositions, come about as a result of their interactions with their social environments or their fields:

The habitus, a product of history, produces individual and collective practices – more history – in accordance with the schemes generated by history. It ensure the active presence of past experiences, which, deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the ‘correctness’ of practices and their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norms (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 54).
Habitus focuses on “our ways of acting, feeling, thinking and being” (Maton, 2008, p. 52), and it helps to explain why we make some choices and not others. In terms of the relentlessness of change and how teacher leaders manage this in their daily practice, habitus can help to explain the process. A person’s habitus, their leanings and dispositions, might play a role in their responses to social structures and situations. When P2 considered change and how it impacted on the lives of teachers, the response leaned towards the observation that many teachers became quite entrenched in their workplace and resisted change because “they have become disillusioned and tired of having to come to grips with something new again” (P2). It was also noted by this teacher leader that many teachers “have established practices in place that make it difficult for change to occur … long term staff have been less receptive to new ideas” (P2).

P5’s view of change was that “within the process of any change, there is scope for increased self-knowledge and wisdom”; however, it was also observed that “many people find change very challenging and some are relatively opportunistic in their reactions” (P5). Within those uncertainties, it was noticed that there was considerable unease in the face of change and this teacher leader understood this as being “… an expression of trying to deal with the uncertainty that comes with any significant change in terms of each individual’s perception of the nature and history of their role within the school community” (P5). Within the field, a person’s habitus is enacted – in the face of change, this teacher leader observed that the teachers who had become attached to their position in the field became threatened and challenged when faced with changeover, which highlighted for them that
they had minimal control (capital). The change, they feared, may disrupt their position in the game.

P7 felt that there was scepticism from staff in the face of change not because they were committed to resisting change but because in recognising the complexity of the work and their investment in their work, they needed to be convinced that the change would be beneficial and worth it. “Teachers resist change because when they have found a way to manage what is an incredibly demanding yet rewarding job, they really do need convincing it will be worth it to support the change” (P7).

Habitus is evolving and flexible, and when considered in relation to field and capital, we can see how this might help to explain how practice is informed.

4.2.3 Capital

In terms of the teaching game, a person’s capital ranges from their resources, such as networks and experience, their standing, such as a title of leader, co-ordinator, or principal, their perceived standing within the school community, their knowledge of the workings of the system, their access to the leadership team, and their access to the bureaucracy. Capital also refers to those resources that have value within the workplace that they can use or manipulate in the game. As an example, a teacher who leads a department has access to finances that others cannot access. They also are in a position where they can distribute power among their colleagues such as the allocation of “better” classes; they can wield extra power in terms of staffing to put them in an enviable position if the school is facing cutbacks or reasons to re-shuffle the teachers’ allotments. Thus, such a position in the field comes
with considerable power. This was noticed by the teacher leaders’ narratives and P3 reflected on this as being one of the difficult aspects of change:

For some staff members there is a sense of loss, [through change], not only in the perceived dismantling of a familiar structure but new staff being added into the equation and old staff being displaced. There exists a sense of justice not seen to be done by many staff members, as they rally to protect their own DBA or staff within their DBA. This has resulted in hostility and toxic conversations aimed directly to undermine the implementation of change (P3).

For this teacher leader, there was evidence that the change disruptions caused within the workplace are problematic due to a relatively unequal distribution of capital, especially when there is a reshuffle of the players’ positions. The field changes engage them in looking after their best interests personally and philosophically as educators.

The participants’ sense of capital is considered very much in terms of being resourced. P1 asked the question: “How can you expect change in schools if you don’t provide the time and resources for teachers to want to change?” (P1). In the educational field, time and resources are generally available at the behest of the external players, who wield the most power in terms of the allocation of resources. P1 noted that school improvement

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2 DBA – Domain-based Area – a teacher’s teaching faculty.
processes of significance generally spanned an implementation phase of four to five years, to

… allow time for teachers to build their skills and knowledge, to implement the change, and most importantly, to embed the practice as part of daily routine. For without this duration of time, teachers feel like they are on the carousel of constant change. (P1).

Time was therefore a significant element of teachers’ (limited) capital. Resources were often lacking in the change process, which was perceived as negating successful implementation, and which portrayed them poorly.

P6 recognised that “change should not always be from a leadership perspective, it should start from the bottom up and to do that, a shift in efficacy, and a common intrinsic need to stimulate must be created in teachers” (P6).

The view presented by P7 was very much focussed on the external bodies who proposed the notion that inequality in the education system was like an “educational apartheid”:

Change is largely defined and determined by the politicisation and polarisation of schooling into a two tired educational system that disadvantages and systematically undermines public education. In this context all change becomes troublesome, and mostly superficial. Or perhaps, coming from
another perspective, most mandated change
works toward preserving the status quo.

P7 saw the relentlessness of change as a symptom of the
disadvantages inherent in the state system, where change was not about
school improvement, but rather about furthering a political agenda. The
capital of the teachers as players in this field was therefore perceived as
being minimal compared to the external players, who controlled the agenda
and generally made the decisions.

4.2.4 Illusio

A teacher’s illusio is their interest, their investment in the game. The
analysis of the data indicated that when teachers had an investment in the
game, in their work as teachers, the relentless changes imposed from outside
became burdensome and unwelcome for many of them. P8 observed that
when a change was suggested, the teachers would react with these
questions:

“What’s wrong with the way we do it now?”,
“When will we have time to do this?”, “How much extra work is involved for us”, “Will we have to rewrite the curriculum?”, “I've been doing this for 20 years, why do I have to do it differently?” and I guess the most pertinent question of all “Is this change necessary or justified, or is it just for change’s sake?” (P8)
At the same time, it was also suggested that “when the staff has been involved, immersed and informed, and embrace proposed changes, it's obvious that the change will not only be implemented, it will be successful” (P8). The teachers’ investment in their work is the crucial point in these observations about how they might respond to change that has been imposed from outside.

A similar observation was made by P9, in terms of teachers’ interest in the game. This teacher leader also felt that change could be embraced, if it was on the teachers’ terms and they had ownership, but otherwise they would not be as receptive:

So small-scale change if owned by the teachers and kids can work, but the bigger changes to the school’s program like the introduction of the National Curriculum is often viewed through sceptical spectacles by teachers. The thing is that teachers have to be convinced that making this change will be worth all the effort, time and energy needed to research the change, resource the change and redesign the change for use in their own classrooms (P9)

P2 summarised the response to change by accepting it, in spite of its relentlessness, but maintaining that “on a day to day basis, the students have to remain the first priority” (P2). In this sense, this teacher leader sees the investment in the game as student-related, and expresses the belief that
relentless change can be managed, as long as this focus is maintained as this is the most important aspect of the work.

4.2.5 Doxa

Generally, the teachers observed overall acceptance of mandated change, even though at the same time, they challenged – or at least identified as troublesome – the relentlessness of change and how it impacted on their work. Bourdieu’s notion of doxa helps to explain why the teachers may have observed a passive acceptance of change, even when it was not necessarily something they believed was in their best interests. Doxa suggests a familiar universe, an uncontested acceptance of the daily world, where most people, most of the time, take most things for granted (Bourdieu, 1992). In the analogy of the game, the teachers saw that change was inevitable and that top down change was to be expected. P1 observed that “change is usually a top-down directive from central office that schools are expected to implement” (P1). Similarly, P2 expressed the view that “I am the conduit through which change is implemented”. P4 questioned the need for consultation when the decision was generally made anyway and was resigned to accepting decisions being made from outside:

I don’t want/need to be consulted on every aspect of the school. I know that this is done to give ownership of some of the decision making to staff but really. Just tell me what you want done and how, and I’ll do it … why pretend that it is consultative when there is clearly an agenda? (P4)
The initial perception of the teacher leaders that mandated pedagogical change is relentless is followed by the sense of loss of autonomy in a change climate.

4.3 Theme 2 – Loss of autonomy

Loss of autonomy can be understood as occurring as an effect of the relentlessness of change. Evidence from the narratives suggested that the teachers felt that they were becoming less and less empowered to implement or own the change because it was not in their hands for long enough, or because they had too few resources to be able to implement it thoroughly. Mandated change was reported to allow little opportunity for the teachers to feel as though they were in control of the change.

Bourdieu used the equation: \[ ((\text{habitus})(\text{capital}) + \text{field} = \text{practice}) \] (Maton, 2008, p. 51) as a way to highlight “the interlocking nature of his three ‘thinking tools’: habitus, capital and field” (p. 51 – 52).

A person’s practice (what they do) is a result of the relations between their habitus (their dispositions, their leanings), their current circumstances, and the social space they occupy (Maton, 2008). The narratives of the teacher leaders often referred to a recognition that many changes which were mandated and imposed from external agencies left them with little sense of control or autonomy over the change. In the game analogy, this refers to the person’s capital:

- a species of capital is what is efficacious in a given field, both as a weapon and as a stake of struggle, that which allows its possessors to wield a power,
an influence, and thus to exist, in the field under consideration, instead of being considered a negligible quantity (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 98)

In the field of teaching, the teacher leaders could identify that in the face of mandated change, their perceived capital was somewhat diminished, as external bodies exerted more power (capital). Bourdieu’s thinking tools are used in this section to consider the theme of loss of autonomy and to identify through the narratives how the teacher leaders managed change, thus addressing the research sub-questions.

4.3.1 Field and the players in the field

In the field, the teacher leaders were aware of a certain degree of conflict between the inner field of the school and the external field of the educational bureaucracy. P5 offered this reflection regarding the loss of autonomy due to change:

Many teachers who have taught for far longer than I have roll their eyes and say that ‘they’ did this back in the ‘70s, ‘80s or whenever. It’s the ‘they’ in that sentence, the sense of not having control, of being put upon, of being subject to the whim of those who would see change for change’s sake which is clear. There is little or no sense of ownership of the process or respect for teachers’ knowledge and professionalism (P5).
Along similar lines, P7 also remarked on the loss of autonomy in the face of change in relation to the tensions between fields, when teachers must resign themselves to accepting the changes as inevitable. It was suggested that “schools have acclimatised to the ephemera of policy initiatives” (P7) and

… the reality around policy announcements and initiatives is that they quickly fade, overlaid by the next election period. Those in the public service work with such vicissitudes as a way of professional life (P7).

P4 reflected on a lack of consultation, generally, and suggested that it was often tokenistic at best and it would be preferable if the process were more direct. This participant reported feeling less tolerant of what was seen as less than sincere aspects of the consultative process from other players:

I am less tolerant of the “crap”. I don’t need/want to be consulted on every aspect of the school. I know this is done to give ownership of some of the decision making to staff but really. Just tell me what you want done and how, and I’ll do it. There have been instances where the staff opinion has been canvased over and over again, only for the obvious desired outcome made. Why pretend that it is consultative when there is clearly an agenda (P4).
The narratives produced a general, overall sense that the field consisted of players with varying agendas – not always aligned – and this had a considerable impact on the daily lives of the teachers. This was sometimes informed by their habitus, and their personal dispositions and leanings.

4.3.2 Habitus

There was evidence from the narratives that the teacher leaders’ feel for the game would impact on their reaction to a perceived loss of autonomy and control when change was mandated and their capacity for choice and input was limited.

P3’s narrative was, to a large degree, focussed on one’s personal capacity to manage change in both their private and professional lives. There was some emphasis on the troublesome nature of change as evidenced by the reactions of staff in the school, which were noted as being “angry, negative, aggressive, undermining, resistant, insecure and critical”; P3 offered some insight into these reactions:

Why these reactions are occurring I perceive people see it as a lack of inclusion and perceived control over the process by people in more powerful positions. They have not been provided with the big picture vision (P3).

P3 observed that the teachers became more resentful and oppositional when they saw their personal control over their work as being compromised; this also drew comment from P5, who saw change as:
... an opportunity for reflection and growth ... essential to good teaching and a dynamic, creative school community (P3).

However, it was also recognised that:

Change is often not very comfortable and is attended by uncertainty and a level of fearfulness that needs to be recognised for what it is ... there is little or no sense of ownership of the process or respect for teachers’ knowledge or professionalism (P5).

P2 commented that “most of the changes I have experienced have been beyond my control” and suggested that “we think we have open and honest input in open forums but much of the manoeuvring, opinion forming and tactics have been decided elsewhere” (P2). This was also a reflection on the degree of capital which the teacher leaders believed they had at their disposal within the game strategies.

4.3.3 Capital

Within the field, the players use their capital to help position themselves and play the game. The teachers referred to the importance of consultation and ownership in relation to new initiatives and mandates; they expressed dissatisfaction when these imperatives were not considered. P1 commented that:

It is also interesting to note that for the majority of teachers and principals, they have little say in the
change initiative. It is usually a top-down directive from central office that schools are expected to implement. Some notable recent initiatives include the e⁵ instructional model, eLearning and the Ultranet (P1).

A key source of capital for many teachers is their experience and knowledge; it is this capital, as noted here by P1, which is seen as being often overlooked in change initiatives. P7 linked the lack of resources available to schools to a broader issues, and suggested that “policy changes, educational reforms, dressed up in a range of packages, then become a euphemism for ‘just another thing’ driven by someone new to the portfolio”, while “public schools are kept busy making do with less” (P7).

P6 indicated that “change should not always be from a leadership perspective, it should start from the bottom up and to do that, a shift in efficacy, and a common intrinsic need to stimulate must be created in teachers” (P6). P8 felt that change was necessary and could be beneficial but “what we see amongst staff is a lack of goal congruence” and as a result, observed that “change with lack of agreement, information or understanding by everyone, causes trouble” (P8).

4.3.4 Illusio

P9’s interest and belief in the game was that “teachers will change their ideas if they see that it will benefit kids” but added that it was crucial to have “grassroots support from all of the educational community” (P9). In this sense, P9 believed that any initiative would really benefit the students only if it was engineered from the bottom up, rather than imposed from the top.
down. That there were visible benefits to the students was a crucial aspect of the change process, as was also noted by P1, who suggested that “many so-called changes in education have not resulted in any improvements to the outcomes of students” and also felt that “most changes in education have been badly implemented” (P1). P1 also stated that “as a classroom teacher, your highest priority is the lessons you deliver to your students” and there was evidence that this appeared to be in some degree of conflict with the mandated changes.

There was a similar line of thought in P5’s narrative:

Personally I have become quite selective in what I take notice of and actively work towards implementing and what I choose to passively resist. If I can see that will improve outcomes for my students, I will support the change. However, if I think there’s no point to it I will do what is necessary but won’t be committed to it. It’s a kind of ‘wait and see’ policy because I’ve seen changes come and go and I don’t want to waste my energy on something I either don’t believe in or doesn’t come to fruition. (P5)

Belief in what they were doing emerged as a striking rationale for teacher leaders in their consideration of change, in spite of the apparently little input invited from teachers in many changes.
4.3.5 Doxa

The narratives raised the notion of doxa, where the teacher leaders had certain expectations, things they took for granted, and a sense of loss when they felt this was compromised by mandates outside of their immediate control. One teacher referred to the expectations the teachers have of leadership and how they see this as an imperative to the successful implementation of change:

I also remember when the Integrated Curriculum was going to be introduced at the junior campus several years ago. I got myself onto the committee and busied myself writing a unit of work which integrated English and Humanities. Needless to say nothing came of it and I learned a great deal about the nature of the inertia within the school which made significant change very difficult. Those who were put in charge of the committee were not overly committed to the idea and the whole thing got lost as other more pressing priorities took over. There are two elements here which are worth considering. The first was the role of leadership in change. Without strong, consistent leadership, fundamental change of that kind won’t happen even when it should (P5).
This teacher reflected on what is lost when those expectations (of leaders and leadership) are not met. This highlighted an assumption that there are certain things that are expected of a person in a leadership role.

4.4 Theme 3 – Emotional labour

The third common theme which emerged from the narratives, emotional labour, was, to a degree, a product of the previous two themes and it was here that the strongest emotions of the teacher leaders were expressed. This is supported by considerable literature on the topic of the emotional labour of teaching.

For many years, researchers have claimed that the emotional intensity of the profession of teaching is a significant factor in their careers and lives (Noddings, 1992; Nias, 1996; Hargreaves, 1998). Alongside this claim has also been the suggestion that this significance is often overlooked in training, and once in the job, teachers are reluctant to reveal too much of their vulnerable selves at the risk of appearing less competent than their peers and less able to cope with the demands of the profession (Kelchtermans, 2005). Thus, the theme of the emotional labour experienced by the participants in this case study emerges as a strong and relevant theme in current teaching practice. Hargreaves (1998) suggested that “good teaching is charged with positive emotion,” that teachers are “emotional, passionate beings” (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 835), and he called for a more politically and sociologically informed perspective on understanding the emotional lives of teachers (Hargreaves, 1998). In this case study, there is clear evidence of the emotional labour of teaching from the narratives.
Sutton, Mudrey-Camino and Knight (2009) referred to teaching as an “emotional endeavour” (p. 130) and described the attempts of teachers to regulate their emotions in the classroom so that they could reach their goals (Sutton et al., 2009). They described emotions as “processes involving multiple components arising from experiential, behavioural, and physiological systems; emotion regulation involves unconscious and conscious attempts to modify any of these processes” (Sutton et al., p. 131). Thus, in the classroom, teachers are consciously trying to monitor and control their emotions so that their teaching practice is not compromised. This may mean controlling anger, curbing impulses and modifying emotions. This is also linked to the notion of display rules – “norms about which emotions can be displayed under specific situations” (Sutton et al., p. 132) – and surface acting, which involves “deliberate emotional displays designed to deceive others about the emotions the actor actually experiences” (Hunt, Gardner & Fischer, 2008).

Gallant and Riley (2013) explored the tension that is created when the teachers’ own emotions are in conflict with the display rules of the organisation. This situation may require surface (or deep) acting on the part of the teacher, thus suppressing their actual emotions: “an unfelt emotion is ‘displayed’ to other inhabitants of the school to maintain the reciprocal understandings involved in an emotional display event” (p. 83).

The narratives produced considerable evidence of the emotional labour experienced by teacher leaders in the face of mandated change and described some of the impacts that this had on their daily practice.
4.4.1 Field and the players in the field

P9 highlighted what many of the participants referred to in their narratives as the conflicting emotions of teaching and the intensity that the work often involved. P9 recognised the conflict that arises within the classroom when a teacher’s emotions are torn between implementing a curriculum that is imposed from an external field and the realities of both the teacher’s life and the lives of the students within the school. A recurring theme was the conflict that teachers experienced as a result of the struggle to keep abreast of mandated change, while every day their workload was extensive and complex:

The nature of teaching is such that, for example, I have to front up period one tomorrow and teach 9A NAPLAN strategies and Connor is bound to have a meltdown and Abbey has run away from home and Shelley will be bored witless and we are in the awful Maths room and my dad’s very ill and so it goes on. (P9)

P9 reflected that the work for teachers each day was a complex blend of curriculum change and requirements, with the personal lives of both teachers and the students; within the education field, the changes that came from external bodies did not always align with the types of realities raised by P9.

P2 reported that “curriculum change has been my greatest source of frustration” and aligned this with the educational bureaucracy not considering the needs of individual schools. In P3’s narrative, there was the
suggestion that “for some staff members, there is a sense of loss, not only in the perceived dismantling of a familiar structure, but new staff being added into the equation and old staff being displaced” (P3). P5 linked some of the frustration with various players within the school field and commented that “it’s also difficult when not all members of the DBA contribute to this course development and subsequently fail to make the necessary change in the classroom. This leads to conflict” (P5). P4 suggested that staff connections played a significant role in their acceptance of change and in this dual-campus work place, considered that “the staff at the junior school seems more connected with each other as a whole” (P4).

Emotional labour emerged as a theme when players within the field were not aligned in the implementation of change and did not necessarily all move in the same direction, according to the same ideas regarding the change.

4.4.2 Habitus

For P2, the emotional labour of change was often due to the response of other teachers, and therefore affected this teacher leader’s capacity to stay professional in this climate.

I see a few teachers who have by choice not adapted to changing curriculum demands, continue to teach as they always have and justify it with changing rhetoric and justifications and consequently have earned the disrespect of their colleagues and quite open animosity between individuals. How to be diplomatic under these
circumstances has been difficult because the curriculum is mandated and the teacher’s responsibility is to deliver the same to all students (P2).

P3 suggested that the impact that change will have on the individual and their relative unease and discomfort will be determined by their personal experience and their capacity to manage themselves in situations of change. It was proposed by this teacher leader that “when looking at the notion of change in the workplace, where you see yourself in the scheme of things is vital and will dictate one’s reaction to change” (P3).

P5 commented that “change is often not very comfortable and is attended by uncertainty and a level of fearfulness, which needs to be recognised for what it is and managed so that the opportunities are not missed and the outcomes of change are, as far as possible, positive” (P5).

4.4.3 Capital

The teacher leaders considered the emotional impact on their work when their capital was perceived to be in some way inadequate or under threat. One teacher leader reported on the injustices felt when staff were compelled to “protect” themselves or their departments:

For some staff members there is a sense of loss, not only in the perceived dismantling of a familiar structure but new staff being added into the equation and old staff being displaced. There exists a sense of justice not seen to be done by
many staff members, as they rally to protect their own DBA or staff within their DBA. This has resulted in hostility and toxic conversations aimed directly to undermine the implementation of change (P3).

4.4.4 Illusio

For the teacher leaders, change is supported when it is perceived to be conducive to better personal performance and improved outcomes for the students. P5 suggested that:

I think changes are necessary to support growth and reflection. I support change that I can see will improve my teaching and educational outcomes for students. Many changes are seen by teachers as a re-hash of previous ideas that are repeatedly foisted upon them by bureaucrats, which leads to a sense of frustration and weariness (P5).

The emotional labour is the result of unwelcome change which is not considered worthwhile. In this sense, emotional labour is experienced when the teachers’ fundamental belief in their profession is compromised or not acknowledged by the external authorities who impose the change. P8 felt that change needed to be agreed on by all staff so that the risks of the change not succeeding could be minimized. This teacher leader’s view was that
... as long as there is even one person who is not backing the change one hundred percent, there lies the risk of the change not being effectual or being undermined. Change with lack of agreement by everyone causes trouble (P8).

Under this degree of pressure, the emotional labour is heightened because teachers are endlessly frustrated by change not succeeding and only partial changes occurring, which often causes confusion for students. This in turn has a negative impact on the teachers, for whom the core business has been described as focussing on the best outcomes for the students.

4.4.5 Doxa

The teachers have an innate understanding of how processes and procedures should work in schools and there is a general sense from the narratives that these teacher leaders have expectations of their leaders, of the education department and the external bodies who implement policies and procedures. The view is that when change is imposed because those bodies “must be seen to be doing something” (P8), the lack of personal understanding and investment in the staff or school could lead to feelings of resentment from staff. P8 stated that “when change is seen to be necessary and beneficial, it is welcomed and supported”, suggesting that there are shared views among these teacher leaders of what is successful and what is not, and these views are based on experience and knowledge.

P1 expects that in order for change to be successful, “it is most important that the right environment is provided for teachers to want to
change”. It appears here that P1 expects that the right environment be provided by the authorities (the external bodies), and within this environment, it is suggested that there should be resources supplied for teachers to do their job well. P1 commented that teachers are not incompetent: “they have very little time to develop their skills and knowledge around the change initiative”.

4.5 Conclusion

The narratives provided the material to proceed to the second round of data collection, the interviews. The themes that emerged from the narratives were shared with the participants, who were asked to validate their trustworthiness and to confirm that these themes were accurate, before beginning the interview. The next chapter presents the findings from the ten interviews.
Chapter 5 – Analysis of the Interviews

5.1 Process of analysis

The material for the second round of data collection was derived from the interviews, which were conducted after the narratives had been collected and analyzed. The participants were asked to validate the three themes from the narratives, namely the relentlessness of change, the loss of autonomy, and the emotional labour involved in the change process. Once this validation had been confirmed, the interviews began.

The interviews were semi-structured and consisted of ten questions, which were generated from the ideas arising from the narratives. The teacher leaders were sent the ten questions prior to the interviews to allow for some consideration of their answers beforehand. They were given information regarding the interview process and the storage of the material. The interviews were conducted at an agreed venue and the participants understood that they would be recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions were done by an external company.

The transcripts of the interviews were coded and recoded, each time searching for commonalities in the responses of the teacher leaders. The coding was connected to the research questions, so I was looking for evidence of how teachers managed change, what was difficult about change, how change was reconciled with their experience and knowledge. I used codes such as TP – teacher professionalism; PKC – professional knowledge compromised; NRC – no real change; JS – job satisfaction; BURT – bureaucratizing of teaching. These codes can be found in full detail in
Chapter 3 (Methodology). In searching for evidence of these concerns, I was then able to develop categories, such as teacher identity, obligation and resistance.

The coding led to three themes emerging:

(i) Moral purpose and social justice
(ii) Self-preservation and personal safety
(iii) Targeted resistance

These three themes emerged after the process of developing codes and categories from the data, and from that identifying the major themes. In this research, the coding system was developed based upon themes, topics, keywords and ideas that were shared by the participants. The system was also based on the theoretical framework using Bourdieu's thinking tools: habitus, field, capital, illusio and doxa, as well as the research questions, which asked how the teachers perceived and managed the change, what is difficult about the change (how they problematized it), and how they reconciled change with their experience and knowledge. Coding allowed the data to be grouped into categories that revealed a shared or common idea. For example, many of the participants had views on their personal obligations to their work and these views were expressed in a range of ways; the fact that the view was shared was the feature of the category.

Similar to Chapter 4, the themes from the interviews were analysed using Bourdieu’s thinking tools.
5.2 Theme 1 – Moral purpose and social justice

5.2.1 Field and the players in the field

A common feature of the interviews was the reference to the professional conflict that the teacher leaders experienced when they managed mandated pedagogical change in their daily practice. This conflict or tension was a result of the teacher leaders’ sense that their core purpose, their moral purpose, was often compromised or undermined in the face of change. This could also challenge their perspective on whether their work was in conflict with their personal perspective on social justice and the value of their work to society. In terms of possible conflict with the external educational field, one participant revealed that:

So when you have things that are mandated or someone’s telling you from outside or the school might embrace something that they think is wonderful, and it seems to be working against the kids, it’s terrible. You’re in an awful situation … And because you knew your kids, you’d often know what they needed. And you were never given credit for that. That’s probably, you know, when you’re talking … we were talking before about the subtext of all this, what is the subtext of education? What you want is people that are connected to kids and that understand them and work with them. (P9, p. 13)
Another participant also referred to some of the mandated changes coming from external fields and questioned the reasoning behind some of the decisions. They reconciled their experience and knowledge about teaching and learning with mandated changes, and questioned which were in the best interests of the children.

Yeah, I question the decision-making, like where’s all this come from and often the teachers seem to be overlooked. It’s sort of like we’re not regarded in high enough esteem to make up our own minds. But most of us have spent quite a few years with quite a few different students and probably have a better understanding of what learning is. (P10, p. 6)

“Get those kids connected” was the view of P3 (p. 3), which reflected a common theme for all participants and suggested that following a rigid, set curriculum is less important than ensuring that the students are engaged. The conflict for this teacher leader was a sense that the educational bureaucracy is out of step with what really needs to be done in the classroom.

P5 pointed to tensions due to the perception that the external players, the education bureaucracy, do not appreciate what drives the teachers who have a purpose in their work and are compelled to seek the best for the students:

For me, also, there’s conflict between some of my personal values and what I would like to teach
based on those, and what’s mandated in the curriculum, because I think things like teaching about global warming, about responsible citizenship in that whole kind of overarching kind of value system, is really important, and important for kids for the future ... And I'd always want my kids to question. But of course they don't because they're just being spoon-fed. (P5, p. 3)

One participant referred to a ‘factory model’ of teaching, reporting that it does not suit all children and causes concern for a teaching model that does not allow for a teacher’s knowledge of the students and experience with a range of levels of learning:

And quite frankly, I don’t like the idea of “This is Week Two, Term Three, Period Four – you should be teaching this” … I hate it, because even to the extent that there are some topics that until you know your kids, they’re going to take longer. Particular parts of the topic, say with algebra. And it’s no use going on to the next bit if they haven’t got the basics of it. (P4, p. 3-4)

In terms of balancing the changes and having rational and open discussions about how change can be implemented, P7 suggested that getting the environment right and ready for change is a crucial step in the process, aimed at reducing the level of frustration for the teachers:
That's where the real work is, and the real challenge, I think. To get the environment right where everybody is professionally open and argumentative and rational\(^3\) and committed to a decision-making process at the local level, which welcomes the change because they know what to do with it when it arrives, not that it's another thing that's imposed and tiresome and draining.

(P7, p. 5)

The teachers position themselves on the field of education on the basis of their knowledge, their experience, their understanding of the game, and their commitment to and interest in it. The next section uses Bourdieu's notion of habitus to identify how the teacher leaders considered their moral purpose and/or their sense of social justice in teaching as being compromised or challenged in the face of mandated pedagogical change.

### 5.2.2 Habitus

Bourdieu's explanation of habitus suggested that a person may not actively or consciously consider their own habitus until they are challenged. In the context of this study, the teacher leaders reported feeling to some degree challenged or frustrated by change when they perceived it to be a threat to their sense of moral purpose or social justice in their professional work. The notion of habitus helps to consider how the teacher leaders see

\(^3\) Terms used by the teacher leaders such as “rational and open discussion” will be interpreted in Chapter 7, and their meaning in this context will be further explored.
these two aspects. The following example is a teacher leader feeling some degree of frustration.

P2 identified a conflict around obligations and accountability, and suggested that often, delivering mandated material was incongruent with what was felt to be the best option for the students; thus, the dilemma was between meeting one’s professional obligations and remaining true to one’s own sense of moral purpose and integrity:

For us at the moment saying okay, so the way we have to deliver the curriculum now is you do your overview, and that’s a couple of weeks, and then you do seven weeks of teaching and learning, and then you do the assessment, and that takes two weeks in your classroom. Well, I’m sorry, it doesn’t fit into nice little time slots, because as you say, you don’t ever have all the kids, because they’re off do sport, or they’ve got to go to the wellbeing, or some other program ... (P2, p. 3).

P1 referred to the changes as a distraction from the core purpose of their work, which is the classroom and teaching and learning:

… too often we’re distracted away from what our real purpose is and that is the teaching and learning, what’s going on in the classroom, improving the outcomes for our students. And we get distracted away from that with lots of these
mandated-type things that we're required to do (P1, p. 7).

For the teacher leaders, the frustration arose when they considered their work was compromised when they experienced conflict. For example, P8 suggested that change was not focussing on really changing the content, it was more about maintaining an old curriculum which had questionable relevance to young people:

Basically, they've maintained, they're maintaining old curriculum, and not looking at the way that they can actually explore the new stuff that's going on and new technologies ... I would love to see modernizing the curriculum, as opposed to maintaining a curriculum which is old ... well, let's do something different. Let's do something new. Let's not just look at rewriting our curriculum into a different template, which is what a lot of it seems to be at the moment (P8, p. 4).

And a specific example from the classroom:

For example, if I'm going back to Science or something like that, now, I'd rather teach Forensic Science, because the kids are exposed more to all the television programs and all the rest of it, rather than teaching Geology, because really, they don't care about rocks (P8, p. 3).
P3 also referred to the problems with many of the perceived changes, which were in fact not really changes at all and were representative of a more traditional and inflexible curriculum that did not cater for the needs of today’s students:

But I think it just reflects how little education has actually come. We’re actually not addressing the needs of our kids, do you know what I mean? It’s not really addressing the kids here in the 21st millennium. It’s not really addressing their interests. They don’t really give a rat’s about knights and stuff like that that much. You don’t even see movies about that stuff anymore. If you give them something relevant that’s on television, some issue, some topic, and get them to do sort of like a comparative study … (P3, p. 10).

The moral purpose and social justice theme is part of the teacher leaders’ habitus and could be considered to be what propelled them towards teaching as a career choice. This notion of habitus and moral purpose will be further explored in Chapter 7 (Discussion).

Often, the teacher leaders expressed frustration about their perceived control over their classroom and their curriculum, and this was often expressed in terms of their capital and where they positioned themselves on the field in relation to others on power. The next section identifies where the notion of capital impacts on the teacher leaders’ sense of moral purpose and social justice.
5.2.3 Capital

Teachers have significant capital in their position as the critical eyes of society, the ones who can drive change to influence the future of young people. This is how they view themselves; it is a crucial element of their teacher identity. It was found that when this capital is undermined or undervalued, they are compromised in their work. Some of the teacher leaders referred to their capital being undermined by the leadership team. There was evidence in the data that this was often difficult for the teacher leaders.

In the interview with P9, there was significant reference to the leadership team and how the implementation of change from outside of the school was being filtered down through the ranks within the school. This teacher leader commented that support from this team was lacking and there was inadequate understanding of the complexity of the work of leadership and change. There was evidence of cynicism about the capacity of some members of the team to drive change and bring staff along:

But you were dealing with people, and you were dealing with the conflicts, very, very complex thing. And you needed to support the staff and everything else through these changes, and crucially recognise what they already do know. Because I think that’s what’s driving people crazy at the moment is that they’re lectured to by [team leader] as if they know nothing and there’s not thousands of years of experience [laughs] of
teaching in the room. But [team leader] knows everything, because this new data-driven information tells you more, apparently, about people (P9, p. 18).

The understanding of how good leadership is crucial to effective change was also mentioned by P7, who identified problems with the management of power and influence in the current climate of change:

I think a good leadership style, whilst having a really well-developed crap detector as a filtration device for schools, their greatest strengths are in empathy and understanding and relationship-based processes, in order. And emotional intelligence and social intelligence, and so that come what may, whatever the situation – and the situation will inevitably change and the processes will inevitably change – they have the capacity to deal with it and the resilience to deal with it … If you have that, that as your prime paradigm in your leadership group in the school, then night will follow day, come what may. Whatever the change is, whatever the mandated change is, the wisdom of the community will use it within the framework of those values, rather than try to have something at a bureaucratic level which
undermines everybody’s faith in themselves and their job and what they're doing … (P7, p. 7-8).

The teacher leaders referred to a lack of faith in the leadership style, and they identified this as a constraining factor in their capacity to do their work and to effectively manage change at the school.

This was one of the difficulties that P5 perceived as having a significant impact on teachers. The style of leadership was questioned as being unsuitable for the school climate, and the style was described as “affecting people’s lives and their families … it just seems to be the style of management that’s coming in, that divide and conquer way of doing things” (P5, p. 13).

This teacher leader also referred to the current style of the typical leader as one who had power, which was perhaps at odds with what was felt to be appropriate for school leadership:

The type of person that seems to be being installed in different schools – that is very much the bureaucrat manager model. And if they have the power to hire and fire, and their priorities are those of the bureaucratic sort … it’s something that we really need to think about. In terms of changes that happen in schools, how that's managed and the kind of values that underpin the management of that change, I think is going to become really critical (P5, p. 16).
While the teacher leaders’ capital was in their experience and knowledge, this was also linked to their belief in the game and their commitment, which is the focus of the next section.

5.2.4 Illusio

P10 referred to practice in his current experience where there was conflict between his personal philosophy and the way that change and process was being implemented at the school:

We’re all being expected to teach in the same way and I find that very stifling and we’re not privy to the decisions … it goes against my philosophy of teaching where it’s your class and you have your own style (P10, p. 3)

This teacher leader identified some tensions arising when one’s own personal beliefs are somewhat at odds with practice. It was also observed that change was not the issue; the tension arose when “ [change] doesn’t gel with my philosophy” (P10, p. 4). It was also noted in this interview a reflection that “most people who choose teaching are interested in learning and how people think and how others learn” (P10, p. 7).

P1 explained how teachers can “filter” the changes that are mandated according to one’s own experience and practice:

As a teacher you focus on what is going to help you achieve a better outcome for the students in your classroom. So what I mean by that is that you – I use this word ‘filtering’ – I will filter out the stuff
that I think’s really important that’s going to help me achieve what I want to do in the classroom and get better outcomes for the kids. And if this thing that’s been mandated or whatever, is not going to help me achieve that, well, I'll put that aside and just either ignore it or come back to it. I will go through a filtering process and say, “No, I'm not going to spend more time. I don't think that’s worthy of me spending time. I've got higher priorities than this sort of thing” (P1, p. 8).

The teacher referred to using their own beliefs and priorities to determine how they responded to change. Another teacher leader identified a similar process in how they would incorporate change into their own classroom:

Like being dictated to by the government about what topics we teach in schools, irrespective of the skills that that topic can actually offer, I still think it’s probably up to the individual to tweak it. And don’t make a big song and dance about it (P3, p. 2).

P5 observed that it was difficult to not consider one's own values in making decisions about teaching, and recognized that conflict could occur when the aims of the bureaucracy did not appear to match the priorities of the classroom teachers:
For me, also, there’s conflict between some of my personal values and what I would like to teach based on those, and what’s mandated in the curriculum, because I think things like teaching about global warming, about responsible citizenship in that whole kind of overarching kind of value system, is really important, and important for kids for the future. But there's no room for it, so ... (P5, p. 3)

When the teacher identified a discrepancy between what was mandated to teach and what they felt was crucial for the best outcomes for students, then they identified a difficulty and a conflict between professional obligations.

This can also be considered in terms of Bourdieu’s notion of doxa, where there is an accepted, familiar understanding of the teachers’ work and professional responsibilities.

**5.2.5 Doxa**

P7 reflected on certain expectations that were held regarding leaders and their roles in the school, and commented on the tension that arose when there were any doubts about the capacity of the leadership to manage change well:

The other thing, coming back to a point that I made perhaps before is that schools are really messy places, because they're democratic, even
though there is a hierarchy of authority institutionalised in them. But for things to work, there’s got to be a unity and understanding in some fundamental areas. What is always challenging, I suppose, is to have the right leaders in place to ensure that process. And that’s not often the case (P7, p. 9).

Most of the teacher leaders expressed a similar belief in the role of the leaders and an expectation of what they should do in terms of their leadership in the face of change. Many of the teacher leaders expressed some doubt that their expectations of solid leadership were being met. P3 commented that they were “frustrated with the leading teachers because they are actually not leaders – they don’t know what they are meant to be doing” (P3, p. 6).

P8 also referred to the impact on staff in general when their expectations of leadership were not met:

So if you have a leader who inspires confidence, whether or not you actually like them or not, but you think that they’re actually doing things for the benefit of the school and for the best interests of the school, and for the best interests of the students, you’re more likely to get people who are happy to make those sorts of changes, as opposed to, “We don’t know what you’re doing. I don’t know that what you’re doing is the best
interests of the school. All I can see around me is a whole bunch of people are really unhappy. Therefore, you might implement something, but I kind of feel really awkward about it and I don’t like it." (P8, p. 15)

The teacher leader expressed a view of what is expected of a leader and referred to the current situation where change has become difficult in this climate. P7 also commented that this made change frustrating, and was not in line with what these teacher leaders expected of those who were in leadership positions:

I suppose the other note I made here about the most frustrating aspect of mandated change is that you’re often working with a leadership team that doesn’t know what it is doing, and that makes it incredibly difficult. So that you know that this is going to breed further anomaly and alienation and emotional exhaustion, because it’s not going to be used. It’s going to be imposed within a school and further undermine the, I suppose, integrity and the commitment that teachers often, but sometimes don’t have, to what they’re doing. That’s frustrating. (P7, p. 14 – 15)

The teacher leaders voiced a strong sense of moral purpose in their work; there was also, as evidenced in the next theme, a significant dilemma
in their perception of their own personal safety and wellbeing. This is discussed here again in relation to Bourdieu’s thinking tools.

5.3 Theme 2 – Self-preservation and personal safety

There was evidence in the interviews that the teacher leaders viewed one’s personal safety as a key priority in their daily work. They referred to this many times in terms of self-preservation, in what is a rewarding – yet often very difficult and demanding – occupation. Bourdieu’s notion of field helps to analyse the perception of the teacher leaders that pressure from outside of their immediate school could impact on their personal health and wellbeing.

5.3.1 Field and the players in the field

P2 identified the impact on teachers when mandated initiatives and changes become problematic and when it seems that ‘the system’ is working against, rather than with the teachers:

And we’ve seen people leave - “I’m not going to do this, because I don’t like the way it’s done.” We’ve seen people, very recently, just walk away from it. And it affects their performance in the classroom, it affects their relationship with their colleagues, they’re not getting on with the administration. Nothing is working for them. Their personal life outside of school becomes a mess in some cases. They literally do drive themselves nuts and they have to walk away from it. I’m not
going to let it get to me. It’s a job. At the end of the day, it’s a job. This is what I’ve been told to do. This is what I’m being paid to do (P2, p. 10).

P9 also reported a lack of alignment between the teachers and the external bodies, which created a tension and professional conflict for teachers that compromised their wellbeing:

I did remember someone telling me this job could bleed you dry, and you could have a nervous breakdown tomorrow and end up in hospital. And you could. You could see it happening to people, really, really good, dedicated teachers who were trying to do everything properly. So you had to manage that, balance that between … well, my priority was the classroom (P9, p. 15).

Their habitus in the school field reflected certain ideals and beliefs. The next section looks at how teachers’ habitus directs their responses in the face of change, and the way they take care of themselves in their work.

5.3.2 Habitus

For many of the teacher leaders, the satisfaction in their work came from their feel for the game, from their personal leanings towards what worked. This is what sustained them through the difficulties and frustrations of mandated change.
P1 identified the students as being the fundamental reason why the work of the teacher is rewarding, and this is not necessarily dependent on change:

That's why we're in the game, it's for the kids and the successes that they achieve, and that's what it's all about. Even when I was principal it was always the students and the success of the students, obviously supported by the teachers. But yeah, it's got to be about the students. (P1, p.11)

A similar reflection emerged in many of the interviews where the teacher leaders consistently referred to the students as being the key factor in their own perseverance and commitment to their work. P10 reflected that “the most rewarding thing is just the relationships with the kids. They're just so honest and most of them appreciate what you're doing and they're pretty fun” (P10, p. 9) and then later, “the kids fill your bucket all the time. They really do” (P10, p. 16).

P7 suggested that the value of the work was in the relationships that they were able to maintain with the students and that these relationships were crucial to one’s survival.

The great thing about the job was working with the kids, working with really, really good people who want to do things, want to make a difference in the world … and what a rewarding job it was (P9, p. 21 – 22).
The interview asked the participants to discuss how they deal with change. One teacher leader put it like this: “I actually don’t … I think that’s one of the reasons why I’m leaving. I have very little patience with bullshit” (P5, p. 10).

One teacher leader reflected on standardised testing as an element of teaching that is at odds with their core beliefs and approach to teaching.

They said, “We’ve got to have standardised teaching”. And I said, “So you’ve got these tests that don’t make any sense … they’re all totally random … well, kids that think creatively could probably justify why they chose D instead of what you’re marking. How are you going to acknowledge that? And they said, “Well, we can’t”. I said, “So what has it got to do with education?” (P9, p. 2).

In this response, there was a conflict between the teacher’s own views on the subject and the views of the bureaucracy. This was also reflected in their references to capital and how this was used in the game.

5.3.3 Capital

The teacher leaders valued the time they had to effectively implement change and often felt that time was limited. Coupled with this was the notion that experience and confidence were significant resources for teacher leaders, which enabled them to circumvent some of the mandated changes that they may not have considered practical or possible to implement.
effectively. This was generally done because otherwise they would have felt that they were not doing the best for the outcomes of the students.

P9 stated that:

The only thing you could control was yourself and treating them [the students] decently, I suppose. I found it very stressful. And I realised that you have to look after yourself. It’s a very hard job, and you had to have good people who you worked with that you trusted too (P9, p. 14).

As an experienced teacher leader, P9 described being able to draw on the support of others as a distinct form of capital that provided some relief from the difficulties of the job. The capital referred to here was also the knowledge that one could have some control over events in their work. This teacher leader described how being able to choose how to work with the students was a significant resource, and one that was valued, alongside the capacity to look after oneself.

There was also a degree of passive acceptance around mandated change, which P5 referred to in the interview as a way of coping and not being too negative through difficult times. This teacher leader suggested that “people, when they’re exhausted and time-poor, are less inclined to argue” (P5, p. 15), and this was suggested as an example of how people look after themselves and manage their own stress. This is an example of how the teacher leaders are able to survive in a difficult climate – their capital is in their core beliefs: “Idealist, yeah, I still am, and I refuse to be anything else. So that’s how I’m managing it” (P5, p. 11 – 12). P5 identified the capacity to
stay focussed in the face of negativity as a strength and a coping mechanism. P2 expressed a similar idea: “I don’t let it drive me nuts because as I said, this is my job and it has to be done” (P2, p. 9). This teacher leader is also able to describe their own personal response to the difficulties of change in their work, and to recognise the strategies that they are drawing on in order to nurture their wellbeing without becoming too stressed.

These teacher leaders drew on capital that they had accumulated in the field through experience and knowledge. The next section looks at their core beliefs, their familiarity with the game, and how they managed change.

5.3.4 Illusio

The teacher leaders often referred to situations where their beliefs in the game were considered to be compromised. There was evidence from the interviews that in these situations, the teacher leaders sought to find ways to sustain their interest in the field and maintain their beliefs, while also recognising a possible conflict or misalignment with their personal and professional beliefs and those passed down from the educational bureaucracy.

P7 commented that “always a frustrating aspect about mandated change is the lack of understanding about a school community, about the complexity of a school community” (P7, p. 12). The school community – what happens at the grassroots level – was generally considered the crux of the teachers' work, and where misalignment with the views of the external bodies was likely to be perceived.
P9 reflected on the satisfaction of being in the classroom where it was possible to make decisions and “do really good and meaningful things that you’re passionate about with them. Otherwise, it’s not going to work” (P9, p. 21). This is what sustained this teacher leader: “you got the opportunity to work in your area that you loved and you could do that, and work with, you know, like adolescent kids. They were great” (P9, p. 22). Of particular significance for P9 was that there was perceived autonomy here, where this teacher was able to establish a position of power within the classroom. This enabled the teacher to maintain faith in the everyday work of teaching, and identify a place where they could draw on the intellectual capital (which was valued by the teachers, but was felt to be perhaps less valued by the bureaucracy):

You know, you didn’t have the boss from Melbourne ringing you up and saying do this or do that … You have a lot of freedom. I suppose that was the other thing. It’s a job where you have some freedom to control what you do in the classroom yourself, and working within the constraints of the school (P9, p. 22).

P4 also identified how the core beliefs and satisfaction of the job came with being with students. This is what sustained this teacher leader and confirmed their beliefs that what they were doing was ultimately worthwhile and valuable:

I like working with kids. Seeing them have success, and whether that success comes easily
or, particularly, I suppose, if that success is really hard earned, it’s really lovely to see. And just … yeah, just seeing them develop, see kids develop. It’s a blessing, and it’s an honour to be able to be part of it, and to be able to contribute to it, quite honestly. Yeah, love it (P4, p. 11).

This teacher leader drew on her knowledge and experience to identify what adds value to the work: that her position in the field and her confidence and wellbeing are enhanced by the belief that the job is worthwhile and worth pursuing.

5.3.5 Doxa

The teacher leaders generally referred to the familiarity of the school field where they had a good understanding and acceptance of how things were and what they could expect. In simple terms, the teacher leaders believed that their first and foremost responsibility was to ensure the best outcomes for their students. They were able to achieve this with a level of autonomy in their classrooms, with collegiate support, with a coherent structure and solid leadership within their school, and with support from external authorities. The teacher leaders felt that these were the essential and expected aspects of their work; when these aspects were fragmented, they felt most affected.

P6 expressed this as a concern in terms of the school community:

Someone who loves teaching shouldn’t think about leaving the profession because of the
community falling apart, and I think that’s the crux of it ... Change can be incredibly emotionally taxing on a whole community. It can actually destroy it obviously, very quickly (P6, p. 16).

The third theme of targeted resistance could be considered an extension or a result of the second theme of self-preservation. The resistance is defined as targeted to distinguish it from a resistance that suggests aversion to change, which was not the overall sentiment expressed by the teacher leaders. Recognising the resistance as targeted and deliberate is therefore a key consideration for the third theme.

5.4 Theme 3 – Targeted resistance

The data from the interviews suggested that the teachers were, generally, in favour of change and were receptive to continual improvement. There was evidence to suggest that the teacher leaders had an acute understanding of the complexity of change and saw it as an integral aspect of their work.

What was significant in the interviews was that the teacher leaders also presented a case for resisting change when they could not see its immediate relevance to the students. They also admitted to resisting change when they doubted the possibility or practicality of its immediate application. They reported resisting change when they were sceptical about the capacity of their leadership team to manage it, and they were reluctant to support its implementation when they believed it to be repetitive or superficial.
The interviews produced evidence that change was often resisted and this section looks at how that resistance was targeted, deliberate, and focussed on meeting student needs and teacher capacity to implement the change.

5.4.1 Field and the players in the field

P1 saw change as a way of building capacity of staff, and thus enhancing their capital within their field. However, it was noted that there were problems related to this, in that many teachers did not have access to the skills and competencies considered necessary for the change to be successful, nor were they given the ownership that created meaning in change:

You’ve got to have had some participation in the decision making process. If you’re not sort of being involved in the change process right from the word go and having some input into it, well, you tend to not want to participate in it or you’re very sceptical about it … And of course, you’ll change when you’ve got the skills and the competencies to be able to actually change. And that requires time, resources, professional development - all those sorts of things. And they’re things that we don’t do well in school. We don’t give teachers enough time to actually do PD to learn to build their skills and their
competencies to embrace a particular change (P1, p. 3).

P1 outlined here some of the reasons why some teachers may not embrace change or why they may be sceptical about the chance of success. There was also reference from this teacher leader to the external field being out of touch with schools in the implementation of change:

That's where they've [external bodies, such as ACARA, Education Department] got to get out into schools and talk to people and see what's actually happening, because what they're thinking and what is happening in reality, is probably two different things (P1, p. 13).

This perceived misalignment of the purposes of the two fields is presented as a case for resisting change.

P2 presented another angle on why teachers become sceptical of changes, particularly those imposed from external fields that do not meet the needs of teachers in schools, and cause doubt about whether they are worthwhile:

Interesting ... is the change really going to achieve what they set out to achieve? It's always about, and you listen to Meredith Peace on the radio this morning, it's always about improving learning outcomes for kids. But they keep wanting

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4 President of the Australian Education Union.
to fix the wheel, reinvent the wheel all the time. It's interesting that we'll find a better way of doing it. But do we ever achieve what we set out to?
(P2, p. 2)

Similarly, P8 considered how many of the changes imposed from external fields were not having a significant impact, and were at odds with what this teacher saw as important for the students:

The element of change that excites me is, “Well, let’s do something different. Let’s do something new. Let’s not just look at rewriting our curriculum into a different template,” which is what a lot of it seems to be at the moment (P8, p. 4-5).

P7 also identified that it was problematic when the aims of the department (the external field) were at odds with the school community:

It’s a lack of knowledge about what schools really do, or a different view of what schools really do, that breeds the notion that you can come up with a new program or a new approach or a new packaging device, and just expect schools to roll it out, so that the day and the classroom and the teacher’s desk becomes haphazard with a myriad of good ideas from somebody else.

That’s the most frustrating aspect of it, and it’s often governed by political change and
bureaucratic change, not by the needs of the school community (P7, p. 13).

Where the teacher leaders were positioned on the school field appeared to affect their response to change and their capacity to align their own judgements with the mandates from the department. This is their habitus at work, which is the focus of the next section.

5.4.2 Habitus

Many of the teacher leaders reflected on their role as a teacher and how they were perceived and what it meant to be a teacher. P9 referred to the complexity of the work, where everyday management issues – “a particularly mad boy who used to throw himself” (P9, p. 37), were juxtaposed with the externally mandated change issue – “Oh, here’s something new coming in …“ (P9, p. 37), and how these dilemmas impacted on the teachers on a daily basis. Managing the changes were not presented as isolated incidents, as work that could be done separately: the changes were perceived as work that was done at the same time as, alongside, the daily work of student wellbeing, student management, classroom management, teaching and learning, and so forth. Often this emerged as a reason why some teacher leaders may have been reluctant to receive and accept change as matter of course, and would often deliberately resist the change based on a learned experience and understanding of what was possible and what was most likely not.

P6 referred to the general nature of change and felt that teachers often resisted change because they could not see an immediate purpose:
It’s how you lead people or walk beside them. But you have to facilitate them because people are often scared of change, because they’re actually not seeing what you’re doing it for. If they don’t understand the purpose, it’s like the kids that you teach. If they don’t understand the purpose, they’re not going to want to do it. They don’t understand what they’re going to get out of it (P6, p. 7).

This teacher leader identified gaps in the implementation of change when the purpose was unclear and the fear of the teachers was not recognised or acknowledged, and saw this as a reason for resistance.

5.4.3 Capital

The teacher leaders held significant capital in terms of their professional experience and their capacity to discern what was worthwhile. There is evidence in the interviews that their resistance to change was based on an understanding that the change was actually not a change, but in fact a repeat of something they had already implemented. P9 questioned the validity of some proposed changes:

Like, if there was anything that was really useful, are we doing this already? Yeah, teachers hate that. We’ve done this and we’ve done this and we’ve done this, and how many times can we do this? (P9, p. 17)
P9’s capital was located in their ability to filter change and be selective, and identify when change was not going to be of use. When that was the case, their experience and position in the field granted them the right to circumvent the change. Capital, then, enabled choice and decision-making for this teacher leader. P1 expressed a similar view:

Some of the stuff that we’re mandated to do is just a waste of time with most of the teachers because it wasn’t relevant to what was happening in the particular classroom. It wasn’t something that was going to help or improve them (P1, p. 2).

This example provides evidence that the teacher leaders can make their own judgements about proposed changes and recognise that there are limitations to some of them; in fact, they were able to describe how they would ignore or filter the mandated changes to suit the needs of their students. This was only possible because these teachers had experience and enough confidence in their position in the game to be able to take this stance.

P8 identified a lack of depth in change over a significant period, and used this experience in the game to reach these conclusions about the nature of change:

Over nearly twenty years of teaching, I’ve seen that many different changes and none of them have been of any real significance …they all seem to have been template changes rather than any
genuine change … we haven’t been told to teach
differently … (P8, p. 7).

This teacher leader’s observation about the perceived limitations of
the changes they have faced is based on their capital, which is located in
their years of experience, their understanding of the nature of the game, and
what has been effective or otherwise during that experience.

5.4.4 Illusio

The teacher leaders, as stated earlier, were not change-averse.
However, their belief in the game and their interest in participating in it
guided to a degree their response to change mandated from the outside. In
this sense, they were able to make conscious decisions, according to their
beliefs, about whether or not they would enter into the change process
around particular initiatives. This was generally seen to be a very deliberate
choice.

When P1 refers to "filtering" out the material that was not relevant, it
reflects a large degree of autonomy and power, if the teachers are prepared
to use that power. In the case of P1, this was done through “talking to
colleagues and that sort of thing … you use a range of people and make
your decision from there”. This suggests a shift away from being reliant on
and answering to external authorities; it describes a situation where the
teachers are comfortable prioritising their work according to their own beliefs
and interests, and where necessary, seeking confirmation of those beliefs
from the people in their own field space – their colleagues.
5.4.5 Doxa

Doxa is related to habitus and the power structures within the field. In the interview, P4 referred to what might be considered to be a constraint on the practice of the teacher leaders, given their experience and understanding of their work. This teacher leader suggested that “there needs to be the interchange of ideas and thoughts. And there’s just not the time given, and then they wonder why you’re not ready for the next stage … “ (P4, p. 5). Over their years of practice, this teacher has formed the belief that if a change is to be implemented, the rule of the game is that time is an essential resource in order for this to occur effectively. In this interview, the teacher points out where there is a discrepancy in the mandates from external bodies. “They” refers to the authorities beyond the school, who in this case are described as being at odds with the teachers who are the agents of change.

A similar sentiment was echoed by another teacher leader, who expressed these frustrations around mandated change:

How do I do this? I’ve just got my head around this, and now you’re telling me I’ve got to do it this way … it would be nice to have that settling period. You’ve always got the wheels turning. It would be nice just to put the brakes on at the stoplight and say, ‘Let’s give these a chance’. But every time we get a new government, and a new budget … you know (P2, p. 13).
These teacher leaders have an expectation that in the process of change, time is a crucial resource; here, they identify the issues that arise when this expectation is not met. P8 referred to the negative impact on the classroom: “We’re being asked to do a hell of a lot more with a hell of a lot less, with a lot less time. And in terms of my professional life, is my teaching suffering for it? Probably ...(P8, p. 18).

The interviews represented the second set of data. The third and final set is analysed in Chapter 6, which is the focus group discussion.
Chapter 6 – Analysis of the Focus Group Discussion

“You have to play the game to win so for me to win, I want my students to be able to learn, I want staff to be safe” (Participant in Focus Group discussion).

6.1 Process of analysis

The focus group discussion took place four months after the final interview was completed and transcribed. The whole process took place over a period between March and November, within the same year. The focus group was attended by seven out of the ten participants, with three unable to attend. It was held in the home of one of the participants, and as they all knew each other well and had worked together for some years, it was quite informal. The participants had received some notes beforehand, which explained that the discussion would refer to education as The Game, with the teachers representing the players (see appendix). The notes explained Bourdieu’s thinking tools and his notion of how the game is played, and gave examples of how this may apply in the school setting. There were also some questions (see below and Chapter 3), which served as a loose guide for the direction of the discussion. It was agreed that the researcher would act as the facilitator and try not to participate too much, but be there to steer the discussion back on track if it became too fragmented. The small group allowed for a round table setting, and the whole discussion continued for seventy-five minutes. Afterwards, the discussion was transcribed using the same external company that was used to transcribe the interviews.
The teacher leaders were prepared to structure the discussion around the notion of The Game and the field. They had each read the explanation of the game, which was given to them two weeks prior to the meetings, and understood how the discussion should flow. There were also questions they had been asked to consider beforehand and it was suggested that the discussion would refer to – but not be limited to – these questions and the story of The Game.

The questions are included here, starting with the key question first:

Ø What is your response to my understanding of The Game and your role in it?

*In responding to this key question throughout the discussion, try to refer to the following questions, in no particular order:*

- What are the rules (and for whom)?
- How do you interpret and play by the rules, how do you negotiate the rules for your own purposes?
- What do you recognise as forms of capital and who has what and how is it used, and when?
- How do you maintain or build your capital?
- When do you use a game strategy?
- What are the accepted beliefs?
- What do you see as being points of misrecognition of the other players?

Similarly to the previous two analysis chapters, this analysis uses Bourdieu’s thinking tools to present the findings.
6.2 Field and the players in the field

In terms of Bourdieu’s thinking tools, field was a notion that was easily recognized and understood by the teacher leaders. The discussion reflected evidence that there were strong views around how the education system was structured and where the teachers and the teacher leaders were positioned within the structure. The notion of the game, the fields and themselves as players was a construct with which the teacher leaders identified readily.

The focus group discussion began with a reference to the Ultranet (see Glossary) and how it was designed with the view of transforming education across the state: “It confirmed everyone’s cynicism about things that dropped through the ceiling on schools” (p. 1). This example was raised as a reference to how the educational bureaucracy imposes initiatives on schools. The observation was made that:

The rules are that the bureaucracy runs education in this country, not the teachers and the teachers should … which is always going to fail. … Despite what schools do, individual schools do, most of their agenda is driven from outside the gate, not inside which is where it should be (p. 1).

This continued to be a dominant theme throughout the discussion: the notion that there is disparity between what the bureaucracy mandates and what the teachers believe would benefit the students most. The teachers consistently observed that the imperatives of the department are often not aligned with what their own knowledge and experience tells them is going to be best for the students and schools.
The notion of not being listened to was a recurring theme. The teacher leaders felt that their professional knowledge was regularly compromised in a climate where their opinions were not sought, and where they felt their expertise was not valued. Finland was mentioned as an example of an education system being driven by the teachers. The suggestion was that in contrast, the Victorian system is driven by the bureaucracy, and this is what contributes to the failure of so many initiatives, such as the Ultranet – a department initiative that was mandated for some two to three years before it was eventually withdrawn:

The top down issue is the real issue and the lack of consultation with teachers. Every teacher, I think, in Victoria knew that, well, the Ultranet for example would fall over and it fell over. No one listened, they didn’t listen to us. So that was just the classic thing where we weren’t listened to and the agenda was driven, again, down (p. 2).

In this discussion, the Ultranet emerged as being symbolic of a common theme of not being consulted on issues where teachers were experienced and knowledgeable. It was said to have “confirmed everyone’s cynicism about things that dropped through the ceilings on schools” (p. 1). These early observations and comments were embedded as a common thread throughout the discussion.

The participants agreed on the term “managerial” to describe the situation they saw within the ranks of their school: “Managerialism is now the paradigm that dominates …” (p. 3). The teachers believed that there is a
managerial side of operations coming in to the schools that approaches education like a business. It was suggested that this could be a common occurrence across all schools, and also that it is accompanied by some degree of intimidation.

The teacher leaders also recognised that in their years at the school, they were aware of having been protected from the external authorities, to a degree, by their school leaders. There was evidence that these teacher leaders respected that the school leaders were also in some way answerable to external authorities: “The leadership did actually try and work around the directives that were coming down, or protected us. Tried to move things around a bit so the staff weren’t totally … you were still under the gun in some way or another which is, well, in some ways, fair enough …” (p. 4).

The participants questioned the role of regional directors (see Glossary) in education; they saw the directors as typically having “managerial expertise and not education”. Because of this leaning, the directors – who governed the school principals – were seen to be driving an agenda that was not immediately concerned with education, but rather, with economics. The participants felt that what was more important for principals to hear was along these lines:

Hang on, no, you’re in education. Stick with education and we’ll get some boffins out there to support you if you run into trouble with your dollars, if need be (p. 13).

The discussion raised the notion of the school as a community. This was also linked to their habitus (see discussion further on in this chapter),
where there emerged concerns about the leadership style. It was proposed that “a school’s actually got more characteristics of a community rather than a business, and yet the model we are working under is definitely a business model … It’s a community, coming together with all these agreements” (p. 15 – 16). Furthermore, the data reflected doubts about the value of learning in this climate:

Look at the bureaucracies that are running the place and how they conceive education. It comes down to dollar crunching and efficiencies, and all those sorts of things rather than educational stuff, kids’ stuff, learning stuff (p. 12).

NAPLAN (see Glossary) was considered in light of their habitus (see below). It was also very much linked to the field and the positions that the teacher leaders considered that they were in regarding decision-making. It was conceded that “we have a lot of top-down things that we have to deal with” (p. 3) which were considered to be “the rules of the game” (p. 3). The teacher leaders felt that it was crucial to know the rules in order to play the game: “If you don’t understand the rules, you end up working independently” (p. 3). There was a strong message that the teachers needed to be clear about the rules and to know why they were playing the game – without that structure, they were not likely to continue playing.

In terms of Bourdieu’s notion of field, the teacher leaders, the players, linked the theory to their practice and their observations. They referred to change as “not being a bad thing” (p. 6); the difficulty is the “implementation and the kind of ideas and rules of the game that the
leadership have, which is completely different to what teachers have” (p. 6). The participants highlight field differences, where understanding the rules is crucial.

The next sections look at habitus and capital and how the participants linked these notions with the field and their roles as the players in the game.

6.3 Habitus

NAPLAN was raised as another significant factor that impacts on families and teachers and is driven by the bureaucracy. This created a considerable moral dilemma for some, as they may not inherently believe in the practice of testing and judging a school based on the results of those tests. This is their habitus at work, where the teacher leaders have an understanding about what is right for their students; here, there is evidence to suggest that externally imposed testing does not rest well with these teachers. Their explanation for this was generally expressed in terms of the impact that they have witnessed on students and families, which they saw as being detrimental to the child’s wellbeing and education. One participant related the story of how the test affected a family because their child had not performed well:

When my niece gets the NAPLAN results, first of all, my brother has trouble interpreting it. He actually says, “What does it mean?” I can see all this. I think it’s terrible, and I have to say, “She’s great. You don’t have to worry about her. She’s terrific”. Because I think, you’re not there to say to a year 7 or year 9, to say to these kids, “Look at
your NAPLAN results. They’re terrible”. I hate all that, and the fact that there’s such pressure on us (p. 2).

The teachers in the focus group questioned their role here, and the theme of moral purpose was highlighted: “But we let it happen. We let this happen. We pick it up and we run with it. We do” (p. 2). And then the response, Do we have a choice with that sort of thing? (p. 2).

There was evidence that the teachers felt frustrated by being mandated to follow a process that inherently did not rest well with their teaching philosophy, and with what their experience and knowledge suggested might be the best practice for the students. The teacher leaders referred to experiences in other schools in relation to the NAPLAN and there emerged from this point a sense of networks and collegiality within the teaching ranks:

There was a lovely thing that was put out by one school that said, “We value your child because your child can do this. They’re part of the orchestra. They’re in the choir. They do all these other things”. So, that whole universality of education, yeah (p. 3).

There was evidence from the discussion that there was an instinctive distrust of externally imposed mandated testing. There was also a sense that despite these perceived constraints and frustrations, teachers will do what they think is best for students, regardless of departmental mandates. One
participant explained that they have always been like that; they do not toe the party line. They might say,

We used to have the period 6 rule … will it work period 6 with a year 9 English class? Like OK, I'm here but is it going to work because really, you can't waste my time here. I have to know – the real world, I'm going in there tomorrow. It's all right to sit here and theorise … it's got to work with the kids. It's got to be something meaningful. It's got to work with them … (p. 4 – 5).

This is how the teachers talked about surviving within the system, by focusing on what they believed to be the most important aspect of the job – the students. The response of the teachers reflected a degree of passive acceptance but was also a sign of targeted resistance – a recurring theme in the interviews - as they talked about using their knowledge and experience to guide their work and steer them towards the best outcomes for students, rather than feeling compromised by the educational bureaucracy. The teachers felt strongly that they needed to be convinced that the change (the initiative, the directive) was worth pursuing, and there was evidence in the data that they were prepared to question some of the initiatives:

I do think there's rubbish out there in education and you need a good bullshit detector. You actually need to know I'm not wasting my time on this. It's a really difficult and complex job and I do have to go in tomorrow and then I'm going to
walk out of 10A, to 9A, to E12. Is this worth working with? What’s good here? There’s a whole lot of things going in here (p. 5).

This reference was made to the obligations of teachers: “You’re a public servant and you’ve got to do what you’re told fundamentally. That’s your appointment contract as a public servant” (p. 5). This suggested that there is an understanding here of the public obligations of the job and an acceptance that teachers must “fundamentally” conform. Again, this is their habitus at work: the comment reflects their understanding of the paradigm within which they work and the limitations and obligations within those boundaries.

Participants agreed that playing by the rules was only possible if it was clear what the rules were and if they were structured and straightforward. This expressed their habitus, their own feel for the game and their innate and purposeful understanding of how the game should be played. The point was raised that in order to play the game well, certain processes and procedures needed to be in place. While it was clear from the discussion that the teacher leaders knew what these processes were, it was also clear that they did not believe that they were supported by the other players in the field who were making the decisions. This highlighted a perceived gap between the teachers and the educational bureaucracy:

To play any game, you have to understand the rules. If you don’t understand the rules and they’re not structured and clear and we don’t understand why we are playing those games, I
don’t know, myself, as a teacher I’m more likely to walk away from that and go, “I’m not actually going to follow your rules…” (p. 6).

The discussion raised the point that a person’s capacity to understand and work with the rules also reflected that person’s capital. The next section highlights comments from the discussion where the participants saw capital as a factor in how the players responded to the rules of the game.

6.4 Capital

The participants agreed early in the discussion that when they referred to capital, they were referring to “what I bring to the role in the game … cultural, intellectual experience” (p. 5). It was from this understanding that their discussion of capital ensued in the first part of the discussion. Early comments also suggested that there was a growing awareness that capital was diminishing – that they could compare the current climate with a time when their voice was heard and encouraged:

I remember when we used to have staff meetings and people would stand up and say “Well, this is a load of whatever”. You won’t get that now because people are really … they have been put right back in their box and the situation with excess [excess staffing] has really, really impacted on what people are willing to say and what they are willing to voice their opinion about (p. 3).
This also references economic capital – that is, their actual jobs – and the teachers perceive that there is a very real threat of losing their job if they are too forward with their opinions. This situation is relatively new, according to the data, and not one associated with earlier periods in their careers. It was also considered that this was system-wide, not just local, and this type of management was visible across the board, in all schools.

There was evidence that the teachers, in spite of feeling under threat from speaking out, were also committed to playing the game to benefit the students the most, even if that meant not always playing by the rules. The suggestion here is that the teachers are using their capital – their knowledge and experience – to implement the changes insofar as those changes would benefit their students:

Teachers will only take it [implementation of new initiatives] so far that they want to take it and see value in it. I understand that the most important thing is what’s happening in your classroom is what’s important to teachers and all this other stuff is not … we’ll do it the way we want to so it suits us. We play the game we want it, so that it’s going to be a benefit to the kids in our classrooms, I reckon (p. 4).

The teachers also referred to the resources that they consider to be their capital. Time is a resource which they need “to be able to play the game and play it well” (p. 6). They used the example of when they were expected to implement a significant, “massive” (p. 6) change in curriculum,
but there was not enough time given to achieve this target: “The next thing seems to be added before you’ve even finished the first one” (p. 6). Another resource that was considered to be lacking was training and professional development: “We’re not clear, we haven’t had any real training on it. We get the odd PD here and there” (p. 6). This also reflects the teacher leaders’ habitus, and the link between habitus and capital: they expect certain conditions and contingencies that have to be in place before they can do their job successfully, and these resources, which are generally allocated from outside of the school, are perceived to be inadequate.

That the rules of the game had changed drew considerable comments from the teacher leaders. While they once had clarity around their position, their power, and the value of their capital, now there is less certainty and less willingness to play a game in which the rules appear to have changed or shifted. The uncertainty that this creates leads to speculation around the value of their capital and their capacity to use it in a way that once would have enabled them to recognize and play within the field rules. There emerged from the data at this point a sense that their familiarity with the game and its rules had shifted or had decreased somewhat. It was suggested that “you don’t get the level of consultation that you might want … in and of itself, change is not a bad thing. It’s the implementation and the kind of ideas and rules of the game that the leadership have, which is completely different to what teachers have” (p. 6). The teacher leaders raised the possibility that the leadership, in implementing the changes from outside of the school, may not be aligned with the teachers.
School culture was raised during the discussion in terms of capital and knowing the way things are done in the school. It was suggested that a number of the people in leadership positions had come with little recognizable capital – “they didn’t even understand the culture of the school” (p. 8). For the teacher leaders, this is where their habitus interacts with capital in the field and generates an understanding of the internal workings of the school – the culture as they perceive it (this is also related to doxa, which is discussed further on in this chapter). The teacher leaders considered knowing and understanding culture to be a significant part of their capital.

The discussion around capital referred to the bureaucracies that governed education:

You look at the bureaucracies that are running the place and how they conceive education. It comes down to dollar crunching and efficiencies, and all those sorts of things rather than educational stuff, kids’ stuff, learning stuff (p. 12).

This caused them to question the amount of capital they actually had in this environment: the discussion suggested that while the teachers were able to recognize their own capital in terms of their intellectual capital and their experience, their influence on the bureaucracies in terms of the allocation of money and resources was minimal. This was viewed as a source of frustration. There was a reference to the economic capital lacking in schools: teachers were unable to manipulate the financial resources that were allocated to each school, and identified the gaps that this caused in
student learning. The teacher leaders’ understanding of capital was in line with Bourdieu’s notion of capital being multi-pronged with varying definitions.

There were recognizable shifts in the teacher leaders’ interpretations and understandings of capital throughout the discussion. From economic capital, the discussion moved towards capital as power, and the shifts in the value of their own:

It [capital] is power but if that capital isn’t valued, because you’ve got loads of capital for example, in many of the things and attitudes you have for example, if that’s not valued in the school, it’s actually not capital

Yes. That’s true, it has to be recognized.

That’s really interesting. Having come back into the disability job this year, my capital, I don’t think is the same as what it used to be the last time I was in the job … it’s like that capital, that you had, it shifts: it changes (p. 16).

The discussion raised the notion of how to estimate and value one’s personal capital. It was felt that there was scope within the school to enable teachers to do that, but it was not a legitimate process:

I think sometimes to be able to tell whether or not you’ve actually got capital, you need to have your practice reflected back to you and that never
happens except under these artificial interview things (p. 14).

The teacher leaders recognized and referred to changing field positions, which altered values in their capital, and commented on the impact that this had on their daily work. It was noticed that “capital that you had, it shifts and changes” (p. 16). It emerged from the data that the power bases or values of capital were less familiar to these teacher leaders than perhaps was once the case. There was evidence that this had a direct impact on their personal positions within the field. However, they also questioned the capacity of the leaders in the school, whom they regarded as having minimal recognizable capital:

The game has changed. The leaders don’t know what they are doing because they haven’t got the capital to actually do the job (p. 10).

Following this observation was the comment that “You never, ever lose your capital” (p. 18) and the suggestion that “it’s how people bring that capital out of you that’s the most important thing … You’d still be doing it without a title, I would imagine” (p. 18). Capital at this point was discussed as not being a constant, but rather as being subject to change depending on the context and the people. However, there was a persistent thread underpinning the discussion, which referred to their common understanding of the value of capital for teachers, and its application on a daily basis:

If you Google your public service role, it will come up with dos and don’ts and all the values and parameters around teaching in Victoria … all that
stuff in the end becomes knowledge and experience that goes into your capital because people are going to turn around and look at you and say, “I need to talk about, I’m having trouble with, I’ve got a crazy parent coming in, I’ll go to the person that, or the people that, or friends, or teams, that had that sort of stuff” (p. 15).

Two points emerged from the discussion here. Firstly, teacher leaders acknowledge that capital does shift and change depending on the field and the dominant field players; secondly, there is an intrinsic value to capital – as perceived by the teacher leaders – that should not diminish, regardless of the field. This was exemplified in the following exchange:

People seem to assume that change is inevitable and you’re going to have cultural change and shifts, and for whatever reason. But it’s going to be constant that you, [name of participant], given my understanding of your teaching background, you could apply to a school and they would get your application and they’d go, “This girl’s got capital. We want her for this position to be a senior coordinator of a sub-school and to take a team of people with her”. That would still be recognized (p. 18 – 19).

The focus then moved to the teacher leaders’ understanding of cultural capital (p. 22).
The capital that the parent brings to the child and the teachers in state school systems bring to the child, and everyone that interacts with them, confirms their status as second-rate educational citizens (p. 22).

The following question was posed: “What’s [the parents’] cultural capital that they put in their kid’s backpack every day and they turn up in your classroom?” (p. 24). The teacher leaders considered how capital was viewed in relation to the differences between private and public schools.

Further to this was the notion of symbolic capital, which aligned with Bourdieu’s understanding, and was reflected on in this observation regarding those in leadership positions in schools:

If you put on your principal badge then whether or not you deserve it, you kind of get respect, authority [facilitator] …

I could do nothing, absolutely nothing, walk into a room and the kids would go …

Yeah, because you’re the Assistant Principal …

And I’d have no relationship with that group and the kids would know me … there was this big symbol somewhere in the system that they imbibed (p. 31).
The teacher leaders aligned Bourdieu’s interpretation of capital with what they were seeing in their workplace. This part of the discussion had as a central focus the distribution of influence and power due to position and how this was absorbed by the school population, especially the students. It was also crucial, the data suggested, that a leader in a school must focus on building the capital of their staff:

As a leader in a school, you should always be trying to build that capital in every staff room. if you can’t do that, then you’re failing the people, you’re failing the students and I think you’re failing the actual community that you work in (p. 30).

Much of this discussion was also framed around the doxa of the teachers, their uncontested views and acceptance of the world, which are considered in the next section.

6.5 Doxa

Doxa, according to Bourdieu, allows certain social structures to be taken for granted and to be reproduced and sustained. By allowing power relations to continually be reproduced, a school can maintain the status quo and sustain what the teacher leaders in this discussion referred to as “a lot of agreed-upon assumptions and understandings and unstated ideas” (p. 16) – a metaphorical line that was recognized and understood by teachers but not written down:
All the rules are above the line. The policy and the descriptions and teaching minutes and what you can and can’t do and how you get yourself sacked and in court, and in trouble with parents and all that sort of stuff. But the most powerful rules are below the line and they are the ones you meet at the corridor. They are the ones you talk about here – the below the line stuff … All that stuff, below the line stuff, it is not policy and articulated politics. It’s how the school works. It’s shared understandings (p. 15).

This is the doxa of the teacher leaders and how their system is perceived and it describes how the schools work within the system. They also consider this to be the rules (as referred to earlier in the field analysis), but the “agreed-upon assumptions and understandings and unstated ideas” were also highlighted (p. 16). The teacher leaders reveal their understanding of doxa in regards to unstated assumptions and behaviours in the field, which are like “the things that you have in a household” (p. 16).

The teacher leaders reflected on what they described as deliberate and purposeful misrecognition (p. 26) where the actual work of educating young people is “so huge, it can’t be done” and the focus is distracted or redirected away from the core business of teaching:

The schools are falling apart, your kids are just rioting and everything is going crazy. Let’s nail every kid whose socks are the wrong colour. Let’s
make that the blitz and you go “Why?” “That would fix everything.” “No it won’t.” It’s a simple thing. That’s misrecognition as well because it’s often too hard to deal with the big stuff (p. 26).

The teacher leaders made reference to the leaders in their school and the discussion centred on the role and expectations of leadership. While they pointed out some deficiencies in their current leadership, this was linked to their doxa around it – their understandings and expectations of good leadership in a school:

They’re supposed to be your leadership group. Just like a football team, you’ve got your leadership group ... so when we’re talking about some beliefs and what kind of unwritten rules that we just assume, that’s some of them as well and it’s not a big ask for your leaders to lead, really, is it? (p. 8 - 9).

Understanding the rules and playing by them was seen to be very much tied up in being a part of the culture of the school and understanding it. There was evidence of some attempts to analyse and explain how leaders are perceived, and the extent to which their power is distributed throughout the school:

The principal reflects down, a very powerful symbolic and personal presence in the school, and shows what is the right behaviour to the leadership group. The teachers then go into the
classroom and say the same, reflect symbolically, often unstated and unsaid and unwritten down, what it is that governs the relationships in that place. It is incredibly powerful (p. 12).

The teacher leaders referred to the question which asked them to consider what their accepted beliefs in the game looked like; in Bourdieu’s terms, it asked them to consider their illusio, which is the focus of the next section.

6.6 Illusio

The teacher leaders agreed that their common purpose in teaching and the feature that underpinned their drive to persevere was their commitment to the students:

We always should come back to: what are we doing? What’s our role as a teacher or a principal or assistant principal? And that’s to move these kids on, give them a really good education and that’s what we’re all about, is the best interests of the kids (p. 11).

In discussions around field positions and playing the game, the teachers’ illusio was revealed in terms of their commitment to the game and their beliefs in teaching:

Back in the classroom, I understand that the most important thing is what’s happening in your classroom ... [this] is most important to the
teachers, and all this other stuff [driven from the top] is not ... we play the game the way we want it, so that it’s going to be a benefit to the kids in our classrooms (p. 4).

There was evidence that the teacher leaders had observed that this was not always the case, with some of the new leaders. There was reference to the fun and enjoyment being taken out of teaching when there was more emphasis on collecting data and “teaching by the rules” (p. 20):

You don’t relate to them, you don’t say “How was your weekend?” ... you just get in there and start ... and you bore the hell out of everyone when you’re by the book and I’m thinking to myself, “Oh, my God”. There was no reading for enjoyment ... there’s data and there’s to be this and there’s to be that... (p. 21).

It was observed that there was a new approach in many classrooms from leaders in the school that focused too much on data and rules and less on learning for enjoyment. This created some tension for the teacher leaders, whose view was that teaching should be enjoyable and that students learn better when they enjoy the class. One teacher recounted a story of a colleague’s approach from earlier years of teaching:

The kids read a story and then you threw it out the window because they said, “What are we going to do now?” And you said, “Nothing. We
just read a great story ... and I'm throwing it out
the window and we just had a great story” (p. 21).

Further on, the discussion took a historical perspective on what
attracted teachers to the profession and considered some of the traditions
which they believed to be the cornerstones of a great job:

I was reading the history of teaching in Victoria
and I was really fascinated ... we do have a really
hard-wired tradition amongst Victorian teachers,
public school teachers that we actually work really
deeply with the kids and care and welfare ... we
are really committed to that and we went in and
that's when you wanted to become a teacher.
And those were the days that you were a bit
passionate about it. You really wanted to be a
teacher. You actually thought, this is a great job
(p. 28).

One of the teacher leaders reported that they were leaving the
profession soon because they could no longer work within a system that they
did not agree with:

I'm leaving the game because I don't play well
with others in the sense that if I'm not on board, if
I don't agree with that fundamental philosophical
approach, I can't do it. It would just be like going
to work and being a little automaton, and I can't
(p. 7).
The teacher leaders generally felt that in spite of frustrations and the sense that there was disparity between their beliefs and what drove them, their core beliefs were enough to sustain them in what was often a very difficult position:

And that’s why teachers, no matter where they are or how much capital or whatever they’ve got, the underlying thing is we all are about helping our kids that we teach and making sure that they’re getting a good education. Yeah, that’s why things will change again at [our school], I’m sure, because we all want the best for our kids (p. 11).

6.7 Conclusion

The results chapters provided the findings from the three sources of data collection in this case study. The next chapter takes these findings and discusses them, using the research questions as a guide for analysis.
Chapter 7 – Discussion

7.1 Introduction

The aim of this research was to add to the growing international emphasis on the need to consider the teachers’ voice in understanding how mandated pedagogical change impacted on the working lives of teachers. Analysis highlighted teachers were in a field underpinned by conflict: there was a perception that their professional capital was limited due to ineffective leadership at the school level, as the focus was heavily on managerialism, and due to an educational bureaucracy that placed minimal value on their knowledge and experience. The conflict became apparent with the tension that developed when teachers were not given voice in decision-making that directly impacted on their work and on their drive to improve outcomes for all students.

It was evident from the data that the teachers experienced a loss of autonomy in the change process and a loss of professional agency. As a result of that, there was an inclination towards negativity in the presentation of the data. The negativity was a result of a sense of oppression and a sense that the teachers were struggling. It emerged that the teachers felt marginalized and that they had been placed in that position involuntarily. This led to resistance to or pushback of change as a means of retaining some sense of autonomy and power, rather than a deliberate act of defiance. This research is important because leaders in schools can have a better understanding of the place and agency of teachers in the ongoing process of mandated pedagogical change.
As it has been previously outlined, the methodology engaged Bourdieu’s thinking tools (habitus, field, capital, illusio and doxa) as its theoretical framework, which guided the analysis process. By using this framework to analyse the data, a practice context was found that has not been considered in the change literature. It is around this context that the following discussion will be constructed, in order to establish what this research contributes to new knowledge.

The literature in Chapter 2 referred to the notion of considering context in school improvement and policy enactment (Braun et al., 2011). Within these considerations was the proposal that four contexts are significant in policy development in schools. It was suggested that there is a situated context, a professional context, a material context and an external context. Analysis of the findings of this research raised the possibility of a fifth context to consider – the practice context – and this is presented in detail in Chapter 8 as new knowledge.

This discussion is shaped by four key areas, which emerged from the analysis of the data. The key areas were revealed as the summary responses to the research sub-questions, as follows:

1. How do teacher leaders perceive mandated pedagogical change and its enactment?
   - Common themes that initially emerged were that change is relentless, that change causes loss of autonomy, and that there is emotional labour in the implementation of change. This is demotivating and impacts on change negatively. These themes
converged to suggest that mandated pedagogical change led to a decrease in teacher leaders’ professionalism.

2. In the face of mandated pedagogical change, what is most difficult for teacher leaders?
   - A major difficulty in managing change was the arbitrary nature of many of the proposed changes and the loss of professional capital they experienced.
   - Limited consultation on change was perceived to be an indication of the diminishing value of their profession.
   - Teacher leaders often considered change to be a distraction rather than inherently valuable to improve outcomes for students.
   - There was a perceived lack of support and guidance from school leaders that impacted on the capacity of the school to implement change.
   - Top-down changes were generally considered to be ineffective and not sustainable.

3. How do teacher leaders manage mandated pedagogical change in their daily practice?
   - Teacher leaders were sustained by their relationships with students, by their professional capital and by their illusion – their belief that the game was worthwhile.
   - A strong sense of moral purpose, social justice, and a commitment to the students were features of their capacity to manage change.
The teacher leaders referred to strategies for self-preservation in the climate of relentless change.

4. In the face of mandated pedagogical change, how do teacher leaders reconcile their experience and knowledge regarding teaching and learning?

○ Targeted resistance to change was reported to be one of the key strategies which teacher leaders employed to manage mandated change.

The discussion will be shaped around the ways that the teacher leaders perceive, problematize, manage and reconcile mandated pedagogical change.

7.2 Discussion

Professional identity (Nias, 1996; Hargreaves, 1998, 2000; Ball, 2003; Sutton, 2009; Perryman et al., 2012) emerged as a recurrent theme at each data collection point, and it was through their professional identity that these teacher leaders’ habitus became apparent. For the most part, their professional identity was underpinned by a strong sense of moral purpose, of teaching as a privilege, a blessing that brings incredible satisfaction and rewards. The identification of habitus provided nuanced understanding of teacher policy resistance and engagement.

Policy resistance was considered as an act intended to preserve pedagogical practices known to support effective teaching and learning. The analysis indicated that resistance had become a major part of the game (Bourdieu), in which they were the players. They were found to be resisting the insistent singularity (Ball, 2008, p. 15) that argues for educational reform.
or rejuvenation in order to have increased student outcomes. The illusio of
this mega-narrative (linking educational reforms to the global economy) was
not professionally valued by the teacher leaders. On the contrary, what they
were professional committed to and invested in (illusio) was increasing social
capital in schools and focusing on cooperation rather than competition
between schools. Education was not regarded by the teacher leaders in
terms of a business model, but in terms of educating for worthwhile lifelong
learning. Pursuing student achievements aimed at satisfying external
expectations was not considered to be a part of the illusio of the teacher
leaders.

The illusio required by the mega-narrative and the illusio of these
teacher leaders were in conflict. Adding to this sense of conflict is the
challenges the mega narrative poses for their sense of professional identity
(habitus). Their habitus is based on the view that teachers develop the next
generations’ human and social capital. The scope of their habitus is not
limited to producing workers for a global economy: “I don't think we’re
doing our kids any favours by giving them a one-size-fits-all education and
being obsessed with results” (P5, p. 4, interview). Ball et al. (2011)
considered the policies that drove standardized testing produced passivity in
the teachers, making them “technical professional[s]” (p. 612), where
creativity and originality is curbed and restrained by the limitations of the
testing agenda (Ball et al., 2011). This sentiment was echoed by the
participants, who experienced the limitations of a results-driven agenda.

This conflict between the teachers and the external players’ mega-
narrative adds to their sense of increasing ‘remoteness’ to the field under
reformation. Their sense of remoteness was found to be associated with a sense of decreasing decisional capital (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). The findings revealed that teacher leaders were questioning if their professionalism was really understood and acknowledged when they were resisting changes that they perceived to be either impractical or irrelevant. This led to what Craig (2012) described as “shifting understandings of their roles” (p. 90) and a lack of clarity around where they stood in the field of education. This conflict highlights a changing field, indicating that these teacher leaders sense their social capital is diminishing and consequently their professional capital is lessened (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). This leads to their resistance as a way of preserving what they know to be effective pedagogy for children, their future and society’s future.

The teacher leaders’ doxa (beliefs) is that schools are generally being inadequately resourced to embrace some of the change initiatives imposed from the educational bureaucracy. Productivity demands imposed from external agencies shift the teacher leaders’ focus away from teaching as a moral purpose to being market-driven, where test results have taken precedence over the human responsibilities of being a teacher. Increasing accountability structures are perceived as having limited the breadth and scope of their pedagogy, which has impacted on their capacity to engage their students in a broader curriculum that contributes to their social development (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). They recognize that testing is reasonably cost-effective and instantaneous, and understand why this had become the preferred medium to measure student performativity. However, they do not agree with this as the only dominant focus. This was noted as changing the school culture and education. An increasing focus on
accountability and testing and data collection is viewed as limiting opportunities for individual creativity (Sahlberg, 2008) and stultifying the learning environment. Participants identified student boredom as unproductive and as the antithesis to effective learning: “The Humanities curriculum, it’s just awful, it’s so dry and crusty and boring … it's not really addressing the kids here in the twenty first millennium [sic]. It’s not really addressing their interests” (P3, p. 10, interview). This competes with the teachers’ habitus that prioritizes the growth of social and human capital as a core facet of teaching and a driving force of their investment, their illusio, as was evidenced at all three data collection points.

7.2.1 A changing field

For the teacher leaders, there was evidence they were occupying a changing field. The change was defined by an increase in competition and individualism in education. It also consisted of their being asked to focus on high-stakes testing policies that are the hallmark of the current educational reforms, both in Australia and internationally. School accountability policies (such as state-wide testing) that are mandated in schools attempt to quantify student performance to satisfy external measures but limit the scope for recognition of the achievements of the student as a whole citizen (Fink, 2011). In reflecting on the notion of achievement for students, this participant suggested that “success doesn’t necessarily have to be academic. It could be social, emotional, all those sorts of intangible things. But look, that’s why we’re in the game, it’s for the kids and the successes that they achieve, and that’s what it’s all about” (P1, p. 11, interview). Teachers are guided by their sense of moral purpose and attracted to the aspect of the profession that recognizes their purpose as change agents for
an improved society. While academic knowledge and learning is crucial to the role, it is not what solely underpins their intrinsic motivation. The relentless pursuit of student growth and obsession with evidence-based data is at odds with the things that characterize teaching – the passion for teaching and learning of the whole child, and the pure enjoyment of the classroom: “The whole focus of learning is to become better … But I don’t think it really helps these young kids turn into mature adults just by worrying about NAPLAN” (P10, p. 5, interview). The view that school success can be measured by scores and results diminishes the realities of teaching as a collective responsibility (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012) and contravenes the illusio of the teacher leaders.

The teacher leaders were found to be in conflict with the educational bureaucracy. The teacher leaders are compelled to respond to changes in fields, but their responses to change were often framed as a binary, reflecting a sense of “it’s us against them” in reference to the external fields. The teacher leaders considered the bureaucracy to be out of step with the reality and complexity of day-to-day teaching. P1 suggested that “[educational bureaucrats have] got to get out into schools and talk to people and see what’s actually happening, because what they’re thinking and what is happening in reality, is probably two different things” (P1, p. 13, interview). The lack of alignment invoked cynicism and mistrust in the teacher leaders and the sense that they are compromised professionally.

In Bourdieu’s view, capital only exists and functions in relation to a field (Bourdieu, 1992) and when the field changes, as these teacher leaders have experienced, they are faced with a sense of diminishing capital.
Changes in the value of capital posed a threat to their professional identity, and challenged the teachers’ habitus. Analysis revealed that the strategic response from teacher leaders in this position was to enact intentional and purposeful resistance to change, where “unless it’s relevant to the actual classroom and it’s going to improve teaching and learning and it’s going to improve the outcomes of kids then it’s a waste of time for teachers” (P1, p. 2, interview). Mandated change, therefore, was not necessarily embraced unless it was deemed to be immediately relevant and in the best interests of the students. There was evidence that the teacher leaders used their cultural capital to enact this decision-making process, where the reliance on colleagues and experience outweighed the exigency of externally mandated policy. In the process of resistance, the teacher leaders were also guided by their habitus, which informed the way they thought about themselves in relation to their work.

Teacher leaders stipulated certain conditions that were required for change to be implemented successfully, which reflected the daily challenges and complexities of schools. They cited frustration, undermining, distrust of leadership, and a general breakdown in collegiality as repercussions of change initiatives being enacted in unsatisfactory and inadequate conditions. The teachers’ reactions to change were described as “angry, negative, aggressive, undermining, toxic …” and furthermore, it was noted that “people see it as a lack of inclusion and perceived control over the process by people in more powerful positions” (P3, narrative). Again, this highlighted the diminishing capital of the teachers during the change process when the implementation is top-down. The teacher leaders’ belief was that outside bodies implementing the changes, including the educational bureaucracy
and politicians, seemed remote and removed from their daily practice. It was suggested that these bodies were not always fully cognizant of the complexities inherent in the change process in schools. It was felt by the teacher leaders that this meant that the preferred conditions for implementing change were therefore rarely considered.

This sense of ‘remoteness’ impacted on their capacity to build professional capital, and thus again, their professional selves were diminished. Many changes were considered to be driven by a political agenda, rather than as a specific plan to enhance the overall educational experience of young people and the professionalism of teachers. This was confronting to their habitus and to their investment in the game. Darling-Hammond (2010) suggested that in this climate, “standards become political documents, rather than curricular guideposts” (p. 281), and offer a superficial view of learning. The participants had misgivings about external decision making processes that disregarded the impact on teachers and limited their opportunities to play an active role in the enactment of initiatives:

I question the decision-making, like where’s all this come from, and often, the teachers seem to be overlooked. It’s sort of like we’re not regarded in high enough esteem to make up our own minds. But most of us have spent quite a few years with quite a few different students and probably have a better understanding of what learning is (P10, p. 6, interview).
The mandated dependence on external authorities to initiate and impose change raised questions for the teacher leaders about their status as professionals and the regard afforded them in the decision-making processes. Associated with this are the ethical considerations of what it means to be a teacher, and what level of respect as a professional one might realistically hope to be accorded from external authorities. These aspects of the processes of mandated pedagogical change were perceived to be the most troublesome for teacher leaders.

Where this struggle is enacted, in the professional field, is where the teachers’ habitus is revealed and where their dispositions change and evolve. In learning and adapting to the rules of the game in the field, the habitus of the teachers is enlivened by the field interactions. The prescriptive nature of the data and results driven agenda highlights the plight of many teachers, for whom the fixation on testing is at odds with their views of effective teaching practices. Participant 2 reflected that while “[the mandated curriculum has] got to be documented because you get audited” (P2, p. 6, interview), there are difficulties embedded within this accountability structure. On the one hand, the teachers are aware of their professional obligations to meet standards, but at the same time they feel that they have not been given adequate resources to implement the programs. Yet, this is what their professionalism will be judged on, an issue that the participants highlight as being unfair and one that compromises their professionalism. In this changing field, the analysis points to a sense of diminishing capital for the teachers and a consciousness of the deskilling of their profession. Student achievement is often a trigger for revised policies and reform, where the response is generally to hold teachers accountable for low achievement. This
is a short-sighted and rudimentary analysis of a complex issue, and one which ignores contextual factors such as generational poverty and dysfunctional neighbourhoods. This deficit image of teachers serves to diminish teacher professionalism and highlights a tension that is evident at all stages of data collection, as highlighted in this narrative reflection:

I have to front up period one tomorrow and teach 9A NAPLAN strategies and Connor is bound to have a meltdown and Abbey has run away from home and Shelley will be bored witless and we are in the awful Maths room and my dad’s very ill and so it goes on (P9, narrative).

The narrative accounts offered rich insights into the daily life of the teachers, which brought into sharp relief the very human side of the profession, juxtaposed with the accountability agenda. This tension leads to questions around the purpose of much of the educational reform that is aligned with results and performance (Fink, 2011). The teacher leaders referred to this constant dilemma as “taking a lot of energy and interest away from teaching. It’s focusing on issues of accountability and justification and rationalization, and enormously time-consuming as well” (P7, p. 16, interview). Standards – and then tests to see that standards are being met – have emerged as the new reality. The accountability regime promises a low-cost improvement to education results and outcomes, without considering the human costs and with no guarantees of how success will be measured (Fink, 2011; Wrigley et al., 2012). It neglects – or disregards – the purpose of the teachers who entered the field with aspirations to lead social change.
The habitus of the teacher leaders is at cross purposes with this market-driven approach to educational reform.

The origins, purposes and ideology of an accountability approach are driven by the criteria of educational improvement as an economic investment (Ball, 2003; Kelchtermans, 2007; Wrigley et al., 2012). The data showed that this was in conflict with the purposes and practices of teachers who engage with the opportunities in schools to develop long-term life skills in their students. The former reflects a business model that is seen to be incompatible with the purpose of the teacher leaders’ view of education. The focus for the teacher leaders is on contributing to the social and human capital of their students, and underpins the moral purpose that is a feature of their practice. The critical aspects of teaching – such as developing the next generation’s social capital – is incongruous with the mega-narrative that seeks to commodify education and operate according to a profit and loss rationale (Ball, 2003, 2008). The teacher leaders argued that

[education is] just so far that way at the moment in these economically rational times, where the economy is everything, efficiencies are everything. And welfare and education and all those sort of things, are way down there on the policy platform (Focus Group discussion, p. 15).

The reality is that the purposes in education do not align with the purposes of business. There was recognition in the data that the current feature of leadership, which is managerialism (focus group discussion), is a feature that falls short of meeting their expectations (their doxa) that the
leader of a school should be a leader in education. The focus group discussion considered the managerial focus on leadership in the current climate and reached the conclusion that “all they are looking at in terms of introducing qualifications [to leadership] is managerial expertise and not education” (Focus Group discussion, p. 15). This was found to be at odds with their intrinsic purposes. It was also acknowledged that this is a policy-driven situation, and one that reflects the economic times. Principals, it was suggested, were

being driven to think in particular ways – the data and the dollar, and these sorts of things, rather than saying, “Hang on, no, you are in education. Stick with education and we’ll get some boffins out there to support you if you run into trouble with your dollars, if need be (Focus Group discussion, p. 13).

Leadership is part of the perceived problem, but it was also acknowledged that this is also impacted by the external authorities driving the current reality.

Another dimension of the market driven model is the narrative that defines the somewhat hazy term ‘quality’ education, which is increasingly dictated by a market or business model, aimed at meeting the needs of its clients and positioning education as a commodity in the modern world. Teacher leaders felt that they were increasingly being directed towards a scripted mandated curriculum, which minimises their contribution as curriculum makers. They also suggested that it has the effect of reducing
their professional input and ignoring the very complexities that define teaching. Success measured by student test scores is limited, in the view of the teacher leaders, and condenses a complex issue to a simple justification of attaining quality education. While it is difficult to argue against striving for quality, the teacher leaders challenged whose definition of quality they are attempting to meet.

A culture of accountability purports to encourage teachers to take professional responsibility for good performance. The view that emerged at each stage of data collection suggests that the sense of owning professional responsibility is diminishing rather than increasing in this climate of accountability, as the demands for responsibility have shifted. The teacher leaders consider their responsibility to their students’ learning and to their profession as a priority, and as the essence of good practice. However, they found that the stifling demands of externally imposed change initiatives relocates the emphasis of that responsibility, which goes from being to oneself, to students, colleagues and school community to being more customer-oriented. This is at odds with their habitus and their illusio. Against the background of global educational reform linked to an economic, market-driven imperative, teacher leaders listed lack of trust, diminished autonomy, and distraction from their core purpose as the by-product of this approach.

Major field changes at a global level alter the dynamics at a domestic level. The teachers were aware of being in the midst of technological advances and significant changes in population demographics, and were also aware that they must somehow rationalize this with their practice. The perception that emerged from the data is that “state education is so poorly
resourced – intellectually, financially, in community regard … we need to fund private and state on an equal footing – then you’d go a long way to raising the value of learning and knowledge, smart country” (P7, p. 15, interview). The teacher leaders’ illusion is that teaching responds to the most basic societal expectations of schooling, which is to make the students responsible for themselves and others, socialized to enhance the moral scope of their society, ready to function as contributing citizens, and happy. Reducing this to numeric terms limits the potential of both teachers and learners and drastically reduces the definition of what constitutes a ‘good school’ to a simplistic measurement.

Educational reforms that are based on a numerical measurement and linked to a global economy have given rise to paradoxes about the nature of teaching and of professional identity. Teachers often complain of having to do more with less; the reality suggests that educational reform is demanding and time-consuming, and to limit these resources is counter-productive. The increasing push towards meeting and maintaining standards contradicts the autonomous role of the profession, yet this is the dilemma facing schools and teachers today, as evidenced in all stages of the data collection. Changing pedagogical practices is demanding and resource-intensive. The teacher leaders cited the lack of time and resources as a source of continual frustration, and as a challenge to their view of themselves as professionals.

7.2.2 Teacher professionalism and Identity

The participants’ view was that

it’s a lack of knowledge about what schools really do that breeds the notion that you can come up
with a new program or a new approach or a new packaging device and just expect schools to roll it out, so that the day and the classroom and the teacher’s desk become haphazard with a myriad of good ideas from someone else … and it’s often governed by political change and bureaucratic change, not by the needs of the school community (P7, p. 13, interview).

This view highlighted the ideological struggle between those in the profession and those charged with the authority to make decisions about the profession. The teacher leaders referred to their own experiences and culture – their habitus – to derive meaning and purpose for their choice of occupation, and this narrative informed the type of teacher they imagined they could be. Retrospective imaginings based on teachers’ own school experiences and the capital that they bring with them into the field enable them to construct and enact a professional identity compatible with their habitus – their leanings and dispositions that will illustrate their ‘feel for the game’ of teaching. There may be incongruities between this identity and the identity that is proposed and defined by the organizing authorities, who may differ in their view of the make-up of the teachers as professionals. Thus, a challenge to their habitus emerges and the view of themselves as professionals is blurred by confusing and contradictory messages, from both the authorities and the public. The vast array of expectations of teachers results in hard-to-define understandings of what makes a ‘good’ teacher, and therefore, of how to measure their performance. In such a climate, measuring success is easiest if it is reduced to quick and relatively inexpensive numerical
terms. In the mega-narrative of education as a part of the global economy, this type of business model may be practical; but in the human world of young people and their contributions to society as effective, productive citizens, this type of measurement is severely limited. It is difficult to test and measure the existence of and growth of human capital or social capital, if the emphasis is on numbers and data.

In discussing the value of persistent testing, one of the participants asked the question: “But the holistic learning of a child is what we’re about, isn’t it?” (P6, p. 3, interview). Affirmation of teacher professional identity relies on recognition that this aspect of their work is valued. In an accountability climate, comparison of schools and therefore judgement of teacher performance fails to take into account the contextual factors mentioned earlier – e.g., poverty and dysfunctional neighbourhoods – and creates an environment of winners and losers.

Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) recognized the risk of teachers losing their professional capital through top-down intervention which does not take into account the teachers’ voice. The participants’ references to the mandated curriculum underlined conflicting purposes between themselves as professionals and the educational bureaucracy. It was suggested that “The department mandates a curriculum which is at odds with the school’s internal operations and it is not possible to accommodate it. It is a one-size-fits-all factory model” (P5, p. 3-4, interview). This view illustrated decreasing professional capital – and specifically, decisional capital – where the value of teacher’s “acquired and accumulative knowledge” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p. 3) is diminished, and their sense of ‘remoteness’ is again invoked. It
indicated a low-trust environment, where teacher leaders reported being
distracted from their core business and side-tracked by burgeoning policy
and accountability processes. Enthusiasm from external authorities for
innovations and standards as educational reform puts a strain on the
teachers (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2009). They have an obligation to their
organization and a professional understanding that they are a part of a
system, yet their habitus – the way they think about themselves in relation to
their work – is developed by differing imperatives. The narratives are not
aligned. In making meaning of the top-down educational policies,
innovations, and reforms, teacher leaders reported a sense of being
excluded from the story and undermined by the process. As this participant
recalled in the interview: “There’s no way of saying as a humanist, “Right,
let’s look at their [the students] community. So they play sport? What makes
them tick? What is their fundamental motivation?” None of these is
considered anymore” (P6, p. 5, Interview). Evidence from the data suggested
frustration with a system which denies the value in the human aspect of
education – yet this was seen by the teacher leaders to underpin their driving
motivation, their moral purpose.

This shows the emergence of tensions that led to a deliberate and
targeted resistance to change. The evidence from the data suggested that
change in itself is not what the teacher leaders objected to, but rather, the
nature of the change in this climate. Therefore, their resistance has been
described as targeted. Resistance emerged when the school and the teacher
leaders could not make sense of or could not realistically enact the change
imperative that was passed on to them. They could not align that
improvement narrative with their own understandings of what drives them as teachers.

Entering the field of education, their commitment to, and their investment in the game – that is, their illusion – relied on the recognition of their capital. The volume and strength of their capital was not only located in the intellectual field of their particular area of study, but was also located in their habitus, in their feel for the game. With capital diminishing in value, this created conflict between the teachers and the players in the external field. The sense of ‘remoteness’ referred to earlier is where this dilemma is enacted: the teachers cannot build their professional capital if they feel as though the bureaucracy is remote to them. If there is no sense of attachment, of being part of a team that has a common goal and a clear trajectory forward, there is little momentum towards building on one’s expertise and enhancing one’s professional teaching capacity.

7.2.3 Loss of autonomy

A consistent feature which led to the sense of ‘remoteness’ for teacher leaders was the recurrence of the ‘new thing’ that was externally imposed with little or no consultation. Teachers appeared to become accustomed to a cavalier approach to innovation from outside their immediate authority. There was evidence that they accepted the likelihood of little theoretical or empirical evidence to suggest the innovation might be sustainable and conducive to improved outcomes for students. It was suggested that “schools have become acclimatized to the ephemera of policy initiatives”, many of which were “political opportunism that simplifies a major societal
problem to a state school solution” (P7, narrative). There was also evidence of a threat to their wellbeing and personal safety:

We’ve seen people leave, we’ve seen people very recently, just walk away from it. And it affects their performance in the classroom, it affects their relationship with their colleagues, they’re not getting on with the administration. Nothing is working for them. Their personal lives outside school becomes a mess in some cases. They literally do drive themselves nuts (P2, p. 10, interview).

To suppose that teachers and teacher leaders will pick up and run with every change initiative without question or without some degree of resistance offers a limited and short-sighted perspective on their professional selves (their habitus).

The preoccupation with numerical results leads to a range of strategies that might contribute to raising the performances higher, and locates the controlling authority of schooling with external agencies rather than the teachers. This resulted in a sense of a loss of autonomy, which emerged in the research: “Quite frankly, I don’t like the idea of ‘This is Week Two, Term Three, Period Four – you should be teaching this’” (P4, p. 2, interview). For the teacher leaders, the one size fits all type of planning and reform is detrimental to student learning. Research suggested that it has the effect of minimizing the decisional and social capital of the teachers.
(Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). The teacher leaders cited frustration with the administrative demands of their work as contradicting their core purpose:

We’re so bogged down with what I think of as just the bureaucratization of teaching, the dotting of I’s, crossing of t’s, that that intellectual creative side of it is being relegated to the back burner. And yet to me, that’s like the central thing of teaching (P5, p. 5, interview).

This highlighted a concern that the creative and intellectual challenges for teachers have been replaced with increasing administrative demands. Raising standards across the board is considered by the teacher leaders as a good thing. The demands of excessive accountability, however, reduce the autonomy of teachers and diminish the value of self-regulation in the profession. As P5 commented, they also reduce their autonomy and limit their capacity to explore their intellectual selves and bring that creativity into their classrooms.

The teacher leaders also reported feeling that many of the changes mandated from external authorities are often futile. It was observed that there is little evidence of any real change at all. It was suggested that “we tend to relabel things and I don’t think we’re making it any better … They keep wanting to reinvent the wheel all the time” (P2, p. 2, interview). This added another layer of dissatisfaction and a feeling of being hamstrung in their capacity to be drivers of change and curriculum makers. Their professional integrity was seen to be compromised and there was evidence of added loss of capital – particularly intellectual capital – as they identified a
level of simplicity around many of the mandated changes. It was considered that they often lacked depth and were “template changes rather than any genuine change” (P8, p. 7, interview). This points to a reality that belies the mega-narrative of externally imposed change imperatives.

This posed a challenge to the teacher leaders’ habitus. A school benefits from a growth in social capital, where the group of teachers relies on each other to collaborate on planning and building an effective learning environment where students can achieve their best (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). However, in an environment where there is a reduction in their capacity to be real agents of change, there is an aligned reduction in decisional and human capital. This then has the effect of limiting the capacity of the school to work effectively on real change and improved student learning. Preparing children for the future and developing “long-term capacities” (Fink, 2011, p. 12) is not valued in the same way as are results and measurements.

Debate about the purpose and value of education must reference world changes and challenges (Wrigley et al., 2012). It is remiss if there is no consideration to the social value of education, and the accompanying goal to create productive, socially aware, and ethical young people. It has been claimed that “the social and economic purposes of education have collapsed into a single overriding emphasis on policymaking for economic competitiveness” (Ball, 2008, p. 11). The casualty of this is the social education that is highlighted in this study as being crucial to the development of the whole student. High-stakes testing has been described as a process of “intimidating teachers and framing learners as passive
recipients of imposed knowledge” (Wrigley et al., 2012, p. 96). This argument was also raised by the participants, who questioned the value of high-stakes testing and who viewed and valued student achievement as multi-tiered and many-sided, and not limited by economic competitiveness, but rather expressed through a model that hopes for a better world. As observed in the interviews:

There’s conflict between some of my personal values and what I would like to teach based on those and what’s mandated in the curriculum because I think things like teaching about global warming, about responsible citizenship in that whole kind of overarching kind of value system, is really important, and important for kids for the future. But there’s no room (P5, p. 3, interview).

Fitting the framework as prescribed in a performativity culture equates to meeting the standards that are dictated by that culture. Teachers are positioned to accept that standard, because their autonomy in this environment is diminished. The data suggested that teacher effectiveness and influence is challenged in this culture, where the teacher leaders reported a diminishing sense of their professional selves and reduction in their capital.

High-stakes testing has the effect of moving schools into an environment that is focused on individual achievement and is in competition with other schools (Biesta, 2004; Sahlberg, 2008; Ball, 2010; Braun et al., 2011). The mark of the effective school, and thus of ‘quality’ education, then
becomes the school which is characterized by strong performance in tests but less so by valuing human growth and responsibility (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2009; Craig, 2012). It ignores the school that can cite personal achievement for students who started at a very low level, in comparison with their peers, even if their improvement was minimal on a comparative level (Darling-Hammond, 2010). This was cited as a dilemma for the teacher leaders. They reported feeling pressured to strike a balance between their moral imperative, their intrinsic motivation to teach for enhanced social capital and improvement, and their professional obligations to adhere to and work within the parameters of the externally imposed standards. A significant issue with a reliance on high stakes testing, which emerged at all stages of the data collection, is the harm this narrow approach to educational reform can have on students who bring less capital into the school and/or perform at a lower level than more high-achieving students (Darling-Hammond, 2010). The participants reflected on the students who they recognized as “the dispossessed and the disenfranchised” (P7, p. 20, interview), where they saw the real value of education: “It’s like mowing your lawn. You look behind you and you can see where you’ve been, with these kids that fuck up all the time and their parents are screwed up and plastered when they come in to see you. You can, over time, give them something” (P7, p. 20, interview). It is argued that the culture of performativity does not reach those students who come into schools from a disadvantaged position. Nor does it address or attempt to reconcile the wider societal problems of poverty, family dysfunction, lack of real employment opportunities, and the extenuating effects of these conditions on young people.
7.2.4 Context – students’ backgrounds and habitus

The illusion of the teacher leaders promotes educational opportunities for all students. It identifies the limitations that they observed a prescribed curriculum has on some students. Of particular concern to them were the students whose habitus is not aligned with the habitus of those students who easily recognize and access the field of education. For those students, it is a familiar playing space, and therefore one in which they are confident and self-assured (Thomson, 2005; Maguire et al., 2011). Access is immediate and supported by a tradition that appreciates the inherent value of education and understands the logic and play of the game. The changing field towards a more data driven focus is compatible with the habitus of these students. The teacher leaders observed a different story for the students for whom school represented a struggle, and whose pile of chips – the share of capital that they are bringing into the school – does not position them to participate in an equitable playing space.

Bourdieu (1992) proposed that there is an “admission fee” (p. 107) that is imposed by fields, which in a sense allows for a process of selection of eligible candidates for that particular field. They must possess a certain type and amount of capital to be eligible. The specifics of this type of capital are defined by those who represent and are dominant within the field, and this methodology of selection ensures that the status quo of the field is sustained (Bourdieu, 1992). The result is an unequal playing field, which is endorsed by a testing and accountability culture. It exacerbates the difficulties for teachers to manage the achievement gaps that are already in play when a student enters the school. Their capacity as change agents is limited by the structures in place, which sustain a system of inequity. It has been recognized
(Darling-Hammond, 2010) that empowering students with education, to enable them to think critically and take control of their learning, allows them to be the drivers of their own fate, rather than being at the receiving end of a plan devised and implemented by others more powerful. The responsibility for enabling this to happen rests with the teachers. While the achievement gap is well recognized, there is also compelling evidence of an “opportunity gap” (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 28), which is given less attention despite highlighting the lack of access to resources that systematically underpins inequality. For the teacher leaders, this can be illustrated by how we value education:

If you walk into any school in the country, go to their weakest point … what are they doing with that person, what are they doing with that situation, with that family, and that will give you more than any NAPLAN test will about educational value (P7, p. 19, interview).

These are intangible measures of effective and equitable schools which, if not valued, allow students to continually fall through the cracks because they do not have the same access to opportunities to achieve as do the students with higher levels of capital.

This is where the criticism of persistent testing and accountability is targeted. The data in this research points to increasing frustrations with external imperatives such as NAPLAN, which, from the perspective of the teacher leaders, have minimal impact on improving student outcomes. Their attention is diverted from what they view as the more pressing aspects of
their work: acknowledging and respecting students’ backgrounds and measuring success in terms of where individual students make progress. A focus on meeting external benchmarks is not a priority.

One-size-fits-all school models presume equal access by all students and equal willingness by all students and families to commit to school and their own futures. For many students, this commitment is linked to their perceptions of whether their schools, the society and their teachers believe in them (Darling-Hammond, 2010) and whether or not the commitment is worthwhile. The illusio of the teacher leaders is intrinsically linked to this conversation and their efforts to enable their students to re-conceptualize their futures can be stymied by an environment that is hostile to students already lacking in capital and opportunities. The mega-narrative which links school improvement and reform to the global economy, the “insistent singularity” (Ball, 2008, p. 15), fails to address the imbalances in equity between schools and then within schools. In doing so, it ensures that this inequity is sustained – that is, it misrecognizes the purpose of high-stakes testing and places the process at the forefront of the school improvement agenda.

Standardizing the curriculum and placing heavy reliance on testing promotes fast-paced, undifferentiated learning which is often superficial and generally driven by external imperatives to be ‘effective’ (Ball, 2003). It offers an impoverished view of learning and education that minimizes the opportunities for all students to succeed. The emphasis on this style of teaching inhibits the teachers’ capacity for focusing on authentic learning, which is more inclusive, promotes deeper understanding, and values
conceptual and flexible learning. It is part of the illusion of the teachers in this case study, who imagined a better world through equal educational opportunities, for all, regardless of social factors that are beyond their immediate control. Authentic learning takes into account school context and the factors highlighted in this case study, such as an acknowledgement of students’ home situations and various personal difficulties, and pays tribute to success and achievement under challenging circumstances. The data suggested that there is criticism of a system that promotes system-wide accountability, when that process ignores or devalues the professionalism of teachers who play a leading role in educational change. The criticism was largely focused on the disjuncture between what is inherently valued by teachers as valid and worthwhile deep-learning practices, and what was demanded by external authorities in a testing regime, where the focus was on a rigid structure and immediacy of results. There emerged an underlying belief from each stage of data collection in the impact of school culture, processes, and patterns on student learning, and how they can either sustain social inequalities that the children bring into the school from their homes and families, or challenge them and bring some balance into the equation. The question was asked, “What’s their cultural capital that they put in their kid’s backpack every day and they turn up in your classroom?” (Focus Group Discussion, p. 27). It was from this understanding of the value of cultural and social capital that the teacher leaders’ were able to position themselves as agents of change. As such, they believe that the hallmark of ‘effective’ schools is to recognize imbalances in capital in their cohorts and attempt to redress this through a carefully devised, strategic pedagogy, focusing on the development of the whole child.
Recognizing and acknowledging the cultural capital that the students bring into the school, regardless of its origins and its perceived value in the economic world, gives the students a sense of connectedness and enhances the relationships between the teachers and the students and their families. By addressing the imbalance in cultural and social equity, the teachers aimed to open the doors to opportunities for young people and connect the pedagogies to their realities. The teacher leaders’ illusio is that disadvantage should not preclude the students from opportunities to have their knowledges recognized and valued, and given meaning and context. The data suggested a broader view of success and achievement, extending beyond that which is collated in numerical testing, which “doesn’t necessarily have to be academic, it could be social, emotional, all those sorts of intangible things” (P1, p. 11, interview).

7.2.5 The definition and ownership of knowledge - complexity of schools

Uncertainty, isolation and individualism are a potent combination (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992, p. 39).

Schools are inherently complex organisations. For many years, theorists interested in effective schools and school improvement have advocated for enhanced collaboration and for less individualism in schools (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992). Teachers in this study have recognised the pitfalls of neglecting relationship building in schools. They have identified the strengths of collegiate work, in a climate where there appears to be an increased focus on competition. The teacher leaders identified competiveness in schools as being in contrast to what they perceive as effective teaching and learning.
The real learning communities advocated for by the teacher leaders relied on an understanding of pedagogy as “reflecting on society, values, history, environment and learning itself …. And address[ing] specific approaches to teaching and learning” (Wrigley et al., 2012, p. 99). The focus on high-stakes testing, standardizing and accountability reduces the emphasis on inclusion (Darling-Hammond, 2010) and too easily allows the system to default to prejudicial assumptions about groups that are marginalized and have limited access to social and cultural capital that has currency in this climate. In difficult classes, the teacher leaders developed strategies that connected them to the students and enabled them to make meaning of their work:

I used to run a really tight ship, because their lives were chaotic … they needed some warmth from me, but they also needed absolute structure … that’s the subtext of teaching that’s never recorded anywhere, like all the good things that work with kids (P9, p. 25, interview).

Inherent in this discussion is the understanding of the value of authentic relationships (Ball, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2010) within the school community. While harder to measure in numerical terms, such relationships are invaluable in schools where it is neither practical nor possible to make any assumptions about the students’ capacity or willingness to appreciate and value their schooling.

The message from the teacher leader to a resistant learner who did not immediately recognize the point of education was:
If we work hard enough, we can get you up through the system. This is what you need to do. You’re going to have to write an essay. Yeah, I know it’s boring. Horrible. Alright. But look, we’re going to do this. This is called an education (P9, p. 23, interview).

The struggles of working within an unequitable system is a highly personal struggle for the teacher leaders, who recognized that social processes are far too complex to be translated into and understood by numbers. They work with the understanding that there are students with little social and cultural capital in their backpacks, and it is their work as teachers to somehow address that inequity and refocus the students on a re-conceptualized future for themselves. It has been argued (Popham, 2007), that standardized testing is less of a reflection of what the teacher is doing in the classroom and more of an indication of what the student has brought into the school – that is, their capital. School reformation that attempts to achieve improvement through the testing and standardization agenda misrecognizes the purpose of this type of regime and proposes it as an improvement strategy, when the reality might suggest that it is a way of containing the status quo of inequity in education (Maguire et al., 2011). It has appeal for the teacher and system who values excellence in tests scores and leagues tables, but it alienates those (such as the teacher leader above) who relies on authentic relationships and a social conscience to inform their teaching. The collective responsibility is part of this teacher’s illusio, which is at odds with the mega-narrative that places value on the system that determines educational achievement through standardized tests. The
language here is transparent: it is always about “we,” and it is not about a competitive, alienating environment, but one which is inclusive and which relies on trust and a belief in what is right.

There was evidence in the data of a dilemma for teachers enacting their professional responsibilities in what they perceived to be a low trust environment. Good practice has been aligned with a collaborative work environment where professional capital is robust (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012); yet the accountability regime shifts the focus to trust in a system, rather than in those acting within that system (Ball, 2003). The data questioned whether there was in fact any real change occurring in the current climate: “Most real changes don’t occur. It makes very little difference to what’s happening” (P1, p. 3, interview). The data raised the question about the validity of the changes that have been imposed from external authorities, which require teachers to conform to a robotic sense of what good teaching looks like in order to satisfy an external agenda – one that they do not feel they have been entrusted to implement themselves. Compliance in this sense is not, according to the teacher leaders, conducive to real change (as noted by the above participant). The teacher leaders struggle to position themselves in the mega-narrative. They are bound to their professional responsibilities as teachers, as change agents, as leaders, yet they are also experiencing diminishment in their actual capacity – in their capital – to be instrumental in change because of the low-trust environment that is the hallmark of the accountability culture. In this prescriptive climate, it is argued that the “soul” of teaching is compromised (Ball, 2003).
In the mandated change climate where change is driven from the top and discourages teacher participation and ownership, teacher leaders reported a sense of isolation from the profession that they chose because of its inherently human angle, and because of the sense of moral purpose that drove them. A prescribed curriculum alleviates the need to adapt to individual needs but also emphasizes the diminishing capital of the teachers. The high-stakes testing agenda is necessarily linked to the curriculum and there is a tacit acceptance from staff that whether or not they agree with it, they have a professional obligation to comply with it. Raising standards is seen to be a measure of quality teaching. Teachers can also be held accountable, a point that was not missed by the teacher leaders in this research. The data revealed that teachers were uneasy with the concept of adding value to themselves as individuals, but very comfortable with the notion that they worked collaboratively to improve the outcomes for all students. It was felt that teachers who once worked together to implement change were now encouraged to be “terribly sort of serious and terribly driven” (P5, p. 15, interview), compared to a former time when it was felt that they “tended to get the job done and done well, but without the kind of self-aggrandizement that goes with that” (P5, p. 15, interview).

7.2.6 A climate of surveillance and conflicting loyalties

Concerns were raised around teacher uncertainty when they felt their choices were limited in their professional duties. In reference to standardized testing, NAPLAN, it was asked: “Do we have a choice with that sort of thing? What do you do? If you don’t pick it up and run with it, what do you do? Are there any consequences if we don’t?” (Focus Group Discussion, p. 3). This questioning suggests a sense of instability and uncertainty and a diminished
confidence in themselves as professionals. There is a heightened consciousness of being persistently watched, examined, measured and compared. It is a climate of scrutiny and surveillance that is not compatible with what defines the teacher leaders’ habitus and their illusio, but it is the climate reflected in what Ball (2003) referred to as the “master narrative” (p. 226) that defines the culture of performativity and accountability.

Within this narrative is the pressure on teachers to meet external demands and parameters of effectiveness and efficiency, such as those represented in the AITSL standards (see Glossary). The persistent need to show competency as professionals to satisfy an externally imposed agenda – which does not discriminate between student background, schools and settings – diminishes the autonomy of teachers and schools. Teachers’ loyalties are divided: on one hand are their students and families who they know well and with whom they have developed meaningful and lasting relationships, and on the other is an anonymous external authority which wields power and dictates the parameters that define professionalism and responsibility. It is through these authentic relationships and the knowledge and recognition of their students and families that teacher leaders feel they are making the most profound impact; this is where their real purpose lies, and yet paradoxically, this appears to be the least valued and recognized aspect within the accountability and performance structure. As this teacher leader observes: “It’s all about your relationships and it’s all about their [students] self-esteem, so if you can get them to trust and to like coming to school, learning naturally occurs through that system. And that’s not acknowledged anymore” (P6, p. 14, interview).

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The data suggested that the teachers’ first and most pressing loyalties and obligations were to their students and to using their professional knowledge to guide their students. It was observed that “obviously, results and data is a big thing, but these kids don’t have the basics. And quite honestly, you could spend the first semester just doing basic number” (P4, p. 8, interview). The teacher leaders made professional judgements about student ability and what is best at that point: this is in contrast to a mandated curriculum that moves according to a chronological age and a set program and pace, which precludes the needs of individuals and works persistently towards testing and comparing students. The data indicated that this was tantamount to a number of students simply missing out and falling further and further behind in their learning.

The challenges for the teacher leaders inherent in the mega-narrative – and thus, difficulties in managing mandated pedagogical change – lie in aligning what they do in the classroom every day with the demands of the global economy. As one of the participants indicated in the previous comment about the teaching of mathematics, there are discrepancies between what is mandated and what is best going to meet the immediate needs of their students. As teachers are under pressure to be effective and efficient in meeting standards (for example, the AITSL) and providing evidence of this, the resultant feeling is more remoteness to their work. This indicates a reduction in their capital and ownership of their work (their connection to it). Instead, they are working in a climate of scrutiny and watchfulness. The enactment of policy resistance emerges as a survival technique for teacher leaders in this climate. Their habitus has been compromised by the mega-narrative which relies increasingly on competition
and choice – linked to the values of the commodity market – and less on creativity, on the human side of teaching, on the common good, and on any suggestion of fun in the profession. The data recognized that there was less opportunity for teachers to be engaged in the change process: “there are probably a lot of teachers here who haven’t had the opportunity of actually trying to lead a change process” (P1, p. 12, interview), reflecting minimal decisional capital for teachers in the change environment. Resistance therefore provides an option that at least enables a degree of autonomy in the game.

7.3 Conclusion – resistance to change

The discussion chapter has led to the conclusion that teacher resistance is a prominent feature of the change process in schools. The resistance is described here as a survival strategy, as a way to preserve professional integrity, as an attempt to keep sight of their original reasons for joining the field of teaching. The resistance is not a blanket refusal to obey authorities, but instead a measured reaction to what they have described as a relentless process of change which has not met the desired result of improving outcomes for all students. When the teacher leaders reel off lists of mandated changes that are imposed from external authorities, there is a profound sense of the “carousel of change” described by one of the participants.

All stages of data analysis highlighted a persistent reference to understanding the backgrounds of the students and respecting the relationships that are forged with families and the whole school community. Thus, the level of emotional labour that emerged as a consequence of
relentless change was a prominent theme. The teacher leaders referred to teaching as more than the amassing of data to satisfy an external agenda: for them, it is a collective responsibility of working with a whole community with a vision to a better future.
Chapter 8 – Contribution to new knowledge;

Conclusion; Recommendations

8.1 Contribution to new knowledge

What I set out to discover was if and how mandated pedagogical change impacts on the professional lives of teachers beyond what has previously been recognized. In order to make this contribution to new knowledge, the research design had to be sensitive to contexts (Braun et al., 2011) in which teachers were engaged. Braun et al. (2011) described four types of context that they considered to be significant in school regarding leadership and policy enactment. These are outlined in detail in the literature review in Chapter 2. It was suggested in that chapter that there was a gap in the current literature around context and mandated pedagogical change.

My research contribution to new knowledge is finding the presence of a fifth context beyond the four proposed by Braun et al., which is the *practice context*. This is a stand-alone context to be added to Braun’s et al. (2011) framework. Considering the practice context alongside mandated pedagogical change allows for recognition and justification of teacher resistance as a consequence of situations when change is imposed from outside and above. It also identifies that mandated pedagogical change can lead to teacher marginalization.

Bourdieu’s thinking tools (capital, habitus, field, illusio and doxa) as a form of analysis drew attention to and made explicit the practice context, which was previously enmeshed in the four contexts’ framework (Braun et al., 2011). The professional and external contexts obscure the practice context.
Situated and material context allow these to be conflated with the practice context. The significance of these will be discussed below when discussing how mandated pedagogical change impacts on the professional lives of teachers.

The methodology of this research was important to get to the key findings. The three levels of data collection led to the emergence of recurrent themes when teachers considered mandated pedagogical change. It was revealed that a persistent thread running through the themes was teacher professional practice being compromised and under-valued. Focusing specifically on the context of practice enables a more comprehensive investigation of the impact of mandated pedagogical change.

As outlined in previous chapters, the findings emerged through the chosen methodology and the use of Bourdieu’s thinking tools. I identified the practice context by using Bourdieu’s equation: [(habitus)(capital)] + field = practice. Adding this fifth context adds a further dimension to the framework proposed by Braun et al., as it focuses on making transparent the motivation, agency and capabilities of teachers. This finding has particular significance to school leaders, who are charged with leading staff to enact policy.

Capital, habitus and field together influence practice. Leaders need to understand how the context of practice is being established and engaged by teachers in order for them to build long-term professional capital within their staff and engage the teachers as agents of change. Understanding the practice context will contribute to building greater efficacy amongst staff and
recognize that their growth and development as a “collective enterprise” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p. 3) is a priority for effective improvement. Teacher practice can stand alone as a context because it embodies the professional lives and identities of teachers. This gives voice to teachers and recognizes their professional capabilities – their capital. Capital is recognized in this framework of contexts, (Braun et al., 2011), but only at a whole school level and not in relation to individual teachers.

This research has revealed that teachers often feel compromised professionally because their practice is not recognized. Data analysis revealed that when capital is not recognized, practice risks becoming a site of passive resistance – and this research suggested that it does. In this climate of resistance, promoting staff capability and enabling effective policy enactment becomes problematic for school leaders.

Data analysis drew attention to professional competing conflicts between the teachers, school leaders and the educational authorities. The current style of leadership was criticized for its “managerial” style and this was not considered conducive to effective teacher development. Teachers cited a lack of autonomy in their work and linked that to a high degree of emotional labour. Their capital was not recognized; it was reported that there was a decrease in opportunities to be involved in leading change and in being consulted about pedagogical change for whole school improvement. The practice context highlighted teachers’ perceived lack of leadership trust in them and teachers in general, which generated a sense of cynicism towards external authorities and leadership. Data analysis indicated that teacher leaders in this case study questioned the role of teachers in a
climate of accountability and performance. They identified a moral dilemma when their illusion – their commitment and belief in the game – was apparently at odds with the current educational and political agenda that was driving school change and improvement. They questioned the capacity of school leadership to provide support, vision and direction. The context of practice emerges from the data in two dimensions: the leadership context of practice and the teachers’ context of practice. There is evidence of discrepancies between the two.

The central research question asked how mandated pedagogical change impacts on the professional lives of ten teacher leaders. The research focused on four sub-questions and explored these through three stages of data collection. These were presented in Chapter 7 in the discussion of the findings. The new knowledge that comes from these findings reveals that mandated pedagogical change leads to diminished professionalism for teacher leaders. This is presented in terms of the fifth context – teacher practice.

8.1.2 The fifth context

The four contexts are defined and described separately; however, it is pointed out that there are overlapping features between them. For example, intake of students can be influenced by teacher values and experiences. The following table provides a brief summary of the four contexts as proposed by Braun et al. (2011), with my additional fifth context. This table identifies where Bourdieu’s thinking tools are enacted across all contexts, and how they are used to describe the fifth context of practice:
1. **Situated contexts**
   - locale
   - histories
   - intake – social and academic structure of students
   - setting
   - habitus
   - capital
   - field

2. **Professional contexts**
   - teachers’ values and experiences and how these impact on pursuing policies e.g. policy management
   - position of policy actors – for example, new teachers compared with experienced teachers
   - habitus – and illusio and doxa
   - capital
   - field

3. **Material contexts**
   - physical aspects, such as: buildings, budgets, also staffing, technology and infrastructure
   - capital
   - habitus

4. **External contexts**
   - external pressures and demands – testing, ratings, tables, and so forth
   - support and relationships with other schools
   - field – external educational field – bureaucracy, authorities
   - capital

5. **The fifth Practice Context**

   The relationship between habitus, capital and field:
   
   - Perceive
     Ø How the individual engages with the field, influenced by their habitus – their dispositions and leanings
   - Problematize
     Ø How the individual’s engagement with the field is influenced by the capital they bring into the field – how it is measured and valued within the rules of engagement of the game
   - Manage
     Ø How the teachers’ _illusio_ – their commitment to the game – positions them to interact with the others in the field
   - Reconcile
     Ø Their doxa – the teachers’ acceptance of what they assume and expect from their professional world and what they take for
Importance:
Ø Without considering the practice of the teachers, it is easy for the leadership of the school to misrecognise their capability, motivation and effectiveness as agents of change.
Ø Therefore, practice as a fifth context to consider in policymaking and implementation could be considered useful as a guide for those enacting change.

Table 6: The Fifth Practice Context

8.1.3 Using the Bourdieusian framework to analyze the fifth context of practice

According to Bourdieu’s equation, practice is the result of the interactions between habitus, capital and field. This interaction was interpreted as follows: “practice results from relations between one’s disposition (habitus) and one’s position in a field (capital) within the current state of play of that social arena (field)” (Maton, 2008, p. 51).

The four contexts have interdependent features, as described above. Capital is present in each of the contexts described by Braun et al. (2011) – however, capital does not stand alone as a context, nor do habitus or field, even though all three appear in each of the four contexts. These constructs are not recognized (or not identified) within these four existing contexts. The defining feature of Bourdieu's thinking tools was their interlocking relationship as pictured in the equation, which reveals how practice is produced together. This helps to explain why there must be a fifth context of practice, which will allow attention to focus on the development and efficacy of teachers and provoke deeper research into their responses to policy enactment and change in their daily work. Without this further development,
school leaders will be able to continue to misrecognize the actual capabilities and motivations of their staff.

It is within the fifth context of practice that teachers use or draw on their capital. The research produced evidence to suggest that the teacher leaders place high value on their capital and recognize that it helps to define who they are as teachers. In that sense, it is their social and cultural capital that they value within the teaching and educational field. It helps to construct their professional identity. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) also referred to high levels of professional capital as being a major contributor to an individual teacher’s success and the hallmark of an effective school. The teachers’ concern that their capital had diminished in value is a valid concern.

Current researchers including, for example, Gamwari (2011), Gilbert (2011), Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), and Evans (2013), have persistently argued that change in schools can only be implemented effectively and sustained if those most closely connected with and most affected by it have a role in its implementation. More succinctly, the teachers must be the agents of change. They must be recognized as professionals: given autonomy, encouraged to work collaboratively, and listened to by the authorities. This research has given voice to a group of teachers who have vast experiences of the change process and their views are aligned with research (Gilbert, 2011; Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012) in what they believe is necessary for change to be effectively implemented in their school. They also have considered the role of leadership, and found evidence that it has become more managerial, which they see as having a negative impact on whole school improvement.
The teachers in this case study expressed their concern that acknowledgement of their own intuition, reflection, experience and professional expertise is diminishing in the process of change and policy enactment. This contributed to a ‘pushback’ as a response to mandated change when it was considered that it was not conducive to improved outcomes for students. There was ongoing data for the diminishing trust in teachers and the associated frustrations of working in this climate of high accountability measures and low trust. Practice – as an outcome of the teachers’ capital, their dispositions and leanings, and how they are positioned in the field – is not given attention.

This is a gap that has been identified in the research – identifying how and where Bourdieu’s equation can be used to inform school leaders and authorities about the importance of practice as a context when considering whole school improvement and improved outcomes for students.

The methodology of using narratives, interviews and then a roundtable discussion enabled the participants to identify key themes that impacted on them in the change climate. These methods allowed me to avoid misrecognition of the participants’ form of capital within the field and therefore, to avoid being dismissive of the teachers’ real concerns. It allowed me to recognize and acknowledge their work. These themes as summarized here collectively suggested that their capital is not recognized:

Ø Professional knowledge compromised
Ø Teacher identity blurred
Ø No real change
Ø Lack of resources
Ø Formulaic curriculum
Ø Bureaucratising teaching/political motivations

Each of the themes pointed to the implementation of mandated pedagogical change from outside of the school as being problematic and frustrating for the teacher leaders. It was perceived that this process bypassed the teachers leaders, misrecognised their roles as change agents, and thus had the effect of undermining their professionalism.

8.2 Significance of the findings

These findings are significant as habitus, capital, field, illusio, and doxa have been silently intersecting across all four contexts, and in doing so they have been inadvertently unrecognized for the significant influence they play in teachers’ working lives. But more importantly, a lack of overt representation of this fifth context – practice – will continue to negate school leaders’ opportunity to fully appreciate those influences on teachers’ types of engagement with mandated pedagogical change. The findings indicate that without the context of practice leaders are more likely to engage in misrecognition of staff capability, agency, efficacy and motivations. Bourdieu suggested that misrecognition is not a conscious attempt at manipulation by one group over another – rather, it is

more of a cultural than ideological phenomenon

… it embodies a set of active social processes that anchor taken-for-granted assumptions into the realm of social life and crucially, they are born in the midst of culture. All forms of power require legitimacy and culture is the battleground where
this conformity is disputed and eventually materializes amongst agents (Navarro, 2006, p. 19).

Policy enactment can be thwarted by misrecognition, as shown here in the research. My research has demonstrated that teacher resistance is not necessarily an act of defiance, or a lack of willingness to embrace change. Instead, their types of engagement with mandated pedagogical change are influenced by the context of practice. Establishing the context of practice makes transparent how teachers’ perceive mandated change in relation to their practice and how they reconcile this. The context of practice provides an opportunity to interpret teachers’ types of engagement that is mindful of misrecognition.

The current amount of research on the importance of the context of practice in a school environment when change is implemented is not substantial. Thus, this research would be useful as a guide for those enacting mandated pedagogical change.

8.3 Conclusion

8.3.1 Teacher Identity

The cornerstone to this research is the notion that understanding teacher identity is a crucial and underlying factor in the study of school organization, management and improvement. The teachers who participated in this study provided the raw material to investigate how they are positioned and how they perceive themselves within the vast professional landscape of education and in the landscape of education in Victoria today.
It was revealed that teaching is a complex, difficult task, fraught with uncertainties and doubt, and rich with meaning and purpose. The challenges that are a part of the work of teachers are a part of their professional and personal identities and help to define just ‘who they are’, which is often a more urgent, pressing consideration than ‘what they do’.

The conclusion that could be reached from the findings is that the impact of mandated pedagogical change on teachers is perceived to be significant enough to justify further research into this topic.

Change is far-reaching and complex, and for that reason, mandated pedagogical change was the target of the study. This enabled the focus to be specific and it encouraged the participants to consider two essential aspects of change – change that was mandated and change that influenced pedagogy. Working with the understanding of pedagogy that was highlighted earlier in this research directed the participants to consider their broad role as teachers in its complexity and diversity – from assessment and reporting to curriculum planning and documentation, to student behaviour and classroom management, to meeting deadlines and working within time and resource constraints, to planning collegially and working within the parameters of the department. While the teachers were considered in their professional landscape, they would also present, in their stories, a sense of their personal change and how they responded to it as individuals, and how they viewed themselves as teachers. Teacher identity emerged through the participants’ stories as a crucial factor in the research.

This research began by considering some questions that might challenge or disrupt some common perceptions about teachers’ responses
to change. These included some questions that would eventually lead to the
research sub-questions.

• What was the climate the teachers worked in and how did this impact
  on their practice?
• What was their perception of the role of leadership and how did this
  impact on their daily lives?
• Did they feel they had autonomy in the change process?
• What were the optimum conditions for change – or at least, the most
  desirable?
• How did change influence their teaching and learning practice?
• What were some of their key concerns about the change processes
  they had experienced?
• Who cared if change was troublesome?
• How did they reconcile their experience and knowledge with change?
• How were their professional selves interwoven with their personal
  selves?

It was the teachers’ practice that emerged as the feature which would
underpin this research and this was related to their identity, the emotional
side of teaching, and the perceived value of their professional knowledge –
all of which were analysed using Bourdieu’s thinking tools.

Previously, I had conducted research for a Masters thesis, a case study
of how teachers in two schools managed the implementation of change
according to a behaviour management model. This research revealed several
key points about change. The most significant of these, for further study,
suggested that it was how change was implemented in a school that
determined its success, and it was important that change be perceived by the teachers to be worthwhile or it would not succeed. It also revealed that teachers needed to feel a part of the process and to feel some ownership and control if they were to consider change. Leadership was a significant factor, as was the teachers’ capacity to relate to the change and be confident about enacting it. Issues of time and resourcing were described as key factors in the implementation of change. Participants referred to the implementation dip (Fullan, 2011a), which describes a situation where change, when implemented, often slips backwards before moving forward – an inevitability in whole school change initiatives. Engaging the full participation of teachers and all staff is highly desirable in the change process but is problematic in the everyday working lives of teachers. Teacher resistance was described as a recurring element of change in schools, and how and why many teachers resisted change was an integral aspect of the research. My interest in how change was perceived and managed was a result of that particular study and led to the present study on mandated pedagogical change.

As stated, the earlier research revealed that change could be troublesome in a school. Yet current literature suggests that change is “all there is” (Dalmau & Neville, 2010, p. 69). This points to a tension in schools and in the profession. My thesis took shape based on the following considerations: that change is inevitable, that change is necessary for whole school improvement, and that teachers are agents of change – and yet change can be difficult and appears to be a constant source of disappointment and frustration within the school field. What needed to be investigated was why change is difficult and often not successful, given that it
is a crucial factor in school improvement. I was also driven to understand what might cause teacher resistance to change, where this resistance is located in schools, and how much importance we should place on understanding teacher resistance.

The research yielded rich and comprehensive data about the teacher leaders’ professional lives. In the context of The Game, the teachers articulated the points of frustration for them and the perception of a dwindling value of them as professionals. As key players within the school field, they considered their practice and their capital to be recognized and valued by their colleagues; however, in the mandated pedagogical change climate, it was perceived that the players in the external field of the educational bureaucracy placed less value on the professional judgements and opinions of the teachers.

The teacher leaders reported this as a sense of professional knowledge being compromised. This was one of the categories that emerged during the coding process. It was a common theme for all teacher leaders, illustrated by a diminishing sense of professional ownership and recognition from outside of their capacity to be included in major decision making processes.

Existing theories (for example, Fullan, Hargreaves, Darling-Hammond, Lingard, and Wrigley) iterate the compelling need for teacher involvement and agency in the change process in schools. Without this, they argue, change could not be sustainable. This view was confirmed by the teacher leaders, many of whom had experienced change over the years and had encountered repetitive attempts at change that had not succeeded or had
not been embedded in school practice. There had been little or no teacher take up and the change had dissipated. They believed that part of the reason for this was that their capital – their professionalism, their experience, their networks, their collective knowledge – was not recognized or valued. In Bourdieu’s analogy that their capital could be represented by coloured chips or tokens, they believed that their pile of chips was rapidly shrinking. This is how they were led to the sense of being marginalized in the change process. It was the point where they would make deliberate and considered efforts to maintain some degree of integrity to their professionalism and not become the passive recipients of every change model that was imposed from outside of their immediate control. These efforts were generally expressed as targeted and considered resistance to change.

8.3.2 Teacher resistance to change

Overall, the data reflected a willingness to change and be challenged and continue to grow as professionals. At the same time, a targeted resistance emerged as a strong theme, where the teacher leaders used their experience, knowledge and considerable capital to resist, “tweak”, filter, or ignore mandated changes that were imposed from above. The resistance was not suggestive of a reluctance to change or grow – rather, the resistance was a considered and deliberate response to a system that the teacher leaders did not fully believe was in line with their daily work. This resistance was therefore recognized and acknowledged by them as a valid construct that reflected a high degree of professionalism. It represented their rights and obligations as professionals to have some agency in change processes.
The resistance often caused some level of anxiety for teachers but it was often seen as the optimum line of defence. The teachers often used their judgement to filter through what was imposed and made decisions based on their experience and knowledge of what works and what does not work. Teachers articulated the conditions that were necessary for change to occur successfully, and if the conditions were not met, it was generally felt that the change was unlikely to succeed. This became the resistance: when the change was considered untimely, under-resourced, ill-planned or poorly led, then it was generally considered untenable and therefore avoided or filtered. Teachers also felt that they would resist change when there was little or no consultation and when they felt under-valued as professionals. For real change, they identified the right environment and good relationships as pre-conditions for success.

Teachers also differentiated between what they considered real change and what they perceived to be re-badging of old ways for ulterior motives. They tended to resist change when they were suspicious of the motives for change or if they used their professional judgement to predict the change would have little or no impact on student improvement. There was significant evidence that the teachers were frustrated by random and arbitrary change which they saw as having little or no impact on students, but caused considerable and repeated frustration for the teachers. The evidence of the relentlessness of change and the teachers’ experience of change weariness emerged at each level of data collection. Teachers were tired of this persistent distraction from what they considered to be their core business: trying to improve the outcomes for their students.
Resistance was a strategy for survival and maintaining professional standards for teachers. Targeted resistance enabled the teacher leaders to implement their knowledge of how students learn and side-step the constraining power of external authorities. While they understood and respected accountability, they felt strongly that their professional obligations must also be aligned with their professional judgement about what works best for students. Thus, teachers reported adhering to the mandated pedagogy such as participating in state-wide testing programs and engaging with department initiatives. Their participation and commitment to department mandates signified their level of professionalism to be accountable, but did not signify that they supported those regimes. Rather, there was strong evidence to indicate serious reservations about the impact of such initiatives as NAPLAN and the effect that these results might have on particular students and schools – effects which were not necessarily in their best interests.

However, it was revealed in the data analysis that a downside to resistance existed, which was the marginalization of teachers who did not immediately take up change initiatives. Bailey (2000) referred to this as one of the negative side effects of mandated change in schools, which the teacher leaders in this research recognized. Within the school field, the teacher leaders referred to the rifts between staff that often accompanied change, between those who immediately responded to change and jumped on board and those who were often represented as the “laggards” (Blood and Thorsborne, 2006; Rogers, 2003) and were seen to be the persistent resisters.
While this was highlighted as problematic in schools and a contributing factor to a disgruntled and disparate staff, teacher leaders also referred to the reasons that led to this situation by invoking factors that were outside of their immediate control. Factors such as the external fields – the education department, government, as examples – who imposed change with little consultation or acknowledgement of teacher professionalism were some of the reasons identified behind teacher resistance. Thus, the teacher leaders recognized that teachers who are change-weary, who had experienced change overload, and who felt compromised professionally by not being included in change processes, saw resistance as one of the few options open to them to be more than just passive recipients of change. Resistance is a measure that has been identified in the literature (Clement, 2014) as being a response to external authorities.

As it was noted in the Introduction chapter, teachers have been considered change-averse. That conclusion suggests an oversimplification of what is a very complex and unresolved issue: how mandated change impacts on teachers’ daily lives and practice. This research revealed that an alternative to seeing resistance as a deficit is to regard it as a measured and considered response by teachers who are experienced practitioners and feel that they need to have more ownership and control over their practice. It revealed that in the context of schools, teacher practice in itself is a context that should be acknowledged by those who recommend change initiatives in schools. Using Bourdieu’s thinking tools to explore teacher practice was found to be a useful method of uncovering and exploring the reasons why particular people are drawn to teaching and how their habitus, their capital and field interact to inform their practice.
8.3.3 Resistance aligned with moral purpose

*Teachers resist change because when they have found a way to manage what is an incredibly demanding yet rewarding job, they really do need convincing it will be worth it to support the change.* (P7, narrative)

This notion of resistance links to teacher identity and the teachers’ sense of agency. Ball (2003) considered the teachers’ soul in a climate of performativity, when a whole new discourse has appeared in the teaching profession that is more closely aligned with the language of business and enterprise than it is with people and humanity. The teacher leaders in this case study questioned the new language of “managerialism” (Focus Group Discussion, p. 4) that they had experienced in their work. They experienced anxiety and some elements of self-doubt that supported the view of Ball (2003) when faced with the dilemma of where to place the most value in their work. The opposing forces were between standardized testing and meeting rigid, one-size-fits-all curriculum guidelines, or responding to individual student needs and acknowledging a complex array of circumstances in students’ lives. The impact of those circumstances on student learning and achievement is considered to be highly significant for the teacher leaders. The frustration and difficulty for them is finding a place to accommodate the enormous range of student needs in a learning environment that is increasingly being directed towards standardized learning and performativity. Ball (2003) referred to this as “ontological insecurity” (p. 220) – a situation where the teacher questions whether what they are doing is right and are looking for ways to meet an accountability agenda imposed from outside. This climate of performativity disrupted their core beliefs about
teaching – their illusion – resulting in anxiety, uncertainty, and (in the case of one of the teacher leaders) resignation.

The teacher leaders considered the cynicism that arose from the things that “dropped through the ceiling on schools” (Focus group discussion, p. 1). This cynicism had the effect of cementing the divide between the educational bureaucracy and the practicing teachers. Implementing change initiatives in this way – by dropping them on schools, rather than working with the teachers – had an increasingly negative effect on teachers and further marginalized them in the change process. Teachers reported feeling intimidated in this climate. Their professional knowledge was compromised and their capital was not valued. The real world as they perceived it – inside the classroom and inside the lives of students – was neither acknowledged nor valued by external administrators responding to policy imperatives. Teachers sensed this disjuncture between what they believed was right and what they were being mandated to do, which most did not rest easily with and was not aligned with the core, moral purpose that led them to teaching as a career.

In this study, the teacher leaders frequently referred to the respectful relationships that they valued most in their work – with each other, and with the students and their families. They considered the development of the whole student as a well-rounded citizen as a crucial aspect of a teacher’s work. This is founded on their habitus – the leanings and dispositions that led them to teaching. While students’ academic achievement is the foundation on which their practice was built, they value this in more than numerical terms and from test results. What the teachers consider and value most of all
is the growth of the student, the personal achievements and the noticeable shifts in their self-belief. There was persistent recognition in the data of the complexity of student lives, which are addressed only through the establishment of respectful and lasting relationships underpinned by mutual trust. Teachers believe that a relentless focus on scores and competing standards does not address overarching societal problems such as poverty and disadvantage. They referred to the capital the students “carry to schools in their backpacks” (Focus group discussion, p. 27) as a telling factor in the capacity of those students to feel at ease at school and to be able to comfortably and confidently access the opportunities offered to them by the education system. The students who did not fit that system – whose habitus was at odds with the mainstream schooling system – were at a disadvantage. It was these students who the teacher leaders considered most vulnerable, most at risk, and most likely to need their help; and yet, they were the ones who would be further marginalized in an accountability and performativity climate. The teacher leaders experienced what Darling-Hammond (2010) referred to as limited curriculum opportunities – opportunities that are only an option for a certain type of student. The teacher leaders understood how the system worked against those students whose lives, through dysfunction, through poverty and often a level of neglect, could only survive – and possibly thrive – in the system with a high level of support. Academic success is important. However, acknowledging and valuing the students’ capital and their life circumstances is the key to motivating them to make the best of their lives. As one of the teacher leaders tried to explain to a group of reluctant students: “Yes, this is an education. Etc. etc.” (P7, p.23). This demonstrates the high level of understanding and empathy of the teacher
leaders for the needs of the students. However, they could also see that in the bigger picture of state and nation wide educational imperatives, this aspect of teaching is, in their opinion and experience, under-valued.

Inherent in these conversations is the underlying focus on social justice and equality. This teacher leader recognized, through this conversation with the students, that there is a real imperative here for the students to use their education to enhance their opportunities for success, their opportunities to consider alternatives to the cycle of poverty and dysfunction of their families and neighbourhoods. It aligns with current literature on the way we view school reform (Wrigley, 2011; Thomson et al., 2012), which acknowledges the social inequalities that stand in the way of improved societies and stronger educational communities. It pinpoints the intrinsic motivation of the teachers – there is a strong sense of working towards a fairer, more just society, through building the confidence and self-esteem of marginalized students.

One of the most difficult elements of mandated pedagogical change for teachers was in balancing these two imperatives: maintaining their own professionalism by adhering to external professional standards – for example, AITSL – while retaining a sense of integrity in their work with the students and their families. The ‘school as a part of the community’ theme resonated with the teacher leaders on many levels. They consider parents and families to be a crucial aspect of their interactions with their students, which goes beyond a focus just on results and test scores.
8.3.4 The accountability culture: performance over humanity?

It has emerged that performance increasingly takes precedence over humanity. There is now a culture of performativity and accountability where education is viewed as a commodity and meeting externally imposed targets has become the indicator of successful, effective schools. The impact of this emergent culture disrupts the moral purpose of teachers and challenges their reasons for entering the profession. The teacher leaders in this case study were united in the view that this type of culture was detrimental to students. It limited the opportunities that schools could offer young people, because they were relentlessly distracted from their core purpose and directed to pursue a trajectory that focused on results, international comparisons, league tables, and less and less curriculum ownership by the teachers. This was accompanied by a profound sense of constant undermining of their roles as professionals to know what works best in schools. This was a dilemma for the participants in the case study, who articulated the negative impact of such a climate in their school and the lengths to which they were prepared to go to ensure that they could still meet the needs of the students. This is where their resistance to change surfaced.

Teachers suggested that the overall school performance as reported in standardized tests such as NAPLAN has a negative impact on school planning and its perception of itself. It also impacts on families, for whom low student results lead to uncertainties and doubts about the capacity of the student to succeed. The teachers in this study deplored this situation where families and students are discouraged by external testing results. They could not align themselves with a system that rates students numerically with little
regard for the child’s individual improvement, or their social and family situation. They were frustrated by placing values on a system which they believe undermines the work they do in the classroom, where they acknowledge, respect and celebrate student success on an individual level. They also described the lengths they need to go to in reassuring parents and students of the value of the students all-round success and self-improvement. In the focus group discussion, the participants referred to conversations they had held with families over the NAPLAN results. It was said that “you’re not there to give an 8 year old or year 7, year 9, to say to these kids, ‘Look at your NAPLAN results. They’re terrible’” (Focus group discussion, p. 2). The participants believed these tests and the focus on the results and comparisons of the tests narrowed the educational goals and caused unnecessary grief to families who did not fully understand how the system worked.

The difficulty for the teacher leaders is where their professional lives and their habitus, their personal identities and leanings, intersect in school around policy and implementing mandated initiatives. The accountability culture represents a significant change at many levels in schools for teachers who have years of practice experience and a solid understanding of change processes.

### 8.3.5 Broader implications of mandated change: losing trust

Gilbert (2011) referred to teacher learning – from and with each other – as a crucial element in achieving change success. He highlighted that the educational authorities need to be “engaging with teachers’ individual and institutional identity” (p. 5) and suggested that relationships and trust were
key elements to be fostered in the change process. The teacher leaders in this study pointed to their persistent frustration with feeling professionally bound to the implementation of proposed change, yet often feeling conflicted by the belief that it would not make any difference to their students. The teacher leaders referred to their own professional judgements as what they felt guided their teaching best. In short, if they supported an innovation and felt it would make a difference, it was likely to succeed. However, if there was no trust and little connection with the external authorities who were implementing the change, then there appeared to be little cohesion in the process, and limited communication between those mandating the change and those at the ground level, who were obliged to meet the implementation targets. In a climate of limited trust, teachers were far less inclined to support the proposed change. When their autonomy and independence were negated, the capacity to support innovation was diminished.

There is a sense of urgency about change that has been recognized in this study and this threatens the viability of the change and the likelihood that it might succeed. For the teacher leaders, the urgency is a very real concern as it disregards their own professionalism in implementing change. It encourages a hasty, slapdash implementation, whereas teachers know, through experience and knowledge, that successful change is a slow and strategic process. Urgency disrupts the organization and running of the school and challenges the harmony on staff. While some staff might feel obliged to pick up and run with every change that is suggested, the more experienced staff, such as the ones in this study (who are well-versed in the mechanisms of change), are far less likely to jump on board without careful
consideration of the implications of the proposed initiative. Thus, while they would prefer to be trusted to plan and implement change as appropriate to the school culture, they are hampered by external authorities who mandate change with little consultation. When teachers guess – as they did with the initiative of the Ultranet, for example – that the change, the innovation, has not been well planned and will not likely succeed, they are not heard. This is because in the planning process they are not consulted. The crux of the problem of implementing change lies here, and this is the point at which the teacher leaders in this study expressed the most concern.

The participants referred to the “ephemeral nature of mandated changes” that had been imposed from outside. The resigned acceptance of change as short-lived, ill-planned and unlikely to succeed pervaded all levels of the data collection, and provided clear evidence that for the teacher leaders in this study, the external educational bureaucracy had lost its way with teachers. The irony was that the teachers almost instinctively drew on robust relationships, trusting environments, and community development as the best means to promote all round effectiveness in their schools, yet it was these very things that appeared to be lacking from the authorities. Instead, they described their working environment as one of little trust, steadily decreasing autonomy, and minimal consultation. Linked with a lack of time and resources to implement change, their increasing frustration with external authorities is understandable.

There was consensus on all of these levels, around implementing change. The three levels of data collection persistently drew on the common themes of lack of professional recognition, lack of consultation, change that
had little or no impact and yet took an inordinate amount of time to implement, only to eventually fail. There was frustration with lack of time and resources to implement change; however, there was acknowledgement that once this was not the case. There were references to previous times in the department when time was allocated to change and considerable resources were made accountable. These times pre-date GERM, the new accountability and performativity regime, where change is underpinned by this sense of urgency and is linked to a broader political agenda.

8.3.6 Creating the “technical professional”

Change weariness, change overload, change cynicism – the themes and patterns which emerged from the data were strongly suggestive of a suspicion of change. The teacher leaders in this case study demonstrated a shared understanding that change mandated from above and outside their immediate control is not sustainable. A common complaint from the participants in this study was the perception that they were not trusted as individuals, and their professionalism was given minimal recognition when change was being considered from above.

Teachers valued their capital – the experience, knowledge, and networks that cumulatively identified them as professionals. Yet they acknowledged that often in the field, their capital went unrecognized or under-valued in a change climate, particularly in the emergent climate of accountability and performativity. Teachers were less interested in delivering a standardized curriculum and saw this as short-sighted and ineffective. Only a certain group of students, they felt, could align themselves with the “ways

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5 Ball et al., 2011a, p. 612
of being” (Maguire et al., 2011, p. 602) in a school. The teacher leaders referred to these students as the ones who came to school with capital in their backpacks (focus group discussion, p.27). Of concern were the ones with little or no capital, the ones whose lives were impacted by poverty, by a poor start in education, by minimal support from outside of the school; these were the students who would slip through the net when the focus of education was simply on meeting grades, passing tests, and jumping through hoops.

There are two forces at play here. The teachers are meeting an external agenda which challenges their professionalism and their intrinsic motivation to teach, which is guided by a strong moral purpose and sense of social justice. They are feeling more and more marginalized by a system which fails to consult and sets unrealistic goals for school improvement. The teachers view the improvement goals as impersonal and often unrelated to their core purpose. They suspect, rightly, a political agenda that is not directly concerned with an improved society but is more aligned with a business model for improvement. This, the teachers, argue, is incongruent with their teaching philosophy. The shift away from what they see as the important things in school – improving outcomes for all students and celebrating their personal achievements – devalues the purpose of school and limits the opportunities for all students to achieve success in their lives.

The first force directly impacts on the teachers, and this is what the research has highlighted. The second force at play is about the students themselves and the implications of the mandated agenda on their lives. As stated earlier, there are many students who the teacher leaders recognize as
having limited capital in their backpacks to bring through the school gate each day. Therefore, their opportunities to find success in life rest with the teachers. Often without realizing, they are reliant on the teachers to manipulate the curriculum as they see fit for the students so they can break through the barriers of poverty and dysfunctional neighbourhoods that prevent them from accessing an education. In this sense, the impact of the first force, where teachers have limited autonomy and where their capital is diminished, is passed directly onto the students, who suffer in this climate.

In creating what Ball et al. (2011) called the “technical professional” (p. 612), the danger is that teachers and the profession lose their soul. The teacher leaders understand the game and recognize that to be players, they need to know the rules. They are also firm in their beliefs that if the rules are not compatible with their beliefs, their illusio, they will not play. Or at least, they will play the game to satisfy their professional requirements but not because of any belief in its value to their work. The teacher leaders in this study are not interested in short-term improvements, which are often the outcome of ill-conceived, hasty change initiatives. They are interested in sustainable and long term improvements for all students, and understand that achieving this is a lifelong task. Being a “technical professional” limits the capacity to be creative and demonstrate their knowledge. It represents a shortcut to short-term, short-lived goals that the teacher leaders recognize as satisfying an external agenda that is not conducive to whole school improvement in the long term. They recognized in this study that the illusio of the mega-narrative (linking educational reforms to the global economy) held little value for them. It did not correspond with their values of an
improved society through opportunities for all students and a better world through an egalitarian education system.

8.3.7 The emotional practice of teaching

*We do have a really hard-wired tradition amongst Victorian teachers, public school teachers that we actually work really deeply with the kids and care.* (Focus group discussion, p. 33).

Care, emotions and identity emerged from the literature as significant features of educational reform. Yet often, in policy processes and change discourse, these factors are not considered high-profile. Hargreaves (1998, 2000) referred to the need to focus on emotion as a form of intelligence and a means to empower teachers, rather than a “gentle sedative” (as he referred to such actions as team building, collaboration, staff wellbeing and such initiatives). Hargreaves felt that the notion of emotion in teaching practice had a legitimate place in educational reform, but a place which was rarely afforded much attention or credibility.

The teacher leaders reported a shift away from a caring environment, which they remembered as being one of the most compelling features of teachers and teaching in the not so distant past. This notion of caring and working holistically with the students represents a significant aspect of the teachers’ capital. Priding themselves on this aspect of their work distinguishes them from being passive recipients of curriculum or technical professionals. It injects a human side into their work, which they hold as significant and crucial to effective teaching. It is thus troubling to them to sense that this aspect of their work is not valued in the current climate.
When the value of teacher capital shifts – as it is suggested is happening in this particular example – power relations within the school and the whole educational organization also change. This is a concern for teachers as it challenges their illusion and their habitus. While it is argued that habitus is flexible and subject to adapting to changes in circumstances, this is a more significant shift in the essential core of their capital, leaving teachers vulnerable and disempowered. When the teachers lose their connection with and ownership of their work, they risk compromising the integrity of the relationships they have with their students.

The data analysis provided evidence that the students were central to the teacher leaders’ work and to their understanding of teaching as a profession. This understanding was underpinned by the value they saw in the complex relationships that they develop with their students and their staff. Permission to establish those relationship is crucial, but takes time, a flexible curriculum, a degree of teacher autonomy, a trusting environment, and a collaborative work environment. Where teachers are steered to respond to external exigencies, these are the things they report as being disregarded in a climate of change.

In this case study, the notion of caring, of being honoured with the task of teaching, and of simply enjoying their work with young people was a common theme among the participants. The teacher leaders described the difficulties of managing mandated pedagogical change in their work; they also clearly articulated their answer to the final research question, which asked how they reconciled their experience and knowledge regarding teaching and learning in the face of mandated pedagogical change.
Essentially, the answer to this question was located in their relationships with the students and their commitment to improving outcomes for all students.

For the teacher leaders in this study, there was persistent reference to the students at all levels of data collection. There were doubts and misgivings with regard to the external authorities and there were some mixed feelings about the level of leadership in their school. However, the point on which they were certain and in agreement was that their work was important and their students mattered. Job satisfaction was exceptionally high in reference to the students and working with them in the classroom and seeing improvement and success, no matter how small. Job satisfaction plummeted in the field where they interacted with the external authorities and their capital was challenged and devalued.

The data suggested a strong sense of professional responsibility to their students. This was evidenced by long working hours and hours at home spent in planning and assessment of students’ work. There was evidence in their strong belief in building relationships and how this was crucial to maximizing students’ potential. The rewards were immediate and convincing:

The kids fill your buckets all the time. They really do. Yesterday, well, I didn’t want to be there on the way there. But then after the first two periods, I was like on cloud nine because I just had two really good groups of year 10 (P10, interview, p. 16)

How the teacher leaders engaged with change was to some degree informed by these relationships with the students. Their work in the
classroom remained their first priority; this became their point of reference when they were caught in the ‘carousel of change’ that was implemented from outside of their immediate control. Boosted by their commitment to the students and the enjoyment of the classroom, the change imperatives were managed, if not wholeheartedly supported, by the teacher leaders in the complexity of their daily work. If they sometimes felt that there was a fragility about the structure of their school and the system – and this emerged due to an inconsistent and an often very slipshod approach to mandated change – they overcame this fragility through their reliance on each other, and their intrinsic motivation to make school as engaging and meaningful an experience as possible for their students.

The general school culture impacted on teacher behaviour. How they behave and respond to classroom dynamics, external change imperatives, demands of leadership and so forth is very much determined by school culture. The teachers became themselves in the classrooms – their habitus was enacted and their values and beliefs came into play. In a climate of increased surveillance and outside pressure to perform to a certain standard, the relationships that the teachers see as key to student engagement and ultimately success could be disrupted. Their practice is on the line, which for many teachers is tied up with relationships, independence, social responsibilities – a pedagogy that promotes human values and good citizenship. Too much emphasis on meeting an external agenda of relentless testing and results diminishes the worth of these ideas about how students learn best.
8.3.8 Jumping through hoops – the external agenda

Teachers understand the imperative to stay abreast of educational change and are willing to do so, according to the teacher leaders in this study. They are fully cognizant of why they should adapt their teaching practices to meet twenty-first century needs. The tension does not lie with the notion of change, but rather with those implementing change from outside of school, who have not considered teacher practice as a significant context. Pedagogy should, as Wrigley et al. proposed, help young people to become “more fully human, individually and collectively” (p. 98). The teacher leaders did not dispute accountability – they were in favour of teachers reaching standards. The issue was how the standards were set and imposed, and responding to an accountability driven from the top and by standardized testing was a major concern.

Teachers are accustomed to being held accountable and have always been accountable to their school community for their work. They are accountable a number of times throughout the year when they meet parents for interviews and discussions about their child’s progress and performance. They are accountable when they write reports during the year and assess against standards. Their accountability is tested daily, when they enter the classroom and must deliver curriculum. The teachers consider this an integral part of their work – interacting with the students and the community is their job. Accountability to external bodies and agendas, however, is a rather different scenario. The culture of accountability appeals to a system that rewards andpunishes and is aligned with a business model of profit and loss. The teachers do not consider this paradigm as conducive to school improvement and the best outcomes for students.
The new, managerial style of school direction also involves the sort of quality assurance indicators that are more likely to be found in other organizations, such as large-scale business operations that are concerned with profit and loss. Repeatedly, when teachers called for more time and resources, they referenced department imperatives as being the time wasters. They felt much of their work was jumping through hoops to satisfy an external agenda. They did not recognize this as legitimate school reform or as an improvement trajectory. Their perception was of an educational bureaucracy closing in around them, focusing on distractions from the core purpose of teaching and taking them away from what mattered – the students and the classroom. They sensed the more recent push towards marketing schools as a foreign concept to the intrinsic value of their work, and guessed it was a response to outside forces and the new school business model, which is at odds with their purpose. In the teachers’ view, students are not customers or clients, and nor should schools be profit-driven. Any sense of gain or loss was illustrated by student achievement, described as “whatever it might be, that success, it doesn’t necessarily have to be academic. It could be social, emotional, all those sorts of intangible things” (P1 interview, p. 10). This is what mattered to the teacher leaders and this is where their identity, their habitus, their illusio came into play in the educational field. They were expecting to be accountable to their students and families and the immediate school community, but they felt that the current level of accountability had shifted beyond what was immediately relevant and useful to schools.

Schools have become competitive and market-driven, and for many teacher leaders this is contradictory to what they believe – and what current
literature has shown – to be the most effective way to work in schools. Building professional capital, working collaboratively and not competitively, and putting students at the forefront of their core purpose is the way forward, which has been illustrated in this research.

8.4 Recommendations

8.4.1 Introduction

Change in school is inevitable and necessary for schools to continue to engage students in their learning, and challenge them to be the best they can be. Change in schools in Victoria is currently characterized by a top-down approach, as it is generally mandated from external educational authorities. This approach relies on a traditional hierarchical structure in school. In this climate, the school leadership passes the change on to the teaching staff, where it is adopted. The focus of this research has been on the past thirty or so years in Victorian education, since the 1980s, when curriculum and pedagogical changes have been ongoing. Many of the recommended changes in schools have been in response to societal demands and concerns, and have tended to focus on specific problems such as bullying and homophobia. These are generally flexible, standalone programs, which are left to the school to implement where there is room to do so in a crowded curriculum. Of more concern for this study and to the teacher leaders who participated in this research are the mandated changes that are imposed from outside school. These types of changes are perceived to be responses to a global pressure to perform and compete, and are characterized by an increased level of accountability.
In experiencing this emergent climate in schools, teachers have reported more and more surveillance of practice and more public reporting and scrutiny of schools’ performance. It is felt that this is done to the detriment of their teaching, and it contradicts how the teacher leaders in this case study see school improvement taking place. They propose collaboration with peers, self-management, developing strong relationships and a recognition of practice as features of effective school improvement strategies. Instead, they report marginalization of teachers and tension among staff, as teachers are divided in their responses to and capacity to deal with change imposed from outside of their control. They described hasty, rash change processes that were doomed to fail and could not be sustained. They referred to a decrease in their capital as they were increasingly marginalized in the decision-making process and considered their accumulated knowledge was undervalued. They reported breakdown in faith in leadership, which was coupled with a sense of not being completely trusted to have autonomy in their teaching. Essentially, the key features underpinning the current change climate present a binary relationship between the educational bureaucracy and schools and teachers that can at best be described as ‘us versus them’.

Indeed, this study reveals that there are rifts in the relationships between those who make policy and those who are engaged to implement the policy at school level. The rifts are explained by a lack of clear communication and a limited understanding of teacher identity and role. The recommendations that have come from this study propose that consideration of the teacher practice context would be useful as a guide for those enacting
change. Thus, a new model of change process is proposed, which focuses on acknowledging and working within the context of teacher practice.

8.4.2 A new model of change process – teacher practice context

It is recommended that a new model of change practice and process is adopted, which will identify the teacher practice context as a crucial element of the change process and one that should be considered when implementing change. When change is imposed from outside, it has been found to be resisted and challenged by teachers and this has prevented any real change from occurring. Teachers welcome change and innovation when they are given time, resources, and ownership of the change and when they are included in the process of implementation. As this study has highlighted, teachers are increasingly marginalized in the way change is currently implemented in schools; their professionalism is undermined, and they are sidelined in the process. The teacher leaders in this study pointed to strong leadership as a crucial element of the change process. Future research might consider the context of practice as a specific frame of reference for professional development for school leaders who are considering change in their schools. If teachers are to be the real change agents – and current literature (Bailey, 2000; Fullan, 2006, 2010; Evans, 2013) argues strongly in favour of this – then they must have ownership and control over the change and their practice must be recognized.

8.4.3 Why teachers should be the change agents

Without considering the practice of the teachers, it is easy for the leadership of the school to misrecognise their capability, motivation and effectiveness as agents of change. Change should be resisted, as Clement
(2014) suggested, as a considered response to externally imposed initiatives that do not necessarily or automatically address what is most needed in schools. Teachers can be the passive recipient of change processes and implement change as it appears, or they can lead change within their schools as it is filtered down from above (Lukacs & Galluzzo, 2014); however, the common theme here is that they are still charged with the implementation of change according to an external agenda. How much of a choice they have in this process is largely dependent on the school context – the leadership structure, the school culture, and the school’s understanding of how change is implemented when it is mandated. In this sense, their talents and capacity to be real leaders and innovators of change are being misrecognized. Change that is passed down from above locates the initiation and construction of change within an external authority and not within the boundaries of the school and in the hands of the teachers. To realise their full potential and enact their professional capital, teachers must be encouraged and supported to become the true agents of change.

There are good reasons for instilling the responsibility of enacting change with the teacher leaders and the teachers themselves, which have been raised consistently throughout this study by the ten teacher leaders and are summarised as follows:

(i) Teachers are closest to the students

The most obvious reason for teachers to become the change agents is their proximity to students. In addition to their knowledge of students’ academic progress is also their knowledge of the students’ backgrounds and personal lives. This has been highlighted as a significant aspect of teachers’
lives, yet one that has been overlooked in a reform agenda driven from outside of the school. Teachers are interested in learning, in how people think and how others learn. They appreciate the limitations of a factory-model curriculum, a one-size-fits-all model, and believe that this type of structure stymies the students’ potential.

Teachers are interested in getting their students connected with their work, building their self-esteem, and teaching them the skills that will enable them to enter the world after school with confidence and the skills to succeed as responsible citizens. While the academic aspect of schooling is crucial to this success, it does not stand in isolation from the overall achievements of the students. This is what teachers recognize in their work, and it explains their frustrations when the educational authorities appear to bypass these priorities in the pursuit of reaching numerical targets.

(ii) Teachers are familiar with processes, successes and failures

In this research, it was clear that teachers have experienced change: innovations, new ideas, new imperatives, school improvements strategies that have been borrowed from other countries, department directives to improve, to become stronger, to become more competitive, and so on. Teachers are change-weary but are not defeated by its notion. Their familiarity with change processes gives them the expertise to be change agents. One participant referred to herself as a “conduit of change” – a conduit between external authorities and her school. It was not, however, a circumstance of her own making, and she was not the change maker in this instance. This helplessness and lack of control in the face of change could be counterbalanced by greater teacher autonomy and increased reliance on the
very expertise that has in fact made them come to be suspicious of change. It is an opportune moment to rectify this imbalance and offer teachers the chance to use their significant capital to become the agents of change in schools.

Experience with change and processes that are not well considered are familiar to teachers, who can make reasonable predictions about a proposal’s potential success or failure. Experience with how to successfully implement change and how to foresee potential problems with change positions teachers in the optimum place to be leaders and creators of change.

(iii) Teachers have accumulated knowledge and are well-equipped to make decisions

The knowledge and experience that teachers accumulate over the years becomes their capital. School leaders should be encouraged to develop the efficacy and capacity of their staff. Unwittingly, misrecognition occurs when change is driven from the top. When the school leaders pass mandated change onto the teachers or teacher leaders to implement, they are misrecognizing the value of their teachers and their capacity to be real agents of change. By simply asking them to be the implementers of the mandated change, their capacity to make decisions and have autonomy is eroded. This is what the teachers understand as having their professionalism undermined and not recognized or valued. While it may seem as though teachers are encouraged to be leaders through implementing change, they are really only acting on behalf of the school leaders, and therefore the actual creation, development and ownership of the change is not their work.
This is misrecognition. It also allows the status quo to be maintained in schools, rather than seeking out real innovation.

(iv) Teachers understand school context

Teachers have considerable access to and understanding of school context, which is their doxa. They have a strong sense of the way things are in a school – its culture – and how the school operates on a day-to-day basis. A change innovation that may work well or be needed in one school may be inappropriate in another. Schools have widely distinctive cultures and one-size-fits-all types of initiatives devalue this uniqueness. Teachers appreciate the complexity of school life and the need to be able to understand and deal with conflict daily. Their capital includes their networks, knowledge of school operations, and experience, and their capital helps to position them in the field. Teachers can appreciate the shifts and changes in the field, understand that the field is multi-layered, and that it can be in a constant state of change. They can adapt to this and work with it, provided their capital is valued and recognized. Their illusio – their belief in the game and their commitment to their work – positions them to interact with others in the field.

8.4.4 Lack of trust

A common, recurring grievance was the obligatory nature of many department initiatives which teachers felt were not just ineffective in improving outcomes for students, but often intruded on classroom teaching and planning time. Standardized, national testing was a specific example that was raised many times and which reflected broader grievances than just the test itself.
The teacher leaders outlined a number of aspects of standardized testing that they considered as reflecting poorly on the relationship between the educational authorities and the teachers themselves. Central to this was the lack of trust in teachers to be able to create and deliver a meaningful curriculum and report effectively on students’ progress and achievement. The teacher leaders considered the links with standardized testing to a broader political agenda as contradictory to their core purpose of teaching. Persistent references to a lack of time and opportunities to plan collaboratively with colleagues highlighted the lack of alignment between the demands of the educational bureaucracy and teacher professional judgement.

This study highlighted the damaging effects of a non-trusting environment and the barriers this climate posed to building teacher efficacy. This was recognised in the Focus Group Discussion:

As a leader in the school, you should always be trying to build that capital in the staff room … If you can’t do that, then you’re failing the people, you’re failing the students and I think you’re failing the actual community that you work in … If you are going to build your school and your culture and do your best for your kids, that capital is the most important part of the rules (Focus Group Discussion, p. 30).

However, it has been shown here that building that capital is not possible in a low-trust environment. Building trust in schools enables staff to
enact their commitment to their work – their illusion – and allows for more collaboration and teamwork with colleagues. Again, as has been highlighted in current literature, the need for greater school collaboration is an imperative in a change environment.

8.4.5 Avoiding misrecognition - implications for the field of School Leadership

If that capital isn't valued in the school, then it's not capital (Focus Group Discussion, p. 16)

The teacher leaders in this case study were cognizant of their own capital and that of their colleagues, and this held particular value for them. This was part of their doxa – their understanding of the familiar features of the game. They recognized key skills and attributes in colleagues that they could envisage transferring between schools as obvious and recognizable skills that would be assets in any schools. There is an intrinsic value to capital that the teachers recognized and that does not diminish in a changing field. The issue here as reported by the teacher leaders is that, in the climate of mandated pedagogical change, depending on the context, the value of their capital does diminish – it is not a constant.

As a part of the practice equation, this was not recognized – or was misrecognized – by school leadership and by the educational bureaucracy. The effect of this was a diminishment of teacher professionalism. If their capital is not recognized, trust is diminished and their identity and value as teachers is compromised. These are the foundations of their professionalism, yet they could not be seen as valuable.
For the field of school leadership, the implications point towards developing a heightened sensitivity to the context of practice in building school improvement. This aligns with Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), who argued that building professional capital in school – human, social and decisional – would lead to whole school improvement and heightened teacher motivation (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012). It aligns with what this research has revealed: that teachers do their best when there is evidence that their professionalism is recognized and valued, and when they are trusted to work as autonomous professionals. They resist or deflect change when it is not considered to be practical or conducive to enhanced outcomes for students and they “tweak” change when it is not relevant.

My research has revealed that resistance to change is deliberate and considered in relation to what teachers believe – based on their experience, knowledge and expertise. Rather than an act of defiance, it is a measured approach to effective teaching and improving outcomes for students. It is a reflection of a professional identity that has not been fully recognized by leadership and school authorities, and a measure of their professional obligations.

In this climate of resistance, promoting staff capability and enabling effective policy enactment becomes problematic for school leaders. Teacher marginalization and resistance can be avoided by building teacher efficacy and professional capital.

As a guide for those enacting change, school leaders and teacher leaders could pose some key questions when considering change and the context of teacher practice:
• How can trust be improved in schools?
• How can misrecognition be avoided and therefore teacher capacity be allowed to grow?

The last element is the crucial turning point for schools: growing teacher capacity. The point was raised during the interviews that many teachers had not had the opportunity to lead change, had not been encouraged to lead it, and had not been positioned to seek it. This was raised as a concern by older, more experienced teacher leaders, who, having had the opportunity themselves to be agents of change, understood that it complemented their roles as professionals and considered it a worthwhile thing to be able to do in schools. It was suggested that not advocating and encouraging change leadership and building that efficacy in teachers was a move towards maintaining the status quo in schools – a situation which the teacher leaders felt was not conducive to whole school improvement. This is where the roots of misrecognition lie: ostensibly promoting the building of teacher efficacy while actually preserving the status quo. As a consequence, change is ineffective, teachers become frustrated and disenchanted, and the potential for schools to improve is hampered by the process.

8.5 Strengths and limitations of the research

8.5.1 Strengths

The key strengths of this research were the participants and the data collection method. The participants were experienced teachers and leaders and were more than willing to take the opportunity to be part of a study into mandated pedagogical change and how it is perceived, and to have a voice on this subject. Having three levels of data collection enabled each
participant a variety of opportunities to express their views on change and how it impacted them. The chances of reliability and validity were increased by triangulating the methods of collecting data. It enabled me to access both their professional and personal responses to change, for it was inevitable that the two would intersect. The places of intersection signified their habitus in action, where their leanings and dispositions informed their responses to change and the operations within and outside of the school. This is where the richness of the data was located: in the stories and lives of the teachers.

The professional respect within the group was also a strength of this study, as it enabled rigorous discussion as a body of people who shared common concerns and interests. There was also a diverse range of experience in the group. They all were considered to be teacher leaders, as defined in the earlier chapters. A further strength was that the participants had held various leadership roles including principal, assistant principal, acting assistant principal, leading teacher, faculty leader, curriculum leader, and sub school leader. This enabled their perspectives to encompass the whole school field and they could speak from experience.

By the third stage of data collection, there was a clear sense that the teacher leaders had collectively engaged in a rich and dynamic process which signalled the importance of their work. Thus, when the third stage was reached (focus group discussion), the group had strengthened throughout the process, and collectively their opinions and thoughts gained confidence. The focus group discussion was animated and represented a shift in their
belief that their work was valued. It enabled robust discussion of who they were as teachers and what, collectively, they hoped to achieve in their work.

This is what Bourdieu called reflexivity. For the participants, the first inclination of the habitus – their leanings and dispositions – is largely unconscious. The different stages of data collection gave the participants multiple opportunities for their habitus to become apparent. The participants used reflexive analysis to alter their perceptions of the situation – the field, their position in the field, and how they reacted to it. This is where the opportunities arose for them to be autonomous: they could resist change or passively accept change instead of simply agreeing (and therefore not enacting their capital).

This was a significant strength in the methodology of the research. There is potential for the participants to have gained from the study a greater awareness of how their own interactions in the field can contribute to how they perceive, manage and reconcile mandated pedagogical change. In that sense, the case study could be seen as contributing to two areas: firstly, to research into mandated pedagogical change in schools, and secondly, to the participants’ greater understanding of their place in the field and the intrinsic value of their capital.

8.5.2 Limitations

(i) Identifying the limitations

The strength of the case study was in its participants – in a sense, this was also somewhat of a limitation. There was a good range of participants with diverse backgrounds and experiences of teaching and change. The
limitation was that they all came from the same school and they were essentially on the ‘same page’ in terms of their beliefs and their commitment to state education. The consequence of this was that the context and setting in which they referred to change were common to all participants. This is a limitation, perhaps, in the breadth of the participants.

The potential impact of the singular group could be that this method did not allow for observing change under various circumstances, under more than one school context. As context is significant in change management, this may have had the effect of limiting the data available to explore how mandated pedagogical change is perceived by teachers.

(ii) Reflecting on the limitations

The first key reason for limiting the study to teacher leaders from the same school was direct access to the teachers, and for me, as the principal researcher, a familiarity with the staff and the way that the school operated. As stated in the methodology, I had also worked at the school for some years. I knew the participants well, there was established mutual trust, and there were common experiences that united us in our approaches to teaching and learning.

Being in the same school saw the teachers reflecting on some changes that were common to all, and therefore there was a clear understanding among all the participants of the changes that they were experiencing and could reflect on from the past. They could converse at length about the impact of these changes on their work. Limiting the study to one school did not affect the validity of the process; the methodology was robust and allowed for in-depth data analysis. However, there may have
been the opportunity to collect comparative data if the study had been conducted at two different schools.

This leads to the second key reason for limiting the study to ten teacher leaders at one school. The choices were depth in data collection and analysis, or breadth in participants and change experiences. I chose the first method to allow for depth in data collection and analysis. The choice to pursue depth at three levels led to rich data and continuity in the narratives of the teachers.

(iii) Overcoming the limitations in future research

In future research around the notion of the teacher practice context, research could extend across two or more schools. This would enable a greater diversity of change experience and response. However, I believe that the smaller group and the more personal methods of collecting data led to a strong, personal commitment to the research process from the teacher leaders, and a belief that their involvement in the study at all levels was crucial to its success. The analysis process was rich and detailed and this contributed to results that were a true reflection of the teachers’ position in relation to mandated pedagogical change.
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Glossary

ACARA  Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, is the independent authority responsible for the development of a national curriculum, a national assessment program and a national data collection and reporting program that supports 21st century learning for Australian students.

AITSL  Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership.

AusVELS  AusVELS outlines what is essential for all Victorian students to learn during their time at school from Foundation (F) to Year 10. It includes the Australian Curriculum for English, Mathematics, History and Science and provides a single, complete set of common state-wide standards which schools use to plan student learning programs, assess student progress and report to parents.

BENCHMARKS  A nationally agreed minimum acceptable standard, without which a student would have difficulty making progress at school.

GENERAL CAPABILITIES  In AusVELS curriculum, the General Capabilities should be incorporated into all student learning. These are Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Capability, Intercultural Understanding, and Ethical Understanding.

MELBOURNE DECLARATION  The Melbourne Declaration was released on 5 December 2008, at a State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education meeting. The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, released
the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, which sets the direction for Australian schooling for the next 10 years.

**MY SCHOOL**

My School is an ACARA information service, a website which enables you to search the profiles of almost 9,500 Australian schools.

**NAPLAN**

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an annual assessment for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. It has been an everyday part of the school calendar since 2008. The assessments are undertaken nationwide, every year, in the second full week in May. NAPLAN is administered through ACARA.

**ON DEMAND TESTING**

On Demand Testing is an online resource for teachers to use when, where and how they choose. Tests are designed to link to curriculum and standards. Both general ability tests and topic-specific assessments are provided. On demand testing is administered through VCAA. It is also referred to sometimes as PAT testing.

**PISA**

The Programme for International Student Assessment, PISA, was designed to assist governments to monitor the outcomes of education systems in terms of student achievement on a regular basis and within an internationally accepted common framework. In other words, to allow them to compare how students in their countries were performing on a set of common tasks compared to students in other countries. In this way, PISA helps governments to not only understand, but also to enhance, the effectiveness of their educational systems and to learn from other countries practices.
REGIONAL DIRECTORS

Regional directors oversee school management in state divisions. School principals report to regional directors.

VELS

In the state of Victoria, Australia, the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) is the curriculum framework for Preparatory to Year 10 school levels, which replaced the Curriculum and Standards Framework II (CSF 2) in 2006.

VCAA

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) came into operation on 1 March 2001 and is the successor to the Board of Studies. It is an independent statutory authority primarily accountable to the Minister for Education, serving both government and non-government schools. The VCAA is also responsible to the Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development and the Minister for Higher Education and Skills in relation to sections of Part 2.5 of the Act that they administer. The VCAA was established under the repealed Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority Act 2000 and continues to operate under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (the Act).

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Protocol


_Brief description:_ The ten teacher leaders who are participating in this case study have each written their own personal narrative on the impact of change on their work. First analysis of these narratives revealed three themes which were prevalent in the narratives:

1. The _relentlessness_ of change
2. The _loss of autonomy_ felt by teachers as an impact of change
3. The _emotional labour_ experienced by teachers as an impact of change

Ten questions were written and sent to each of the teacher leaders along with an invitation to participate in a taped, semi-structured interview, lasting 30 – 45 minutes.

The participants were asked at the beginning of the interview if they agreed that the analysis was valid, and that the three themes which had been identified were correct.

_Date and time of interview:_

_Location:_

_Interviewer:_ Lisa Vinnicombe

_Interviewee:_

______

_Questions:_

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1. Describe a situation where you experienced conflict between what you wanted to teach and what you had to teach.
2. What do you find interesting and/or rewarding about change?
3. What elements of the change process in schools do you find challenging?
4. Can you describe what has been the most frustrating aspect of mandated pedagogical change for you?
5. In your broad experience as a teacher and a leader of others, how do you reconcile the depth of knowledge and learning you have acquired over the years, with change?
6. Describe a situation where you witnessed conflict in your workplace due to mandated change.
7. What do you find rewarding about your work, with or without change?
8. Identify a time in your teaching career when there was less emphasis on change.
9. Under what circumstances/conditions have you been consulted and included in the change process?
10. How has your professional life been compromised (in any way) by change?

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Thank you for participating in the interview. The interview will be transcribed and a copy will be sent to you. Participants are reminded that the interview is anonymous and they will be referred to only by number.

Lisa Vinnicombe
Appendix B: Interview questions

1. Describe a situation where you experienced conflict between what you wanted to teach and what you had to teach.

2. What do you find interesting and/or rewarding about change?

3. What elements of the change process in schools do you find challenging?

4. Can you describe what has been the most frustrating aspect of mandated pedagogical change for you?

5. In your broad experience as a teacher and a leader of others, how do you reconcile the depth of knowledge and learning you have acquired over the years, with change?

6. Describe a situation where you witnessed conflict in your workplace due to mandated change.

7. What do you find rewarding about your work, with or without change?

8. Identify a time in your teaching career when there was less emphasis on change.

9. Under what circumstances/conditions have you been consulted and included in the change process?

10. How has your professional life been compromised (in any way) by change?
Appendix C: The Game for focus group participants

Focus Group conversation

*The aim of the focus group conversation is to achieve as near as possible a natural discussion that elicits useful information about the group's consensus.* (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013, p. 387)

The focus group discussion represents the third level of data collection for the topic I am researching, about pedagogical change in schools and how it is perceived by the teacher leaders. It follows the individual interviews which were conducted earlier in the year, transcribed, and analysed according to codes that became categories which allowed me to see emerging themes across the interviews. The following information will allow each of you to gain some understanding of what has emerged from the analysis to this point and what we are hoping to achieve in the discussion. It is an opportunity for you to converse openly and share your opinions and thoughts with each other.

The Game

I am using Pierre Bourdieu as my theorist which guides the analysis. He proposed the idea that education can be thought of as a field, where the players – all those who are involved in education – take to the field and enter into a game of strategy. The players have a belief that the game is worth playing, hence they are willing to play by the written and unwritten rules because they believe in it and they feel like they belong in the field. They have a certain “feel” for the game which enables them to move among all the players and interact with them, but often on different levels.

This metaphor of the game enables me to look at how you (the players) enact the rules of the game, and how they might best suit your professional purposes/beliefs when you are engaging with other players. It allows us to explore these interactions between players in terms of their power and resources – eg their capital - and helps to explain how players’ capital positions them within the field. I want to understand what the rules are and for whom, when they change and why, from your perspectives: what are the
rules? How do you interpret and play by the rules, how do you negotiate the rules for your own purposes, how do you maintain or build your capital, when do you use a game strategy?

An example of a (teacher) player:

English teacher, female, 50, twenty five years’ experience in the game, some leadership roles over the years, teaches all levels, usually senior – and we might refer to these resources as her “capital”. What are the rules for her when she engages with all the different players in the field?

Because of her significant capital, she will have access to the school leaders and probably a fair degree of negotiating power with leadership; she has cultural capital – she knows the system and how to play it; she can access the policy makers and interpret their mandates at the local level; she can position herself and others around her according to how she wants the next play to be enacted; she has experience and intellectual capital on her side that enable her to influence decision making; she knows the community and the external bureaucrats; she is familiar with the workings of leadership and it pays the leadership team to have her on side. In short, she is in a position of considerable power when decisions are being made because she has capital and she knows how to maintain it and she knows the rules.

The analysis

After the initial narratives that you wrote, I looked for the general categories and the emergent themes were. From those themes, the ten interview questions were developed and the responses to the interviews were re-coded and analysed; again, looking for general categories and then the themes that arose from them - this was done by using Bourdieu’s theoretical tools, which are briefly explained below.

The codes and categories analysis:

**Fields** -The different player sub fields that are part of the whole game – for example I found, the teacher field, the leadership field, the teacher by discipline field, the external field (VCAA, ACARA, etc), the community field,
the students’ field – and the players in those fields – teachers (by discipline), the teacher leaders, the leadership team, the community, the educational bureaucrats, the students.

**Illusio** – Bourdieu talked about *illusio* when he wanted to refer to a person’s interest in the field, their investment in the game. In this case, the *illusio* represents the investment that the teacher leaders have in the game of teaching – Bourdieu explained it further in terms of it being directly opposite to disinterest or ambivalence.

**Doxa** - the shared pedagogical beliefs about the game – for example, I found time and resources were viewed as essential for teaching and learning; PD and collegiate planning are integral to good teaching; teachers need to get to know students for the best planning; change has to be relevant to the classroom; leaders are those who know what they are doing and have a clear vision; the teachers know more and have different knowledge to the department about what engages students in the classroom; curriculum must be interesting and relevant; the new breed of teacher works with the business model (managerialism); teaching is a human activity, not a bureaucratic one; it is a privilege to teach young people; the rewards are in the successes with students. *Doxa* represents the things that we almost take for granted in our work, those things that are self-evident.

**Capital/power** - for example, experience and intellectual capital; economic capital; cultural capital – knowing how the school works and how to play the game; social capital – having networks in and beyond the school; how a teacher’s relative amount of capital (symbolic power) will impact on their capacity to enter the game and how they work with the other players.

**Habitus** – Bourdieu talked about *habitus* to refer to the behaviours/leanings of participants, their “feel for the game”. When a teacher enters into the game of teaching and their practice develops and evolves according to their personal leanings and their responses to the rules – for example, I found a filtering of the rules and mandates and initiatives trusting one’s own initiative and evolved understanding to decide on what will best benefit students.
**Misrecognition** – Bourdieu talked about misrecognition as a type of learned ignorance which would allow a person to continue to support a belief or behaviour even if there were some doubts about the value of that belief or behaviour.

**What the interviews revealed**

The interviews revealed many levels of understanding of how change is delivered through the school and how it is received and enacted by staff. Some participants leaned more towards the notion that there was a passive acceptance of the change but in reality, little was done to implement it within the class room and no-one was any the wiser. If it was implemented, it was based on the teacher’s pedagogical knowledge. In other cases, change may have been accepted and acted upon, but with little real understanding of its purpose. In general, there was not much evidence of overt resistance to change – although it was more apparent that change initiatives that were imposed were often considered ineffective, tokenistic and poorly planned.

There were many, many references to leadership and some frustrations with how decisions were made within the school. Once again, it depended on a teacher’s relative capital/power as to how they responded to those decisions. Teachers would then position themselves according to how they would accept/implement/play the game of change. Collegiate support became more significant when there was resistance and frustration with the change and in that case, staff would play as a team (reshuffle and move closer together). The rules changed according to what the imperative was, the degree of impact on the teachers, the implications for being seen as not playing by the rules; in the case of the latter, there was the increased stress due to overstaffing and possible economic ramifications for some teachers which caused significant anxiety across the board.

**Some examples of things that have been said in the interviews about the game:**
“They should show the teachers that they value them and they’re valuing what they’ve done” (talking about the leadership as “they” and not giving teachers time to work on curriculum change)

(Talking about conflict in what you want to teach and what you have to teach)
“And being dictated by the government about what topics we teach in schools, irrespective of the skills that that topic can actually offer, I still think it’s probably up to the individual to tweak it. And don’t make a big song and dance about it”

“A lot of what I’m teaching is the stuff that I’m told to teach rather than the stuff that I feel is valuable for the kids to actually know and understand on a deeper level”

“There’s conflict between my personal values and what I would like to teach based on those and what’s mandated in the curriculum, because I think things like teaching about global warming, about responsible citizenship in that whole kind of overarching kind of value system is really important for kids for the future”

“I feel I’m aimless... there are some sort of goals around but overall I feel very aimless ... that’s what’s actually causing more of the frustration amongst the general populace”

“I don’t think we’re doing our kids any favours by giving them a one-size-fits-all education and being obsessed with results”

“I tend to filter out the crap that I think is not relevant to what’s going to happen in my classroom ... unless it’s going to improve teaching and learning and it’s going to improve the outcomes of the kids then it’s a waste of time for teachers”

What these examples indicate:

I am proposing here that from the interviews, we can see examples of how you feel you’re being positioned by various other players in the field – such as the leadership team, the broader educational bureaucracy, and the other players within the school. These responses suggest that at times, you have
felt the need to employ strategies to regain some control and/or power over their professional lives. These strategies may be “tweaking” a mandated curriculum, assuming a kind of passive acceptance then pursuing what you believe to be the right choice, changing the rules to suit your purpose. Often, the teachers will rely on their “feel for the game” to make decisions that affect their teaching and learning and they make those decisions based on what they inherently believe is best for the students and this is more important than accepting any change without question.

Our focus group discussion will start with the key question …

Ø What is your response to my understanding of The Game and your role in it?

In responding to this key question throughout the discussion, try to refer to the following questions, in no particular order:

• What are the rules (and for whom)?
• How do you interpret and play by the rules, how do you negotiate the rules for your own purposes?
• What do you recognise as forms of capital and who has what and how is it used, and when?
• How do you maintain or build your capital?
• When do you use a game strategy?
• What are the accepted beliefs?
• What do you see as being points of misrecognition of the other players?