The Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic Principals and Vice-Principals: Purpose Versus Practice

by

Gino Montanari

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

© Copyright by Gino Montanari 2014
The Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic Principals and Vice-Principals: Purpose Versus Practice

Gino Montanari

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto
2014

Abstract

Education is a field that experiences a number of policy initiatives and changes all in an effort to improve the system. The success of these initiatives is dependent in large part on the way the policies have been received by those expected to implement the changes. This study explored the experiences of seven Catholic secondary principals and seven Catholic secondary vice-principals with the Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF) in one school district of Ontario. As a provincially mandated policy change, the OLF was part of an initiative to support and sustain current school leaders in their work by providing a catalogue of leadership practices and competencies that have been found to be highly effective both in the research literature of educational leadership and from current practitioners.

A review of the policy implementation and educational change literature was used to provide a perspective on how innovations can be understood to go through a process that involves 3 phases: initiation, implementation, and institutionalization. Of particular interest to this study is the presence of factors that influence how an innovation is implemented. This conceptual framework was used to explore and understand the presence of these factors in the experiences of this study’s participants. Qualitative data
were collected through personal interviews with participants and provided opportunities for them to reflect on their experiences with the OLF.

Findings suggest that participants’ experiences were largely influenced by the way their school district unpacked the OLF. More specifically, participants identified the framework as a tool for performance appraisals, a reference for job interviews, and a source of a common leadership language. Despite the intent to embed core leadership practices and competencies into the professional learning and daily practices of school leaders, study participants only used the framework to complete two administrative tasks. Further, principals and vice-principals noted aspects of their work that were not reflected in the framework. Results of this study suggest a number of implications for practice for governments, school districts, and for principals and vice-principals.
Acknowledgements

There are no words that I can possibly use to express my gratitude to those people that have made this thesis a reality. Without their support, advice, and guidance this would have been an insurmountable task to complete.

I first want to acknowledge and thank Dr. Blair Mascall, my thesis supervisor, for his willingness to take me on as his student. His advice, guidance, and expertise have made the challenge of writing this thesis a tenable one. I am indebted for his time and efforts in my regards. I want to also acknowledge and thank Dr. Stephen Anderson and Dr. Joseph Flessa, my thesis committee members, whose careful reading and critique of my earlier drafts challenged my thinking and vastly improved my final product.

I want to acknowledge the participants in this study whose willingness to share with me their experiences with the Ontario Leadership Framework has taught me the importance of understanding change from those most directly affected by it.

I want to also thank and acknowledge the support and friendship of Dr. Suzanne Molitor. The ability to speak to another colleague during this process and share the challenges and successes of this academic journey has assisted me greatly in completing this thesis.

Lastly, to my wife Antonia Angelini and to my son Massimiliano. They endured many moments of isolation and solitude as I worked on completing this dissertation. They have watched me struggle and provided encouragement in my most challenging times. Without their love, support, and understanding, I would not have been able to complete this work. This thesis is dedicated to the both of them. Vi Amo!
# Table of Contents

Abstract ................................................................................................................................. ii
Acknowledgements ............................................................................................................... iii
List of Tables .......................................................................................................................... viii
List of Figures ......................................................................................................................... ix
List of Appendices ................................................................................................................ x

Chapter One: Introduction and Purpose ............................................................................ 1
  Context of Ontario ................................................................................................................... 2
  The Problem ........................................................................................................................... 4
  Some Further Gaps to Consider ............................................................................................. 7

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework ............................................. 11
  Policy Implementation ......................................................................................................... 11
  Educational Change ............................................................................................................. 14
    Initiation ............................................................................................................................... 26
      Advocacy from central and/or school administrators ....................................................... 27
      Teacher advocacy ............................................................................................................. 28
      External change agents ................................................................................................... 29
      New policy and funds ...................................................................................................... 29
      Problem-solving and bureaucratic orientations .............................................................. 30
  Implementation .................................................................................................................... 32
    Characteristics of change .................................................................................................. 33
      Need .................................................................................................................................. 33
      Clarity ................................................................................................................................. 34
      Quality and practicality of the program .......................................................................... 35
    Local characteristics .......................................................................................................... 36
      School districts .................................................................................................................. 37
      Role of the teacher ............................................................................................................ 38
    External factors: Government and other agencies ............................................................ 39
  Institutionalization ............................................................................................................... 40
  Leadership ............................................................................................................................. 42
    Transformational leadership ............................................................................................... 43
    Instructional leadership ..................................................................................................... 47
  Core Practices of Educational Leadership ......................................................................... 50
  Conceptual Framework ....................................................................................................... 61
  Summary ............................................................................................................................... 70

Chapter Three: Methodology ............................................................................................... 72
  Design of the Study ............................................................................................................. 72
  Research Procedure ........................................................................................................... 81
  Data Organization and Analysis ......................................................................................... 86
Chapter Four: Context of the Study ................................................................. 89
  Ontario Leadership Framework ................................................................. 89
  Context of the Ontario Leadership Framework at Rushmore ................... 97
  Individual Profiles of Principals of Rushmore Catholic District .......... 100
  Concetta ........................................................................................................ 100
  Antonio .......................................................................................................... 101
  Max .................................................................................................................. 101
  Peter ............................................................................................................... 102
  Frank .............................................................................................................. 103
  Nick ................................................................................................................. 104
  Steve .............................................................................................................. 106
  Individual Profiles of Vice-Principals of Rushmore Catholic District ..... 107
  John ............................................................................................................... 107
  Gregory ......................................................................................................... 108
  Jack ............................................................................................................... 109
  Ida .................................................................................................................. 110
  Maria ............................................................................................................. 111
  Lianna ........................................................................................................... 112
  Jim .................................................................................................................. 114
  Summary ........................................................................................................ 118

Chapter Five: An Analysis of Emerging Themes ....................................... 119
  Emergent Themes .......................................................................................... 119
  Ten Themes .................................................................................................... 120
  School board pressure and support .............................................................. 120
  Preparation and performance ....................................................................... 123
  Indicators of effective leadership ................................................................. 127
  Common language ........................................................................................ 132
  Reflection ........................................................................................................ 134
  Limitations ...................................................................................................... 137
  Job affirmation ............................................................................................... 142
  Priority .......................................................................................................... 144
  Fit ..................................................................................................................... 148
  Catholic piece ............................................................................................... 152
  Summary ........................................................................................................ 155

Chapter Six: Data Analysis and Findings ..................................................... 156
  Initiation ......................................................................................................... 156
  Government (macro) level .......................................................................... 158
  Initiation/implementation: School district (meso) level ......................... 162
  Implementation ............................................................................................. 168
  Principal and vice-principal (micro) level .................................................. 170
List of Tables

Table 1. Alignment of Research Questions to Interview Questions ............... 81
Table 2. Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic Principals and Vice-Principals ................................................................. 91
Table 3. Key Findings of Individual Profiles ........................................... 116
Table 4. Organization of Analysis and Findings ...................................... 157
## List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Change process</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Factors associated with initiation</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Interactive factors affecting implementation</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Conceptual framework for study</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Appendices

Appendix A. Question Guide for Interviews ................................................................. 245
Appendix B. Telephone Script With Principal/Vice-Principal ................................. 247
Appendix C. Information and Written Consent Form ................................................. 248
Appendix D. Initial Categories of Data by Interviewees ........................................ 251
Appendix E. Example of Response Summary for Interview Questions by Interviewee ................................................................. 253
Chapter One: Introduction and Purpose

There continues to be a considerable amount of importance and pressure placed on school leaders to improve schools and student achievement. This is quite evident from the recent growth of school improvement initiatives and mandates that districts, and their schools, have had to implement under the close scrutiny of both the government and the public. This has not only been supported by politicians, policy makers, and the public at large (Robinson, 2007, p.5), but also by a growing body of empirical evidence that suggests that school leaders have a significant effect on student learning (Barker, 2005; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Robinson, 2007).

In the province of Ontario, a number of initiatives have taken place that have acknowledged the important role that effective school leaders play in maximizing the achievement of all students. For example, in 2005 a discussion paper was released from the Ministry of Education that made a commitment to a number of initiatives intended to develop, support and sustain the highest quality leadership possible in schools and boards across the province (Government of Ontario, 2005). In 2006, the Ministry of Education created the Ontario Institute for Education Leadership as a “virtual organization that would build on the efforts of principals’ associations and school boards in developing a framework to support school leaders in professional learning, provide opportunities for research and knowledge sharing, and ensure overall coordination of leadership initiatives” (Institute for Education Leadership, 2009, para. 1). This commitment was once again echoed in the document Reach Every student: Energizing Ontario Education (Government of Ontario, 2008) that highlighted the importance and impact of school leaders, especially school principals, on student learning and the need to support them “in
this regard with a more comprehensive leadership strategy” (p. 14). In late 2008, the Institute for Education Leadership published the *Putting Ontario’s Leadership Framework Into Action: A Guide for School & System Leaders* to ensure a consistent and effective approach to leadership which listed and described those school and system leadership practices and competencies that were found to be highly effective in both research and workplace practice (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008).

While these initiatives recognize and acknowledge the importance of effective schools and school leadership for student achievement, standards of practice for school leaders are a relatively recent phenomenon internationally, and there has been little investigation about how these kinds of policy standards are actually being used. More specifically, in relation to the introduction of the Ontario Leadership Framework, there has not been any empirical work that has examined what impact, if any, this has had on those directly affected by it. In short, how have principals and vice-principals reacted to this policy change?

**Context of Ontario**

In Canada, education falls under the authority of the provincial government. Generally, the Premier of the province appoints the Minister of Education to represent the interests of the ministry to the provincial cabinet and to assist in the development of education policy. One of the dominant responsibilities of the Minister of Education is to administer provincial statutes and regulations that concern education.

The task of operating Ontario’s publicly-funded education system is conducted through 72 district school boards comprising 31 English-language public boards, 29 English-language Catholic boards, four French-language boards, and eight French-
language Catholic boards. These district boards are responsible for administering the funding they receive from the province to their schools for such aspects as determining the number, size, and location of schools; providing education programs that meet the needs of the school community, including needs for special education; and prudent management of the funds allocated by the province to support all board activities, including education programs for elementary and secondary school students, and the building and maintaining of schools (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013).

At the board level, supervisory officers are responsible to the Minister of Education for ensuring that ministry policies are carried out and that they perform the duties that are assigned to them (Ontario College of Teachers, 2013a). Supervisory officers in Ontario have taught successfully for 5 years, earned a master’s degree and completed the Supervisory Officer’s Qualification Program.

At the school level, principals are responsible to the district, through their respective superintendent, for the leadership and management of the school under their care. In order to be considered for the position of principal (or vice-principal) one needs to successfully complete the Principals Qualification program. In order to be eligible to enroll in the program, candidates are required to have at least 5 years of successful teaching experience, hold an acceptable university degree, hold a certificate of qualification which specifies concentrations in three divisions including intermediate, and one of the following:

Two specialist or honor specialist qualifications, or  
One specialist or honor specialist qualification, and at least half the number of graduate postsecondary credits required to qualify for a master’s degree, or  
A master’s degree that required completion of at least 30 graduate postsecondary credits or their equivalent, or a doctorate, or
At least 30 graduate postsecondary credits or their equivalent. (Ontario College of Teachers, 2013b, para. 5)

**The Problem**

The Ministry of Education for the Province of Ontario recognized early on in its education improvement efforts in 2003, that leadership plays an important role “in any attempt to improve student outcomes” (Government of Ontario, 2010a, p. 5). Citing the work of Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004), the ministry emphasized the finding that “leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school” (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 5) and that closer attention needed to be placed on supporting this role. In 2005, the ministry released a discussion paper *Leading Education: New Supports for Principals and Vice- Principals in Ontario’s Publicly Funded Schools* (Government of Ontario, 2005) that outlined their overall objective to support principals and vice-principals in their role as school leaders. A large part of their strategy to achieve this was through the development and attainment of five goals:

- ensure conditions exist that permit principals to perform their key function as the instructional leader in our schools; provide the highest quality training and support possible to principals and vice-principals, both in advance and throughout their careers; increase the input principals and vice-principals have with the education system; improve respect and security for the roles of principals and vice-principals; and better define the role, powers, responsibilities and obligations of principals and vice-principals to ensure coherent and consistent expectations. (Government of Ontario, 2005, p. 2)

In order to facilitate the achievement of these goals, the ministry established a virtual Institute for Education Leadership in 2006 with four key goals. The first was to define leadership, to identify the necessary skills and competencies of it, and keep abreast of leading edge leadership work. Secondly, the institute was to support research on effective leadership practices both in the Ontario context and internationally. Thirdly, it was to re-
examine current practices in response to emerging research to align theory and practice, and lastly, to provide a forum of communication to enhance understanding of educational leadership and to promote dialogue (Institute for Education Leadership 2009, para. 5). As a way to achieve these goals and of particular significance to this study, the Institute created and developed the Ontario Leadership Framework for school and system leaders in 2008. The Ontario Leadership Framework makes specific reference to the important role that “effective” leaders play in the success of any school and the challenges of trying to achieve this. It purports that the framework is “tailored to the roles and responsibilities of school leaders” and describes the leadership practices and competencies that research has found to be effective for student achievement (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008, p. 9). In short, it is designed to:

Inspire a shared vision of leadership; promote a common language that fosters an understanding of leadership and what it means to be a school and system leader; identify the practices and competencies that describe effective leadership; and guide the design and implementation of professional learning and development for school and system leaders. (p. 6)

The framework was divided into two parts: leadership practices and competencies, and system practices and procedures. The leadership framework was further distinguished by addressing both the Catholic and secular school systems of Ontario separately. This distinction was deemed necessary to acknowledge and reflect the religious traditions and beliefs of the Catholic system of education in Ontario as enshrined in the Canadian constitution.

Having spent the past 20 years in Catholic education as a classroom teacher, Department Head, Vice-Principal, and Principal at both the secondary and elementary
level in Ontario, I have always been fully aware of the challenges that my work as a school leader has presented. With an ever increasing workload and an environment of greater accountability, I relied greatly on my leadership experiences to inform my decision making and nurture my leadership practices. With the introduction of the Ontario Leadership Framework for principals and vice-principals I became quite curious about how this would affect my school leadership. Introduced and supported by my district as a policy change that would benefit one’s leadership practices and competencies as a school leader, I became intrigued as well with how my colleagues would react to this. Would this really change anyone’s leadership approach or practice? What would their reaction be to this and would there be any variations or differences between them? Recognizing the significance of these questions, I began to search for any research that may have tested or evaluated this framework from a workplace perspective.

After a number of searches for articles and published research papers from online libraries, and communication with ministry of education officials of Ontario responsible for leadership, I was unable to find or locate any studies. Considering that all boards across the province of Ontario have incorporated this framework as a guide for their school and system leaders, and the absence of any study that has examined the Ontario Leadership Framework, it seems timely now that an empirical study on the Ontario Leadership Framework is done. One important note to make at this point is the recognition that the Ontario Leadership Framework has recently been revised during the conduct of this study. Hence, this study only focuses on the content and characteristics of the first edition of the Ontario Leadership Framework.
Some Further Gaps to Consider

The absence of any documented study on the Ontario Leadership Framework, despite being introduced to all Ontario school districts, is a curious situation. It would seem quite important, from many stakeholders point of view, to understand what the possible experiences, influences, effects, or impacts the Ontario Leadership Framework is having on both current school and district administrators. Work concerned with this would inevitably provide a wealth of information and insight to all those concerned. However, the difficulty with such work, as Fullan (2007) states, lies in the fact that many attempts at policy or program change have concentrated on product development, legislation, and other formally expressed changes in a way that ignored the fact that what people did and did not do was the crucial variable. This neglect is understandable, for people are much more unpredictable to deal with than things. (p. 85)

Hence, a study which explores how school leaders have actually experienced and derived meaning of the Ontario Leadership Framework can help us begin to understand the impact of this policy change on principals and vice-principals.

While there are no documented studies that have examined the Ontario Leadership Framework, the research it makes reference to demonstrates “a direct and powerful link between good leadership and improved student achievement” (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008, p. 3). A large amount of this work has focused on core leadership practices that have been found to have a significant effect on student achievement (this will be summarized in more detail in the literature review). This work also reveals that much of the research has focused on school principals at the elementary level, with limited emphasis on school vice-principals and the secondary context.

Principals continue to be seen as the driving force behind each school when it comes to school improvement, effectiveness, and quality (Deal & Peterson, 1990, 1994;
Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Hallinger & Heck 1998; Leithwood et al., 2004; Richardson, Short, & Prickett, 1993. Furthermore, work by Robinson (2007) makes reference to how principals have also been the focus of the success of “turnaround” schools which describes how newly appointed principals take dysfunctional schools (where staff and student absence is high, where the environment is unsafe and where little of value is being learned) and transform them into schools which attract both students and staff, where there is a love of learning and student achievement meets or exceeds relevant benchmarks. (p. 5)

However, this “preoccupation with the leadership of principals has reinforced the assumption that school leadership is synonymous with the principal” (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006, p. 96), and overlooks the important role that others, such as vice-principals, play in school leadership as well (Cranston, Tromans, & Reugebrink, 2004; Hausman, Nebeker, McCreary, & Donaldson, 2002). While there is empirical work from the area of school administration that recognizes the importance of the vice-principalship in schools, “the knowledge base remains inadequate to meet the needs in understanding this vital role in educational administration” (Hausman et al., 2002, p. 136).

Another important consideration here is the limited number of studies that have focused directly on principals and vice-principals as “users” of the educational change or innovation. Much of the research literature on educational change has focused on the principal as the facilitator or the one “responsible” to lead the change in their school. There has been a lack of emphasis on how principals and vice-principals experience educational change when it is directed toward them. While the research states that the principal is critical to educational change efforts being implemented and possibly continued beyond its initial use in their schools and inevitably their districts (Berman &
McLaughlin, 1977, 1978; Fullan, 2007; Gross, Giacquinta, & Berstein, 1971; Huberman & Miles 1984; Supovitz 2006), there is a limited amount of research on how they experience change, let alone vice-principals, when they are the focus of it.

Another point to consider is that the majority of the work that has been conducted on school leadership and its effects on student learning has focused on elementary school organizations (Hallinger et al., 1996; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leitner, 1994; Marzano et al., 2005; Supovitz, Sirindes, & May, 2009; Witziers, Bosker, & Kruger, 2003) with limited attention to secondary schools and the formal leadership structures that exist within them. The danger here is that we are not focusing “on all school leaders.

Generalization in educational research is difficult enough without conflating leadership, or indiscriminately extrapolating findings from a sample of leaders in one type of school to all schools” (Southworth 2002, p. 75). For example, “in large secondary schools, most headteachers’ influence on pupils’ academic learning will almost always be through other adults” (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006, p. 85). Beyond their size, secondary schools are seen as complex organizations (Hallinger, 2005, p. 231) where leadership may often look different from that of elementary schools (Southworth, 2002). More specifically, secondary schools “tend to organize their work in separate departments, based on the subject they teach” (Lomos, Hofman, & Bosker, 2011, p. 722) and under the supervision and leadership of the head of the department (Turner, 1996). Recognizing this, it seems quite apparent that more work from the secondary level may help balance our understanding of school leadership practice.

Hence, this study will begin to address some of these limitations by undertaking empirical work that examines the initial use of the Ontario Leadership Framework from
the perspective of Catholic secondary principals and vice-principals in one Ontario school district.

The primary question for the study is: What has been the experience(s) of Catholic secondary principals and vice-principals with the Ontario Leadership Framework?

Sub-questions to be asked include:

1. How have Catholic secondary principals and vice-principals come to understand the introduction of the Ontario Leadership Framework in their school district?

2. What experiences do Catholic secondary principals and vice-principals identify in their initial use of the Ontario Leadership Framework?

3. What do Catholic secondary principals and vice-principals consider to be important variables that would influence whether or not they continue to use the Ontario Leadership Framework?
Chapter Two: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

This literature review brings together concepts and evidence from policy implementation, educational change, educational leadership, and empirical work on core leadership practices. Together, they provide both a background to the genesis of the Ontario Leadership Framework, and conceptual understandings of the relationship between this framework and the leadership experiences of current Catholic secondary school principals and vice-principals.

Policy Implementation

Research in the field of policy implementation in education has had a history that some have traced back to the 1960s during a time where federal and state programs in the United States were running into conflict with local levels of government (Honig, 2006; Odden, 1991). A major part of the thinking of the time, which to some extent continued for a few decades after, was the assumption of policy-making authorities and analysts that “once they have completed their task of choosing policies, the policy process is virtually complete. All that needs to follow, they assume, is the simple matter of implementation” (Downey, 1988, p. 97). Contemporary research in policy implementation in education not only considers such assumptions as naïve, but also limited in their understanding of the complexity of the implementation process. More specifically, while there has been an evolving understanding that “policies, people, and places affected implementation; contemporary implementation research specifically aims to uncover their various dimensions and how and why interactions among these dimensions shape implementation in particular ways” (Honig, 2006, p. 14).
In a study conducted by Fuhrman, Clune, and Elmore (1991) on the process of implementation of educational reforms in six states during the 1980s, they found that their initial view of the implementation process was “significantly” challenged. In their summary, they describe how they assumed that local responses to reforms would fall into one of three categories: resistance to policy change, formal compliance, and adaptation. Instead they observed local behavior which would “seize policy opportunity, coordinate and expand state policies to meet their needs, and anticipate and actively shape state policy” (Fuhrman et al., 1991, p. 218), a behaviour they describe as “strategic interaction.”

Such acceptance should not be surprising according to Odden (1991) for four important reasons. One, the education systems seems to react quickly to education reforms when there is consensus for educational change from political representatives. Secondly, innovations which were directed to improve student achievement through the improvement of curriculum and teaching strategies have always been within the realm of the responsibilities of local educators. Thirdly, as Murphy et al. (1985, as cited in Odden, 1991) discuss, while state and districts can define and require local schools to move in particular directions, the way in which they arrive at this has been usually decided at the local school level. Lastly, while there were assumptions that local implementers of policy did not have the capacity to successfully implement change, research is clear that not only do local implementers have the capacity and technical expertise to carry out the implementation, but they also have the will (Odden, 1991, pp. 303-304).

Fullan (1991) makes the assertion that “the implementation of educational change involves a ‘change in practice’” and that this can occur on any level (p. 37). Important to
this study is Fullan’s assertion that there are “at least three components or dimensions at
stake in implementing any new program or policy: (1) the possible use of new or revised
materials …, (2) the possible use of new…approaches, and (3) the possible alteration of
beliefs” (Fullan, 1991, p. 37). While it is possible, as Fullan (1991) states, that people
could implement none or all three, all three are necessary. One of the dilemmas that
Fullan makes reference to that is also important to this study is the “tension” between the
“fidelity perspective” and the “mutual adaptation perspective” that is present in the
educational implementation literature (Fullan, 1991, p. 38). The fidelity of
implementation is the “extent to which the change is implemented as originally planned”
(Berman & McLaughlin, 1975, p. 7).

More specifically, when an innovation already exists “the task is to get
individuals or groups of individuals to implement it faithfully in practice, that is, to use it
as it is ‘supposed to be used’ as intended by the developer” (Fullan, 1991, p. 38).

Mutual-adaptation is the perspective that change often is a result of “adaptations and
decisions made by users as they work with particular new policies or programs, with the
policy or program and the user’s situation mutually determining the outcome” (Fullan,
1991, p. 38). As Berman and McLaughlin (1978) discuss in their findings, “key to
understanding implementation… is adaptation at the user level” (p. 16). They further
found that mutual adaptation could

involve a variety of adjustments to the project itself, for example, reduction or
modification of idealistic project goals, amendment or simplification of project
treatment, downward revision of ambitious expectations for behavioural change…or of overly optimistic effects of the project on students, and so on.
(Berman & McLaughlin, 1978, p. 16)

What is just as important to understand, as many studies on the implementation of
policies has discovered, is that any “given policy varies across and within implementing
systems and sites and that the ‘policy’ that matters ultimately is the one enacted within the system, not the one originated outside of it” (McLaughlin, 2006, p. 212). Further, it is becoming increasingly clear that the process of implementation is highly determined by those most affected by it and the “sense” they make of it. Interestingly, there has been work done on the importance of “sense-making” that comes from those who are the end users of the innovation. Contemporary work by Spillane, Reiser, and Gomez (2002) suggest that from a cognitive perspective, “a key dimension of the implementation process is whether, and in what ways, implementing agents come to understand their practice, potentially changing their beliefs and attitudes in the process” (p. 387). More specifically:

what a policy means for implementing agents is constituted in the interaction of their existing cognitive structures (including knowledge, beliefs, attitudes), their situation, and the policy signals. How the implementing agents understand the policy’s message(s) about local behavior is defined in the interaction of these three dimensions. (Spillane et al., 2002, p. 388)

While it is important to consider sense-making from the individual perspective,

cognition is inherently a social practice that can be conceptualized as stretched over people and key aspects of their situation. In this way, what is understood from and about policy is defined in the interactions among implementing agents and their situation. (Spillane et al., 2006, p. 63)

**Educational Change**

Work that has been dedicated to the understanding of change and its effects on organizations and individuals in education has been an area of great interest for many years (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Fullan, 1991, 1993, 2001, 2007; Gross, 1977; Gross et al., 1971; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2009; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). In “today’s era of educational change where reforms proliferate, initiatives abound, legal responsibilities are constantly expanding, and both teachers and leaders complain constantly of overload”
(Hargreaves & Fullan, 2009, p. 3) it is quite apparent that we are still grappling with an understanding of the change process that is still evolving. This is not to say that we have not been able to progress our knowledge of change as it applies to education, quite the contrary (Fullan, 2001, 2007; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). But what it does articulate is the need, as Fullan (2001) discusses, to continue to make the complexity of change understandable to those that study it, and more importantly, to those who experience it firsthand.

One of the more fundamental challenges of understanding educational change is taking into account how others will experience it and the important role they play in how the changes are actually implemented into practice (Fullan, 1991, 2001). This point is further elaborated by Fullan (2001):

real change, then, whether desired or not, represents a serious personal and collective experience characterized by ambivalence and uncertainty; and if the change works out it can result in a sense of mastery, accomplishment, and professional growth. The anxieties of uncertainty and joys of mastery are central to the subjective meaning of educational change, and to success or failure thereof, facts that have not been recognized or appreciated in most attempts at reform. (p. 32)

Fullan (2001) goes on to say:

The psychological process of learning and understanding something new does not happen in a flash. The presence or absence of mechanisms to address the ongoing problem of meaning, at the beginning and as people try out ideas, is crucial for success, because it is at the individual level that change does or does not occur. (p. 47)

Beyond change at the personal level, however, there is also the challenge for a more logical and comprehensive understanding of the change process itself (Fullan, 1991, 2001). In an attempt to address this concern Fullan (2001) discusses how most researchers see three broad phases or stages in the change process (p. 50). Since the
conceptual framework of this thesis adopts Fullan’s (2001, 2007) theory of the change process, it would be prudent to briefly acknowledge and discuss some of the previous work that has also recognised similar phases to the change process. More specifically, a brief discussion will consider the work of Gross et al. (1971), Gross (1977), and Berman and McLaughlin (1974, 1975, 1977, 1978). This is not to suggest that there are no other studies that have developed or devised theories on the change process, but rather that these studies form the basis of Fullan’s theoretical framework of the change process and therefore would be highly relevant to my study. Upon completion of this, a detailed discussion will follow on Fullan’s (2007) theory of the change process.

In an intensive study that examined the change process as it unfolded in an elementary school, Gross et al. (1971) sought out to investigate what factors could possibly prevent and facilitate the implementation of a new innovation that was created to address the “problem of motivating lower-class children and of improving their academic achievement” (p. 10). Until this time very limited attention in the social sciences and educational literature had been given to this area of organizational change (Gross et al., 1971, p. v). This is not to say that work was not done to examine aspects of educational change, but that the scarcity of it lead to major gaps in understanding why certain innovations were successful and others not. As Gross et al. conclude on their review of the literature on organizational change,

most social scientists have not recognized the need to conceptualize the success or failure of the implementation of organizational innovations as the result of a complex set of interrelated forces that occur over an extended period of time after the innovation has been introduced. (p. 40)

This was in direct reference to the Overcoming Resistance to Change (ORC) model, which dominated the organizational change literature of the time.
During the time of the ORC model, social scientists tended to account for the success or failure of innovations as one of “overcoming the initial resistance to change of organizational members” (Gross et al., 1971, p. 36). Such a model focused on management or a change agent to overcome members’ initial resistance to change. Hence, if management was not able to convince their employees of the advantages of the innovation, it would be almost ‘impossible’ to successfully adopt the innovation (Gross et al., 1971, pp. 36-37). Through their work of informally interviewing both teachers and administrators, and conducting classroom observations during an eight month period at an elementary school, Gross et al. (1971) discovered a number of weaknesses to the ORC model in helping to explain or understand the change process, as well as developing a new understanding of the change process in school organizations.

Gross et al. (1971) had found empirical evidence to support their reservations with the ORC model. They found that the failure to implement the innovation was attributable to a number of obstacles. The first was the barriers that were encountered by the organizational members (in this case, teachers) in trying to carry out the changes. Teachers faced a number of obstacles including; clarity of the change, the capability of teachers to carry out the change, the availability of necessary resources, and compatibility of the organization to accommodate the change (Gross et al., 1971, pp. 197-198). A second obstacle was teachers’ resistance to the innovation after it was introduced. Gross et al. found that while teachers were excited and enthusiastic to the innovation initially, they later were no longer willing to make the effort to attempt its implementation (p.198). Lastly, they found that management played a large part in whether or not the innovation would be implemented.
Gross et al. (1971) discovered that teachers were unable to implement the innovation largely because administration failed to recognize the difficulties that teachers were having in carrying out the innovation (pp. 200-201). Hence, they conclude this section of their findings with a submission that the resistance to change assumption needs to be challenged. They further explain that “investigators of the introduction or the implementation of an innovation would be well advised not to treat the degree to which members of an organization are initially resistant to change as an ‘organizational given’, but as a matter requiring empirical examination” (Gross et al., 1971, p. 204). More specifically, Gross et al. found that the process of change involved “three basic stages or time periods: (1) the period of the initiation of an organizational innovation; (2) the period of time of its attempted implementation; and (3) the period during which an innovation is incorporated into an organization” (p. 17). They describe each of these phases in the following ways:

*Initiation* covers the period of time in which a particular innovation is selected…it is the stage in which an organization defines a problem, decides on an innovation to resolve it, and presents the innovation to organizational members. The period of *attempted implementation* begins after the announcement that an innovation will be adopted and focuses on efforts to make the changes in the behavior of organizational members specified by the innovation. If…members do not make the required changes in their organizational behavior, the process breaks down. *Incorporation* is the period when a change that is implemented becomes an enduring part of the operation of the organization. (p. 17)

Building on these previous findings, Gross (1977) reviewed empirical studies which examined the Federal efforts to improve public schools. Concerned with the poor results of these change efforts and grounded with the findings of his earlier work (Gross et al., 1971), Gross took the perspective that the unsuccessful change efforts must have been the result of obstacles. Through a case study approach, Gross examined five school
districts and one large city public school over a 10-year time period that involved the close monitoring and description of the “dynamics of deliberate efforts to institute major innovations into school systems” (p. 76).

Gross (1977) found that the objectives of these various change efforts did not attain their intended goals. Gross argues that this is mainly due to his findings of eight impediments to the change effort in the school systems under investigation. Briefly, they are: the failure to diagnose the problem that the innovation tried to solve; the failure to anticipate or resolve implementation problems; the disorganized manner in which the school systems introduced innovations; uncritical acceptance of existing innovations; absence of monitoring and feedback mechanisms; lack of community involvement; inadequate planning for implementation; and the absence of leadership (Gross 1977, pp. 76-80).

These impediments, as Gross (1977) explains, challenges the ORC model basic premise that the only barrier to change is staffs’ resistance to it. In an effort to make this argument more concrete, Gross discusses six specific ways in which the ORC model needs to be revised as a result of his study’s findings. Of particular relevance to this study is his discussion of how the ORC model truncates the conceptual time line of the change process. More specifically, while ORC model consists of “two stages: the initiation (or introduction of an innovation) stage and the incorporation or rejection stage…it ignores a time period of critical importance to any change effort: the stage of attempted implementation” (Gross, 1977, p. 82). As Gross goes on to explain, this stage “embraces the time period of the change process that starts as soon as the initiation phase is completed and that ends when either the innovation is discarded or is incorporated into
the organization” (p. 82). Further, Gross’s findings also suggest that the inclusion of two additional stages: *the exploratory stage and the strategic planning stage* occur prior to the initiation phase, need to be considered. Hence, a more empirical formulation would view the change process as “composed of five stages: exploration, strategic planning, initiation, attempted implementation, and incorporation or rejection” (Gross, 1977, p.83).

The works by Gross et al. (1971) and Gross (1977) have helped this current study with understanding the need to “conceptualize” change as a result of three main phases. This challenged the traditional thought that success in change or an innovation was simply a matter of overcoming the initial resistance of those expected to change. Gross et al. found that “attempted implementation” was an important consideration in understanding the change process and that there were a number of factors that could either “facilitate or prevent” the change. Gross et al. were able to identify a number of them (e.g., clarity of the innovation, and the presence of leadership) that provided a clearer understanding of the fate of various innovations.

In a 4-year, two-phase study, also known as the Rand Change Agent study, Berman and McLaughlin (1974, 1975, 1977, 1978) set out to identify “what tends to promote various kinds of changes in schools and what doesn’t” (Berman & McLaughlin, 1974, p. iii) by examining four federal change agent programs. During the late 1960s:

> educational reform was often cast as an ‘input-output problem’: the supply of the right amount and kind of inputs: money, innovative ideas and technology, would enable school districts to change their educational practices and thus produce improved student outcomes. But by 1973… serious doubts began to be raised. The evaluation evidence suggested that federal policy instruments had not yielded the expected improvements. (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978, p. 4)

Based on a review of the literature on educational change of the time, “federal efforts to stimulate change in local school systems ha[d] led to disappointing results,” and central
to this was the limited understanding of the implementation of innovations (Berman & McLaughlin, 1975, p. vii).

While there are various reasons as to why this was occurring, the Berman and McLaughlin (1978) study took the perspective that it was not the innovation per se that was the issue with the success or failure of federal efforts to improve public schools, but rather the implementation of it. Berman and McLaughlin (1974) define implementation as the:

change process that occurs when an innovative project impinges upon an organization. By so defining implementation, we shift the focus of research away from measuring compliance or the degree to which the project fulfills its stated goals. Instead, we ask what changes actually occur as a result of the introduction of a new project: how and why they occur and how they affect the operation of the organization. (p. 13)

As a way to guide their data collection and analysis, they devised a conceptual framework that included three distinct yet interrelated phases or stages of the local change process: mobilization, implementation, and institutionalization (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977, p. 17) which was quite similar to Gross et al.’s (1971) work.

While Berman and McLaughlin entitled the first stage of the change process as mobilization, this part of the process has also been identified as the initiation or adoption phase as well (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978). They see mobilization as planning related activities, for example, “defining a problem or need, seeking solutions in terms of new educational methods or approaches, locating funding opportunities, formulating a proposal to do a project, and generating local support for the proposal” (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977, p. 21). Berman and McLaughlin (1978) go on to discuss that there are four paths this can take: opportunism (lack of support from both central and project staff), top-down support (central office staff wanted change but did not support the school staff),
localized support (the efforts at the local level are not supported by central office), and broad-based support (all levels of the district supported the change) (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978, p. 15).

The second phase of change, *implementation*, “involved the translation of project plans and proposals into practice” (p. 15). This phase is more complex and crucial to the whole innovation process as it directly relates to the adaptation of the change into practice. As Berman and McLaughlin (1978) discuss, “each classroom, each school, and each school system, being somewhat different from others, implements the same innovations in different ways at different times or places” (p. 16). Further, the implementation of the innovation followed one of three processes: non-implementation (change did not alter setting nor was adapted to it), cooptation (staff adapted innovation to meet their own needs without any corresponding change in traditional institutional behaviour or practices), and mutual adaptation (both project and setting were changed) (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978, p. 16).

Lastly, the *institutionalization* stage is characterized by the “final transition of a change agent project to an accepted part of regular district operations or its ultimate disappearance” (p. 18). Again, similar to the implementation phase, innovations could follow one of four paths: discontinuation (neither district officials nor building level staff chose to continue change effort), isolated continuation (despite lack of support from district, project methods and materials were continued in isolation from other schools), pro forma continuation (change as official policy, not all use it), and institutionalized change (change becomes part of the standard routine at both district and class level) (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978, pp. 18-20).
While the primary purpose of the model was to provide an understanding to how the change process works and the various paths that an innovation can take, Berman and McLaughlin (1978) were also concerned with the outcomes it produced. It was not only important to understand how the change progressed through the phases, but also whether or not the change effort was successful in addressing the need or problem it was created to address. In order to assess the success of a change or innovation, outcomes would need to be based on some form of information that would indicate whether or not the change or innovation made a difference. One of the most common ways that education determines whether or not any improvement or progress is made is through student achievement. While this would seem a likely candidate to base one’s conclusions on, it is not sufficient. As Berman and McLaughlin (1978) discuss, relying on student outcomes produces problems with comparability, and timing issues for the analysis of change efforts. More specifically, such reliance would not be able to distinguish what went wrong or right with the change effort. Instead, two other outcomes in combination with student outcomes would yield a clearer picture on the outcome of the change effort, namely: “the project’s relative success in achieving its goals (…project’s implementation effectiveness)” and the extent and type of change precipitated by the change (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978, p. 5). The findings of this study “marked a significant shift in the ways policymakers, practitioners, and researchers thought about affecting and understanding planned change in education” (McLaughlin 1991, p. 143). Specifically, this work provided a number of insights into the change process that not only built on Gross et al.’s (1971) work but has also informed this study in three ways. First, their study involved an analysis that
examined macro (federal policies), meso (school district), and micro (teachers) level factors and characteristics that affected project outcomes. Secondly, their finding that: project outcomes (successful implementation, teacher change, improved student performance, and continuation of project methods or materials) depended on three classes of factors; Federal policies (program aims and management strategies); Project characteristics (educational methods, project resources, scope of proposed change, implementation strategies); and Institutional setting (organizational climate and leadership, school and teacher characteristics, district management capacity and support). (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978, p. 22)

Thirdly, they found that within each of the phases of change, “an innovation could follow different paths (i.e., processes) depending on local choices, concerns, and characteristics” (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978, p. 13).

In 1982, Fullan published “the meaning of educational change” which consolidated an extensive portion of the literature on reform and the change process that has been conducted since the 1960s (Fullan, 1982, 1991, 2001, 2007). Acknowledging both the complexity and personal nature of change, Fullan (1991, 2001, 2007) conceptually described a model which explained and provided an understanding of the change process from the identification of a need or a problem to solve, to its either complete adoption or rejection in the education system. The model contained three distinct yet interdependent stages of change that were not new or unique, but in fact there was considerable empirical evidence from other works that identified similar, and in some cases identical, categories to describe the change process. Since this study makes specific use of this conceptual framework to help explain and understand how current practicing Catholic secondary principals and vice-principals have experienced the Ontario Leadership Framework, it is incumbent upon me to provide a clear and comprehensive discussion of Fullan’s model.
There is empirical support to suggest that the change process can be seen as involving three broad phases (Fullan 2001, 2007). While the categories or names used to describe these phases may not be identical in other works on the processes of change, the description or identification of them is. Fullan (2001, 2007) describes his model of the change process as involving the three phases of: Initiation; Implementation; and Institutionalization. Figure 1 is a visual representation of this change process adapted from Fullan (2001, 2007).

![Figure 1. Change process. Adapted from Fullan (2001, 2007).](image)

As the bidirectional arrows connecting the three phases or stages of the change process in Figure 1 illustrate, change is “not a linear process, but rather one in which events at one phase can feed back and alter decisions made at previous stages, which then proceed to work their way through in a continuous interactive way” (Fullan, 2007, p. 67). The outcome circle of the model, depending on the objectives, can refer to several different types of results… for example, improved student learning and attitudes; new skills, attitudes, or
satisfaction on the part of teachers and other school personnel; or improved problem solving capacity of the school as an organization. (Fullan, 2007, pp. 66-67)

Hence, change is not seen as a single event, but as a process involving many variables and factors that may affect the way in which it is introduced, implemented, and ultimately incorporated (Fullan, 2007). It would be important at this point to further elaborate on each of these three phases of the change process to provide a more comprehensive discussion of their place and role in the change process. This representation and understanding of the change process is applicable to any change and to the various roles that people play in the change process.

**Initiation.** Initiation is the first phase in the change process that leads up to and includes the decision to proceed with implementation of an innovation or change (Fullan, 1991, 2001, 2007). As Fullan (2007) explains “at a general level we might assume that specific educational changes are introduced because they are desirable according to certain educational values and meet a given need better than existing practices do” (p. 69). However, Fullan (2007) goes on to state that there are a number of variables which can affect whether or not an innovation or change is initiated. More specifically, Figure 2 identifies eight such factors that Fullan (2007) discusses that are associated with the first phase of the change process of initiation.

While Fullan (2007) provides a comprehensive discussion of each of these eight factors associated with initiation, this review will only include those factors of particular relevance and importance to this study. More specifically, the following factors will be discussed here: advocacy from central administration; teacher advocacy; external change agents; new policy-funds; and problem-solving and bureaucratic orientations.
Advocacy from central and/or school administrators. Any change or innovation if it is to be successfully introduced and later implemented will require strong support from a number of central personnel. Fullan (2007) discusses how innovations “rarely occur without an advocate” (p. 73) whether it comes from leaders at the central district or from the school level. The importance of this administrative support in the beginning of the change phase has been found to be quite influential on those most directly affected by it (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977, 1978; Fullan, 2001, 2007; Gross et al., 1971; Supovitz, 2006). Administrative support not only legitimizes the innovation, but also directs the resources needed to allow it to be implemented (Fullan, 2007, p.74). District advocacy for innovations has often been overlooked…[yet their] attitudes of enthusiasm, support, indifference, or opportunism toward the coming innovation…seem to be crucial for the fate of innovative efforts. These attitudes establish the “legitimacy” of the project, define the priority accorded it in the district, and determine people’s commitment to the project. (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977, pp. 22-23)
For example, when district leadership is not interested in an innovation, little may happen, but when there is interest, “it is the superintendent and central staff who combine access, internal authority, and resources necessary to seek out external funds for a particular change program and/or obtain board support” (Fullan, 2007, p. 74).

**Teacher advocacy.** Teachers as a group are usually not recognized with initiating educational change; they are usually the ones that are asked to participate in some change effort to bring about some new reform. Their support however, is quite important as they “almost always decide whether they will implement a change or innovation, or the degree to which they will use it” (House, 1974, p. 67). Yet, this does not mean that teachers do not innovate; they actually do quite a bit. This usually takes place when teachers find the time and opportunity to come together to share their experiences and practices, as can be done in a professional learning community (Fullan, 2007, p.75). The ability of teachers to come together and discuss changes and innovation in such communities allows them to “feel more comfortable in exchanging ideas, and [produces] a collective sense of responsibility” (Bryk, Sebring, Kerbrow, Rollow, & Easton, 1998, p. 128).

Advocacy for change or educational innovations can also come in the form of teacher unions. Teacher unions “can be powerful initiators when they do decide to lead reform” (Fullan, 2007, p.75). Hence, it is not surprising that “many teachers are willing to adopt change at the individual classroom level and will do so under the right conditions (e.g., an innovation that is clear and practical, a supportive district administration and principal, opportunity to interact with other teachers, advocacy from the union, and outside resource help)” (Fullan, 2007, p. 75).
External change agents. External change agents relates to the people in roles external to the district (regional, state, or national) that play an important role in much of the stimulating and supporting of the change (Fullan, 2007, p. 76). There has been much written in regard to the active role of state and federal governments to stimulate educational change or innovation projects in school districts (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977, 1978; Fullan, 2001, 2007; Rosenblum & Louis, 1981). However, governments have not only been the source of external change agents. Interestingly, “what is new in the past decade is the enormous presence on a large scale of not-for-profit foundations and business partnerships. Much of the innovative money and opportunities for large-scale reform are made possible through foundations” (Fullan, 2007, p. 76). With an increasing awareness of funding shortages and gaps in schools to provide quality of education for all (Education Trust, 2005), there is also the recognition that local and federal governments cannot stimulate or initiate much needed change or innovation in schools without the support of others.

New policy and funds. Many of the new government initiatives that are creating change in our schools are increasingly being mandated. A large part of this is because “without the existence of state and federal lobby groups and reform-minded policy-makers, many new social change programs would never even get formally adopted” (Fullan, 1991, p. 58). Many “major educational initiatives are generated through government policy making and legislation in areas of greatest need of reform such as special needs, desegregation, literacy and numeracy initiatives, teacher education and the like” (Fullan, 2007, p. 78). As well, “new policies, especially if accompanied by funds,
stimulate and sometimes require initiation of change at the local level” (Fullan, 1991, p. 58).

The increasing nature of mandated reforms coupled with the financial incentive of money and/or resources has demanded more accountability from school districts (Elmore, 2004). As governments become more insistent about the nature and accountability of educational reforms (Fullan, 2007, p. 78), more schools will be held to account (Elmore, 2004, p. 134).

**Problem-solving and bureaucratic orientations.** There have been a number of studies and works that has found that the decision to accept a particular innovation or change can be motivated by two different orientations: (a) to resolve a local problem, or (b) for opportunistic reasons (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977, 1978; Bryk et al., 1998; Fullan, 2001, 2007; Pincus, 1974). Those that are oriented toward bureaucratic (opportunistic) patterns are motivated primarily by the desire to reap the windfall of [available funds]” (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977, p. 23). Districts “welcome external funds and/or polices…as an opportunity to obtain extra resources (which they use for other purposes and/or which represent a symbolic act of appearing to respond to a given need)” (Fullan, 2007, p. 79). Some schools become quite adept at securing a myriad of programs and funds to showcase, the downfall here is that “so few of these programs receive the necessary time, attention and commitment to be well implemented. Consequently, few survive beyond initial funding” (Bryk et al., 1998, pp. 123-124). However, it is important to note that it has also been found that such actions to secure funds “may be necessary for political survival, may be needed first steps that set the
preconditions for real change in practice, or may represent the only change possible in certain situations” (Fullan, 2007, p. 80).

Conversely, changes that involve the problem-solving orientation are taken more seriously because they deal with local educational concerns or problems. Change efforts that followed this orientation “were more likely to be implemented effectively because they enjoyed institutional support and a high level of teacher commitment” (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977, p. 23).

The Ontario Leadership Framework was initiated by the ministry of education of Ontario in response to the need to address a number of concerns and issues around developing, supporting and sustaining the “highest quality leadership possible in schools and boards across the province” (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008, p. 5). At this level, factors of initiation such as external change agents, and new policy and funds provide an understanding and context for this in recognizing the important role they play in the introduction of the Ontario Leadership Framework at the district level, and which may also affect its implementation as well. At the district level, the factors of advocacy from central administration, problem-solving and bureaucratic orientations of the district, and advocacy of the teacher (in this study this will refer to advocacy from the principals and vice-principals who participated in this work) were significant in informing this study. More specifically, the Ontario Leadership Framework was re-initiated at the district level to both their school and board leaders as a framework that would benefit one’s leadership practices and competencies. District support and advocacy of the Ontario Leadership Framework would greatly influence the level of awareness and its initial use.
Implementation. Implementation is the part of the change process that is concerned with “putting into practice an idea, program, or set of activities and structures new to the people attempting or expected to change” (Fullan, 2007, p. 84). More specifically, “implementation or initial use involves the first experiences of attempting to put an idea or a reform into practice” (Fullan, 2007, p. 65). Fullan (2007) and others (Bergman & McLaughlin, 1977; Gross, 1977; Gross et al., 1971) consider the implementation process to be critical because it is here that the livelihood of the innovation or change is determined.

Similar to the initiation phase, there are a number of factors which can affect the implementation of an innovation or change. Based on empirical research, Fullan (1991, 2001, 2007) groups these variables under three main categories. Figure 3 provides a visual of the interactive factors affecting implementation and the three broad categories that they are grouped under.

Figure 3. Interactive factors affecting implementation. Adapted from Fullan (2007, p. 87).
Characteristics of change. In the first category, characteristics of change, Fullan (2007) lists and describes four factors (need, clarity, complexity, and quality/practicality) related to the characteristics of innovations themselves (p. 87). Of particular relevance to this study are the factors of need, clarity, and quality/practicality.

Need. The importance of needs, whether they are perceived or real, plays an important part in the implementation of change (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977, 1978; Berends, Bodily, & Kirby, 2002; Bodily, 1998; Fullan, 2001, 2007; Rosenblum & Louis, 1981). For example in relation to the work that has been done with New American Schools, Berends et al. (2002) found that if “schools were forced to adopt a design without careful assessment of needs, it is not surprising that teachers would resist engaging in the activities of the design” (p. 14). Similarly, Rosenblum and Louis (1981, as cited in Fullan, 2007) found that formal recognition within the school system of unmet educational needs was one of the four factors they considered to play a major role in participating in the Experimental School program (pp. 89-90). Unfortunately, there have been many innovations that have been attempted without the careful attention to whether or not they address what are perceived to be priority needs of the user (Fullan, 2007, p. 88). The importance of need is a complicated factor to understand completely in the implementation of change. While the importance of being able to connect needs to decisions about implementing a particular change or innovation seems clear enough, as Fullan (2007) states, there is the challenge of understanding needs through the change process; for example, “people often become clearer about their needs only when they start doing things, that is, during implementation itself” (p. 88). More specifically, the “fit
between a new program and district and/or school needs is essential, but it may not become entirely clear until implementation is underway” (pp. 88-89).

Clarity. Understanding what the goals or objectives of a change or innovation is quite important to its implementation. Gross et al. (1971) discovered that the lack of clarity of an innovation can act as a barrier to the implementation of it. Gross et al. found that teachers never obtained a clear understanding of the innovation and therefore were unable to explain or articulate what it was they were to do differently as a result of the innovation (pp. 123-129). When staff does not achieve clarity about the objectives of the change, the innovation is subject to breakdown during implementation, to cooption, and to eventual abandonment. Users of the innovation can better implement innovations if they clearly understand what its purposes are (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978, pp. 25-26). Fullan (2007) remarks that when goals or what people need to do differently is not clear, people can feel anxious and frustrated at the lack of coherence in the change process; lack of “clarity, diffuse goals and unspecified means of implementation, represents a major problem at the implementation stage” (p. 89). However, this is not easily solved by simply making educational change clear from the outset, “the key is to work on clarity all through the implementation process” (p. 90).

Work done by Huberman and Miles (1984) found that a large majority of users of an innovation were “dimly aware” of what they were actually being asked to do despite the innovation being adopted at the level of the central office. In their analysis they further found that in early implementation, users’ understanding remained “muddy” and that it was not until much later when “they actually got their hands on the materials” that greater clarity emerged (Huberman & Miles, 1984, p. 61).
However, too much clarity is not a solution either. “Very simple and insignificant changes can be very clear, while more difficult and worthwhile ones may not be amenable to easy clarification” (Fullan, 2001, p.77). Related to this is also the problem of “false clarity.” This is where “change is interpreted in an oversimplified way; that is, the proposed change has more to it than people perceive or realize” (Fullan, 2007, p. 89).

Such misunderstandings can lead to users not comprehending what needs to be done differently (Fullan, 2007) and therefore affecting the chances of a successful implementation of the innovation based on its intended purposes and goals.

*Quality and practicality of the program.* To simply state that the quality and practicality of change is important, would be to treat this factor superficially (Fullan, 2007). Those that implement change are always concerned with its quality and practicality for their practice. If the “fit” is not right then so too is the change. For example, Huberman and Miles (1984) found that “goodness of personal fit” was an important element in the implementation process. When users of the innovation could relate to it in terms of some familiarity (comfort and routine) with their practice, then the innovation was a “good fit” and this improved its implementation. However, when the “fit” was poor or not right, this could produce challenges to its implementation (Huberman & Miles 1984, p. 65). Similarly, practical changes can also refer to addressing “salient needs that fit well with a user’s situation, that are focused, and that include concrete how-to-do-it possibilities” (Mortimore et al., 1988, as cited in Fullan, 1991, p. 72).

The importance of quality is also very important during the implementation stage. During this phase “teachers and others involved in an innovation are learning about it,
discovering how to use it, assimilating its intricacies and becoming efficient and comfortable with its use in their classrooms…it is during implementation that most of the problems associated with the innovation become glaringly apparent” (Hord, 1987, p. 77). Hence, “inadequate quality and even the simple unavailability of materials and other resources” (Fullan, 2007, p. 91) can undermine efforts to implement the innovation in the first place. If educational change is to be implemented, it needs to be well thought out, have the requisite supports and materials to assist those with the charge of implementation and this takes time and is complex to do. Fullan (2007) maintains that it is “what people develop in their minds and actions that counts” (p. 92), and if the educational change is perceived as lacking in quality and in practicality, then its implementation will be affected.

**Local characteristics.** In the second category of implementation factors, *local characteristics*, Fullan (2007) lists and describes the “social conditions of change; the organization and setting in which people work; and the planned and unplanned events and activities that influence whether or not given change attempts will be productive” (p. 93). Under this category, Fullan (2007) lists: *school district, board and community characteristics, the principal*, and the *role of the teacher* as factors related to the characteristics of change implementation at the local level. In this study the factors of the *school district, and the teacher* as discussed by Fullan (2007) were found to be especially relevant to this work. More specifically, while Fullan (2007) makes reference to the teacher, in this study this role was found to be more closely aligned with the principal and vice-principal.
School districts. School districts play an important role throughout the change process and are “key to widespread educational improvement in the twenty-first century. Despite their shortcomings, local school districts are still uniquely situated to play a critical role in improving…education” (Supovitz, 2006, p. 219). In fact, the critical importance of their performance with respect to the success or failure of the implementation of innovations has been well documented (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977, 1978; Fullan, 2001, 2007; Gross et al., 1971; Supovitz, 2006; Rosenblum & Louis, 1981). A large part of the influence that school districts have on the implementation of innovations has to deal with its history with innovation attempts. As Fullan (2007) discusses,

the more that teachers or others have had negative experiences with previous implementation attempts in the district or elsewhere, the more cynical or apathetic they will be about the next change presented, regardless of the merit of the new idea or program. (p. 94)

Hence, the way in which the school district goes about initiating and implementing the change effort will have a profound effect on those that are directly charged with implementing it.

A second important factor about school districts is their level of support in the implementation of innovations. Administrative support has been found to be a fundamental aspect in the success of the implementation of change (Huberman & Miles, 1984). Change can occur “without the support of central administrators, but district-wide change will not happen…support of central administrators is critical for change in district practice” (Fullan, 2007, p. 94). For example, in a study of district-wide reform in Ontario, Sharratt and Fullan (2006) describe the levels of support that the district provided to their schools in improving literacy. They found that the district developed a strong team of
curriculum coordinators, invested in ongoing systematic professional development in literacy, assessment, knowledge…and developed and supported school literacy teams (Sharratt & Fullan, 2006, pp. 585-586). Such examples of support can signal to those involved in the implementation of change, the importance of carrying it out. As Fullan (2007) notes, “teachers and others know enough now, if they didn’t twenty years ago, not to take change seriously unless central administrators demonstrate through actions that they should” (p. 94).

Role of the teacher. Teachers are generally seen as the target of many new reform and/or educational change efforts. This is in large part because teachers do not usually “initiate innovations, but almost always decide whether [they] will implement it or, more precisely, the degree to which [they] will use it” (House, 1974, p. 67). Research continues to examine teachers and other users of innovations to understand what it is exactly that they experience when involved in the change process. For example, Huberman (1988) found that certain individual characteristics and mental states affected how teachers reacted to change; serenity, confidence, and how engaged the teacher was provided valuable insight for him in understanding the relationship between career cycles of teachers and school improvement (pp.128-129). Similarly, Berman and McLaughlin (1977) found that teacher characteristics had major effects on the outcomes of change. In an effort to examine the relationship between teacher characteristics and project implementation and continuation, they found that years of experience, sense of efficacy, and verbal ability significantly affected project outcomes (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977, p. 136). In many respects, the role of the teacher can be seen as analogous to that of the principals and vice-principals in this study.
**External Factors: Government and other agencies.** In this last set of factors that influences the implementation process, the focus is on understanding the dynamics of schools and their respective districts in the “context of the broader society.” Pressure “for increased school accountability is a distinctive hallmark of the present period of educational reform” (Elmore, 2004, p.134). As concerns and demands from the public continue to emerge on the state of education in the country, preoccupation with the question “what does the larger society think of its education system?” (Fullan, 2007, p. 99) dominates. In response to these pressures, elected officials and government agencies enact “legislation, new policies, and new program initiatives [to address] public concerns that the education system is not doing an adequate job of teaching” (Fullan, 2007, p. 99) the skills and competencies that the future generation will need. Such reforms then “put pressure on local districts (sometimes to the point of force) and also provides various incentives for changing in the desired direction” (Fullan, 2007, p. 99).

However, as Fullan (2007) states, preoccupation with the initiation of change has led to the underestimation of “the problems and processes of implementation. We have the classic case of two entirely different worlds, the policymakers on the one hand and the local practitioner on the other hand. To the extent that each side is ignorant to the subjective world of the other, reform will fail, and the extent is great” (Fullan, 2007, p. 99). More importantly, Fullan (2007) states that the local school system and the “external authority agencies have not been able to establish a processual relationship with each other...[instead it is] submission of requests for money, intermittent progress reports on what is being done, external evaluations, paperwork, not people work” (p.100) that dominate.
Exploring and analyzing how principals and vice-principals (micro level) translated this policy change into practice would be difficult without some frame of reference. Fullan’s (2007) discussion on implementation and the factors that can affect it, provided this study with a context from which to examine their initial use of the Ontario Leadership Framework. More specifically, it provides this study with a lens from which to understand the experiences and responses of the principals and vice-principals in their initial use of the Ontario Leadership Framework.

**Institutionalization.** Considered to be the last phase of the change process, institutionalization (also referred to as continuation, incorporation, and/or routinization) refers to “whether the change gets built in as an ongoing part of the system or disappears by way of a decision to discard or through attrition” (Fullan, 2007, p. 65). When the change process reaches this phase, there is evidence that users have assimilated its methods, materials, approaches (and so on) into their own practices (Hord, 1987, p. 82). In a sense, it represents another “adoption decision, which may be negative, and even if positive, may not get implemented” (Fullan, 2007, p. 101).

Much of our understanding of institutionalization has been through the work of Miles (1983). Miles recognized that research on institutionalization was “quite thin” and the research that was available was “vague and mysterious” in explaining this process (p. 16). In an effort to uncover why certain programs continued, and others not, Miles set out to examine the experience of 12 schools with school improvement programs. What Miles found “was that strong attention of administrators to stabilizing and supporting innovation, extending its use to a large group, and making provisions to protect the
innovation against the threats of personnel turnover that are endemic to schools” (p. 19) were important factors in the institutionalization of change.

As the “final transition of change to an accepted part of regular district operations or to its ultimate disappearance” (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978, p. 18), institutionalization can face many challenges and barriers. For example, variables such as: expiration of district or state funding; central administrative support; and the capacity of those implementing the innovation, turned out to be formidable influences on the longevity of the innovation beyond implementation (Fullan, 2007, pp. 101-103).

Research by Datnow and Stringfield (2000) documented that reform adoption, implementation, and sustainability, and school change more generally, are not processes that result from individuals or institutions acting in isolation from one another. Rather, they are the result of the interrelations between and across groups in different contexts, at various points in time. (p. 199)

In summary, Fullan (2007) reminds us that:

it takes a fortunate combination of the right factors, a critical mass, to support and guide the process of relearning, which respects the maintenance needs of individuals and groups and at the same time facilitates, stimulates, and prods people to change through a process of incremental and decremental fits and starts on the way to institutionalizing (or, if appropriate, rejecting) the change in question. (pp. 104-105)

Fullan (2007) makes the claim that moderately complex changes from initiation to institutionalization can take from two to four years (Fullan, 2007, p. 68) to occur.

Relating this time frame to the Ontario Leadership Framework, which has been in existence since the fall of 2008 to school districts, it seems plausible that the principals and vice-principals in this study may provide some preliminary insight on the Ontario Leadership Framework being accepted as a part of their leadership practice or to its dismissal. This section on institutionalization illuminates for this study the challenges that the principals and vice-principals may communicate as their experiences and responses to
the Ontario Leadership Framework. More specifically, this phase represents another opportunity to explore and make sense of the possible affect that the Ontario Leadership Framework is having on the leadership practices and competencies of principals and vice-principals.

This literature review on educational change, the three phases of the process, and the various factors that can affect them provides a lens from which to understand how principals and vice-principals have experienced the Ontario Leadership in their practice. More specifically, since this study is concerned with the experiences of principals and vice-principals with the Ontario Leadership Framework, framing it as a “change” provides a conceptual framework from which to explore and analyze their responses. This is achieved by applying the three phases of change process and the relevant factors that affect each of these phases to the responses of the principals and vice-principals to the Ontario Leadership Framework. In so doing one is then able to make sense of the responses of the principals and vice-principals by comparing and contrasting them to the phases and the factors that affect them as highlighted by Fullan (2007). This in turn would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the experience(s) of the principals and vice-principals with the Ontario Leadership Framework.

Leadership

The Ontario Leadership Framework has its base from a large amount of research that has been, and continues to be, conducted on educational leadership. Of particular note to this study is the work that has been done to understand what effective school leadership is, and more importantly, what it looks like in practice. In an effort to consolidate and make sense of what it is we actually know and understand about school
leadership, a number of academic experts have set out to review the many articles that have been written on the topic (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leithwood & Duke, 1999; Leithwood et al., 2004; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). Their work has not only organised and provided coherence to our understanding of leadership; it has also provided the basis for future leadership work that has led to such developments as the Ontario Leadership Framework. An important element that has arisen from this work is the frequent reference to two approaches of leadership; instructional and transformational. While other approaches have been articulated, these two continue to dominate the empirical research on educational leadership (Robinson et al., 2008, p. 638). More specifically to this study, the Ontario Leadership does contain dimensions that try to improve the quality of teaching and learning (instructional leadership) and the organizational conditions that enable and support efforts to improve schools (transformational leadership) (Leithwood, 2012a, p. 12).

Hence, it would be fitting that some context be set by discussing these two leadership approaches which then should be followed by an examination of those studies that have focused on core leadership practices that have also informed the Ontario Leadership Framework.

**Transformational leadership.** Transformational leadership has its roots in the work of Burns (1978) who some consider to be the “founder of modern leadership theory” (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 13). Burns (1978) “analyzed the ability of some leaders, across all types of organizations, to engage staff in ways that inspired them to new levels of energy, commitment and moral purpose” (as cited in Robinson et al., 2008, p. 639). Burns (1978) spoke of the importance of leadership being aligned with a collective
purpose, where “one or more persons engage with one another and they increase their levels of motivation and morality” (as cited in Stewart, 2006, p. 8). This form of leadership “raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both the leader and led, and thus it has a transforming effect on both” (Burns, 1978, p. 20). As Burns makes clear, this is in contrast to transactional leadership where leaders interacted with followers with the intent of “exchanging one thing for another: job for votes, or subsidies for campaign contributions” (Burns, 1978, p. 4). This form of leadership where something was exchanged for something else was seen by Burns to be the predominant way that relationships between leaders and followers occurred, where performance was expected (Burns, 1978).

To some extent, Bass (1985) also “contrasts transactional or exchange-based forms of leadership, in which leaders clarify expectations and reward followers for fulfilling them, with transformational leadership, in which leaders motivate their followers to move beyond self-interest and work for the collective good” (as cited in Wang, Oh, Courtright, & Colbert, 2011, p. 224). However, transformational leadership “adds to the contribution of transactional leadership to effectiveness; transformational leadership does not substitute for transactional leadership...the best leaders are both transformational and transactional” (Bass, 1995, p. 474). Bass (1985, 1990) articulated that there were four main behaviours that leaders who demonstrated transformational leadership exhibited: individualized consideration; intellectual stimulation; inspirational motivation; and idealized influence. Individual consideration is characterized by giving “personal attention to members who seem neglected” (Bass 1990, as cited in Marzano et al., 2005 p. 14). Intellectual stimulation is characterized by “enabling followers to think
of old problems in new ways” (as cited in Marzano et al., 2005, p. 14). Inspirational motivation is characterized by “communicating high performance expectations” (Bass 1990, as cited in Marzano et al., 2005 p. 14). Idealized influence is characterized by “modeling behavior through exemplary personal achievements, character, and behavior” (Bass 1990, as cited in Marzano et al., 2005 p. 14).

While for the most part transformational leadership was discussed in business, politics, and various institutional settings, there was a noticeable gap of this approach in the educational administration literature. Considering that education was facing a number of challenges and societal pressures for improved productivity, this approach to leadership was still quite unknown in the school leadership literature.

Drawing on the works of Burns (1978), Bass (1985), Avolio and Bass (1988), and others, Leithwood and his colleagues began conducting research that examined the nature and effects of transformational leadership as it applied to school contexts (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Marzano et al., 2005; Stewart, 2006). For example, Leithwood and Jantzi (1990) use transformational leadership as “a promising conception of the type of leadership required to meet many school reform objectives...and [to] learn more about the specific nature and effects of strategies associated with such leadership” (p. 4). Further, they add that the most “generic purpose of transformational leadership [is] the enhancement of individual and collective problem-solving capacities of organizational members; such capacities are exercised in the identification of goals to be achieved and practices to be used in their achievement” (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990, p. 7).
In the works of Leithwood (1994), and in Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach (1999) a model of transformational leadership was developed to describe transformational leadership “along six dimensions: building school vision and goals; providing intellectual stimulation; offering individualized support; symbolizing professional practices and values; demonstrating high performance expectations; and developing the structures to foster participation in school decisions” (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000, p. 114). Recognizing the importance of transactional practices to transformational leadership, Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) added four management dimensions to their model: staffing, instructional support, monitoring school activities, and community focus (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000, p. 114). This approach to leadership “fundamentally aims to foster capacity development and higher levels of personal commitment to organizational goals on the part of leaders’ colleagues. Increased capacities and commitment are assumed to result in extra effort and greater productivity” (Burns, 1978; Bass, as cited in Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000, p. 113).

In a relatively recent review of transformational school leadership research, Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) make four conclusions that justify the continuing interest in transformational approaches to school leadership:

- Transformational leadership effects on perceptions of organizational effectiveness are significant and large;
- transformational leadership effects on objective, independent measures of organizational effectiveness are less well documented and less uniform in nature but are positive and significant, although modest in size;
- evidence about transformational leadership effects on independently measured student outcomes, in particular, seems quite promising though limited in amount;
- recent evidence about transformational leadership effects on students’ engagement in school, while still modest in amount, is uniformly positive. (p.193)

Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) go on to conclude that the studies on transformational leadership have begun to produce a robust and relatively clear picture of the nature, causes, and consequences of this type of leadership. “Given such progress, expanding and
refining transformational conceptions of leadership seems likely to be more productive than adopting an excessively narrow conception of such leadership” (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005, p. 194).

**Instructional leadership.** A review of educational leadership and school effectiveness literature in the early 1980s would reveal an emphasis on the conceptual model of instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2003, p. 329). This was in large part driven “initially by findings from research conducted in the 1970s and 1980s on instructionally effective schools” (Hallinger, 2005, p. 222). As an approach to school leadership it:

- assumes that the critical focus for attention by leaders is the behaviors of teachers as they engage in activities directly affecting the growth of students. Most conceptions of instructional leadership allocate authority and influence to formal administrative roles (usually the principal), assuming, as well, considerable influence through expert knowledge on the part of those occupying such roles. (Leithwood et al., 1999, p. 8)

Hence, during this period of time much attention was directed toward principals as the key to effective change in schools and underscored “the importance of instructional leadership, especially the role of the principal in coordinating and controlling the instructional program. Such work has led to a reappearance of the old maxim, “effective principal, effective school” (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, and Lee, 1982, p. 34). Hence, the instructional leader was seen as strong, directive and who had high expectations and standards for students and teachers, goal oriented, able to align the strategies and activities of the school with the school’s mission, and had a combination of expertise and charisma (Hallinger, 2005, pp. 223-224). This school leadership “model shaped much of the thinking about effective principal leadership disseminated in the 1980s and early 1990s internationally” (Hallinger, 2003, p. 330).
To make sense of this new approach, a number of models of instructional leadership have been proposed (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Bossert et al., 1982; Leithwood et al., 1990), however the one discussed in the work of Hallinger and Murphy (1985) “has been used most frequently in empirical investigations” (Hallinger, 2005, p. 224). Hallinger and Murphy’s (1985) study suggests that the instructional role of the principal can be subdivided into three general dimensions: defining the school mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive learning climate (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985, p. 220).

Defining a school mission is to have:

- a vision of what the school should be trying to accomplish. Defining a school mission involves communicating this vision to the staff and students in such a way that a sense of shared purpose exists, linking together the various activities that take place in classrooms throughout the school. (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985, p. 221)

Managing the instructional program “involves working with teachers in areas specifically related to curriculum and instruction. It consists of several related job functions. These are supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum, and monitoring student progress” (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985, p.222). Promoting a positive school learning climate refers to the protection of instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, developing and enforcing academic standards, and providing incentives for learning (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985, pp. 223-224).

Instructional leadership typically was associated with “positional power and (invariably) expert knowledge about teaching and learning processes” (Leithwood et al., 1999 p. 17). During the development and growth of instructional leadership in the
educational literature in the 1980s, exclusive reference was made to the principal as the person responsible for the success of schools (Bossert et al., 1982; Glassman, 1984) and as a “normatively desirable role that principals who wished to be effective should fulfill” (Hallinger, 2005, p. 223).

However, there was very “little reference made to teachers, department heads, or even to assistant principals as instructional leaders. There was little discussion of instructional leadership as a distributed characteristic or function to be shared” (Hallinger, 2005, p. 223). This heroic portrayal of principal’s capabilities “often spawned feelings ranging from inadequacy to guilt among the vast majority of principals who wondered why they had such difficulty fitting into this role expectation” (Marshall, 1996, as cited in Hallinger, 2005, p. 224). A further dilemma was the lack of clarity or universal understanding of what it meant to be an instructional leader (Bamburg & Andrews, 1991; Leithwood et al., 1999; Marzano et al., 2005; Wahlstrom, 2012). While instructional leadership was a major focus of studies concerned with school change, restructuring, and leadership practices, “the lack of explicit descriptions of instructional leadership make it difficult to assess the extent to which such leadership means the same thing to all those writing about it” (Leithwood et al., 1999, p. 8). A further challenge was that a “great majority of studies on instructional leadership were conducted in elementary schools” (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985, p. 219). This may be in large part, as Leithwood et al. (1999) discuss, because of the “size and complexity of secondary schools, and because of the nature of secondary school administrators’ practices” (p. 25). As a result of this focus, there were relatively few references to the obvious need for adaptation of the instructional leadership role in secondary schools. Contextual differences were often glossed over in extrapolating the findings for policy and training purposes. In fact, the practice of instructional leadership requires substantial adaptation in
secondary schools, which are often larger and more complex organizations. (Hallinger, 2005, p. 231)

Despite some of these criticisms, however, instructional leadership continues to attract attention as efforts at educational reform seek to improve teaching strategies to maximize student learning (Hallinger, 2003, 2005; Southworth, 2002; Wahlstrom, 2012). What seems to be more evident from recent research concerned with instructional leadership is the movement away from the heroic role of the principal to one that is shared (Hallinger, 2005; Robinson et al., 2008; Wahlstrom, 2012). More specifically, Robinson et al. (2008) found that recent research had a “more inclusive focus with many instructional leadership measures now embracing principals and their designees, those in positions of responsibility, and shared instructional leadership” (pp. 638-639). Furthermore, there is the empirical recognition that instructional leadership in elementary schools may be completely different from how it is practiced in secondary schools (Hallinger, 2005; Wahlstrom, 2012) and that these differences need to be explored further.

**Core Practices of Educational Leadership**

Work that has focused on the various leadership approaches of school and district leaders has inevitably attempted to identify those leadership practices and competencies that have been found to make a difference for school and student success. More specifically, a number of academics have been able to consolidate much of this work to identify a number of “core” leadership practices that underlie the work of successful school and district leaders (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leithwood et al., 2004; Marzano et al., 2005; Robinson et al., 2008). The significance of this work to this study is that the Ontario Leadership Framework is largely based on the findings of this research. More specifically, it lists and describes for both school and district leaders those leadership
practices and competencies that have been found to be part of the repertoire of successful educational leaders. Hence, some review of the work that has influenced the Ontario Leadership Framework in this way is warranted.

In a study that reviewed research from 1980-1995 on the relationships between principal leadership and student achievement, Hallinger and Heck (1998) provide an account of how school leaders provide a measurable but indirect effect on school effectiveness and student outcomes. Selecting studies that focused on principal’s beliefs and leadership behaviour, a measure of school performance as a dependent variable, and studies that examined the impact of principal’s work in a variety of countries, they were able to include 40 published journal articles, dissertation studies, and papers presented at peer-reviewed conferences in their work (Hallinger & Heck, 1998, pp. 160-161). In an effort to organize their findings from this review, they hypothesize four areas through which principals can have an indirect effect on school outcomes.

The first area that Hallinger and Heck (1998) describe as prevalent in the literature is one that refers to the purposes and goals of the school as set out by the school leader. Under this area, the school leader frames, conveys, and sustains the school’s purpose and goals so that everyone is aware and strives to achieve them. While they acknowledge the influence of the management literature of the time, the research they have consulted has supported the importance of vision and goal cohesion which offers “strong evidence of this domain’s validity in terms of the leader’s role in school effectiveness and improvement” (Hallinger & Heck, 1998, p. 171). In their second categorization of structure and social networks they explain that there is great importance to the “link of leadership to organizational roles and the network that comprises the
organizational system” (p. 173). One of the ways that this has been practiced by effective leaders is by creating environments where collaboration can occur and decision making is shared within the school community. In some work, there is also the implication that parents need to be a part of such networks as well (pp. 174-175). Such involvement produces “stronger and more cohesive social interactions, attitudes about work, commitment, and higher morale (pp. 174-175). In their third categorization, Hallinger and Heck (1998) identify people as an important element of consideration in how leadership may influence the school organization. Research evidence provides consensus that “administrative activity is largely directed at people…and a major impact of principal efforts is to produce changes in people” (Hallinger & Heck, 1998, p. 175). Some of the ways that school principals try to achieve this is through supporting staff, being more approachable, following through, seeking new ideas, and spending time to develop human resources (p. 176).

The fourth and final element that Hallinger and Heck (1998) state as an important consideration in the principal’s effort to influence and change their school organization, is the importance of organizational culture. Here, Hallinger and Heck (1998) discuss the “meaning people associate with their work and willingness to change” (p. 176). Despite being a new “construct”, there is evidence that indicates that perceptions of those that work in the school about “how things are” (e.g., work conditions) on a day to day basis, “climate would be expected to change more readily, depending, for example, on the actions of administrators, than the entire system of variables comprising the school’s culture (e.g., its structure, value system, managerial processes)” (p. 178).
In their concluding remarks, Hallinger and Heck (1998) point out that their findings suggest:

that there are several paths that begin to describe the means by which principal leadership influences student learning outcomes...While the state of this research is still evolving, these variables represent both a reasonable focus for principal practice and also for future research into school effectiveness and improvement. (p.187)

Further insights and understandings about similar elements or characteristics of effective or successful educational leadership practices and competencies has also been provided by the work of Leithwood et al. (2004). In their review of the leadership literature, they found evidence to claim that “successful leadership can play a highly significant and frequently underestimated role in improving student learning” (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 5). Through the various efforts of school reforms to improve teaching and learning, they “all depend for their success on the motivations and capacities of local leadership” (p. 4). Without the presence of effective or successful leadership, the chances of school reform being effective are remote (p. 4). In an effort to address what constitutes effective or successful leadership practices, Leithwood et al. (2004) discuss how:

there is compelling evidence of a common core of practices that any successful leader calls on, as needed...these practices can be thought as the ‘basics’ of successful leadership. Rarely are such practices sufficient for leaders aiming to significantly improve student learning in their schools. But without them, not much would happen. (p.8)

They identify three “core practices” of successful leadership practices. The first core practice that successful leadership demonstrates is setting directions. They state that their evidence suggests that “those leadership practices included in setting directions account for the largest proportion of leader’s impact” (p. 8). Setting directions, involves:

helping one’s colleagues develop shared understandings about the organization and its activities and goals that can under gird a sense of purpose or vision.
People are motivated by goals which they find personally compelling, as well as challenging but achievable. (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 8)

Such practices can include “identifying and articulating a vision, fostering acceptance of group goals and creating high performance expectations” (p. 24). The positive impact of this is that “goals helps people make sense of their work and enables them to find a sense of identity for themselves within their work context” (p. 8).

The second core leadership practice that Leithwood et al. (2004) identify as making up the basic core of successful leadership practices is developing people. The capacity of people to move in various directions toward specific goals is an important consideration for those in leadership roles. As Letihwood et al. (2004) state, “the ability to engage in practices that help develop people depends, in part, on leaders’ knowledge of the ‘technical core’ of schooling, what is required to improve the quality of teaching and learning, often invoked by the term ‘instructional leadership’” (p. 24). McColl-Kennedy and Anderson (2002) go on to discuss how this ability is also a recognition of a “leader’s emotional intelligence” whereby “a leader’s personal attention to an employee and through the utilization of the employee’s capacities, increases the employee’s enthusiasm and optimism, reduces frustration, transmits a sense of mission and indirectly increases performance (as cited in Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 24). This practice acknowledges that capacities and motivations of those in the organization are influenced by “the direct experiences organizational members have with those in leadership roles, as well as the organizational context within which people work” (p. 8). Practices that leaders use to demonstrate this included “offering intellectual stimulation, providing individualized support and providing an appropriate model” (p. 24).
The third core practice that Leithwood et al. (2004) discuss is redesigning the organization. This core practice recognizes that “organizational conditions sometimes blunt or wear down educators’ good intentions and actually prevent the use of effective practices” (p. 9). Hence, “successful educational leaders develop their districts and schools as effective organizations that support and sustain the performance of administrators and teachers, as well as students” (p. 9). Among the central practices that demonstrate this are “strengthening district and school cultures, modifying organizational structures and building collaborative processes” (p. 25). Interestingly, a few years later Leithwood and his associates (2006), through a number of research summaries, recognized that there was a fourth core practice: “managing the instructional program”. This practice recognizes the important role that school leaders play in “staffing, providing teaching support, monitoring, and buffering staff from distractions to their core work” (p. 23). Staffing the programme involves “finding teachers with the interest and capacity to further the school’s efforts” (p. 42). Providing instructional support involves “supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum and providing resources in support of curriculum, instruction and assessment activity” (p. 42). The practice of “monitoring” student progress and the “purposeful use of data” have been found to be quite important for school leaders as they seek out ways to improve school and student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2006, p. 43). The leadership practice of buffering staff from distractions to their core work recognizes “value to organizational effectiveness of leaders who prevent staff from being pulled in directions incompatible with agreed on goals” (p. 43).
Marzano et al.’s (2005) meta-analysis of 69 studies that focused on principal practices and student achievement from 1978-2001 sought out to address “to what extent does leadership play a role in whether a school is effective or ineffective? That is, how much of a school’s impact on student achievement is due to leadership” (p. 4). They found as a result of their work, that there is a correlation of .25 between principal’s leadership behaviour and student achievement which they state “is compelling and should stir school leaders to seek ways to improve their leadership skills” (p. 32). More specifically, their meta-analysis “indicate[d] that principals can have a profound effect on the achievement of students in their schools” (p. 38). The way in which this can occur, they explain, is through the identification of 21 categories of specific behaviours that they refer to as “responsibilities” of principal leadership (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 41). It is not in the scope of this review to list and outline all twenty one responsibilities; however, it is important to note the responsibilities of situational awareness; outreach; monitoring/evaluating; flexibility; and discipline which were above the correlation of .25.

Situational awareness represents the school leader’s ability to recognize the “undercurrents regarding the functioning of the school and their use of this information to address current and potential problems” (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 60). This can be achieved in a variety of ways, for example: “he studies the schedule in an attempt to identify hidden problems that it creates for teachers or students…[or] he meets with a group of teachers who he has heard are disappointed in a decision he has recently made” (p. 61). The responsibility of outreach refers to the “extent to which the school leader is an advocate and a spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders” (p. 58). This can be reflected by ensuring that the school complies with all district and state mandates; being
an advocate of the school with parents, with the central office and with the community at large (p. 58). Monitoring/evaluating refers to the extent to which the school “leader monitors the effectiveness of school practices in terms of their impact on student achievement” (p. 55). This can occur by “continually monitoring the effectiveness of the school’s curricular, instructional, and assessment practices… [and by] being continually aware of the impact of the school’s practices on student achievement” (p. 56). The responsibility of flexibility refers to the “extent to which leaders adapt their leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and are comfortable with dissent” (p. 49). For example, flexibility is demonstrated when the school leader recognizes that a certain action or decision being made by staff could impact others “negatively” or shares his/her leadership by having others share in the decision making (pp. 49-50). In discipline, the school leader “buffers” teachers from the various distractions or interruptions that take them away from their “instructional time” (p.48). As Marzano et al. (2005) illustrate, “the school leader uses the responsibility of discipline when she establishes and enforces a policy that no announcements are to be made during instructional time…[or] handles an issue with the local media in a way that does not involve individual teachers” (p. 49).

Robinson et al. (2008) also recognize the presence of leadership practices that have an impact on student achievement. In their review of 27 published studies that examined the relationship between leadership and student achievement, Robinson et al. (2008) derived five leadership dimensions that had significant effect sizes when it came to the impact of different leadership practices on student outcomes. In their first dimension, *establishing goals and expectations*, Robinson et al. discuss how the setting of clear goals and communicating expectations is an important element not only to
teachers and students, but also to parents (pp. 659-660). More specifically, Robinson et al. found from their review that “goal content was just as important as the generic process of goal setting” and therefore state that “in the context of goal setting, what leaders and leadership researchers need to focus on is not just leaders’ motivational and direction-setting activities but on the educational content of those activities and their alignment with intended student outcomes” (p. 660). Hence, to Robinson et al.,

goals provide a sense of purpose and priority to an environment where a multitude of tasks can seem equally important and overwhelming. Clear goals focus attention and effort and enable individuals, groups, and organizations to use feedback to regulate their performance” (p. 661).

In their second dimension, resourcing strategically, Robinson et al. (2008) found evidence to support that school leaders “can influence student achievement through their decisions about staffing and teaching resources” (p. 661). While they state that the findings of work under this dimension are quite “sketchy and more needs to be known (ES=.31) about the knowledge and skills needed by school leadership to link resource recruitment and allocation to specific pedagogical goals” (p. 661), they did find evidence to suggest that when school leaders are able to secure instructional resources to support their teachers and hire their own staff directly, student achievement was higher than in schools where school leaders were not able to do the same. This was also evident in Robinson et al.’s third dimension of planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum. Robinson et al. found a moderate (ES=0.42) impact on student outcomes from school leaders who directly become involved with:

teachers to plan, coordinate, and evaluate teachers and teaching. They are more likely than their lower performing schools to provide evaluations that teachers describe as useful, and to ensure that student progress is monitored and the results used to improve teaching programs. (p. 663)
Much of the evidence to support this dimension revolves around studies which highlight the important role that school leaders play in facilitating discussions with teachers about how instruction matters to student achievement, how they work with teachers to review and improve teaching, classroom observation and subsequent feedback, and their expectation that teachers use data to monitor student achievement and adjust their teaching strategies accordingly (Robinson et al., 2008, p. 662).

Robinson et al. (2008) found a larger effect size (.84) when school leaders became “active participants” in teacher learning and development. This fourth dimension, promoting and participating in teacher learning and development, makes special note to the importance teachers place on their school leaders’ participation in their learning and development as educators. The leader “participates in the learning as leader, learner, or both. The contexts for such learning are both formal (staff meetings and professional development) and informal (discussions about specific teaching problems)” (p. 663). Such promotion and participation in teaching learning and development from school leaders does allow them to be seen as sources of “instructional advice, which suggests that they are both more accessible and more knowledgeable about instructional matters than their counterparts in otherwise lower achieving schools” (p. 663). The more teachers “reported that their school leaders to be active participants in teacher learning and development, the higher the student outcomes” (p. 663).

In their final leadership dimension; ensuring an orderly and supportive environment, Robinson et al. (2008) found that the establishment of safe and supportive school environment by the school leader had a small mean effect size (.27). Despite this small effect size, Robinson et al. discuss the importance of “creating an environment for
both staff and students that makes it possible for important academic and social goals to be achieved. In an orderly environment, teachers can focus on teaching and students can focus on learning” (p. 664). This may include, but is not limited to, “establishing a safe and supportive environment through clear and consistently enforced goals…and [where] staff conflict is quickly resolved and effectively addressed” (p. 664).

These major works have not only provided a synthesis of the extensive educational leadership literature that exists, but they have also highlighted a number of similar leadership practices and competencies that they have found to be influential for school improvement and student achievement. Recognizing the important role that school leaders can play in student success, there continues to be a focus on understanding what this looks like in practice. Through much work, we have been able to identify a set of leadership practices and competencies that underlie the success of school leaders. Many of these leadership practices and competencies are quite similar in description and only vary in the terminology or category used by the researcher. Hence, what successful leaders do does not vary greatly. The significance of this work for this study is in the way that it has informed the Ontario Leadership Framework.

Four of the leadership domains covered in the Ontario Leadership Framework come directly from the leadership practices and competencies documented in the empirical work above on core leadership practices. More specifically, the framework uses the core leadership practices to provide school and system leaders with a sense of what they need to put into place in their day-to-day practice as leaders, the specialized skills and understanding they need to develop, and the confidence they have adopted the most effective leadership approach (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008).
Conceptual Framework

This study is primarily concerned with what has been the experience(s) of Catholic secondary principals and vice-principals with the initiation and implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework in their school district. As a new policy change, it purports to provide a number of benefits for current practitioners that will help them grow and refine their leadership skills (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008, p. 2). So how have they responded to this? There is no straightforward response to this because the experience of change at any level is complex, hence, there is the need not to underestimate what it is and factors and processes that account for it (Fullan, 2007, p. 20).

In order to appropriately address and understand what the experience(s) are of the principals and vice-principals in this study with the Ontario Leadership Framework, we need to develop a conceptual framework that can act as a lens from which to make sense and meaning of this. Recognizing that the Ontario Leadership Framework is a policy change and that it is the experiences of principals and vice-principals that this study is focusing on, it seems quite appropriate that a conceptual framework that depicts change as a process would be required. More specifically, it would be applicable to adapt Fullan’s (2007) model that illustrates the change process as involving three phases. Adapting this model to fit with this study would allow for deeper understanding on how the Ontario Leadership Framework was initiated, implemented, and possibly even institutionalized.

Figure 4 represents an illustration of the conceptual framework which will be used to guide my analysis in this study. The four overlapping circles illustrate the influence of
each of the levels to one another as the Ontario Leadership Framework is initiated, implemented, and in some respects even institutionalized in this study. Each of these phases is susceptible to factors that can affect the progress of the Ontario Leadership Framework as it moves through the change process.

Figure 4. Conceptual framework for study. Adapted from Fullan (1991, 2007).

The initiation phase of the conceptual model proposes that the Ontario Leadership Framework as a policy change was introduced because it became desirable according to the educational value (Fullan, 2007, p. 69) that the government placed on school and system leaders in supporting student success. More specifically, the Ontario Leadership
Framework was seen as addressing the need to support and sustain high quality leadership in the province of Ontario. While the province recognized the significant role that school leaders play in school and student performance, they also were aware of the increasingly challenging role that they undertook on a daily basis. More specifically, there was a concern that there would not be enough new or experienced educational leaders to fill the gap that was being left by those school leaders switching to part-time work or those just retiring (Government of Ontario, 2005, 2008). As a large (macro) scale policy change, the Ontario Leadership Framework relies on the support of the government to promote and support the initiation of it province wide. One way that the government can achieve this is to mandate new requirements that incorporate the use of the Ontario Leadership Framework. Fullan, (2007) acknowledges this by discussing how recently “state and provincial governments are mandating new requirements” (p. 78) and are in a position to “initiate many new…programs that otherwise would not be formally adopted” (p. 78).

Another mechanism that the government could use in stimulating and supporting the Ontario Leadership Framework is funding. As an incentive, the government could couple the mandate of using the Ontario Leadership Framework in school districts with money. As Berman and McLaughlin (1977) and Fullan (2007) have discussed, this can be a very important factor in the initiation of a policy change, and in the case of this study, it may provide further incentive for school districts to actively initiate and implement the Ontario Leadership Framework. However, beyond mandating and providing funding at this phase, the government would also have to provide some support into how this can occur uniformly across the province. Hence, supporting government resources or
initiatives that demonstrate or at least describe how the Ontario Leadership Framework can be implemented would support this mandate. One of the concrete ways that the government achieved this was through its Board Leadership Development Strategy (BLDS). This initiative required all boards to develop and implement a BLDS (Government of Ontario, 2010b), that would establish a systematic approach to fostering high-quality leadership throughout the organization (Government of Ontario, 2010b). More specifically, it required that they “embed the leadership practices and competencies of the Ontario Leadership Framework” (p. 15) to support, sustain, and develop effective leadership in the district. The government also did this with the principal and vice-principal performance appraisal, where it was revised to include the Ontario Leadership Framework throughout the process. In short, the initiation phase at the government (macro) level of the Ontario Leadership Framework took the form of a mandate. This inevitably will influence how school districts both initiate and implement the Ontario Leadership Framework into their school district.

The second circle of the conceptual framework represents the district (meso) level of initiation and also marks the beginning of the transition of the Ontario Leadership Framework from this phase to implementation in the school district. Largely influenced by the ministry, the two circles overlap to depict this connection between the government’s initiation efforts of the Ontario Leadership Framework (e.g., mandatory, funding, new initiatives) and those of the school district. This then affects the way in which the Ontario Leadership Framework is initiated in the school district and the structure that the district creates to facilitate implementation. Fullan (2007) states that the “relationship between initiation and implementation is loosely coupled and interactive”
As a loosely coupled system, both initiation and implementation are “responsive, but retain evidence of separateness and identity” (Weick, 1976, p. 3) where factors or variables that have affected the phase of initiation may also influence what occurs in implementation. For example, the BLDS that the government had created to encourage the use of the Ontario Leadership Framework in various aspects of school and system leadership will inevitably affect how the district initiates and facilitates the implementation of the framework to its school and system leaders. At play, there will be a number of factors that will affect the initiation and implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework. Some of these factors may overlap between both phases of change, while others may not. An example may help illuminate this point further as it relates to the conceptual framework. If we take the example of the government advocating for a new policy change that it believes has important educational value for schools and their districts, then the actions they take to promote this (i.e., mandate) will inevitably influence how school districts will respond to this change. As the change makes its way to the district level, the actions that the government takes in promoting it dictates to a large extent how the district communicates this new policy change to its intended users.

Hence, advocacy from central administration would be important for “change rarely occurs without an advocate, and one of the most powerful is the chief district administrator, with his or her staff, especially in combination with school board support or mandate” (Fullan, 2007, pp. 73-74). However, support from central administration is not only reserved for the initiation phase, it is also quite important at the implementation phase where their support and actions has been found to be “critical for change in district
practice” (Fullan, 2007, p. 94). Hence, advocacy, and more specifically advocacy from the school district, is a factor that can affect both the initiation of a change as well as its implementation (Fullan, 2007); yet, the way in which it occurs at each of these phases can be quite different. Another factor that may be present at this level is the support of other change agents that are external to the district, but who can act as champions of the change. Fullan (2007) categorizes this factor as external change agents and they may include people in roles that are at a regional, state, or national level (p. 76). One such agent in this study may be the Catholic Principals Council of Ontario (CPCO) that is a professional association that represents the needs and perspectives of Catholic principals and vice-principals in Ontario. As a representative of the principals and vice-principals in this study, their presence and support for the initiation and implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework may motivate them to adopt the change more readily. Such factors and others that may emerge in this study will inevitably influence how principals and vice-principals implement the Ontario Leadership Framework.

The third circle which represents the implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework at the principal and vice-principal (micro) level also overlaps with the school district to signify their influence on implementation. Recognizing that their involvement with the Ontario Leadership Framework would occur during the implementation phase, it would seem appropriate to make reference to factors that affect the implementation of change as covered in the change literature. Directed by the ministry to introduce and facilitate the implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework, it would seem plausible that the way in which the principals and vice-principals experience the Ontario Leadership Framework at this level would be greatly influenced by the district’s actions
or inactions. As some work has already outlined (Fullan, 2007; McLaughlin, 1990; Supovitz, 2006) school districts play an important role in the implementation process through their actions and inactions. When there is evident support for an innovation the chances of implementation are greater as opposed to when there is not. Here it is expected that respondents would highlight evidence of the school district’s support or not of the Ontario Leadership Framework, and subsequently their treatment of it. At play at this level is also how principals and vice-principals adapt to the implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework. As Berman and McLaughlin (1978) discuss, because so many people can be an end user of change, every person and situation being somewhat different from the other may implement the same innovation in different ways. Hence, “a key to understanding implementation, then, is adaptation at the user’s level” (p. 16).

Another way in which principals and vice-principals may respond could be based on their perception of how much the Ontario Leadership Framework aligns or not with their current leadership practice. At the outset, the Ontario Leadership Framework has been adapted to include Catholic faith elements and as such would be seen by principals and vice-principals as an important feature of the framework because it acknowledges their faith traditions. Hence, they could view this as an alignment with the work they do. Where there is alignment, principals and vice-principals may feel that the Ontario Leadership Framework is more of an endorsement of their work and therefore it would not require much change on their part. However, if there is little alignment, principals and vice-principals may feel the pressure to consider changes to their leadership practice. This sense of “fit” and “practicality” of the change or innovation has been documented in the change literature as an important factor in the implementation process (Fullan, 2007;
Huberman & Miles, 1984). In short, there can be many factors at play that can affect how implementation occurs and how principals and vice-principals experience it. The conceptual model acknowledges the influence between the initiation and implementation phase and how factors can affect the process of change, in this case the movement of the Ontario Leadership Framework from one level and phase to another. It is recognized that the way in which implementation occurs strongly affects the outcome and potential for its continuation (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977).

The last segmented circle of the conceptual model represents the perceived potential of the Ontario Leadership Framework becoming institutionalized as a result of both district and principal and vice-principal influence and action. The segmentation of the circle indicates that the change process at this phase is still very much evolving. This last circle overlaps with both the school district and principal and vice-principals to illustrate the combined efforts required to institutionalize the Ontario Leadership Framework. This is mainly based on the premise from Berman and McLaughlin (1977) that “institutionalization occurs at two levels, the individual teacher and the school system” (p. 16). While only preliminary findings may be found in this study to suggest the progression of the Ontario Leadership Framework to this phase, Berman and McLaughlin (1977) state that “institutionalization cannot be understood without taking into account the history of the project…what happened early in a project profoundly affected what happened later” (p. 17). As a result, the history and movement of the Ontario Leadership Framework through the phases of initiation and implementation may provide some clues or evidence of the potential for the framework to progress to the institutionalization phase. Related to this, there is also the assertion that for change to
move beyond the implementation phase, those that experience the change have to institutionalize some personal adaptation of the project’s methods or materials (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977, p. 19). Hence, if there is evidence that the principals and vice-principals of this study have used the Ontario Leadership Framework in some way or form in response to the influence and/or actions of the school district during the implementation phase, then there is the probability that this may continue beyond the implementation phase. However, if for example there is a “lack of interest and support at the central district office” (Fullan, 2007, p. 101) for the use of the Ontario Leadership Framework, then the chances that it would continue beyond implementation at the principal and vice-principal level would be greatly diminished. Hence, as Fullan (2007) states:

it takes a fortunate combination of the right factors… to support and guide the process of relearning, which respects the maintenance needs of individuals and groups and at the same time facilitates, stimulates, and prods people to change through a process of incremental and decremental fits and starts on the way to institutionalizing (or, if appropriate, rejecting) the change in question. (p.105)

In short, there can be many factors at play during this phase that can interact and influence the potential for the institutionalization of the Ontario Leadership Framework in this school district. However, it seems quite plausible that what has happened in the two prior phases in regards to its initiation and implementation will inevitably influence what will happen after.

Fullan’s (2007) conceptual model of the change process provides a useful way to understand the experiences of current Catholic principals and vice-principals in one school district in regards to the Ontario Leadership Framework through the phases of initiation, implementation, and institutionalization. It is useful because it allows for the
researcher to examine how a particular initiative, in this case the Ontario Leadership Framework, is understood by those directly affected by it (i.e., current principals and vice-principals) and to make sense of this with the guidance and assistance of a conceptual framework that has been supported empirically to document the change process.

**Summary**

This chapter began by reviewing a number of research areas according to their relevance to this study. Since the Ontario Leadership Framework can be seen as a policy change, it was appropriate that the areas of educational policy implementation and educational change literature should be included. Research on policy implementation has provided insight on the importance and complexity of trying to put into practice an innovation or change. More specifically, it has outlined the centrality of the end user in implementing policy. The research on educational change has also provided a number of insights to this study in regards to its process and the factors that can influence it. More specifically, change can be viewed as a process that involves three phases and at each of these phases there are a number of factors that can interact and influence how the change is enacted.

Another area of focus of the literature review was on leadership, especially in regards to transformational and instructional leadership. Many of the concepts and ideas that have been used to develop and construct the Ontario Leadership Framework have originated from these two leadership approaches. Hence, it became quite apparent that any discussion of the Ontario Leadership Framework would not be complete without some recognition of this point and some discussion on the concepts and ideas that these
two leadership approaches have provided to not only our understanding of educational leadership, but also to the domains, practices and competencies that make up the Ontario Leadership Framework. In addition to this, a number of studies that have dedicated their work to identifying key leadership practices and/or competencies from a review of the leadership research were also discussed. These studies highlighted a number of core leadership practices that underlie four of the six dimensions of the Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic principals and vice-principals.

The conceptual model that will be used in this study has its base in the work of Fullan (2001, 2007). Based on a three-phase change process, the model is able to provide explanation as well as understanding into how the Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic principals and vice-principals has been experienced by Catholic secondary principals and vice-principals in this study.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Design of the Study

This chapter provides an overview of the way in which the study was conducted. More specifically, it describes the research activity in regards to the analytic methods that were used to summarize and describe the data.

The impetus for this research is based on my interest in how Catholic principals and vice-principals have responded to the initiation and implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework. While there is empirical agreement that school leaders are critical to the success of schools and that there are a number of effective leadership practices that underlie this, how have current practitioners responded to the Ontario Leadership Framework that has drawn on this work?

The Ontario Leadership Framework represents a change in policy. Despite performance appraisals and the general feedback of stakeholders in the school community, Ontario school leaders really did not have a common standardized model from which to reflect on their leadership practices and competencies. While change is a constant, we cannot underestimate or overestimate its impact and effect on those most directly affected by it. As Fullan (2007) states quite unequivocally:

we have become so accustomed to the presence of change that we rarely stop to think what change really means as we are experiencing it at the personal level. More important, we almost never stop to think what it means for others around us who might be in change situations. The crux of change is how individuals come to grips with this reality. We vastly underestimate both what change is… and what factors and processes account for it. (p. 20)
Hence, I find myself curious as to how principals and vice-principals have responded to the Ontario Leadership Framework. More specifically, I am interested in understanding their perceptions and experiences with the Ontario Leadership Framework, and what it could mean for their leadership practices and competencies. Since the focus of this study is on the experiences and meanings that current Catholic secondary school principals and vice-principals have had with the Ontario Leadership Framework, the unit of analysis for this study will be at the individual level. A majority of research carried out about school-level leadership has indicated that this is an appropriate unit of analysis (Mascall, Leithwood, Strauss, & Sacks, 2008, p. 219).

As a researcher I assume that “ideas, people, and events cannot be fully understood if isolated from the circumstances in which and through which they naturally occur” (Schram, 2003, p.8). This assumption is consistent with qualitative inquiry (Merriam, 1998) where an in-depth understanding of how principals and vice-principals have responded to the Ontario Leadership Framework is sought. More specifically, as Morgan and Drury (2003) outline “the utilization of qualitative research methods provides access to the lived reality of individuals, facilitating the exploration of people’s internal construction of their personal worldview” (p. 74).

The nature of the primary research question that this study seeks to address warrants an approach where knowledge is “obtained by participating subjectively in a world of meanings created by individuals... [thereby] capturing an understanding of people in their environment” (Kirby, Greaves, & Reid, 2006, p. 14). More specifically, this study seeks to understand the meanings that Catholic secondary principals and vice-principals in one school district have constructed, that is, how they make sense (Merriam,
of the Ontario Leadership Framework, and what influence, if any, it has on their leadership beliefs, practices and competencies. As such, my approach to this qualitative study is influenced by the philosophy of phenomenology, and the rich descriptions and analysis that are characteristic of it.

Phenomenology, as described by Merriam (1998), “is a school of philosophical thought that underpins all of qualitative research…in its emphasis on experience and interpretation” (p.15). More specifically, “phenomenology produces understandings of the ways in which individuals construct their world and their place in it” (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 234). As such, phenomenology “begins with the individual and seeks to understand the interpretations of the world around [them]” (Greenfield, 1993, p. 10). In his discussion of schools as organizations, Greenfield (1993) discusses how a phenomenological perspective can help understand the types of issues or problems that they may face:

In this way, the proposed model accounts both for apparent stability of schools, their resistance to change, and for the continuing conflict about what schools are for and how they should be organized and run. It suggests as well that the path to understanding more about schools must lie through the interpretations and analysis of the experience of people in schools, not through attempts to decide which structural elements of schools yield outcomes that best approximate their ultimate purpose. (p. 20)

Hence, phenomenology is based on the understanding of the importance of peoples lived experiences and how this gives meaning to the world around them. Since this study is concerned with the perception and understanding of the Ontario Leadership Framework from the perspective of current practicing principals and vice-principals it seems quite appropriate that a phenomenological stance assist in this methodology.
Recognizing that it is the lived experiences and meanings of principals and vice-principals with the Ontario Leadership Framework that is the focus of this study, it became apparent that a phenomenological qualitative study approach would be appropriate for this means of analysis. As van Manen (2001) states:

in phenomenological research the emphasis is always on the meaning of lived experience. The point of phenomenological research is to borrow other people’s experiences and their reflections on their experiences in order to better be able to come to an understanding of the deeper meaning or significance of an aspect of human experience, in the context of the whole of human experience. (p. 62)

Hence, within this context, as Greenwalt (2008) states:

the work of the researcher…is to fashion the most insightful and edifying interpretation of others’ experiences that are possible. This is primarily done through the analysis of various types of text. Engagement with participants whose texts relate aspects of concrete life experiences therefore becomes the primary research method. (p. 391)

As a means of collecting data in this study, it was decided that both a document analysis and an interview process would be appropriate. The collection of information through document analysis is considered to be “a ready-made source of data easily accessible to the imaginative and resourceful investigator” (Merriam, 1998, p. 112). This method of data collection was used primarily to address the initiation phase of the conceptual framework which occurred at the government (macro) level. As a background to the primary focus of this study, this form of data collection served to provide a descriptive account of the process that led to and included the decision to proceed with the adoption (Fullan, 2007) of the Ontario Leadership Framework. Principals and vice-principals of this study were not involved in this process; however, in order to appreciate how they experienced the implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework, which
was the primary focus of this study, it was important to include what occurred in the phase prior to their initial use, the initiation phase.

Studies on the educational change process explain that what occurs early on in an innovation (in this case the initiation phase) can profoundly affect what happens in subsequent phases (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Fullan, 2007). Documents obtained from the Ontario Ministry of Education included discussion papers on new supports for principals and vice-principals, documents on the Ontario Leadership Strategy, the Ontario Leadership Framework, and policy initiatives to support the implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework (Government of Ontario, 2010a). Documents from the school district involved their leadership development strategy, their leadership program guide, and board policies that outlined the purpose of the Ontario Leadership Framework. The combination of these documents from both the government and the school district provided sufficient information in the understanding of the initiation phase of the Ontario Leadership Framework in this study. The inclusion of the initiation phase in this study and the document data that supported it allows for an understanding of the implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework that is developed more fully having an appreciation for the process that occurred earlier.

In order to address the primary focus of this study, I carried out interviews to shed some light on the experiences corresponding to the principals’ and vice-principals’ implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework. Interviews “are a special form of interaction between people, the purpose of which is to elicit information by asking questions” (Kirby et al., 2006, p. 133). More specifically, they the “presumed possessors of information, answer questions in the context of dispositions (motives, values,
concerns, needs), which the researchers need to unravel in order to make sense out of the words that their questions generate” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 64). Patton (1990) explains that we interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe... [like] how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person’s perspective. (As cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 72)

Hence, “the opportunity to learn about what you cannot see and to explore alternative explanations of what you do see is the special strength of interviewing in qualitative inquiry” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 65).

A field test of the interview questions to be used in the interviews was conducted with three administrators. From this I was able to discern which questions needed further clarification and which did not, and to practice my ways of relating and interviewing respondents (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 68). Based on this I was able to create the interview schedule of 19 questions (see Appendix A) which proved to be an appropriate fit to the topic of my inquiry.

The first section of the interview schedule begins with three “relatively neutral, descriptive information” (Merriam, 1998, p. 82) questions to help put the interviewee at ease and begin the interview process. It also helps provide some contextual information about the interviewees as well. Question 4 attempts to solicit their current understanding and experience as a school leader. The purpose of this question is to gather insight about the work they do in their school, and how this is determined. This was seen as an important question to ask as it might identify aspects of their work that could act as barriers to their implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework. As well, this
question was developed also to explore if the principals and vice-principals would provide comparable and/or contrasting responses. This information would then provide initial insight on how the responsibilities they are involved with align with the Ontario Leadership Framework.

Question 5, as an extension of question 4, seeks to tease out those aspects of their work as school leader that takes the most and least of their time. This question was seen as important to include as it could provide responses that refer to factors that affect implementation, such as the practicality of the change that Fullan (2007) discusses in his work. For example, principals may identify aspects of their work that may be acknowledged in the leadership practices and competencies of the Ontario Leadership Framework, and in turn their initial use of it may be based on its practicality for the work that they already do.

Question 6 seeks to provide them with an opportunity to discuss their understanding of effective school leadership practices and how this may look in their school. The insight gathered here could provide links or connections to what may or may not be present in the Ontario Leadership Framework. Again this would be important in being able to identify if there could be any barriers or disconnects between what they do as school leaders and what is contained in the Ontario Leadership Framework.

Question 7 seeks to gather data on what influences if any have affected their leadership practices and/or competencies. This question seeks to discover if any of the respondents make reference to the Ontario Leadership Framework as influencing their work. Such references to the Ontario Leadership Framework would provide evidence of
initial use and references to aspects of the Ontario Leadership Framework that they find relevant to their work.

Question 8 begins a series of questions that are aimed at directly asking respondents to describe their initial experiences with the Ontario Leadership Framework. It starts off by asking the respondents about their understanding of the framework and the six dimensions that comprise it. It is expected that the responses to this question will identify the variation between them and some initial context to their use.

Question 9 asks them to discuss aspects that are directly related to the initiation phase of the change process. By discussing how it was developed and the purpose behind it, it is expected that references will be made to how the Ontario Leadership Framework is a policy change initiated by the province and how through their district they are expected to adopt it. It is suspected that they may also make references to why the province and their district have initiated this policy change.

Questions 10 to 13 deals directly with their leadership practices and competencies, and seeks to explore and discover the manner in which they have or have not used the Ontario Leadership Framework in their work as school leaders. From the responses to these series of question it is hoped that respondents will make references to characteristics of the Ontario Leadership Framework that they either find relevant or not to their leadership practices or competencies. With this, it is also expected that respondents would be able to identify factors or elements that could influence the way in which they implement the Ontario Leadership Framework, if at all. It is also anticipated that respondents would speak to the influence of their district toward their implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework. For example, some respondents
may express how the district’s support has encouraged their use of the Ontario Leadership Framework in their leadership practice. Questions 14 and 15 ask them to reflect on their leadership practices and competencies. More specifically, the respondents are asked to discuss how they know when their leadership practices are effective or not, and what effect does the success or not of an initiative have on their leadership practices and competencies. As a way to further examine their use or not of the Ontario Leadership Framework beyond the requirements of the district, responses to these questions could yield further insight on ways that principals and vice-principals may adapt the Ontario Leadership Framework to fit their needs. There is also the possibility that some of the interviewees may provide some evidence of a “change in practice” (Fullan, 2007, p. 30) as a result of their use of the Ontario Leadership Framework.

Questions 16 to 18 seek to explore preliminary insights on the possibility of the institutionalization of the Ontario Leadership Framework. However, it is also recognized that these three questions may continue to add to the data on their experiences with the implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework. How do all these questions relate to the research questions of this study?

As outlined in Table 1, groupings of the research sub-questions with the interview questions were created. However, it became increasingly clear that no real boundaries could be set; rather the responses that address the specific research questions could come from other non-grouped interview questions. In short, the data that would address the research sub-questions were not limited to any specific interview question(s).
Table 1

*Alignment of Research Questions to Interview Questions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research sub-questions</th>
<th>Data from interview question(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How have Catholic secondary principals and vice-principals come to understand the introduction of the Ontario Leadership Framework in their school district?</td>
<td>#8-9, 12-13, 16-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What do Catholic secondary principals and vice-principals consider to be important variables that would influence whether or not they continue to use the Ontario Leadership Framework?</td>
<td>#10-14, 17-18.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Procedure**

In an attempt to secure interest in such a study, preliminary discussions were held with senior administration of Rushmore\(^1\) Catholic district school board about the feasibility of such a study and the significance it could have for them. Rushmore was chosen as a district initially because of its Catholic designation and its general proximity to my residence. The secondary schools that make up this board are found in four different, but neighboring towns and cities that are easily accessible by both major highways and secondary roads. During these discussions, reference to the implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic principals and vice-principals into the board’s leadership strategy and portfolio, and how the proposed study could provide further insights and understanding about leadership practices and competencies, were

\(^1\) Rushmore is a pseudonym.
discussed. Since Rushmore Catholic district school board makes reference to research that shows that school leaders have a profound impact on student achievement in their district leadership strategy, and that administrators play an important part in improving student achievement, they found merit and value in having this study done in their district.

The proposed study was submitted, along with ethical review documentation, to the University of Toronto ethics committee for consideration. Once approval was granted by the university to conduct the study, I then completed the external research application process to gain approval from Rushmore’s research and development department to begin my research. After the study was approved by Rushmore’s research and development department, I began the process of participant selection. Nonprobability sampling was used to select the participants that would be involved in this study. More specifically, the form of purposeful sampling was used because it is “based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight” (Merriam, 1998, p. 61) from the data they are collecting.

Patton (1990) states that purposive sampling provides for the selection of information-rich cases which can provide greater insight about the understanding the researcher is trying to achieve in their study (as cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 61). As a Catholic secondary administrator I was interested in understanding what the experiences of my peers was with the Ontario Leadership Framework. Since it was their experiences that I wanted to understand and that the Ontario Leadership Framework applied to both principals and vice-principals, I needed to sample both Catholic principals and vice-principals in this research. At the time of this research, there were only eight secondary
schools in Rushmore Catholic district school board, with the prospect of another one
ing opening in the coming academic school year. Invitations to all current secondary
principals were communicated by phone (see Appendix B) at their present schools (their
school phone numbers were available publicly on the Internet via the Rushmore Catholic
district school board website; I also asked if I could have their email address) to inform
them of who I am, that I have been given permission by their board to conduct a study
that will involve secondary principals and vice-principals, and to ask them if I could
email them an information letter/consent form (see Appendix C) that provided further
details about my study for them to read and review. The letter also informed them that if
they were interested in participating in my study they could contact me using the
information on the letter/consent form in order to set up an interview date, time, and
location. Once a date, time, and location were established they were asked to bring the
letter of consent form with them to the interview. I reviewed it orally with them and
addressed any questions they may have had prior to beginning the interview.

It was hoped that six of the eight secondary principals would agree to participate
in my study. Of the eight, seven responded that they would participate, and one did not,
citing a variety of school based issues that would not afford them the time to participate.
Recognizing that seven secondary principals would participate in the study, and that I
wanted to also include secondary vice-principals, I then set out to invite vice-principals in
the same manner as I did with the secondary principals with the hope that I would be able
to balance the principals with the same number of vice-principals. I was only able to
contact and communicate with 10 vice-principals, seven coincidently agreed to
participate in my study, with the other three referencing a number of personal and school related issues that would prevent them from fully participating in the interviews.

A total of 14 administrators (seven principals and seven vice-principals) from secondary schools of Rushmore Catholic district school board agreed to participate in this study. The consent letter (see Appendix C) informed them that they could withdraw at any time and that no judgment or evaluation of their responses would be made. Further, they were informed that their interview would be audio taped only with their consent, that pseudonyms in place of their real names would be used in all written reports, and any details that would identify them would be excluded. Participants were also informed of their opportunity to review the transcriptions of their interview in order to check for accuracy or to add any additional information. All participants were also given the choice to receive a summary of the research findings. Once participants signed the consent forms, interviews were then scheduled.

Interviews began in June of 2012 and carried over into September 2012. Locations, dates, and times of the interview were all made at the convenience of the participant. In an effort to reduce some of the anxiety of the participants, interview questions were sent a few days ahead of the interview for them to review. The interview questions (see Appendix A) reflected the specifics of the research questions of the study in order to gather insight and information on the Ontario Leadership Framework from the perspective of current practicing Catholic secondary principals and vice-principals. More specifically, the interview questions explored how Catholic secondary principals and vice-principals had come to experience the Ontario Leadership Framework. The semi-structured format of the questions reflected a balance between highly structured and
unstructured interviews (Appendix A) by providing a mix of both. Interviews conducted in this manner allow for flexibility and access to the “participants perspectives and understandings” (Merriam, 1998, p. 74). Hence, the interview would be guided by a list of “questions or issues to be explored… this format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic” (Merriam, 1998, p. 74).

I recognized that I brought a construction of reality to the research situation that would inevitably “interact with other people’s construction or interpretation of the phenomenon being studied” (Merriam, 1998, pp. 22-23). Therefore, throughout the interview process I tried to be very careful not to influence the interviewee in their responses to my questions. I strived to achieve this by setting aside my assumptions of what my respondents were trying to say, and by asking them to elaborate or provide examples in regards to their statements whenever possible. I also was careful not to react in any way to the answers that I was attaining from my respondents, and I strived to be always calm and reassuring with them (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, pp. 80-87).

In addition to this, I kept a field notes journal where I was able to record my struggles about representing the experiences of others, reflect on the data gathering process, and to ensure that my voice did not dominate the research (Kirby et al., 2006, p. 81). I divided the journal into three main sections. The first section of the journal was where I tried to keep track of how my research topic was evolving and my reflections throughout the process. The second section of my journal were highlights of some notable readings that I felt made strong connections to what I was trying to discover, and insight to what I was finding. The final section of my journal is where I documented,
after each interview, my experience, reflections and thoughts on what I heard and what meaning this would have for my study. Although these comments cannot be quoted directly, they can offer insights about the research (Kirby et al., 2006, p. 204).

Once the interviews were completed, each interview was transcribed verbatim. In an effort to reference and search for particular themes, thoughts, or statements, each line of the transcript was numbered. The transcript was also given a unique serial number to protect the identity of the interviewee, and within the transcript the interviewee was designated with the number 001. In addition, in order to verify and review certain passages whenever further clarification was required, each page of the transcript had a time stamp indicated at the bottom. This allowed for efficient access between the transcript and the recording. The transcripts were then reviewed three times for accuracy and clarity of the data. Once this was completed, each respondent received an electronic version of their transcripts. They were given a period of one week to review their transcripts. They were also offered a second opportunity to meet or clarify any aspect of their transcripts. Of the 14 interviews transcribed and emailed to the participants, only two interviewees indicated some minor grammatical changes to the transcriptions sent to them, the rest indicated approval of their responses.

Data Organization and Analysis

All transcripts and the accompanying digital recordings were safely and securely stored in my office, at my residence, in a locked filing cabinet to which I only had access. The process of organizing the data began by taking each of the transcriptions of the interviews and re-reading them for understanding and making cross references with my field notes. As this was being done, notes, comments, observations, and queries were
recorded in the margins (Merriam, 1998, p. 181). The notes “serve to isolate initially the most striking, if not ultimately most important, aspects of the data” (Merriam, 1998, p. 181) that address the research questions. This allowed me to treat each of their statements related to their experience with the Ontario Leadership Framework as having equal value (Cilesiz, 2011). Once all the transcripts were reviewed in this manner, I began to organize my notes into emerging themes and categories that appeared to be consistent in most if not all of the interviews. In an effort to manage the data, coding was used to “identify information about the data and interpretive constructs related to the analysis” (Merriam, 1998, p. 164).

The themes and categories were organized in a chart form that listed them against the interviewees by page number initially (see Appendix D). For example, one of the themes that were consistent with all the interviewees was the process of “reflection.” Hence, each time a response included or referred to the process of reflection, the page number of the transcript that it was found on and the interviewee’s file number was entered into the reflection column. This gave both a visual representation and a frequency of the number of times the process of “reflection” was discussed or given as a response. This process of identifying themes and categories that were emanating from the transcripts and then organizing them into a chart for reference, assisted in developing meaning from the data. It also assisted in ensuring that the categories were “mutually exclusive.” As Merriam (1998) makes reference to, “a particular unit of data should fit into only one category” (p. 184). Hence, the categories and themes used to organize the responses of the interviewees was reviewed a number of times to ensure that they represented what was reflected in the data. More importantly, the final set of themes or categories “should reflect the purpose
of the research… [and] provide answers to your research questions” (p. 183). A data chart was also created to provide a quick summary of the responses to all of the interview questions by each interviewee (see Appendix E). More specifically, this summary table allowed for an initial analysis of the data and how they specifically responded to each of the questions in their interview. All the data organization and initial analysis was conducted with the assistance of a computer software program that allowed me to electronically store, sort, and retrieve the data and information that was beginning to evolve (Merriam, 1998, p. 186).

The four chapters that follow have been organized in a manner which seeks to provide the reader with information and data that have contributed to the findings of this study. Chapter 4 focuses on the context of the study. Here both the Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic principals is explored and a brief profile of each of the participants is provided. The profile provides data that is later on used and highlighted in the findings. Chapter 5 is dedicated exclusively to the “voices” of the participants and is organized around the 10 themes that emerged from their responses. Chapter 6 takes these 10 themes that have dominated the responses of the interviewees and provides an analysis of how they support a number of factors that affects predominately the implementation phase of the change process, as supported by the research literature within the context of the conceptual model of this study. Chapter 7 concludes the study with a discussion on how the research questions were addressed by this work and makes a number of conclusions about the findings discovered and their implications.
Chapter 4: Context of the Study

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with some background and understanding of the Ontario Leadership Framework and the interviewees who participated in this study. The Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic principals and vice-principals is the first of its kind in the province of Ontario and as such it is necessary to provide some discussion on its distinctive nature, the composition of its six domains, and how it has been utilized at the system level to provide context for this study. It is also important to provide a brief profile of the individual participants of this study, specifically the seven principals: Concetta, Antonio, Max, Peter, Frank, Nick, and Steve, and the seven vice-principals; John, Gregory, Jack, Ida, Maria, Lianna, and Jim. (All of the names are pseudonyms.) Recognizing that it is their “experiences” that provide the data for this study; it seemed quite important that some connection be made between the quotes used and those that authored them. More specifically, this section of the chapter also provides insight and data that are used in the subsequent chapters.

Ontario Leadership Framework

The Ontario Leadership Framework recognizes both the English-language public boards and the English-language Catholic boards by providing two leadership frameworks that acknowledges these two main differences in public education in the province of Ontario. More specifically, the authors of the Catholic leadership framework distinguished it from the secular version by adding an extra leadership domain (Catholic faith, community and culture) and by embedding descriptors of Catholic faith, values, and traditions within each of the six domains (see Table 2). This domain was not based on any empirical work of leadership, rather a consultative process where advocates of the
Catholic system of education in Ontario were given the opportunity to adjust the Ontario Leadership Framework to include a Catholic lens (B. McMorrow, personal communication, May 14, 2014).

Despite these two differences, both leadership frameworks draw on empirical evidence from the educational leadership literature that recognizes the presence of core leadership practices “that provide a comprehensive account of what successful leaders do” (Leithwood, 2012b, p. 66). Drawing predominately on the work of Leithwood et al. (2004, 2008), these core leadership practices have been organized into four categories that incorporate a number of effective leadership practices and competencies that successful school leaders utilize in their role and responsibility as school leader. More specifically, Leithwood et al. (2008) identified these four categories as: “building vision and setting directions; understanding and developing people; redesigning the organization; and managing the teaching and learning programme” (p. 29).

These core practices of effective leadership have provided the “educational leadership community [with a] solid footing in understanding the impact of leadership on student success, as well as ways to articulate successful leadership qualities and practices” (Crum & Sherman, 2008, p. 565). Hence, to a large extent, these same four categories have been incorporated into the Ontario Leadership Framework as four leadership dimensions for both public and Catholic school leaders that inspires shared leadership; promotes a common language of school and system leadership; identifies practices and competencies that describe effective leadership; and guides the design and implementation of professional learning and development for school and system leaders (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008, p. 6).
Table 2

*Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic Principals and Vice-Principals*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catholic faith, community, and culture</th>
<th>Setting directions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The principal nurtures Catholic faith, community, and culture and models a commitment to gospel values.</td>
<td>The principal builds a shared vision, fosters the acceptance of group goals and sets and communicates high performance expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Practices:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Practices:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal will:</td>
<td>The principal:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• build and sustain a collaborative Catholic professional learning community that promotes a sense of collective responsibility for the worth and dignity of all members of the community.</td>
<td>• ensures a Catholic vision is clearly articulated, shared, understood and acted upon by all;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participate in liturgies and prayers that nurture Catholic School culture and faith development;</td>
<td>• works within the school community to translate the vision into agreed objectives and operational plans which promote and sustain school improvement;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide pastoral care to persons and situations in need;</td>
<td>• demonstrates the vision and values in everyday work and practice;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Promote school programs, policies and procedures embedded with the fundamental concepts of human dignity, social justice and environmental stewardship;</td>
<td>• motivates and works with others to create a vibrant Catholic learning community, shared culture and positive climate;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Establish systematic and comprehensive program links that support school, parish and family life;</td>
<td>• ensures creativity, innovation and the use of appropriate technologies to achieve excellence;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fosters a commitment to equity of outcome and closing the achievement gap.</td>
<td>• ensures that strategic planning embraces the diversity, values, and experiences of the school and community;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competencies</strong></td>
<td><strong>Provides ongoing and effective communication with the school community.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills</strong></td>
<td><strong>Competencies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal is able to:</td>
<td><strong>Skills</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facilitate liturgical and daily prayer experiences that celebrate Catholic life and support faith formation;</td>
<td>The principal is able to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recognize persons and situations which require a pastoral response;</td>
<td>• think strategically and build and communicate a coherent vision in a range of compelling ways;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Foster the relationship among parents, parish and the school community to support faith development and school programs.</td>
<td>• inspire, challenge, motivate and empower others to carry the vision forward;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge</strong></td>
<td>• model the values and vision of the board;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal knows about:</td>
<td>• actively engage the diverse community, through outreach, to build relationships and alliances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Church teaching on education, culture, and the connection of faith and culture;</td>
<td><strong>Knowledge</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The role of the administrator in shaping the Catholic culture of the school;</td>
<td>The principal knows about:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The integral role that human dignity, social justice and environmental stewardship play in the faith formation of students and staff;</td>
<td>• the Catholic faith tradition;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The availability of resources to provide the pastoral care;</td>
<td>• local, national and global trends;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Personal strengths, styles and strategies to deepen relationships and networks.</td>
<td>• ways to build, communicate and implement the Catholic vision;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitudes</strong></td>
<td>• strategic planning processes;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal demonstrates:</td>
<td>• ways to communicate within and beyond the school;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Commitment to faith development through modeling, facilitation and mentorship;</td>
<td>• new technologies, their use and impact;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A strong, authentic and active faith reflective of gospel values;</td>
<td>• leading change, creativity and innovation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Commitment to the promotion of Catholic school culture;</td>
<td><strong>Attitudes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Empathy for the feelings and faith perspectives of others;</td>
<td>The principal demonstrates:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Commitment to excellence and service tempered by compassion;</td>
<td>• commitment to setting and achieving ambitious, challenging goals;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Commitment to equity of outcome and closing the achievement gap.</td>
<td>• a belief that all students are created in the image of God;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• a belief that all students can learn;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• commitment to an inclusive, respectful, compassionate, equitable school culture based on Gospel values.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2 (cont’d)

**Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic Principals and Vice-Principals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building relationships and developing people</th>
<th>Developing the organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The principal strives to foster genuine trusting relationships with students, staff, families and communities, guided by a sense of mutual respect. The principal affirms and empowers others to work in the best interests of all students.</td>
<td>The principal builds collaborative cultures, structures the organization for success, and connects the school to its wider environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Practices:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Practices</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The principal:</em></td>
<td><em>The principal:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• treats people as fairly, equitably and with dignity and respect;</td>
<td>• builds a collaborative learning culture within the school and actively engages with other schools, parishes and community partners to build effective learning communities;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• creates and sustains a caring Catholic school culture;</td>
<td>• nurtures and empowers a diverse workforce;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• develops and implements effective strategies for staff induction, professional learning, faith formation, leadership, and performance review;</td>
<td>• provides equity of access to opportunity and achievement;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• uses delegation effectively to provide opportunities for staff to self-actualize;</td>
<td>• supervises staff effectively;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• acknowledges and celebrates the achievements of individuals and teams;</td>
<td>• uses performance appraisal to foster professional growth;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• encourages colleagues to take intellectual risk;</td>
<td>• challenges thinking and learning of staff to further develop professional practice;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• leads by example, modelling Gospel values;</td>
<td>• develops a school ethos which promotes shared knowledge and shared responsibility for outcomes;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• demonstrates transparent decision-making and consistency between words and deeds;</td>
<td>• builds a harmonious community which works, reflects and prays together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• maintains high visibility in the school and quality interactions with staff and students.</td>
<td><strong>Competencies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills</strong></td>
<td><strong>Skills</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The principal is able to:</em></td>
<td><em>The principal is able to:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• foster an open, fair and equitable culture;</td>
<td>• collaborate and network with others inside and outside the school;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• develop, empower and sustain individuals and teams;</td>
<td>• perceive the richness and diversity of school communities;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• give and receive effective feedback;</td>
<td>• foster a culture of change;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• challenge, influence and motivate others to discipleship and servant leadership;</td>
<td>• engage in dialogue which builds community partnerships;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• communicate effectively with a diverse range of people, including the public and the media;</td>
<td>• listen and act on community feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• manage conflict effectively;</td>
<td><strong>Knowledge</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• listen empathetically and actively;</td>
<td><em>The principal knows about:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• demonstrate cultural competency.</td>
<td>• building and sustaining a Catholic professional learning community;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge</strong></td>
<td>• change management strategies;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The principal knows about:</em></td>
<td>• models of effective partnership;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• the significance of interpersonal relationships, adult learning and models of continuing professional development;</td>
<td>• strategies to encourage parent involvement;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• strategies to promote individual and team development and adult faith formation;</td>
<td>• ministry policies and procedures;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• the relationship between performance management and school improvement;</td>
<td>• models of behaviour and attendance management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• the impact of change on organizations and individuals;</td>
<td><strong>Attitudes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• effective media relations.</td>
<td><em>The principal demonstrates:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitudes</strong></td>
<td>• acceptance of responsibility for school climate and student outcomes;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The principal demonstrates:</em></td>
<td>• Catholic discipleship and character;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• commitment to effective working relationships;</td>
<td>• a transforming style of leadership based on trust and mutuality;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• commitment to shared servant leadership;</td>
<td>• authenticity;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• commitment to effective teamwork;</td>
<td>• ethical behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• confidence, optimism, hope, and resiliency, integrity and trust.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 (cont’d)

*Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic Principals and Vice-Principals*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leading the instructional program</th>
<th>Securing accountability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Practices</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;em&gt;The principal**:&lt;/em&gt;&lt;br&gt;• ensures a consistent and continuous school-wide focus on student achievement, using data to monitor progress;&lt;br&gt;• ensures that learning is at the centre of planning and resource management;&lt;br&gt;• develops professional learning communities in collaborative cultures;&lt;br&gt;• participates in the recruitment, hiring and retention of teachers with the interest and capacity to further the school’s goals;&lt;br&gt;• provides resources in support of curriculum instruction and Catholic graduate expectations;&lt;br&gt;• buffers staff from distractions that detract from student achievement;&lt;br&gt;• implements strategies which secure high standards of student behaviour and attendance.</td>
<td><strong>Practices</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;em&gt;The principal**:&lt;/em&gt;&lt;br&gt;• ensures individual staff accountabilities are clearly defined, understood, agreed to and subject to rigorous review and evaluation;&lt;br&gt;• works with the school council providing information and support so that the council can participate actively and authentically in its advisory role;&lt;br&gt;• develops and presents a coherent, understandable, accurate and transparent account of the school’s performance to a range of audiences (e.g., school council, parents, board, supervisors);&lt;br&gt;• reflects on personal contribution to student achievements and takes account of feedback from others;&lt;br&gt;• participates actively in personal external evaluation and makes adjustments to better meet expectations and goals;&lt;br&gt;• creates an organizational structure which reflects the school’s Catholic values and enables management systems, structures and processes to work within legal requirements;&lt;br&gt;• develops and applies appropriate performance management practices to goals and outcomes identified in the school improvement plan;&lt;br&gt;• makes connections to ministry goals to strengthen commitment to school improvement efforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competencies</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Skills</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;em&gt;The principal is able to**:&lt;em&gt;&lt;br&gt;• demonstrate the principles and practice of effective teaching and learning;&lt;br&gt;• access, analyse and interpret data;&lt;br&gt;• initiate and support an inquiry-based approach to improvement in teaching and learning;&lt;br&gt;• establish and sustain appropriate structures and systems for effective management of the school;&lt;br&gt;• make organizational decisions based on informed judgements;&lt;br&gt;• manage time effectively;&lt;br&gt;• foster faith and moral formation of students.</td>
<td><strong>Competencies</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Skills</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;em&gt;The principal is able to**:&lt;em&gt;&lt;br&gt;• engage the school community in the systematic and rigorous evaluation of the work of the school;&lt;br&gt;• collect and use a rich set of data to understand and assess the strengths and weaknesses of the school;&lt;br&gt;• combine the outcomes of regular school self-review with external evaluations in order to develop the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;em&gt;The principal knows about**:&lt;em&gt;&lt;br&gt;• strategies for improving achievement;&lt;br&gt;• new and emerging technologies to support teaching and learning;&lt;br&gt;• models of behaviour and attendance management;&lt;br&gt;• strategies for ensuring inclusion, diversity and access;&lt;br&gt;• curriculum design and management;&lt;br&gt;• tools for data collection and analysis;&lt;br&gt;• school self-evaluation;&lt;br&gt;• strategies for developing effective teachers;&lt;br&gt;• project management for planning and implementing change;&lt;br&gt;• legal issues to effectively manage the importance of effective student character development;&lt;br&gt;• exemplary Catholic educators and their systems of education;&lt;br&gt;• the liturgical year and appropriate ways of celebrating its major seasons and feast days with the school community.</td>
<td><strong>Knowledge</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;em&gt;The principal knows about**:&lt;em&gt;&lt;br&gt;• accountability frameworks including self-evaluation;&lt;br&gt;• the contribution that education makes to developing, promoting and sustaining a fair and compassionate society;&lt;br&gt;• the use of a range of evidence to support, monitor, evaluate and improve aspects of school performance;&lt;br&gt;• the principles and practices of performance management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitudes</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;em&gt;The principal demonstrates**:&lt;em&gt;&lt;br&gt;• commitment to raising standards for all;&lt;br&gt;• commitment to closing the achievement gap;&lt;br&gt;• belief in meeting the needs of all students in diverse ways;&lt;br&gt;• commitment to sustaining a safe, secure and healthy school environment;&lt;br&gt;• commitment to upholding human rights.</td>
<td><strong>Attitudes</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;em&gt;The principal demonstrates**:&lt;em&gt;&lt;br&gt;• commitment to individual, team and whole-school accountability for student outcomes;&lt;br&gt;• commitment to the principles and practices of school self-evaluation;&lt;br&gt;• commitment to personal self-evaluation and reflection;&lt;br&gt;• commitment to Catholic values and their implementation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Adapted from Institute for Education Leadership (2008).
Leadership practices are defined in the leadership framework as “the actions, behaviours and functions found through research and professional experience to have a positive impact on student achievement and competencies as the skills, knowledge and attitudes of effective school or system leaders” (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008, p. 6). The six leadership dimensions that make up the Catholic leadership framework for principals and vice-principals are: Catholic faith, community and culture; setting directions; building relationships and developing people; developing the organization; leading the instructional program; and securing accountability (see Table 2). In the first dimension, Catholic faith, community and culture, the school leader supports Catholic faith, community, and culture and models a commitment to Christian values. Through their practices and attitudes they demonstrate a knowledge and commitment to facilitating a Catholic learning community that develops and supports the Christian faith, traditions, and values in the school community. The school leader plays an important role in supporting the faith formation of their staff, their students, and themselves.

In the second dimension, setting directions, this is described as the practice and competency of building a shared vision, fostering the acceptance of group goals and setting and communicating high performance expectations (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008, p. 16). It is to ensure that “a Catholic vision is clearly articulated, shared, understood and acted upon effectively by all” (p. 16). In trying to achieve this, the principal “inspire[s], challenge[s], motivate[s] and empower[s] to carry the vision forward” (p. 16).

The third leadership dimension, building relationships and developing people, the school leader “strives to foster genuine trusting relationships with students, staff, families
and communities, guided by a sense of mutual respect. The principal and vice-principal affirm and empower others to work in the interests of all students” (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008, p. 16). A large part of this leadership dimension is based on the principal developing and implementing “effective strategies for staff induction, professional learning, faith formation, leadership, and performance review” (p.16) and in building relational trust with staff. The school principal recognizes, “acknowledges and celebrates the achievements of individuals and teams” (p. 16). The school leader also demonstrates competencies in being able to communicate with a wide range of people, “including the public and the media and can manage conflict effectively” (p. 16).

The fourth leadership dimension, developing the organization, concerns itself with practices and competencies of the school leader building collaborative cultures, structuring the organization for success, and connecting the school to its wider environment (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008, p. 17). Importance is placed on “establishing the conditions of work which will allow staff to make the most of their motivations and capacities” (Leithwood et al., 2006, p. 39). School leaders contribute to this by providing and facilitating opportunities for collaboration to occur among staff, making changes to the school organization so that there is greater involvement of the staff in decision making and greater involvement of the larger community. School leaders also recognize the importance of communication through a variety of means to not only inform the community but also to learn from it (Leithwood et al., 2006, pp. 38-41).

The fifth leadership dimension, leading the instructional program, involves practices and competencies of the school leader that sets high expectations for learning outcomes and monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of instruction. The school leader
manages the school effectively so that everyone can focus on teaching and learning (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008, p. 17). School principals and vice-principals recognize the importance of a highly qualified staff and participate in the “recruitment, hiring and retention of teachers with the interest and capacity to further the school’s goals” (p. 17). School leaders also play an important role in providing instructional support by providing “resources in support of curriculum instruction and Catholic graduate expectations and buffer staff from distractions that detract from student achievement” (p. 17). Further, this leadership dimension also reveals competencies that demonstrate knowledge of the school leader to strategize improvement for student achievement toward a “commitment to raising standards for all, closing the achievement gap, [and] belief in meeting the needs of all students in diverse ways” (p. 17).

The sixth and final leadership dimension, securing accountability, relates to leadership practices and competencies that create conditions for student success and reveal an accountability of the school leader to students, parents, the community, supervisors and to the board for ensuring that students benefit from a high quality education. This final domain of the Ontario Leadership Framework “ensures individual staff accountabilities are clearly defined, understood, agreed to and subject to rigorous review and evaluation” (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008, p. 17). School leaders reflect on their contribution to “school achievements and makes connections to ministry goals to strengthen commitment to school improvement efforts” (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008, p. 17). School leaders are specifically accountable for the goals set out in the school improvement plan (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008, pp.16-17). School leaders “use a range of evidence to support, monitor, evaluate and improve
aspects of school performance” (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008, p. 17). Under this leadership dimension, school leaders also meet the demands of external accountability by developing and presenting a “coherent, understandable, accurate and transparent account of the school’s performance to a range of audiences (e.g., school council, parents, board, and supervisors)” (Government of Ontario, 2012, p. 31).

Since its introduction, the Ontario Leadership Framework has been used for a variety of initiatives at the system level (Government of Ontario, 2010a, p. 13). This has been in large part due to its use as a foundation for such new government initiatives as the mentoring program for newly appointed school and system leaders; and the principal and vice-principal performance appraisal process (Government of Ontario, 2010b). In addition, it has been used as an organizing framework for the Principals Qualification Program (Ontario College of Teachers, 2013b) and in the program modules of the Supervisory Officers Qualification Program (Ontario College of Teachers, 2013a) that all aspiring principals and supervisory officers are required to successfully complete before they are appointed to these positions of school and system leadership respectively. Its uses for these purposes, however, have not provided much understanding into how it has affected school leaders and their work.

**Context of the Ontario Leadership Framework at Rushmore**

The Ontario Leadership Framework was first introduced to the school principals and vice-principals of Rushmore Catholic district school board through a number of workshops and professional development sessions aimed at introducing and explaining the benefits of adopting the framework in their leadership practices and competencies. As a district receiving Ontario Leadership Strategy funding, Rushmore Catholic district was
required to develop and implement a Board Leadership Development Strategy (BLDS). The primary purpose of creating a BLDS was to “establish a systematic approach to fostering high-quality leadership throughout the organization” (Government of Ontario, 2010b, p. 4). More specifically, one of the main requirements of completing the BLDS was to develop a plan that “embeds the leadership practices and competencies of the Ontario Leadership Framework” into initiatives focused on leadership development (Government of Ontario, 2010b, p. 12).

One of the ways in which Rushmore Catholic District did this was to develop a leadership strategy that incorporated the Ontario Leadership Framework. They achieved this by creating the Leadership Journey Program which was designed to “support student achievement and well-being by developing passionate and skilled leaders” in their schools and board. Through their creation of their Leadership Journey booklet, Rushmore Catholic district outlined their vision for school and system leadership in their board. Beyond the inclusion of the Ontario Leadership Framework, they make specific reference to it in their profile for effective Catholic leadership, and in the portfolio for Catholic leadership sections. In the profile for effective leadership section, they use the six domains of the Ontario Leadership Framework as a basis to self-assess by evaluating their leadership skills on a continuum of development. As a way to supplement their self-assessment, they are encouraged to create and use a professional portfolio to “map out their own professional development, leadership, readiness and ability to make a difference within their school and system” (Rushmore Leadership Journey).

In developing their professional portfolio, they organize their artifacts and experiences around the six leadership dimensions of the Ontario Leadership Framework
for Catholic principals and vice-principals. Once complete, the portfolio provides the user with an opportunity to identify areas of strength and further development. However, if they wanted to apply for a leadership position, they were required to create a Leadership Portfolio that would demonstrate alignment between their leadership practices and competencies and those covered in the Ontario Leadership Framework. This would then be shared with the candidate’s superintendent to foster a discussion to determine one’s readiness to apply for positions of leadership. More specifically, once the superintendent supports the candidate’s readiness to apply, the leadership portfolio is used to foster a discussion at the first stage of the interview process with superintendents to determine whether or not the candidate can move on to the next and final stage of the leadership selection process. Hence, understanding and being able to align and make connections to the Ontario Leadership Framework from one’s leadership experiences, practices, and competencies is an important consideration in determining the selection of school leaders at Rushmore.

In this study, nine of the 14 school leaders created a leadership portfolio to apply either for the position that they are currently in or for one that they have aspired to. A second way that Rushmore incorporated the Ontario Leadership Framework in their district was through the principal and vice-principal appraisal process. School and system leaders of Rushmore were introduced to the Ontario Leadership Framework initially as a necessary component of their performance appraisal. Every principal and vice-principal at Rushmore Catholic district was to complete an Annual Growth Plan that had to include some of the leadership practices and competencies described in the Ontario Leadership Framework for their area of professional growth. In addition to this, during a year of
performance review, the principal and/or vice-principal had to develop goals that took into account the practices and competencies described in the Ontario Leadership Framework and use them as well to strategize on how to attain those goals.

**Individual Profiles of Principals of Rushmore Catholic District**

**Concetta.** Concetta has been in education for 21 years, and is entering her second year as secondary school principal. She describes her specific leadership jobs as “setting direction in terms of developing the school improvement plan…and developing leadership in the building…and building relationships.” Concetta finds most of her time consumed with school improvement efforts; “school improvement plan is the one that takes up most of my time because its literacy, its numeracy, its pathway, its Catholicity and the developmental assets.” Concetta wishes she had more time to “visit with students, to be in classrooms, to have more conversations with them.”

Concetta’s leadership practices have been largely influenced by two elements; people she has worked with and her graduate work; “my master’s… hugely impacted who I am as an educator and as an administrator.” In terms of how she determines whether or not her leadership practices and/ or competencies are effective in her school, Concetta explains that: “open and trusting relationships you have with your vice-principals…tell me what I am doing well and where I can improve. Getting feedback from them and from the staff… helps me set directions.” When initiatives do not meet with success, Concetta asks many questions based on the data she has in hand: “I look at the data and what it tells me and if our kids are doing well I think that speaks well to the student, to the staff and what they are doing in the classroom. And if we don’t meet with success…what can I do better”? 
Antonio. Antonio has been in education for 27 years, and is entering his third year as a secondary school principal. Speaking of his responsibilities, Antonio describes it as being “responsible for basically everything, and I guess that’s in a sense the way, I look at it right now is that, whatever happens at the school, in some way, shape, or form, you have to be connected to it.” Antonio states that most of his time as a principal is consumed with issues that staff and parents bring forward to him and this is based on his “open door policy that people can drop in whenever they want.” As a result of this, Antonio finds it difficult to find time to be more involved in curriculum and the respective meetings that accompanies this.

Antonio’s leadership practices have been influenced through his work in four different school communities and in two different school districts. Most of these experiences set a standard for him as Antonio explains: “you know…how to conduct yourself as a professional…how to work really for the benefit of the community.” He describes effective leadership practices and competencies as being based on “strong relationship with your staff, if there’s a sense of trust and integrity, everything else will fall in place from there.” Antonio gauges his effectiveness as a school leader by monitoring such data sources as EQAO scores, suspension rates, staff and student surveys, and feedback that he gets from staff. When a particular initiative meets with success, Antonio does not really see the need to dwell on it too long, but rather as Antonio discusses: “I probably focus more of my energies when we don’t have success.

Max. Max has been in education for twenty-three years, and has served five of those as secondary school principal. In terms of his responsibilities, he describes them as being concerned with issues that are brought to his attention from parents and teachers “I
think that takes up a lot of time. It probably takes up the majority of time.” Max laments that this results in less time for “the important area…of instructional leadership.”

Max characterizes effective leadership in his school as being able to communicate to your school community “what you believe and what your commitment to a particular idea is.” Max also finds it quite important to “develop people within your own building,” to build capacity. Max has found that the district has provided him with valuable professional development. He also states that his family life and “the change in leadership at the board level impacts… on what you do at the school level.” Max finds that as a school leader he can determine his effectiveness by reviewing the school improvement plan to observe “to what extent” he has achieved the goals set out in the plan. The other area is from feedback. As Max discusses “I think the feedback you get from peers, from your VPs…who care about the school and want to kind of discuss where you are going in certain things, is important.” When initiatives go well, Max tries to make it a part of his “regular practice,” however, when certain things are not met with success, Max reflects on the possibilities and adjusts his approach the next time around.

**Peter.** Peter has been in education for 24 years and as a secondary school principal for 7 years. In his experience as a school leader, Peter finds that the tasks he does as a school principal can be divided into two main areas: school manager, and school leader. Tasks that he considers to be part of the management aspect are centred around plant inspection, fire drills, health and safety, and school discipline for example, compared to school improvement, student success, and school council which he considers part of his school leadership role.
Peter discusses that a large part of his responsibilities revolve around initiatives and projects that deal with “student success” and this takes the majority of his time. As a result of this, Peter goes on to discuss that he feels guilty “not walking the hallways enough…talking to teachers more on a regular basis…[making] that human contact.” Peter describes effective leadership as one where you can “have good relationships with your teachers and students…they see you working for the good of the school and not yourself.” A lot of this thinking has come from his experiences from colleagues and the professionals he has worked with, as well as “reading a lot of books.” Peter finds that his leadership is effective, as he states, “if the students are happy, the teachers are happy, their morale is good, and they’re motivated. And, I think, if it’s a healthy school, where…people are willing to talk about problems, about issues…I think that’s an indication that I’m being successful as a leader.” Peter finds that when initiatives meet with success it “reaffirms that I am doing a good job. But when there isn’t success…I focus on developing the organization, building relationships, and developing people. I think of my leadership. Am I doing enough to inspire and motivate people…it always gives me an opportunity to reflect.”

**Frank.** Frank has been an educator for 32 years of which 7 have been in the capacity of secondary school principal. Frank describes his main tasks as being responsible for the culture of the school and in setting directions. He finds that a large part of his day is dedicated to dealing with “staff, student, community issues, and also school council.” He believes that in order for him to be effective as a leader it is important “to create an environment of inclusiveness…to engage staff and students in roles that would entice them to…leadership.” Frank believes a lot of his leadership
practices and competencies have been influenced by “colleagues, staff, and people I have respected over the years.” He also believes it is important to keep up to date with new research on leadership and readings from his principals’ association. Frank declares that communication is “number one” when it comes to determining whether or not you are an effective leader in your school. He goes on to state the importance of having open “lines of communication with VPs, with the staff, with the students, with the parents, then they give me tremendous feedback if were on the right track or not.” Frank also subscribes to what he has called the seven Cs. He believes that a school community should be “collaborative, collegial, communicate, compassionate, considerate, committed, and show care for each other.”

Frank has gone to great lengths to develop a school culture around these seven Cs, and explains that his staff also expects this of him as he discusses: “when I have not been collaborative, when I have not been so collegial, they remind me…and that keeps me grounded as well.” When initiatives meet with success Frank states: “we don’t reflect on it, because we have been successful. There is no need. It is working.” However, when an initiative does not meet with success Frank finds himself doing a lot of reflection and trying to figure out why it was not successful. Frank states that he is one “that reflects a great deal. I think about things over and over again… why didn’t it work? What could we have done?”

Nick. Nick has been a secondary school principal for 10 years and an educator for 23 years. Nick describes his responsibilities by listing his involvement in the following: “staffing, budgets, school improvement plan, public relations, performance appraisals, new registrants, school council, plant and maintenance, student leadership, pathways,
community agencies, head meetings and staff meetings.” He finds that “performance appraisals take the most of his time…there’s the constant churn of them happening. And that’s just the formalized process. But, in reality you are constantly monitoring…your staff” and this takes time to do. Nick feels that an effective leader is one who “uses data from student achievement, like testing” to help make decisions in terms of what directions to take to try to “remediate” any student learning issues. He also feels that leaders need to “pay attention to people’s emotional states…a school is operating well when students, parents, and staff are not upset.” Further, a leader needs to look for feedback: “verbal, nonverbal, and emotional. People are either enthusiastic about what we’re doing or not.”

Nick finds that his leadership practices and competencies have been greatly affected by his previous principals. He states that he “looked at what other leaders in schools did and [he] aspired to accomplish some of the things that they accomplished, always cognizant that [he] wasn’t them.” Nick goes on to say: “my influences are people. They are not structures, they are not books, and they are not theories.” Nick feels that one of the determinants of whether you are performing well as a leader is by “monitoring the reaction, the satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction levels of parents, students, and staff.” Further, Nick states that you “do your best to manage them such that [they] are sufficiently satisfied to continue to perform whatever role is theirs in a way that meets the needs of the organization, which is the school.” When initiatives meet with success in the school Nick states that it “affirms that what you are doing is the right way to do it, so I’m going to keep on doing it. There is a sense of exhilaration and excitement.” When an
initiative is unsuccessful: “I’m thinking, how can I do that better, what should I have done? Next time that happens, what should I do?”

**Steve.** Steve is the most experienced educator of the group with 45 years of service in education of which 10 have been in the capacity of secondary school principal. Steve explains that his job is basically “to make sure that everybody is able to do their job.” Steve goes on to say that he tries to “set direction, set a focus, and make sure people understand what [he] would like to do and to encourage them to do that.” Steve states that most of his time as school leader is taken up by public relations. This involves “how we deal with teachers, how we deal with parents, how we deal with students, that’s what the job is all about.” As a result of this Steve finds that he does not have enough time to interact with teachers. He finds that the demands of his job prevent him from spending the time he would like with teachers. Steve finds that he has been influenced greatly by people who are critical of his leadership: “feedback that I get…makes me reflect on how do I deal with this group? And, how can I make this group work better within the parameters that I set for them?”

A great indicator for Steve to gauge whether or not his leadership practices or competencies are effective is to see if the tasks and responsibilities that he is accountable for are done. As he states; “it’s not who does the job, does it get done? It’s not who’s responsible or who takes the credit or who takes the blame, is it done?” Steve sees successful school initiatives as a question of preparation. He states: “I like to know the outcome of something before it happens. I talk to all the people that I think might be against what I am trying to do and see whether or not I can float the idea out there to make sure that they feel that it is not my idea, that somebody else comes up with it and
then we can go ahead and support it…I don’t like to surprise them.” He states that he has been very successful as a result of this approach and cites that there are no initiatives that he is aware of that have not been successful in his schools as a result of this.

**Individual Profiles of Vice- Principals of Rushmore Catholic District**

**John.** John has been in education for 13 years and has just completed his first year as vice-principal of a secondary school. Being new to the position, John has discovered that the role responsibilities are really dictated by the principal. While he is involved with a number of committees and initiatives, his primary responsibility is “attendance and behaviour.” In fact, school discipline does take the majority of his time, he states: “I’d like to spend more time on the things that are proactive, the committees that can impact student performance or the teacher professional development; I struggle right now in my job to try to find a balance between those.” John states that his experiences in three schools with different leaders have allowed him to see “lots of role models, good and bad…there’s been lots of opportunities to learn how the situations been handled and how maybe I would handle them differently.” John goes on to state that “course work” from his Master’s program and the research literature that he has read has been important to him as a leader.

John uses the feedback from his immediate supervisors (principal and superintendent) to reflect on what he is doing well and what he needs more development in. John has also conducted exit interviews with his department heads which has helped him “in being able to understand how they feel about administration and whether they felt the administration was being supportive.” John has also been influenced by feedback that he has received from parents and teachers: “we’ve had some very good anecdotal
information from parents this year… to inform us of what is going well.” When school initiatives meet with success “they should be shared and celebrated within a school,” John goes on to state that his leadership practice does not change that much in this case. However, when an initiative does not meet with success, it involves “reflecting on the steps that caused…the failure, and changes and adjustments that can be made…to make those adjustments to hopefully meet with more success.”

**Gregory.** Gregory has been in education for 18 years of which 4 have been in the role of secondary school vice-principal. In regards to his responsibilities, generally “we sit down every year, prior to school commencing and we sort of divvy up the duties of vice- principals. The principal works with both of us and makes sure we have equitable responsibilities.” A large part of Gregory’s responsibilities “is the day-to-day discipline of the school…I’d say a good 70% of my day would be student discipline.” This then leads to minimal amount of time to be visible in the school, which is important to Gregory: “would absolutely love more time to be visible in the school…I find you get bogged down with the problems when you’re in the office and you know to be an effective administrator I think the visibility piece [helps]… kids see you in a different light.” Gregory feels that in order to be an effective leader you have to be “a very effective communicator…to communicate openly, clearly and honestly with all those involved” and he feels that has gained him a lot of trust from the staff that he works with. Much of Gregory’s influence has come from observing and learning from others whether it is successes or failures. “You have different people you have worked with, you say I like that approach or I like that style or I like the way he or she has done something.” Gregory determines whether or not his leadership practices are successful by reviewing
two basic aspects: school data and feedback. As Gregory states: “you can look at numbers…and as long as were working together in the right direction, to me that’s a positive and that to me is a success. …Feedback is important to hear too. I think feedback from the community, feedback from parents, feedback from the board lets you know at least… [whether or not] you’re going in the right direction.” In regards to getting an initiative to work, Gregory feels that teachers are the key to success. Gregory states: “trying to be as supportive as I can and trying to encourage the teacher or staff member to try it and explore the different initiative without overburdening the teacher with extra work has been one of the biggest challenges.”

**Jack.** Jack has been in education for 22 years and has been a vice-principal for 4 of those years. His major responsibilities in this role have centred on numeracy, literacy, and discipline. The roles and responsibilities are decided “as a group. We sat down as a group and go over them as a leadership team.” The majority of Jack’s time as an administrator is dominated by the discipline issues that would appear at his door. Jack states that “discipline takes up three-quarters of the day” and this can translate into “10 crises every day and a lot of times there is one incident that happens that can take a week or two weeks of your time.” As a result, Jack does not have much time for “curriculum development.” To be effective as a school leader Jack feels that you need to be “visible in the halls…the more the teachers see you…the happier they are. You also have to have an open door policy…a relationship where you can discuss things and see other people’s point of view.” Jack has been influenced by mentors, but finds his real influence has come from reading biographical books such as “Giuliani’s book on leadership, Covey’s effective leadership strategies… [he is] always looking for books on leadership.”
Jack determines whether or not his leadership is effective by “looking at the data and informal conversations” with his staff. Jack expands on this: “first and foremost it’s the data…the number one thing for us is what our scores are like.” Secondly, “informal conversations with staff…getting feedback from talking with people” these together are what gives Jack a sense of how he is performing as a leader in his school. His leadership practices are not really affected when something meets with success. However, when an initiative or innovation does not meet with success, Jack finds himself changing his approach. More specifically, he speaks how on the numeracy committee he had to make some tough decisions to somehow improve their scores: “I decided at that point that I needed to be a little more active. I needed to be proactive. I need to ensure teachers have actually signed up and this has affected me all the way through. I don’t assume anything anymore. It is my responsibility to make sure everything is in order.”

Ida. Ida has been an educator for 23 years and a secondary school vice-principal for 7 of those years. Ida reflects that a large part of her main task is “supporting staff [with] discipline, so dealing with student issues is certainly a big part of a VP role.” Even though as an administrative team Ida acknowledges that she is assigned a number of roles, “a huge portion of your day is taken up by just following up on student behaviour, student attendance issues…75% of your day is taken up by this.” Due to this, Ida states she does not have adequate time to try to be a: “curriculum leader, supporting teachers, I’d say that probably is the one that I would like to have a lot more time for.” Ida would describe effective leadership practices as ones that are “community-oriented…someone who’s fair, consistent, accountable…and cares about wanting to build a good school.” In terms of influences on her leadership practices: “being exposed to many leadership types;
some incredible positive and some not so much…you learn about yourself by working with these people.” Ida goes on to state that “I’ve had some influence from senior administration but not nearly as directly as I do by the people that you work with in that administrative role.”

Ida determines the effectiveness of her leadership practices primarily by “self-reflection.” As she states, this has been “key in trying to determine whether or not I think I’m doing a good job…and part of that self-reflection is being willing to talk and listen to other people.” When initiatives that are met with success occur in Ida’s school: “it reaffirms what you are doing is right.” However, when something does not meet with success she states: “it makes me question, well, what did we do? What didn’t work? What can we improve? What can we change? ...You have to be open to altering, changing, sometimes totally rearranging the path you are on, if that’s what the data is telling you.”

Maria. Maria has been an educator for 22 years and a secondary school vice-principal for 7 years. Maria finds that her responsibilities are coordinated through the principal. Generally, Maria took over the exact same responsibilities of the vice-principal she replaced, as she states: “a lot of times you inherit…then when somebody leaves, you take what you want from the leaving administrator and leave what you don’t want for the coming VP.” Maria goes on to state that the majority of her time as a vice-principal is taken up with issues that deal with students. More specifically, “with special education issues, mental health issues…more than 75% of the day is spent with these issues which are all part of the discipline.”

Maria has the least amount of time in her day for “things like the literacy team, teacher performance appraisals, and classroom visits.” Maria describes effective leadership
practices as ones which develop relationships in your school. Maria speaks of “recognizing teachers themselves, their input. You value what they do in the school…this then creates an environment where you can have conversations to help you move in a certain direction.” Maria finds that what she has done and continues to do as a vice-principal is influenced by the principal that she is working with. The “principal’s style and priorities have a major influence on how I practice my leadership in the school.” In regards to how Maria determines whether or not her leadership practices and competencies are effective, she states: “that a lot has to do with attitudes of teachers. If you have teachers willing to participate in a new idea…always looking to do things better, how to reach their kids more,” this then Maria thinks is a good indicator of her effectiveness. When an initiative meets with success “you’re just happy that you have got some buy in. I think buy in is a success, because you are not necessarily always going to get the results, because there are too many variables.” Maria states that when an initiative does not meet with success “you do not have teacher buy in, you have to change what you are doing.”

Lianna. Lianna has been a secondary school teacher for 18 years and a secondary vice-principal for 9 years. Her responsibilities have been mainly decided after consultation with the principal and the other vice-principal. Lianna is responsible for “literacy, safe schools, and youth settlement worker.” A large amount of Lianna’s time is dedicated to “first, dealing with students, and then dealing with parents, and then teachers.” Lianna states that student discipline takes up “a good 80%, at least” of her time. Lianna wished she had more time for “classroom visits.” Lianna characterizes effective leadership as one which demonstrates an understanding of the school community and school data. Lianna states that you will be ineffective as a leader “if you don’t know your community, and your
teachers. You really need to know your community, starting from the grassroots” to be effective. Also, you need to know your school’s data. Lianna states that you need to reflect: “what does it look like in the classroom… are you reaching all students… are there mental health issues, financial issues, and how does that affect the student.”

Lianna was greatly affected by her experience and training in restorative practices. Before this, she described herself as a “punitive type of administrator” where she would suspend students without much regard to their personal situation. Restorative practices influenced her to look “at the student as a whole person. It is not about the action a student took, it’s about that student as a whole person. You need to know the background of the student.” Lianna also found that the culture of the school was also a major influence in how she practiced her leadership. “Culture influenced me. So, I had to change. And, my changes became significant. Here I am in this particular school…and I am trying to initiate initiatives that promote a sense of belonging, but the school already had a school culture of belonging and was not receptive to my initiatives.” Lianna determines her effectiveness as a leader by reflecting on how she feels: “either you feel that you are effective or you don’t.” She also bases it on “the interaction with students, your interaction with your colleagues, with your teachers, with the community” this combined with achievement data helps Lianna understand how effective she really is in leading the school in certain directions. When initiatives meet with success she initially feels elated, but then begins to ask: “what were the real reasons for the success? How were students involved? Did the people in your group make the difference? You need to figure out what happened. You need to break it down to see what things worked” When an initiative does not meet with success Lianna believes that you need to break it apart “to see what happened? You are tweaking your
leadership because it is not all black and white. It depends on the people you are working with and how you may need to work with them” to get better results.

Jim. Jim has been a secondary school vice-principal for 9 years, and in education for 23 years. He found his role and responsibilities for his present school based on what the previous vice-principal was accountable for. He finds that “the one that takes up the most time is student discipline, because there are various issues that come up. It sometimes requires us to meet with parents, and so that may take up quite a bit of time.” When asked how much of his time was spent on student discipline in his day, Jim replied “around 70%.” Jim finds that because of this, he has little time for other leadership functions: “I consider myself an instructional leader…but…the time one devotes to discipline…takes away from that time.” Jim feels that in order to be effective as a school leader, you need to engage in practices “that provide students with the kind of genuine and authentic learning experiences that allow them to contribute to a globally interconnected 21st century.” He goes on to say that the practices have to also include “a positive, safe learning environment for most students and staff…which result in the creation of relationships underscored by common courtesy and respect.”

Jim has been influenced by his prior work experience in business, the community in which the school is situated, and the feedback of his immediate supervisors, in regards to his leadership practices. Jim determines whether or not he is being effective by monitoring for: “positive working environment for staff, staff that is engaged in taking risks, that’s engaged in learning…students that are achieving, and are able to contribute, not only to their own well-being… but also able to benefit the greater community.” He goes on to say
“you try to create an environment that is open to speak and to be courageous in their conversation with you, free to give you feedback.”

When asked how he reacts to when an initiative meets with success: “it’s a reaffirmation…the peril is that we tend to gloat on our successes and we tend to take that affirmation as absolute. But, just like the business world” we need to continually improve and “professional development” is one way to do this. When an initiative fails: “you need to go back and examine the causes of the failure, come up with a plan on how to counteract those failures and turn it into a positive. You have to challenge your assumptions, challenge your assumptions about your leadership…and then you have to change that.” Jim concludes that “leaders fool themselves when they are not constantly re-examining their leadership practices and their assumptions and the world views that obviously influence their practices.”

While a more detailed profile could have been presented, the anonymity of the interviewee was paramount. Instead, a well-rounded discussion emanated that focused on a number of characteristics. Each individual profile provided information on the number of years in education (combining both years as a teacher and an administrator), the number of years in their current role, their roles and responsibilities as an administrator, what their perception is of an effective leader, what has influenced their leadership practices and competencies, how they determine whether or not they are being effective as school leaders, and how their leadership practices and/or competencies are affected when a particular initiative or change is successful or not. Table 3 provides a summary of these key points as expressed by the respondents.
### Table 3

**Key Findings of Individual Profiles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal respondents</th>
<th>Years in education (teaching and admin. combined)</th>
<th>Role and responsibilities</th>
<th>Influences on my leadership practices and competencies</th>
<th>How do I know if I am effective as a school leader?</th>
<th>What effect does success / not having success have on my leadership?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concetta</td>
<td>21 / 2</td>
<td>“Setting direction and school improvement”</td>
<td>Colleagues and graduate work</td>
<td>Feedback from VPs and staff</td>
<td>Ask many questions: “what can I do better?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antonio</td>
<td>27 / 3</td>
<td>“Responsible for everything”</td>
<td>Working in 4 school communities and 2 school districts</td>
<td>EQAO scores, suspension rates, feedback from staff and students</td>
<td>“Focus more of my energies when we don’t have success”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max</td>
<td>23 / 5</td>
<td>Deal with issues from parents and teachers</td>
<td>Professional development and family life</td>
<td>Achievement of School Improvement goals and feedback from staff</td>
<td>Make success part of regular practice. When no success, reflect and adjust approach next time around.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>24 / 7</td>
<td>School manager and leader</td>
<td>Experienced peers and “reading lots of books”</td>
<td>“If students and teachers are happy”</td>
<td>Success reaffirms of good work. When no success, need to reflect, develop organization and people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>32 / 7</td>
<td>Deal with staff, student, and community and school council.</td>
<td>Colleagues and staff and research</td>
<td>Feedback from VPs staff, students, and parents</td>
<td>Don’t reflect on success, only on initiatives that do not meet with success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>23 / 10</td>
<td>Staffing, budget, SIP, Public relations, performance appraisals…</td>
<td>Previous principals</td>
<td>Uses data from student achievement and people’s emotional state</td>
<td>Success affirms that the right way to do it was achieved, when unsuccessful, “how can I do that better?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>45 / 10</td>
<td>Set direction, set a focus, and public relations.</td>
<td>Feedback that is critical of his leadership.</td>
<td>If leadership tasks and responsibilities are completed</td>
<td>Success is based on no surprises. Not aware of any initiative that was not met with success.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3 (Cont’d)

**Key Findings of Individual Profiles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vice-principal respondents</th>
<th>Years in education (teaching and admin. combined) and current role</th>
<th>Role and responsibilities</th>
<th>Influences on my leadership practices and competencies</th>
<th>How do I know if I am effective as a school leader?</th>
<th>What effect does success / not having success have on my leadership?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>13 / 1</td>
<td>Student “attendance and behaviour”</td>
<td>Previous school leaders and Master’s degree</td>
<td>Feedback from immediate supervisors</td>
<td>Share and celebrate success with staff, reflect and make adjustments when unsuccessful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregory</td>
<td>18 / 4</td>
<td>Discipline of the school.</td>
<td>Observing and learning from others</td>
<td>School data and feedback</td>
<td>Teachers are key to any successful initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>22 / 4</td>
<td>“Discipline takes up ¾ of the day”</td>
<td>Biographical books on leaders</td>
<td>School data and feedback</td>
<td>Success does not affect leadership, change approach if unsuccessful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ida</td>
<td>23 / 7</td>
<td>Supporting staff with student discipline</td>
<td>Work with other school leaders</td>
<td>Self-reflection, speaking, and listening with others</td>
<td>Success reaffirms what you are doing right, question and be open to changing when unsuccessful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>22 / 7</td>
<td>Student issues</td>
<td>The principal’s style and priorities</td>
<td>Teachers’ attitudes</td>
<td>Success is a result of teacher “buy in.” Need to change what you are doing when unsuccessful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lianna</td>
<td>27 / 9</td>
<td>Dealing with students, parents and teachers</td>
<td>Training in restorative practices and school culture</td>
<td>Reflecting and interactions with teachers and the community</td>
<td>When success occurs ask questions as to why. Need to adjust leadership when unsuccessful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim</td>
<td>23 / 9</td>
<td>Student discipline</td>
<td>Prior business experience, school community, and feedback of immediate supervisors</td>
<td>Positive work environment for staff, students achieving, open communication</td>
<td>Success is a reaffirmation. When unsuccessful, examine causes, come up with plan, and challenge assumptions about your leadership.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

This chapter presented a context for the study by providing a description of the Ontario Leadership Framework and the individual profiles of the fourteen administrators that participated in this study. The chapter gave a context for this study by providing a brief discussion of its Catholic identity, the six domains that comprise it, and how Rushmore Catholic district school board utilized it at the system level. The second part of this chapter provided individual profiles of the participants in this study. Beyond the initial difference in their administrative position (i.e. principal and vice-principal), the principals and vice-principals in this study also provided some contrasting views about the nature of their work. The potential significance of this insight is that it could influence how the principals and vice-principals in this study implemented the Ontario Leadership Framework. For example, vice-principals in this study spoke of how student discipline took up most of their time, and how they saw themselves as more managers of the school than leaders. It is plausible that if the Ontario Leadership Framework does not contain leadership practices and competencies that speak to student discipline and the managing of the school, vice-principals may find the framework not practical or relevant to their work as a school leader.
Chapter Five: An Analysis of Emerging Themes

In the previous chapter the Ontario Leadership Framework and the individual profiles of the 14 administrators that participated in this study were provided as a context for this work. This chapter begins an analysis of the 10 emergent themes that the respondents in this study have articulated in response to the interview questions posed.

Emergent Themes

It became apparent from an analysis of the interview transcripts that the respondents in this study shared and expressed a number of similarities in their responses. These similarities developed into common themes in the data where they began to provide some preliminary insight into addressing the research questions of this study. Following the methodology described in chapter 3, 10 themes emerged and formed the basis of this chapter: school board pressure and support; preparation and performance; indicators of effective leadership; common language, reflection; limitations; job affirmation; priority; fit; and Catholic piece.

A special note needs to be made about the themes of preparation and performance, and common language. Interviewees in this study spoke about their understanding of the Ontario Leadership Framework as addressing specific “needs.” More specifically, they made reference to how the Ontario Leadership Framework was a required piece of information that they needed to use both in their quest for further advancement in school or system leadership positions and in the completion of their performance appraisal. As well, interviewees spoke of how the Ontario Leadership Framework addressed the need for a common leadership language among their peers and with their supervisors. To a large extent, these two themes represent their initial
understanding of why the Ontario Leadership Framework was introduced to them in the first place, that is, to address these needs.

While only 10 themes formed the basis of the data section of this chapter, there were two other themes that received some mention from the respondents that are worthy to highlight. The first of these was the theme of relationships. Here a few of the respondents spoke about the importance of the human connection and “going beyond” the structure of the Ontario Leadership Framework to understand what effective leadership is about. To them, leadership is predominately based on the varied relations that the administrators have with their staff. It is quite difficult, if not altogether impossible to categorise or even list what it is they do as school leaders without an understanding of the importance of relationships.

The second theme that received some attention was quantity of practices and competencies. Here a few of the respondents spoke briefly of how difficult it was for them to discern what leadership practices and competencies they should follow. The sheer number of practices and competencies listed in the Ontario Leadership Framework made them feel overwhelmed. Not only did this challenge how they felt about their own efficacy as a leader, but it also appeared to define a standard that to them was unattainable. As complex and varied as their role is as school leader, the Ontario Leadership Framework did not provide any real support or value to their current leadership practices. If anything, it reminded them of how daunting their role and responsibilities were.

**Ten Themes**

**School board pressure and support.** Interviewees in this study articulated an
awareness of the pressure and support from their district in regards to the implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework. The group of quotes used in this theme are representative of all the respondents’ agreement that their district in one way or another provided support and/or pressure in their initial use of the Ontario Leadership Framework. With references to in-services and district expectations, for example, it became clear to them that they had to become more than just aware of its presence. As Jack noted, “I would say that I am more aware of the Ontario Leadership Framework now and that’s because of our board’s emphasis on it. Our Board has done a very good job of using that leadership framework.”

One of the first areas that the interviewees spoke of support from their district in the use of the Ontario Leadership Framework was through their development of an optional professional portfolio that incorporated the six domains of the Ontario Leadership Framework. The portfolio was to be used to identify both strengths and areas that needed further development for the aspiring leader. To accommodate this, Rushmore Catholic District created a template for both current and aspiring school and system leaders to use and provided an in-service on how to complete it. Some of the interviewees speak specifically about this experience of creating a portfolio and how it allowed them to also become more familiar with the Ontario Leadership Framework as a result.

I have a reasonable understanding of the Ontario Leadership Framework primarily because of the board’s direction in terms of the portfolio. In trying to support or identify where your strengths and your challenges are as a leader. So it did give me a chance to become a lot more familiar with the framework. (Ida)

I had to spend a lot of time with it in order to understand where I fit within the leadership framework, to know what my areas of strength were and areas that I need to work on, using the board portfolio, as well, the electronic portfolio. I found this a really helpful way of putting information into the framework and working within the framework. So, I did find that helpful. (John)
As helpful as this was for them, interviewees also expressed a sense of pressure from the district in trying to align with the leadership practices and competencies of the six domains. This was especially true of those aspiring for positions of school leadership. As Gregory and Jim (vice-principals) state:

I looked at this framework recently, and as an administrator in our board, you know, we have to know those domains. We have to live those domains, and if you have aspirations of moving on, moving up, vice-principal to principal in our board and I am sure principal to superintendent those domains are basically your framework for you as an administrator in our board. (Gregory)

I have not consulted with the framework in the context of applying for a position of greater responsibility in the past. But I probably would. I probably would for the simple fact that my superiors would be looking for me to exhibit some kind of competency or knowledge directed by the Ontario Leadership Framework. (Jim)

Acknowledgement of this pressure was not only exclusive to those aspiring to school or system leadership, but also by those already in those positions. For example, Steve, a veteran principal, recognizes the demand and pressure to align with the leadership framework from the district as influential when he states the following:

If I was a vice-principal or a department head just starting out, I think knowing that the board has taken this on then I think I would definitely take a real hard look at that and take my own profile and make sure it measures up against the leadership framework just because that would be the smart thing to do. (Steve)

Another example of how the district supported and pressured their principals and vice-principals in their use of the Ontario Leadership Framework was through their school visits. Superintendents would ask, in preparation for their visit with their school leaders, to prepare a brief statement of the strengths and areas of development that they felt best reflected their leadership practices and competencies. With the assistance of the Ontario Leadership Framework, they would begin to highlight goals and directions for
their discussion. For example, Frank, Antonio, and Nick state that the Ontario Leadership Framework helped them:

to identify what my goals for the year were and how I met them. So that when I have that discussion with my supervisor, we had specific things to look for. And, that way we went from there. So, it was a tremendous help in understanding, and setting goals, but also to see if we’ve achieved them. (Frank)

When I sat down with the Ontario Leadership Framework developing basically my own plan for the year I was thinking of the conversation I was going to have in terms of the leadership reflection with the superintendent. I think the fact you know you are looking through these and you are saying “yeah, you know what? I should be doing this if I am not doing it. And the other one is, “hey, you know I am not doing a bad job in these particular areas.” (Antonio)

I think it provides information to people who would be interested in pursuing the role to see what capacities they need to build and I think it provides a framework and a conversation starter for people who are managing principals and need to give them feedback and need to appraise their performance. (Nick)

This recognition of the role and influence that central district (board) administrators play in the implementation of change has been echoed by the interviewees of this study. More specifically, they acknowledge both the district and the superintendents’ role in facilitating and supporting the use of the Ontario Leadership Framework in their leadership portfolio, school visits, and as a reference point to discuss professional growth for current administrators.

**Preparation and performance.** Interviewees acknowledge the centralized authority of the Ontario Leadership Framework, and they also recognize the pressure to conform to the expectations of their immediate supervisors. For example, interviewees were asked by their appraisers to reflect on their leadership practices and competencies and to develop goals and priorities for their performance and annual growth plan using the Ontario Leadership Framework as a reference. With expressions as “I had to use it” and “I did have to look at it” for example, interviewees understood the expectations that
were placed on them and they in turn expressed some of the challenges and successes of trying to do so.

I found that I had to use it this year, because I was doing my performance appraisal. I’ve got to be honest…I liked it because it kind of…quantified what you thought were the leadership attributes that you should be looking for. And, also it provided a structure for you. (Antonio)

It’s rudimentary, I know there are six dimensions and I was on a vice-principal appraisal process last year. So, I did have to look at it. I know the first time I saw it, I found it very overwhelming, the descriptors. There was no possible way anyone could do it all. I had to pick a number of competencies. And, I went to my strengths, to look what it was. So, I was able to look at it more in depth. (Maria)

In the process of preparing and completing their performance appraisals, some interviewees also began to speculate further on the need that the Ontario Leadership Framework was trying to address. For example, Lianna believes that the Ontario Leadership Framework was developed to primarily deal with the evaluation of the performance of school administrators and Jim believes it was a way to condense all the research on best practices:

I believe, I may be wrong, but I believe that when it was developed, it was because they wanted to figure out a way on how to evaluate the principals and vice principals, if you have nothing, no measure?! So, you need to have that, like a rubric to score yourself. (Lianna)

I believe the Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic principals and vice-principals, is an attempt to bring research based best practices to bear on principal leadership…the attempt here is to condense all of that into something that can be itemized and easily referenced, as opposed to having to go back to volumes of studies, and books. (Jim)

Interviewees also provided evidence of the importance of support from the central office in the performance appraisal process and the expectation in the utilization of the Ontario Leadership Framework. An example of this is provided by Frank who speaks of
the expectation of the district on him using the Ontario Leadership Framework for his personal growth plan of his performance appraisal:

our board has in serviced us on the framework on several occasions. The expectation is that when we do our annual personal growth plan, we do require to review it and implement some of the, not all six dimensions, but some of the dimensions and specific expectations. (Frank)

This is also recognized by Max as he reflects on the Ontario Leadership Framework and the influence it has on his annual growth plan:

I think in terms of certainly personal leadership it does in terms of my own growth plan. Over the last year or two, I tried to look at the board improvement plan, the school needs and then what I can do in terms of my competencies to kind of fit that…it’s a big part of what the board’s doing. (Max)

In addition to the need to use the Ontario Leadership Framework for their performance appraisal, interviewees also articulated that the framework was also required if they wanted to apply for positions of leadership, whether it be at the school or district level. More specifically, Rushmore Catholic district revised their application process for the positions of vice-principal, principal, and superintendent to reflect the six domains of the Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic principals and vice-principals; and for Catholic supervisory officers. This was mainly accomplished by requiring potential candidates to prepare a “leadership portfolio” that would provide evidence (artefacts) of their leadership practices and competencies as they related to the six domains of the Ontario Leadership Framework. This leadership portfolio would then be presented to the interview team during one of the stages of the interview process where interviewers would be able to review and question the candidate on the various aspects of their portfolio in order to discern whether or not they should advance to the next stage of the interview process. If successful at this stage, they were invited back for a final interview,
if not; they would be debriefed about their interview and their leadership portfolio. Hence, there was much weight placed on the candidate’s ability to articulate, through their leadership portfolio, a connection between the six domains (and their respective leadership practices and competencies) of the Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic school and system leaders, and their leadership experiences.

Within this context, it became apparent that those interviewees who prepared for school or system leadership interviews were able to articulate an understanding of the framework that was more directly aligned to a purpose or a need. More specifically, interviewees here were in search of career or professional advancement and in order to be considered as a candidate for this they had to incorporate the Ontario Leadership Framework as part of their application for it. Interviewees knew that in order to be competitive for leadership promotion, they needed to demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the Ontario Leadership Framework that would convince the interviewers that they were the “ones for the job,” so to speak. This point is highlighted by Gregory who sees the importance of the Ontario Leadership Framework in the interview process:

> we obviously recognize the direction from our board that this [Ontario Leadership Framework] is what they are looking at as being an effective administrator. Therefore, if you don’t fit into these categories, why don’t you? If you have any aspirations to move up to superintendent or principal, they want to see that you have those competencies within the domains. If you don’t, then there is something wrong. (Gregory)

The power and influence of career advancement through the use of the Ontario Leadership Framework was also demonstrated by the amount of time and effort that the interviewees extended in trying to prepare for their leadership interviews. It was not enough to be aware of it; they needed to make direct connections between the Ontario
Leadership Framework and their leadership practices and competencies. This usually involved deep reflection.

I went for an interview once and obviously the questions they are going to ask is related to your leadership, in terms of Catholic leader. I looked at each of the competencies in great detail. And I was trying to, in preparing for my interview to think, “well okay, where have I demonstrated effective Catholic faith, community, and culture? Where have I effectively set directions?” (Peter)

I have a reasonable understanding of the Ontario Leadership Framework, primarily because of the need, this year with the board’s direction in terms of Leadership portfolio. In trying to support or identify where your strengths and your challenges are as a leader. What I found really beneficial by looking at the six dimensions is it really did force me to sit down and reflect on “can I demonstrate competency in each of these areas?” (Ida)

When I look at the framework for me, I looked at that as a vice-principal, as a principal, in particular, preparing for an interview. And I thought about everything that I did in my role as vice-principal as I prepared to become principal and not like it was a checklist but I’m like okay how does that connect? (Concetta)

Interestingly, some interviewees also did not see the purpose of the framework beyond its use in the preparation for interviews for leadership positions. For example Concetta states the following:

I think the reality is that unless you’re in an interview, who’s going to look at the Catholic Leadership Framework? I mean, those are the questions that they’ve developed so yes, I think that the framework is pulled out for the interview. I think people who are vice-principals, principals and SOs, they know the framework because they had to know it. (Concetta)

Despite these few subtle differences in purpose, the cluster of quotes used in this theme were representative of the respondents. In fact, all respondents made reference to either the performance appraisal or the interview process when discussing their use of the Ontario Leadership Framework.

**Indicators of effective leadership.** All interviewees in this study articulated in one way or another how they were now able to compare and contrast their leadership
practices and competencies with that of the Ontario Leadership Framework. Prior to the
Ontario Leadership Framework there was no formal framework or structure for
administrators to compare and contrast the effectiveness of their leadership. Much of
what they did relied on the feedback from staff and on self-reflection. Responding to the
question “how do you determine whether or not your leadership practices or
competencies are effective in your school?” Ida describes it like this:

I think up until this point, primarily self-reflection for sure…what are you doing?
Does it seem to be well received by the community? Is it working effectively? Is
it time efficient? Like, are you getting that bang for your buck, in terms of what
you’re putting out there? So, self-reflection, for me, has always been key in trying
to determine whether or not I think I’m doing a good job. And, part of that self-
reflection is being willing to talk to and listen to other people. (Ida)

Similarly, Nick gauged his effectiveness by asking himself, “are students achieving: are
parents, you know, generally satisfied with the education their children are receiving, are
staff at least sufficiently satisfied with their working conditions that they want to continue
to do the things that they have done” (Nick).

Institute for Education Leadership (2008) Putting Ontario’s Leadership
Framework Into Action: A Guide for School and System Leaders, which contains the
Ontario Leadership Framework, makes a number of references to the importance of
effective leadership in schools. For example, its opening paragraph begins by stating that:
“we all know that effective leadership is critical to the success of any organization, and
we recognize leadership as one of our key professional responsibilities” (p. 3). It goes on
to further state that there is a “substantial and growing body of professional knowledge
and research that demonstrates a direct and powerful link between good leadership and
improved student achievement” (p. 3). More specifically, it states that:
the framework provides principals, vice-principals and supervisory officers with a clear leadership roadmap representing the best thinking and experience of successful leaders across Ontario and the world. In the frameworks, you will discover the key practices of successful educational leaders, and how you can put them into action to achieve your goals. You will also discover the skills, knowledge and attitudes of effective leaders. (p. 3)

The booklet also cites one of the purposes of the Ontario Leadership Framework as “identifying the practices and competencies that describe effective leadership” (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008, p.6). Interviewees in this study made connections to this revelation of effective practices and competencies in two ways. First, they were now able to make comparisons between their practices and those listed in the framework; and secondly, they recognized the framework set a standard that they could now be measured against in relation to their leadership practices and/or competencies.

For example, Steve, a veteran administrator, speaks about it this way:

They needed a measuring stick and they came up with this framework because there are very specific practices that they put out there. It gives superintendents and directors that measuring stick so that they can say “the leadership framework says you should be doing this and you are not so therefore were not going to put you in a leadership position.” (Steve)

Nick shares this view by speaking of the framework as a tool for both those that are being evaluated, and those that are aspiring to become future leaders:

I would imagine this is useful to a supervisory officer to say, “Well, Nick really isn’t doing enough of X. And, I can use the framework to redirect some of his energies in that way.” Likewise, when you have aspirants and they are not successful applicants, you can say to them, “well we would like to see you develop more in X, Y, and Z.” So, I think frameworks like this can be useful tools for self-reflection. (Nick)

This rationalization that Nick speaks about is also represented by interviewees who see the framework as defining what they attempt to do as effective school leaders on a daily basis. More specifically, the Ontario Leadership Framework seems to provide a reference
point for others to judge their effectiveness as a school leader. For example, John sees the framework as a way to address the difficulty of describing the role of principal and vice-principal:

I think it is very difficult to define the job of a principal or vice principal. I think it’s an attempt to try to quantify the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that a school leader has to have, because it is difficult to see what a principal does day to day. It sets a very high bar for what were supposed to be doing as school leaders. (John)

Similarly, John also speaks of how the Ontario Leadership Framework sets a standard for both aspiring and current administrators:

it sets a very high bar for what we’re supposed to be doing as school leaders. And, I think, that’s a bar that’s reachable, but a bar that’s continuing to move as principals grow within their position. So I think there’s that purpose there. I also see it as a very useful tool in trying to choose who are going to be effective school leaders. (John)

Max extends this idea by suggesting that the framework can help you improve your own leadership and can act as a way to get the best people into leadership positions based on the competencies of the framework. Max highlights this, “I think it hopefully attracts the best people to the leadership jobs. I think it’s a pretty good overall indicator of the sort of things that you need to keep in mind and work on to be successful. It’s all-encompassing.”

Interviewees also expressed that the effective practices listed and described in the Ontario Leadership Framework provided them with a tool for comparison. For example, as Gregory states:

It is a very good framework for what an effective administrator would look like. I think the framework is there to give you a guide as to the direction of what an effective principal would look like and what they would like to see in their schools. It is a very good tool, a reflection tool, a piece to look at, of exactly what it is an effective principal looks like. It’s a great piece to use to sort of judge yourself as to where you are at. (Gregory)
Interviewee responses that culminated in the creation of this theme also provided evidence of their support for its introduction and initial use in their leadership practice. While they varied in content, they all seemed to indicate that the interviewees ascribed some value to the use of the Ontario Leadership Framework in their leadership practices. For example, Antonio speaks about the effective practices and competencies listed and described in the framework:

If you can take a step back, look at what you’re working on, it [Ontario Leadership Framework] almost sets up to me the ideal. That if you were really hitting everything, if you were looking at it and saying that you’ve done a good job, you should be able to say that, you know, you are doing all of these things within the six pillars. (Antonio)

Similarly, Gregory and Steve shared the following:

it gives you an indication of what an effective administrator in the Catholic system would look like and by going through the framework…if you are missing a few of those competencies it gives you direction as to, okay how can I improve upon these domains…within my school? (Gregory)

You can take all your competencies and practices, put them down in writing and say “okay this is what I do and this is what the leadership framework is. How do they match up?” … It does give you some idea of what they are looking for and what, whoever made this leadership framework up, considers to be important and I think that’s a good thing. (Steve)

Recognizing that the Ontario Leadership Framework contains indicators of highly effective leadership practices, interviewees demonstrated how the Ontario Leadership Framework was affecting them by comparing and contrasting their leadership practices and competencies with those of the framework. In so doing, the Ontario Leadership Framework also became an evaluative tool that supervisors (mainly superintendents) would use toward their school leaders. This theme also highlighted how the listed effective practices and competencies of the Ontario Leadership Framework became like a checklist for those interviewees that were preparing for leadership interviews.
Common language. A number of interviewees spoke of how they saw the Ontario Leadership Framework as addressing the need for a common language of leadership practices and competencies for both aspiring and current practitioners. Coincidentally, the concept of a common language is also reflected in the opening pages of *Putting Ontario’s Leadership Framework into Action: A Guide for School and System Leaders* (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008). The guide makes a number of references to the Ontario Leadership Framework providing a “common language” for both school and district leaders. For example, beyond the skills, knowledge and attitudes of effective leaders that the Ontario Leadership Framework lists, it does express “a common leadership language to enable effective dialogue, professional learning, and collaboration” (p. 3) between school and system leaders. It also lists “common language” as one of the key benefits of applying the Ontario Leadership Framework to one’s leadership practice, and as one of the central purposes of the framework “it promote[s] a common language that fosters an understanding of leadership and what it means to be a school and system leader” (p. 6).

One of the key advantages of a common leadership language is the ability of leaders now to use it in communication with other school or system leaders, or those aspiring to be one. This is important, as Maria states:

> It has value. It gives you a common language. Just like the curriculum for teachers allows teachers to ensure that everyone is looking at a curriculum that is consistent across the province. I think that the framework has validity across all of Ontario. (Maria)

Similarly, Antonio has found his use of the leadership language contained in the Ontario Leadership Framework of particular value when speaking with staff that has been newly appointed to positions of added responsibility and leadership:
It provides something that we can talk about, so that we are not just talking sort of generically or abstractly. I have had a number of teachers here who are going into either the role of department head or moving from teacher to vice-principal position. I think it’s provided a great framework and a nice structure for the conversation. That in some way, shapes, or forms; I’m going to have to be able to show that, you know that I touch upon each of these six pillars. (Antonio)

It is quite evident that the interviewees found the presence of a common language in the Ontario Leadership Framework extremely useful and of particular value in their understanding and communication with colleagues of their leadership practices. More specifically, interviewees speak about the common language feature of the Ontario Leadership Framework as fulfilling a particular professional need that they and others had. This was expressed in a number of ways by the interviewees who also revealed how some of their professional needs were being met. For example, Jack, a vice-principal, speaks about the leadership framework as providing him with the language to articulate his work:

I think it heightens the awareness of what I am doing. I think leaders, effective leaders, do what the framework is suggesting without even looking at it. I would actually get in and read the specifics and I would actually pull words from the terms from the leadership form and I would use it to form my responses to what I was doing. (Jack)

While not in the same fashion, Peter and Nick (both principals) articulate how the Ontario Leadership Framework provides a common language in which they can use to discuss with others: “this is something I would reach for to use the language and to be able to justify some of the competencies that I have focused on this past school year” (Peter).

It is useful only insofar as it provides language, common language, for people to discuss what we are doing in this role. I would look to it for language, to have a conversation about practice. I would look to people to inform my practice. And, they might point to the framework and say, “this area or that area.” We would like
to see you do more or less of.” And then, that would give us a way to talk about it. (Nick)

Interestingly, what seems to be communicated from these excerpts is the general understanding that the leadership framework can have value beyond the expectations set out by the district. More specifically, while Rushmore Catholic district requires school and system leaders to use the leadership framework to apply for positions of leadership within the board and to complete the performance appraisal process, interviewees also saw the utility of the Ontario Leadership Framework beyond this. While the cluster of quotes used under this theme was highly representative of the respondents, there were a few interviewees that did not acknowledge or mention any aspect of the common language feature or purpose of the Ontario Leadership Framework.

Interviewees who articulated the common language characteristic of the Ontario Leadership Framework discussed it as now being possible to communicate with other school leaders, and those aspiring to become one, about leadership practices using the language of the framework. Since it is accessible to everyone and outlines a broad range of leadership practices and competencies, it also establishes a common language that everyone can use and understand. More specifically, principals and vice-principals have discussed how they have used terms and concepts from the framework in their understanding of what they do and how they communicate it with others.

**Reflection.** Unlike common language, “reflection” does not receive the same attention in the guide for school and system leaders. In fact, there is only one reference made to reflection and it appears under the heading of “7 key benefits for leadership practice.” More specifically, under this heading it lists it as a “powerful self-reflection tool” where one can use the framework to reflect on one’s own leadership (Institute for
Education Leadership, 2008, p. 4). However, despite the limited acknowledgement of reflection in the booklet, many of the interviewees in this study have referred to the framework as a useful instrument for professional reflection.

All the interviewees, with the exception of two, make specific reference to how the Ontario Leadership Framework can provide them with the opportunity to reflect on their leadership practices and competencies. While responsibilities and tasks that current administrators face on a daily basis continue to increase both in size and complexity, many of the interviewees spoke of the importance of trying to reflect on their work as school leaders and how the Ontario Leadership Framework may be able to facilitate this. As Jim states:

I don’t think the framework is the answer to everything. I think its strength is that, here’s something that you should look at and as reflective practitioners, it should drive us to do the work. I don’t believe that the framework was meant to be a type of cookbook, where it solves every problem. It is a way for us to engage in our own professional reflection to guide our professional development. (Jim)

It became quite apparent that interviewees in this study placed a considerable amount of importance and value on the ability and opportunity to reflect on one’s own leadership practices and competencies. While much of this occurred as a result of preparing for leadership interviews, or as part of their performance appraisal process, it became clear that they were also deriving some meaning from the framework as well.

What I found really beneficial is by looking at the six components or dimensions of it, it really did force me to sit down and reflect on, can I demonstrate competency in each of these areas. And, if I think I can, then what evidence do I have to try to support it? …It’s a lot of self-reflection. (Ida)

The meaning that they were expressing appeared to be connected in two ways. First, there were the beginnings of an understanding of the role the Ontario Leadership Framework could play in their professional lives as school leaders. For example, a number of
interviewees viewed the framework as a tool in which to compare and contrast their leadership practices and competencies to: “I have tried to look at it in terms of what I can do in terms of my competencies to kind of fit into that. Again, just as a reflective tool to self-assess, I find it pretty valuable” (Max). Lianna also makes specific reference to this:

It certainly makes me reflect. It gives me a base how to lead schools effectively. I was interested in being a principal, so I was forced into looking into it. Reflecting on it, kind of tweaking my own leadership style that way, measuring myself against that particular domain, areas that you feel really strong and areas that you are really weak. (Lianna)

Secondly, as a result of this comparing and contrasting, the interviewees were also articulating the importance of reflection as a need for professional growth. This was more pronounced from the vice-principals than for the principals. They recognized the importance of reflection in their professional practice and the role the Ontario Leadership Framework can play in achieving this. For example, Jack and John as vice-principals expressed the following:

its reflection…it’s a great reflection piece. That’s what it is; it is a reflective framework you know. I was quite happy going through the process of reviewing the framework. It wasn’t an onerous process, it was very reflective…I found it as a practical, reflective piece as to what we’re doing”. (Jack)

Because I do see that there are areas there, which I know I need to grow in and I want to grow in. And, selfishly, you would do it to move ahead. But, there is so much good material here for self-reflection that I think a person would be foolish, if they’re looking to grow in their own job, not to reflect on this. (John)

In comparison, Frank a principal states the following:

I don’t reflect on the actual dimensions on a daily basis, but over the year, I believe to have developed some best practices, as described in the framework. I’ve come to the understanding, or at least realized, they do work. It gives us the opportunity to stay on the path. If you deviate, then it brings you back to say those are some of the things that you need to work on. (Frank)
While these excerpts from the interviews provided a discussion on the value of the Ontario Leadership Framework as a self-reflection tool for the interviewees, a lot of this is attributable to the common leadership language that the framework provides (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008, p. 4). Hence, in addition to speaking about the reflective nature of the leadership framework, interviewees also recognized the importance of a common leadership language.

Those interviewees who spoke of the reflective aspect of the Ontario Leadership Framework discuss how it can act as a tool for self-reflection. With the introduction of the leadership framework, interviewees spoke of how they were now able to reflect on their leadership practices and competencies in relation to its six domains. A number of the interviewees specifically spoke of how the Ontario Leadership Framework made them aware of the areas of their leadership practice that they could improve on.

**Limitations.** When one speaks of limitations, one usually refers to the shortcomings, gaps, or boundaries of something. In this study, interviewees also discussed how the Ontario Leadership Framework was lacking, or was limited for them as practitioners. A number of interviewees perceived the Ontario Leadership Framework as limited in terms of describing what it is they do on a daily basis. As a result of this perception, most of the interviewees made personal and professional comparisons between what they did as a school leader, and what is contained in the Ontario Leadership Framework. In a sense, much of their understanding of the leadership framework was based on what was familiar to them, their leadership experience. For example, Steve describes some of the anxiety and trepidation that he and his colleagues felt when the Ontario Leadership Framework was first introduced to them:
When it first came out, I think every principal, every vice-principal was very interested in having a look at it and saying, okay what does the Ontario government think that I do? What do they think is most important and have they missed anything? Is this who I am? If somebody asked, what do you do in this school? Here it is. This is what I do [referring to the Ontario Leadership Framework]. (Steve)

A number of interviewees found that what they did as school leaders did not completely align or match with what was listed and described in the Ontario Leadership Framework. This incomplete alignment between what they did as school leaders and what was contained in the Ontario Leadership Framework did present them with a view of the Framework that challenged their personal use of it. For example, Maria has been a vice-principal for 7 years and describes her leadership practices as not parallel to the Ontario Leadership Framework.

For me, personally no. I don’t think it reflects what I do as a leader in my school. It doesn’t understand my leadership practice and competency in my school for me personally. And, I struggle with that. A large reason for this is that I spend a lot of time with students. It’s the student piece that is missing here and that I spend a lot of time on. I have not referred to the Ontario Leadership Framework since my last appraisal last year. (Maria)

Similarly, Jim, who has not referred to the Ontario Leadership Framework since it was first introduced to him in 2009 through a board in-service, speaks about this way:

it is so broadly stated that it could mean anything. It may seem like you have a common framework for principals and vice-principals, however, the way that they interpret and thus enact the leadership may differ. (Jim)

John also speaks of the broadness of the framework and how as a result it can cover a great many things. However, there is also a drawback with this:

I think in an effort to try and describe what an effective school leader is, there’s so much here that it’s almost unwieldy…there is no way I could sit down and go through and say yes or no to all of these in any kind of timely manner. So is it useful? I guess I struggle with that a little bit, I would like to see it pared down somewhat to something that’s more meaningful for people and could be more of,
let’s say a day-to-day or monthly reflective tool, rather than something that you are only going to look at when you are going for an interview. (John)

Another element that the Ontario Leadership Framework seems to miss is the managerial or operational aspect of leading a school. Many of the interviewees did not see the managerial aspects of what they do as a school leader reflected in the Ontario Leadership Framework as well. To them, this was a major gap and quite important in their role and responsibility as a school leader. For example, Maria highlights this point quite clearly and the significance of it to school leaders:

is there the managing piece, because you can do all these things, but if you don’t manage the day-to-day stuff, then everything will fall apart. So, I don’t know if the managing piece is in there. That would probably be a majority of the principal’s job. Is just the managing piece, the day-to-day piece to making sure that the office is running, and the secretaries are happy, and the teachers are fine, and how do you make the decisions when it comes to budgeting? Those nitty-gritty things that if you don’t do those managing well, then all this falls over. (Maria)

A large part of this managerial aspect that the interviewees identified was the important responsibility of money and finances in their school. The school principal is accountable not only to the school district, but also to the school proper, and its community to provide an accurate record of expenses and revenues that the school receives. Interestingly, many of the principals focus on this very element when discussing the limitations of the Ontario Leadership Framework.

Budgeting for me as a principal, if I had to look at the levels that are on an assessment piece, I was below Level 1. I don’t like being below Level 1. I want to be a Level 4. So, no, it [Ontario Leadership Framework] doesn’t speak to that…and budgets are so important in a school and you have to know how to use the budget but [also] you have to know what the restrictions are in terms of spending money. (Concetta)

Similarly, Frank and Steve state:
One of the things that I did not see in the Ontario Leadership Framework is the money issue. How do you balance school budgets? How do you maintain a balanced budget? Because we as principals and vice-principals, are always asked about proposals for money. We have to deal with it as a leader. The other thing is building relationships. But how do we get help in communicating with the staff, parents, about decisions we make, how do we get them to understand that what we’re trying to do is the best for the whole community? (Frank)

It doesn’t cover everything. It doesn’t address the whole consistency issue. It doesn’t cover the people things that you do in a school, the community things that you do in a school. It overgeneralizes those and it skips over them whereby those are probably the most important pieces. There is also the management issue. I don’t think that they consider it important but I think basic accounting skills, basic business management, is an important part of running a school. (Steve)

Another concern that interviewees raised was how they saw the framework as more relevant and practical for those aspiring for positions of leadership than those who were not. More specifically, they were not sure of what value the framework would be for principals who had already attained the apex of school leadership. For example, Ida (vice-principal) sees the framework as ideal for those aspiring to be leaders because it lists and describes many aspects of the principal role; however, she questions “as to how effective it is for anyone that’s already in the role, as to whether or not they use it as the guidance tool as maybe it was meant for, for them as well.” Nick (principal) goes on to support this very point by stating “I personally feel, for somebody’s who’s already in the role, it’s not as useful… unfortunately, my experience tends to suggest that there will be much more action that there will be reflection. And, that I guess is what makes this framework less useful.”

Interviewees in this study speak to some of these challenges by questioning a variety of aspects connected to the use of the Ontario Leadership Framework and also revealing a need for more clarification on the goals and objectives of the framework.
Well, I think it’s one of those things that in your personal practice you really have to get your head around, is this something I’m just going to pull out once a year when I have to do an end of the year growth plan and then it goes away…I think in terms of maybe on the accountability side, …like what’s in place at the board level to kind of help you out? What is the accountability piece other than once a year you submit it to your SO and maybe they come in and talk to you…maybe they don’t. (Max)

So they say, this is what you should be [referring to the Ontario Leadership Framework] in order to be a principal or vice-principal. Okay, so how do you do that, then? On a day-to-day basis? If you want us to use this more regularly and more consistently, or using it not only as reference but as practice, how do I get from point A to point B, more explanation…more guidance, right? We don’t have that…they really haven’t explained exactly what are the next steps. (Lianna)

It’s probably something [referring to the Ontario Leadership Framework] that people engage in without often really thinking about why we do this and what are the benefits of doing this, and why is it human and important? Why do we do this? Why do they make us do it? It’s a matter of explaining clearly the intention of it and how it can best be used for aspirants, current practitioners, and supervisors…how can this be used in a way that is useful to all three of those groups? (Nick)

Interviewees in this theme provided insight on the limitations and shortcomings of the Ontario Leadership Framework according to their past and current leadership experiences. This cluster of quotes was representative of the agreement among many of the interviewees of the challenges and limitations of the Ontario Leadership Framework. Much of what they discussed revolved around the lack of attention of the Ontario Leadership Framework to the managerial/operational aspects of the school leader. Such limitations to them were concerning because they felt that they spent a considerable amount of time carrying out these tasks as school leaders, and there was no real acknowledgement of this in the Ontario Leadership Framework. However, there were a few, who did not hold the same view. These few respondents spoke about how the framework was helpful in “keeping things simple” (Antonio) and did not see any
challenges or difficulties in following the Ontario Leadership Framework as a school leader.

**Job affirmation.** A number of interviewees recognized the Ontario Leadership Framework as a way to help them understand their own leadership practices and competencies. While the Ontario Leadership Framework was never intended to be a job description or checklist (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008, p. 6), a large number of interviewees have regarded it as an explanation of what they do. The incongruence here is important to highlight.

Interviewees in this section spent a considerable amount of effort comparing their role with the one they perceive to be depicted in the Ontario Leadership Framework.

I think it’s a pretty good overall indicator of the sort of things that you need to keep in mind and work on to be successful. It’s pretty all-encompassing. It’s kind of daunting sometimes when you look at it and say, “wow, these are all the things I’m supposed to be” so I think in that sense too it’s kind of aspirational a little bit. It’s something to try and grow towards. (Max)

Jack, upon reflecting on his experience of the interview process for principal provides the following insight about his use of the Ontario Leadership Framework: “after going through the process for the first time, I was not excited about it, but here I go again, but as I went through the process it really allowed me to organize and to take a look at who I am and where my strength and where my weaknesses are.” However, Maria articulated that the Ontario Leadership Framework does not describe what she does as a leader in her school. Specifically, she states that:

it doesn’t understand my leadership practice and competency in my school, for me personally. I don’t think that’s necessarily true across the board. I’m sure there are other people that see themselves reflected well in the competencies. And, I struggle with that. Because when the competencies came out, I didn’t see myself reflected here. So, it did help me make a decision that I didn’t want to be principal. Because I recognize that yes, there are the things that you do want to be
able to see. So, it helped discern for me where my strengths are and to say, I’m right to say that, I am good at what I do, and I’m happy doing what I am doing. It doesn’t reflect who I am and my strengths. (Maria)

Jim and Lianna direct their thoughts more on the utility of the Ontario Leadership Framework:

It’s a useful tool to affirm what practices that I currently engage in. And, it’s also very useful in the fact that it provides you with a direction for my professional development in that it will cause me to reflect on some of the things that I have considered before and to divert my energies to those other aspects that I am not familiar with that could enhance my leadership practice. (Jim)

I had the impression that there was nothing before that [referring to the Ontario Leadership Framework]. Yes we do have the Education Act, and it does cover certain things, but that is slightly different. The Ontario Leadership Framework is really talking about your role and what does it look like, and what does it feel like, and that type of thing. (Lianna)

Despite the fact that the interviewees were not involved on any level with the decision to adopt the innovation of the Ontario Leadership Framework, their responses in this section does provide evidence that the Ontario Leadership Framework affirmed the work they did as school leaders:

The leadership framework is a good example of understanding what is it that the principal, Catholic principal’s job is. It was created in the sense of best practices, so I use that as much as possible. It is a confirmation of what we are actually doing. (Frank)

By and large the leadership framework reflects what I do. So when I first sat down, again looking at the framework, I tried to align what I saw as my way of working in a school, with the different dimensions of the framework. Well these are the dimensions and these are the pieces of evidence they think I should have. Can I illustrate it? … It was reaffirming for me. (Ida)

I think it affirms for you what you do and you just feel good. Yeah, I do that. It’s like when you are in a classroom and you are learning new literacy strategies. Oh, I already knew that. It just affirms the good job you are doing. (Concetta)

Interviewees in this theme saw the Ontario Leadership Framework as a way to affirm what they already do as a school leader. In so doing, they compared and contrasted what
they did as school administrators to the practices and competencies listed and described in the leadership framework. They found use of the framework in this light, and in some respects it became like a checklist or job description where they were able to identify and discern their role as school leader. While the Ontario Leadership Framework was never intended to be a job description or checklist, the quotes used in this section were representative of the interviewees in this study. This is not surprising, as there is empirical evidence to suggest that an innovation may go through a number of changes itself that will be more in keeping with the needs or wants of the person who is implementing it than with the original intent of the authors who created it in the first place.

**Priority.** Another main theme that emerged from this study, in regards to the use of the Ontario Leadership Framework, was the challenge that interviewees found in making time for the use of the leadership framework. Many of them articulated some frustration with the lack of time that they have during the day to make use or refer to the Ontario Leadership Framework, while others accepted the reality of this predicament. For example, as John and Nick reflect on the Ontario Leadership Framework they state the following:

I think at the end, is this something that I would certainly use next year when I am doing my own personal learning plan or annual growth plan? It would be helpful to look at the end of the school year. The difficulty then just becomes trying to find the time in the school year to use this effectively. And, I think that’s the struggle. So, I think that’s the biggest difficulty. Where in the school year can I find the time to go through and look at this and be able to use it effectively?

(John)

[In referring to the Ontario Leadership Framework] I see an impossibly large number of attributes, skills, behaviors, beliefs, and knowledge, that it would be foolish, it seems to me, to expect every person in the role to exhibit all the
...because, you don’t have the luxury, it seems to me, of a lot of time to reflect on these things when you are busy doing them. (Nick)

Within this context then, the indication that interviewees found little if any time to use the Ontario Leadership Framework in their daily leadership practice, would suggest that they do not view it as important or as a top priority. In fact, interviewees spoke clearly of the demands of their time on other more pressing issues. Interestingly, there was a difference between what vice-principals declared as taking the most of their time compared to principals. For example, vice-principals of this study spoke of how their day revolved around student discipline issues. In fact, some were even able to actually quantify this to some degree:

I would think it was probably more than 75% when it comes to student related things. And then what is left over is, is the parent issues with Special Ed. So things like the literacy team, teacher performance appraisal, classroom visits, any of that is non-existent. (Maria)

I would say a good 80% at least, is dealing with students, dealing with parents, and dealing with teachers. With this you then also deal with the guidance department, student success, and the social worker. I wish I had more time. (Lianna)

The responsibilities that take the most time are basically student discipline, because there are various issues that come up. And, also, coming with those issues sometimes, it requires us to meet with parents. And, so that may take up quite a bit of time. I would say that takes up about 70% of my time. I consider myself an instructional leader, but the time I devote to ensuring a safe school takes away from that time. (Jim)

In contrast to student discipline issues that the vice-principals articulated, principals spoke more of their leadership functions;

I don’t have a problem with the leadership competencies that are identified…but I think the reality of the school administrator is trying to find the time to sit and have a conversation about that… It’s time. Where do you find the time? School improvement plan is the one that takes up most of my time because…it’s literacy; it’s numeracy, its pathways, its Catholicity and the developmental assets. (Concetta)
As the principal of this school most of the assigned responsibilities are clearly outlined either by the board or by the job description. What I find to be of most importance or where I spend a lot of the time is looking at the culture of the school. How it is either positive or negative and what direction we want to move. (Frank)

Public relations [takes the most time]. Public relations is what I think the job is all about and it is so far removed from how we are trained and yet it’s probably one of the most important pieces of the job. How we deal with our teachers, how we deal with parents, how we deal with students, that’s what the job is all about…but you don’t have enough time in the day to do them all so you have to prioritize. (Steve)

However, what is important and relevant to this study is the fact that neither of them found any use or support from the Ontario Leadership Framework to assist them with their identified main tasks and responsibilities as school leaders. Why is this? In regards to the vice-principals citing student discipline issues as taking the most of their time, the Ontario Leadership Framework really does not address practices and competencies that deal with student discipline directly. Hence, if a large part of the day of vice-principals is devoted to student discipline, of what relevance would the Ontario Leadership Framework have for them? On the other hand, the principals cited a number of leadership responsibilities that are more directly connected to the Ontario Leadership Framework, yet none of the principals spoke or mentioned how they could use it beyond their professional growth plans, leadership interviews, or appraisals. This disconnect is an interesting point. Earlier on in this chapter, both principals and vice-principals spoke of the need to understand and be knowledgeable of the Ontario Leadership Framework in order to complete their performance appraisal and/or to participate in a leadership interview. Both processes would involve making connections between their current leadership practices and competencies and those contained in the Ontario Leadership
Framework. In fact, many did find alignment and some even found the leadership framework helpful. Why then the difference here?

Part of the reason for this may lie in the fact that unless there is district support or pressure to complete certain leadership tasks or responsibilities, school leaders in this study would have no other motivation or incentive to refer or make use of the Ontario Leadership Framework. Given the growing level of responsibilities and complexity of their work, school leaders may not find it an effective use of their time if it does not support or relate to what they do on a daily basis. For example, Peter acknowledges it this way:

> Our principals meetings that we are having, it’s less on the managerial aspects of becoming a principal and more with student success. It’s more professional development. Maybe each principals meeting each month we focus on one of those [competencies]. Then write a reflective paper or even an exit card on what you learned from that session. Because it gives us the time to reflect on it, as I mentioned, we don’t have the time. But, if we can be given the time, maybe it would help current principals and vice-principals to focus more on this and reflect on it. And then, you know, use it in a positive way. (Peter)

All the interviewees in this study made some reference to how the lack of time in their work limited or restricted their use of the Ontario Leadership Framework. To the interviewees of this study, the citing of time or explicit purposes beyond performance appraisal or dealing with applications for promotion as a reason as to why they do not use the Ontario Leadership Framework appears to be more in reference to the lack of priority they give it in relation to the many responsibilities and tasks they are faced with on a daily basis. More specifically, if there is no administrative pressure or expectation to implement it in various ways, why would they?
Fit. A number of interviewees in this study made reference to the Ontario Leadership Framework in regards to its practicality for their work as school leaders. More specifically, they did this by making comments that are closely associated with ideas of professional “compatibility” or “fit.” In other words, interviewees began to make sense of the Ontario Leadership Framework by evaluating it against their leadership experience. Their form of evaluation or judgement appeared to resemble a checklist of sorts where they reflected on what they did as school leaders, and then checked to see if there was any acknowledgement or presence of their work in the Ontario Leadership Framework. When there was no “fit” or “compatibility” between what the interviewees did as school leaders and what was contained in the Ontario Leadership Framework, this was mainly accompanied by questions or phrases from interviewees such as “this does not reflect me” or “I don’t see…”. For example, Maria quickly identifies an aspect of her work that requires a lot of her time and attention on a daily basis which she does not find covered in the framework:

Is there a chunk here that talks about dealing with students? It seems to me that it mostly talks about dealing with staff, dealing with teachers. And, I think it is important…I don’t think anywhere here [referring to the Ontario Leadership Framework] is that relationship I have with individual students, especially the neediest students…it’s the student piece that’s missing. (Maria)

Similarly, Concetta speaks about her sense of humour and its importance to her work;

I think my sense of humour is not reflected in the leadership framework and I think you have to have some to greet situations with humour and I don’t think the framework speaks to that but I think it’s very important when you deal with conflict…you have to have a sense of humour and the framework doesn’t speak to that. (Concetta)

Such responses do question the motivation of those that similarly have experienced the same feelings or meanings toward the Ontario Leadership Framework.
However, not all interviewees saw or viewed the leadership framework in the same way. In fact, a number of them actually found value and “fit” in what they practiced as school leaders. These interviewees spoke more broadly about how they have or could use the framework in their leadership practice. For example, Steve and Max see a more practical use for the Ontario Leadership Framework in their leadership practice.

You can take a look at the leadership framework every once and a while and go through some of the practices and say, “oh you know what, I haven’t done that in a while. It might be a good idea to try that this year.” Because sometimes you get so busy with the incidentals that you forget the big picture. It’s nice to have a framework to go through maybe once a year even just to say, “I did a good job this year but may be this was a little faulty. Maybe I can work on that this year.” It’s a good bell weather to see whether or not you’re doing a decent job. (Steve)

I do find it useful. It’s not something I have sitting on my desk. When I am kind of thinking a personal growth plan for the year, it is something that I consider and also it’s a pretty good reflective tool. …Sometimes it’s humbling to think “oh my gosh”, yeah, you can identify areas that you would like to see in yourself and so I think for personal goal-setting it’s certainly a good idea. (Max)

Some interviewees expressed a connection or familiarity with some of the practices and competencies listed in the Ontario Leadership Framework. For example Jim and Lianna:

I mean, when you look at it right now, especially in the small print, it looks like there is a lot there. But, when someone examines it carefully, some of the things that we do in the schools is already articulated in this document. And so were not going to continue to review those things that we believe that were doing well, we are going to spend our time on those things that we don’t do well or haven’t considered. (Jim)

I think they needed to come out with some kind of a template. There was nothing really written per se. Those six dimensions are valid. They make sense…do we look at them and do we actually practice them day to day? I think for the most part we do. …But I think a lot of it is innate…and it’s more a sense of validation. You’re looking at that and going, “Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.” I do this…you’re kind of validating your leadership. (Lianna)
Some interviewees were also specific to how the Ontario Leadership Framework could be used to provide justification for the actions they take or decisions they make. For example:

[The Ontario Leadership Framework] really has not crossed us in terms of how to lead or facilitate a particular initiative. I think what it does provide for us is a justification at times. Some background, an educational ideal of why we’re doing it. (Antonio)

I would just use it quite naturally. This is something I would reach for, when, you know, a superior and I had a performance appraisal done this year. ...And, it was just quite natural that I reach for this in order to use the language and to be able to justify some of the competencies that I would focus on in this past school year. (Peter)

Another element that emerged from the interviewees that is worthy of mention here is the possible influence of personal characteristics on their implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework. A few of the interviewees, who had been in their school leadership roles prior to the introduction of the Ontario Leadership Framework, commented on how the leadership framework could not influence their leadership practices. A large part of this, it seems, would be because of their years of experience as a school leader and the subsequent well-established leadership practices that they would have developed as a result. It is possible that some may feel that the Ontario Leadership Framework does not apply to them because they are already in the role of school leader. For example, Ida an experienced vice-principal makes the following statement about the Ontario Leadership Framework:

Anyone in senior administrative position, as a principal or senior administrator prior to the development [of the Ontario Leadership Framework], I don’t think there’s too many of them that would pick this up as a guidance tool at that point. So, to me, I do think it’s effective for anyone going into the role. I question as to how effective it is for anyone that’s already in a leadership role. (Ida)
Similarly, Nick and Frank, who are both well-seasoned principals, support Ida’s statement this way:

I was already sort of moulded as an administrator before it [Ontario Leadership Framework] came into existence. So it does not inform who I am and how I behave, which I believe are more central to what I do as an administrator than any other aspect of my practice. It’s too late to have made a significant impact on me. I would look to it for language, to have a conversation about practice. But I would not look to it to inform my practice. (Nick)

I wouldn’t follow it [Ontario Leadership framework] on a daily basis, and I don’t follow every expectation there…a lot of the things that are listed, in my perspective, in the framework, it’s not something you do on a daily basis; it’s something that is entrenched in what you do. It shouldn’t be that an issue comes, and you go to the framework to find a solution. You should be proactive. You should be practicing those things that are listed already, prior to the issue. (Frank)

As these series of quotes illustrate, it was quite typical of the interviewees in this study to make reference to the Ontario Leadership Framework using the idea or concept of “fit” and/or “compatibility.” As implementers of the Ontario Leadership Framework, they made comparisons and passed judgement on the fit or compatibility of the leadership framework to their practice as school leaders. Where the fit was “good” or “high” between school leaders’ practices and those listed and described in the Ontario Leadership Framework, interviewees suggested that their use would be limited beyond the requirements of their district. A large part of this may be because they are already demonstrating those leadership practices and competencies in the Ontario Leadership Framework and may feel that they do not need to refer to it any further. There were also a few interviewees that did not see the connection between their work as school leaders and what the Ontario Leadership Framework was listing and describing. For them, the “fit” was not present and this would seem to suggest diminished use beyond the expectations of the district as well. However, there was also a group of school leaders that found the
Ontario Leadership Framework useful beyond their board’s expectations through references of “reflection,” “common language,” and “personal goal setting” and this could lead to more use.

A final point to be made here is that “fit” or “compatibility” can be affected by a multitude of personal factors or characteristics as supported by research. One of those is years of experience. In this study years of experience appeared to play a part in how interviewees perceived the Ontario Leadership Framework. It appeared that a few of the more experienced school leaders did not find that the leadership framework could support or assist their leadership practice any further. As such, the chances of them using it beyond the requirements of the district would be suspect.

**Catholic piece.** A number of interviewees in this study were very cognizant of the Catholic element as evidenced by the sentiments and responses they shared. For the most part, they saw the fact that the Ontario Leadership Framework came in two versions; Catholic and secular, as an endorsement to their existence as a system of education. This was made quite clear by Jack’s initial thoughts on the Ontario Leadership Framework: “When the framework first came out, I really thought well this is a new beautiful validation for why we exist and why they should still publicly fund us.”

Jack continues to speak quite candidly of how the Ontario Leadership Framework is a way to justify the existence of a Catholic system of education. He draws on how it is a reflective piece for current Catholic educators, and how it acts as a way to hold them accountable for the persistence of the Catholic system.

I think it’s there as a guide. I think Catholic education is under fire and I think people are looking to promote and try to articulate what it is that makes us Catholic and I think…it’s there to make teachers and administrators reflect on
their leadership practices and I think it’s there to make us accountable for why Catholic education is a viable option to the public system. (Jack)

What is especially significant from Jack’s last response is his use of the term “accountable.” Here Jack makes specific reference to how the Catholic version of the Ontario Leadership Framework makes him (and his colleagues) accountable to both the system that they work in and the public that they serve.

Within this context then, the Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic principals and vice-principals provided clarity, in the sense that one of its objectives (according to Jack) was to provide a measure of support and assistance in this area. This point is also echoed in Concetta’s response where she discusses the importance of making a distinction between the Catholic and secular system of education and, similarly in Frank’s where he underscores the accountability piece once more.

I think that we need to have a reason for Catholic schools to exist and I think that it was very prudent actually of Catholic leadership in the province to look at a framework for schools, in general, and to give it a Catholic slant or a Catholic meaning or raison d’être because we are different than our public schools. I think it’s very important for us to define that as Catholic leaders because we are not the same as our public school leaders…there is a difference and I think that it was really important for them to develop that and I welcome it as a Catholic leader. (Concetta)

I honestly believe it was developed to give some guidance to the leadership role of a Catholic school community. But not only for that purpose, also to show the governments what it is that we actually do in a Catholic school community. And, I think that was the two main components; one to give leadership teams of the school some direction, but more importantly to also let the government and community in general understand the six dimensions that we are involved in on a daily basis. (Frank)

A number of interviewees in this study reflected much on their Catholic leadership practice and made a number of connections to the Ontario Leadership Framework as a way to develop their understanding of what it means to be a Catholic
leader. As previously mentioned in chapter 4, there are two versions of the Ontario Leadership Framework to reflect both the secular and Catholic systems of education in Ontario. The Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic principals and vice-principals uses descriptors of Catholic faith, values, and traditions within each of the leadership domains to provide a Catholic lens on school leadership. Peter makes mention of this:

I think the main thing is the Catholicity. [The Ontario Leadership Framework] gives us an opportunity to call to mind what we are in Catholic education for. And, every single one of these columns, competencies, always boils down to our Catholicity. So, it steers us in a direction that makes us, not just a leader, but a Catholic leader. (Peter)

I used the framework to prepare for an interview. For example, Catholic Faith, community, and culture. When I read through those competencies, I really had to think about my personal faith journey. And, I know whenever I speak to students I often talk about our Catholic social justice themes. So, that’s who we are. And that’s just one example of all of the competencies that I used to prepare for this interview, it basically defined who I was as a leader. (Peter)

To a large extent the Ontario Leadership Framework also provided them with a sense of identity. Before the Ontario Leadership Framework there really was no thorough explanation or understanding of what Catholic school leaders did differently than their secular school counterpart. The sentiments that interviewees shared about their understanding and meaning of the Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic principals and vice-principals provided support for their growth and development as Catholic school leaders. While interviewees were not specific in the ways it did this, they were clear on the importance of this.

I think one of the good things from the framework is it does, it does give you an indication of what an effective administrator in the Catholic system would look like. (Gregory)

Like I know that our Board has emphasized the Catholic piece. I think that’s a faith formation piece, which I think is really important. Obviously that defines who we are and defines the job that we have. The principal is a faith animator
within the school, as much as anything else. So, I am happy to see that for Catholic principals, that piece has been added in as well. (John)

Interestingly, only half of the respondents made any mention of the Catholic element of the Ontario Leadership Framework. Of those interviewees that did acknowledge the Catholic characteristic of the Ontario Leadership Framework, all of them agreed that the inclusion of the Catholic element in it was an important validation for their existence and work as Catholic School leaders. Under an increasingly sceptical public that continues to challenge the necessity of two systems of education in Ontario, the Ontario Leadership Framework represents to them an endorsement and a support for their continued existence. However, the Ontario Leadership Framework also reminds them that they are also accountable to the public.

Summary

This chapter provided a discussion on how the principals and vice-principals experienced the Ontario Leadership Framework in their school district. More specifically, it exposed 10 themes that the respondents in this study expressed as they addressed the interview questions posed. Each of these themes were explored and examined as relevant pieces of information and insight into how the principals and vice-principals of this study experienced the Ontario Leadership Framework. The next chapter utilizes these 10 themes and applies the conceptual framework in conjunction with the change literature to provide meaning and understanding to their experiences and to begin to provide insight in addressing the research questions of this study.
Chapter Six: Data Analysis and Findings

Data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data. And making sense out of the data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read, it is the process of making meaning (Merriam, 1998, p. 178).

This chapter provides a discussion of the research findings in relation to the change literature utilizing the three phases of the conceptual model adapted in this thesis to structure the conversation. More specifically, with the use of the conceptual model (Figure 4) of change adapted in this thesis, the analysis will expose connections between factors that affect the change process as stated in the literature and the 10 themes that emerged in this study. This discussion will provide insight in addressing the specific research questions of this study. Table 4 provides an illustration of how the discussion has been organized in this chapter by using the levels of analysis as headings, the phases of change as adapted by Fullan (2007) as rows, and the factors that affect each of the phases as links between the two.

Initiation

The conceptual framework that was discussed in chapter two provided a representation of how the Ontario Leadership Framework can be understood by examining it as a process of change that began at the ministry (macro) level, was then adopted at the school district (meso) level, and then implemented at the principal and vice-principal (micro) level. The first phase of the change process is the initiation phase. Fullan (2007) speaks of initiation as a process leading up to and including the decision to proceed with implementation. It can take many different forms, ranging from a decision by a single authority to a broad-based mandate. At a general level, we might assume that specific educational changes are introduced because they are desirable according to certain educational values and meet a given need better than existing practices do. (p. 69)
Table 4

*Organization of Analysis and Findings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases of the Ontario Leadership Framework (adapted by Fullan 2007)</th>
<th>Level of analysis</th>
<th>Characteristics of the change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initiation</td>
<td>Government (macro) level</td>
<td>Rushmore Catholic district (meso) level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New policy/ funds</td>
<td>Advocacy from central administration</td>
<td>Teacher advocacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>External change agents</td>
<td>Problem-solving and bureaucratic orientations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation (Themes)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation &amp; performance, common language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective leadership, job affirmation,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fit, limitations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District support &amp; pressure</td>
<td></td>
<td>District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority, reflection</td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic piece</td>
<td></td>
<td>Government and other agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutionalization</td>
<td>District mandate</td>
<td>Need</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While there are many other terms that have been used to describe this initial phase of the change process (i.e. mobilization, adoption, support) all of them speak to the decision to follow a particular change or innovation (Berman & McLaughlin, 1974, 1977, 1978; Fullan, 2001, 2007; Gross, 1977; Hord, 1987). This is the phase in which “getting people motivated and mobilised, introducing the innovation to them, describing it to them in ways that are clear and reasonable and generally setting in motion the process of transporting the prospective change from the realm of the theoretical to that of the actual” (Hord, 1987, p. 73) takes place.

**Government (macro) level.** As a policy change, the Ontario Leadership Framework was part of an effort aimed at supporting and sustaining the highest quality leadership possible. The government of Ontario recognized early on that effective leadership would be an important condition to support its three core educational priorities of ensuring high levels of student achievement and well-being; reducing the gaps in student achievement; and increasing public confidence in publicly funded education (Government of Ontario, 2010a). It became apparent in the government’s discussion paper *Leading Education: New Supports for Principals and Vice- Principals in Ontario’s Publicly Funded Schools* (Government of Ontario, 2005) that principals and vice-principals needed support to meet all the challenges of school leadership if they were to be effective school leaders. Beyond the many recommendations that the paper made at improving support for principals and vice-principals, it stated that they needed high quality training both in advance and throughout their careers, that conditions needed to exist to permit them to perform the key function of the “instructional leader,” and that
their role, powers, responsibilities, and obligations needed to be better defined to ensure coherent and consistent expectations (Government of Ontario, 2005).

A year after this discussion paper, the Institute for Education Leadership was established to “assist school and system leaders in maximizing achievement…and build on the efforts of principals’ associations and school boards in developing a framework to support school leaders in professional learning” (Institute for Education Leadership, 2009, para 2). While the province continued its efforts to explore ways to support school leadership in the province, it recognized that a “solid foundation for such work” was needed that would be based on research and professional practice (Government of Ontario, 2005). In 2008 the Ontario Leadership Framework was introduced to school districts of the province that not only was based on research and input from current practitioners, but outlined “core leadership practices and competencies in five domains and describe[d] what good leadership look[ed] like” (Government of Ontario, 2010a, p. 6). Its purpose was to:

- Inspire a shared vision of leadership in schools and boards; promote a common language that fosters an understanding of leadership and what it means to be a school and system leader; identify the practices and competencies that describe effective leadership; [and] guide the design and implementation of professional learning and development for school and system leaders. (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008, p. 6)

For the government, the Ontario Leadership Framework represented a consistent and effective approach to developing, supporting, and sustaining “the highest quality leadership possible in schools and boards across the province” (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008, p. 5). More specifically, the Institute for Education Leadership produced a guide—*Putting Ontario’s Leadership Framework Into Action: A Guide for School and System Leaders* (2008) to help principals and vice-principals discover the
“key practices” of the Ontario Leadership Framework, and how they could put them into action to achieve their goals (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008, p. 3). For them, implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework meant that current and aspiring school leaders would grow and refine their leadership skills, and put advanced leadership concepts and techniques to work on a daily basis to meet their education targets and achieve concrete results (p. 2).

As a way to support and encourage use of the Ontario Leadership Framework beyond the guide in school districts, the government created and developed the Board Leadership Development Strategy (BLDS) that all districts that received Ontario Leadership Strategy funding had to develop and implement. Rushmore Catholic district school board was one such district. The BLDS was based on the premise that the progress and success of all students in Ontario was contingent on having effective leadership at every level to guide teaching and learning in Ontario schools (Government of Ontario, 2010b). School districts had to appoint a lead of the BLDS who would establish a steering committee to develop a board leadership plan. In the development of the plan, the steering committee had to take into consideration the board strategic and improvement plan for student achievement; and embed the leadership practices and competencies of the Ontario Leadership Framework. In addition, it had to provide mentoring for newly appointed school leaders and implement the requirements of the principal and vice-principal performance appraisal regulation (Government of Ontario, 2010b, pp. 12-13). In short, the BLDS focused on school, system leaders, and those who aspire to a leadership role (Government of Ontario, 2010b, p. 5).
The relevance of all this background is to provide a connection to what Berman and McLaughlin (1977) refer to as “planning related activities,” during the mobilization phase. They provide examples of “defining a problem or need, [and] seeking solutions in terms of new educational methods or approaches.” They go on to state that the designers must also make a set of decisions about how to implement the innovation. They include implicit and explicit choices about allocation of resources, selection of sites, staff, target group, project governance… staff development, selection and development of materials, and evaluation procedures. (p. 22)

As in the case of the Ontario Leadership Framework, it represented a new policy change for school and system leaders in the province of Ontario that was created and developed by the provincial government. Such large-scale policy change efforts could not be successful without careful consideration to the way in which it will be introduced and supported. More specifically, it is quite important how governments “launch new programs” as this has an influence in the way it is perceived by the end users (Fullan, 1991, p. 253). In Fullan’s (2007) description of how new policy and funds can affect initiation, he makes reference to the current trend of provincial governments mandating new requirements (Fullan, 2007, p. 78). Usually spurred on by an area that they have identified in great need, they use government policy making and legislation to mandate change. This in turn has made them “more insistent about the nature and accountability of reforms” (Fullan, 2007, p. 78). This has been the case with the Ontario Leadership Framework through the BLDS where the responsibilities, eligible expenses, and reporting have been outlined as requirements in order to qualify for funding. Such efforts have inevitably affected how school districts like Rushmore Catholic have initiated the Ontario Leadership Framework to their principals and vice-principals.
Initiation/implementation: School district (meso) level. Initiation of the Ontario Leadership Framework at the district (meso) level at Rushmore began with the involvement of “external change agents.” When the Ontario Leadership Framework was first introduced to the principals and vice-principals of Rushmore Catholic district, it was done by a series of workshops and in-services put on predominately by the Catholic Principals Council of Ontario (CPCO), which is the provincial arm of the principals and vice-principals association. The in-services provided principals and vice-principals with an introduction of the framework as well as a number of strategies and benefits to using it. In addition to this, the in-services and workshops provided principals and vice-principals with resources and additional supports that they could access to deepen their understanding and use of the Ontario Leadership Framework.

Fullan (2007) discusses the role of “external change agents,” like the principal and vice-principal association in this study, as important in “stimulating and supporting change” (p. 76). As seen in this study, Cox (1983) found that external change agents “made people aware of the existence of new practices…worked with local facilitators to develop plans for implementation; arranged and conducted initial training; and sometimes played a continuing support and evaluation role” (as cited in Fullan, 2007, p. 56). This involvement of CPCO is also an example of advocacy from the principals’ association. As with Fullan’s (2007) factor of “teacher advocacy,” where he discusses how teacher unions can act as strong advocates of reform during the initiation phase, so too this can be applied to the principals and vice-principals association of CPCO. While Bryk et al. (1998) discuss this in the context of school teachers as well, opportunities where school leaders can come together and discuss changes allows them to “feel more comfortable in
exchanging ideas, and [produce] a collective sense of responsibility” (p. 128). Hence, it is possible that principals, like teachers, may be willing to adopt change as a result of factors like an innovation that is clear and practical, a supportive district administration, an opportunity to interact with others, and advocacy from the principal and vice-principal association (Bryk et al., 1998, p. 75).

Another important source of advocacy at this level was from school district leaders of Rushmore Catholic. Superintendents of Rushmore Catholic, especially the one charged with the responsibility of leadership, became a strong advocate for use of the Ontario Leadership Framework. As a result of the BLDS that Rushmore needed to comply with, they developed and implemented a leadership program for all current and aspiring school and system leaders designed to offer all an “opportunity to consider leadership potential and to build on leadership capacity” (Rushmore leadership strategy). More specifically, it embedded the Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic principals and vice-principals throughout the program and it became the foundation of all leadership initiatives and projects of the district. Interviewees in this study acknowledge the support of the district toward the use of the Ontario Leadership Framework by making references to these directions and actions of the district. Advocacy from the district is an important factor in the initiation of change as described by Fullan (2007):

Initiation of change rarely occurs without an advocate, and one of the most powerful is the chief district administrator, with his or her staff, especially in combination with school board support or mandate. In some cases, district leadership may not be interested in innovation, and little may happen. But when there is an interest, for whatever reason, mandate from a board, or a reform minded or career-oriented administrator, it is the superintendent and central staff who combine access, internal authority, and resources necessary to seek out external funds for a particular change program and/or to obtain board support. (pp. 73-74)
This point of support is further maintained by Berman and McLaughlin (1978) findings where they discuss the importance of the active commitment of district leaders. They conclude that:

Districts differ sharply in their capacity to manage change agent projects and in their receptivity toward them. Though we could not measure these factors with precision, our observation and interview data leave little doubt as to the importance of constant and active support from LEA (local education agency) officials and specialized staff. ... During mobilization, the support of the central office staff can determine whether planning for the project is adequate and whether teachers and administrators become committed. (p. 33)

This point is also echoed by McLaughlin (1990), who in her review of the work done by Berman and McLaughlin in the Rand study (1973-1978), concludes that “active commitment of district leadership was essential to project success… [and] needed to be present at the outset to undergird implementation efforts” (p. 12). Similarly, Supovitz (2006) discusses how school districts “are key to widespread educational improvement in the twenty-first century. Local school districts are still uniquely situated to play a critical role [for they have the] broad capacity to entrench improvement and the geographical proximity to sustain it” (p. 219).

At Rushmore, this advocacy identified the importance of the Ontario Leadership Framework to the interviewees. This in turn influenced and motivated interviewees to pay particular attention to the framework because of this. This importance was further reinforced at Rushmore with the incorporation of the Ontario Leadership Framework in the performance appraisal process for principals and vice-principals and with their restructuring of the leadership selection process.

The performance appraisal process for principals and vice-principals of Ontario is set out to support both new and experienced administrators with their professional
Participation in the performance appraisal is a ‘legal’ requirement as set out in Part XI.1, “performance appraisal of principals, vice-principals and supervisory officers of the Education act” (Government of Ontario, 2010c, p. 6). To assist principals and vice-principals with the performance appraisal process, a technical requirements manual was published (Government of Ontario, 2010c) outlining all the legal requirements for both the appraisee and appraiser. More relevant to this study, the manual makes the following reference to the Ontario Leadership Framework:

The Ontario Leadership Framework provides the underpinnings for the principal/vice-principal performance appraisal process and identifies effective practices and competencies, skill, knowledge, and attitudes of successful education leaders. The Ontario Leadership Framework is based on research by world-recognized experts in leadership and extensive consultation with educators across Ontario. The Ontario Leadership Framework provides a resource for school and system leaders to identify practices and competencies for building expertise in relation to a wide range of leadership capacities. (p. 7)

In addition to this, the manual also makes reference to the Ontario Leadership Framework when discussing the required Annual Growth Plan that each school leader needs to complete on an annual basis. More specifically:

in the development of the Annual Growth Plan, the appraisee must include the leadership practices and competencies described in the Ontario Leadership Framework that will be the focus of his or her professional growth for that year. These practices and competencies have been shown to have a positive impact on student achievement and well-being. (Government of Ontario, 2010c, p. 35)

In order to align with this, Rushmore facilitated a number of in-services to inform their principals and vice-principals of the changes that were occurring in their district’s performance appraisal process. According to the interviewees, superintendents would frequently structure their conversations on performance appraisal around the six domains that were part of the Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic school leaders.
Interviewees did not articulate any particular reason to why the change was occurring, other than it was now the direction of the board and that they were required to follow this.

Similarly, Rushmore re-structured its school and system leadership selection process that involved the incorporation of the Ontario Leadership Framework. It now became necessary for any aspiring school or system leader to complete a leadership portfolio that would document the leadership practices and competencies of the prospective candidate within the domains of the Ontario Leadership Framework. In other words, candidates had to demonstrate how their leadership experiences, practices, and competencies aligned with those listed and described in the Ontario Leadership Framework. Once again, interviewees were not able to articulate any particular reason for the change other than it was now an expectation and requirement to fulfill.

Such sentiments from the interviewees for both the performance appraisal and leadership selection process at Rushmore in regards to the initiation of the Ontario Leadership Framework is quite applicable to Fullan’s (2007) discussion of problem-solving or bureaucratic orientations of school districts. As a factor that can affect initiation, Fullan (2007) discusses school district orientations to change where they “welcome external funds and/or policies either as an opportunity to obtain extra resources or as a chance to solve particular local problems” (p. 79). The difference in the two can also predict whether or not an innovation will be successful in regards to implementation. Similarly, Berman and McLaughlin (1975) discuss that changes essentially generated by opportunism seemed to be a response to available funds and were characterized by a lack of interest and commitment on the part of local participants…problem-solving motives for projects emerged primarily in response to locally identified needs and was associated with a strong commitment to address these needs” (p. 9).
Furthermore, Berman and McLaughlin (1977) remark that changes that were “opportunistic” did not continue after funding ended, whereas, those change efforts that were “problem-solvers” were more likely to be implemented effectively (p. 23). The Ontario Leadership Framework was seen as an innovation directed toward the general population of school and district leadership of the province in recognition of the goal of attracting quality people to positions of school and district leadership, and in supporting and sustaining current school and district level administrators. The question here becomes one of discerning whether the Ontario Leadership Framework was a problem solving initiative or more of an opportunity to secure available government funds for Rushmore Catholic district school board. While interviewees were quick to point out the changes in the performance appraisal process and/or the leadership selection process, they did not indicate or articulate any problem or issue that their use of the Ontario Leadership Framework was addressing. Their commitment to the use of the leadership framework was purely an expectation on the part of their supervisors. Failure to meet those expectations would produce difficulties and challenges in successfully completing their performance appraisal process and/or in attaining career advancement. In short, the Ontario Leadership Framework seemed to mirror more the bureaucratic aspect of the initiation of change as operationalized in this district.

The Ontario Leadership Framework was introduced to the principals and vice-principals of Rushmore Catholic district school board as a mandated change. A number of changes were introduced to embed the framework in the school district. There was no specific problem or prior need that it was addressing as expressed by the interviewees of this study. Such orientations can and do have an effect on the implementation of change.
As Fullan (2007) discusses, “the relationship between initiation and implementation is loosely coupled and interactive. The process of initiation can generate meaning or confusion, commitment or alienation, or simply ignorance on the part of participants and others affected by the change” (p. 82). Despite the uncertainty that is generated here, there is empirical evidence to suggest that when change is mandated, implementation does occur. However, the way in which this occurs and is defined varies.

In this study, the mandated introduction of the Ontario Leadership Framework represented some changes; however, this was limited in respects to leadership practice for principals and vice-principals. Rushmore’s mandated introduction of the Ontario Leadership Framework did influence how principals and vice-principals implemented the framework. More specifically, the fact that in order to complete the performance appraisal and participate in leadership interviews one needed to utilize the Ontario Leadership Framework appeared to dominate the interviewee’s experience. As will be apparent in the next section, initial use or implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework for principals and vice-principals meant using it as a tool and not as a change, per se, in leadership practices.

**Implementation**

Implementation, or “initial use (usually the first 2 or 3 years of use) involves the first experiences of attempting to put an idea or reform into practice” (Fullan, 2007, p. 65). It “begins after the announcement that an innovation will be adopted and focuses on efforts to make the changes in the behaviour of organizational members specified by the innovation” (Gross et al., 1971, p. 17). More specifically, Fullan (2007) speaks of implementation as consisting of:
the process of putting into practice an idea, program, or set of activities and
structures new to the people attempting or expected to change. The change may
be externally imposed or voluntarily sought; explicitly defined in detail in
advance or developed and adapted incrementally through use; designed to be used
uniformly or deliberately planned so that users can make modifications according
to their perceptions of the needs of the situation. (p. 84)

Unlike the first phase of educational change “processes beyond adoption are more
intricate, because they involve more people, and real change (as distinct from verbal or
on paper decisions) is at stake” (Fullan, 2007, pp. 84-85). Berman and McLaughlin
(1975) describe the implementation phase as a “crucial stage.” They explain that “when
the project confronts the reality of its institutional setting and project plans must be
translated into practice” (p. 6) the process becomes quite complicated. They discovered
that the “initial design of an innovative project must be adapted to the particular
organizational setting of the school, classroom, or other institutional hosts, and, at the
same time, the organization and its members must adapt to the demands of the project”
(p. 6).

Hence, one of the important aspects of understanding implementation “is
adaptation at the user’s level” (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978, p. 16). Their understanding
and meaning of the change is a complex process to understand; however, as Fullan
(2007) states:

The problem of meaning is one of how those involved in change can come to
understand what it is that should change, and how it can be best accomplished,
while realizing that the what and how constantly interact with and reshape each
other. We are not only dealing with a moving and changing target; we are also
playing this out in social settings. Solutions must come through the development
of shared meaning. The interface between individual and collective meaning and
action in everyday situations is where change stands or falls. (p. 9)

Another important factor to consider about implementation is what it means in practice.

Fullan (2007) states that the implementation of change involves a “change in practice”
What does a change in practice look like at the user level? Fullan (2007) states that there are at least three components or dimensions at stake in implementing any new program or policy: (1) the possible use of new or revised materials…, (2) the possible use of new…approaches…, and (3) the possible alteration of beliefs” (p. 30). He goes on to discuss that if the change is to achieve its intended outcome then it will need to occur along these three dimensions (p. 37).

In this study, the implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework, as described by the principals and vice-principals at Rushmore Catholic district, occurred mainly as a use of new materials. There was very little evidence of the Ontario Leadership Framework being used as a new approach in leadership practices, and virtually none as a change in beliefs.

**Principal and vice-principal (micro) level.** We now turn to the implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework utilizing six factors from Fullan (2007) that have been found to interact with the 10 themes that emerged from the interviews with the principals and vice-principals of Rushmore Catholic district.

**School district.** We know from the previous section that the district played an important role in advocating for the Ontario leadership Framework. But how did the principals and vice-principals respond to this? Interviewees mainly identified this as both support and pressure from their school district. Interviewees used such phrases as “board’s emphasis,” “expectation,” and “board’s direction” to highlight the general climate in which they were implementing the Ontario Leadership Framework. As one of the “local factors” that Fullan (2007) discusses, the setting and organization in which people work can have a direct effect and influence on a change or innovation being
implemented. Just as advocacy from the school district is one of those important factors in the chances of an innovation moving beyond an idea, so is their support in the initial implementation. In fact, Berman and McLaughlin (1974) state “that among the institutional characteristics that might affect implementation” the degree of …superintendent involvement, support, and accessibility is listed as one of the four main ones (Berman & McLaughlin, 1974, p. 22). Further, in a review of studies on the implementation process, Odden (1991) found that administration commitment at the beginning, during the process of implementation, and when complete implementation occurred was important for successful implementation…without district and site administrator support throughout the change effort, successful implementation was hindered. (p. 306)

Interviewees in this study provide much evidence in how influential this support and pressure from the district was in facilitating the implementation of Ontario Leadership Framework. More importantly, it demonstrated the effectiveness of Rushmore Catholic district not only in communicating the importance of the Ontario Leadership Framework to the school and district leaders, but also their expectation in the implementation of it from their school and system leaders.

This pressure and support for principals and vice-principals to implement the Ontario Leadership Framework came in a variety of forms from Rushmore Catholic district, ranging from workshops and in-services, to scheduled individual visits from superintendents. Such investment in time and resources to inform and support the use of the Ontario Leadership Framework among their school administrators was quite evident from the interviewees. As Berman and McLaughlin (1978) found in their work, “a supportive district environment is necessary for an innovation to be effectively implemented and sustained. This means that district officials must mobilize a broad-
based commitment to the innovation at all levels” of the district (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978, p. 34). Interviewees in this study, as Fullan (2007) has discussed, also acknowledged the significant influence that district leaders can have because they knew from previous experiences “not to take change seriously unless central administrators demonstrate through actions that they should” (p. 94). Hence, districts possess the ability to “develop an incapacity for change as well as a capacity for it” (p. 93).

Interviewees in this study acknowledged this significant role that their school district played in how the Ontario Leadership Framework was received and ultimately how it was being implemented by them. This just does not happen by chance. As Datnow and Stringfield (2000) have found in their extensive work on school reform, “clear, strong district support positively impacted reform implementation, and the lack thereof often negatively impacted implementation” (p. 194). Similarly, the active commitment of district leadership is essential for project success (McLaughlin 1990, p. 12) for they are the ones that can “set the conditions for implementation to the extent that they show specific forms of support and active knowledge and understanding of the realities of attempting to put change into practice” (Fullan, 2007, p. 94).

Interviewees in this study also made specific references to policy and procedural changes that were made to support the use of the Ontario Leadership Framework. This policymaking power that local central administrators have can also mediate the outcomes of implementation (Burch & Spillane, 2005; Spillane, 1996). For example, Spillane (1996) found central district administrators, “as proactive policymakers, [can] mobilize and shape” reform to either support or interfere with how inevitably it is implemented by those directly affected (p. 84). This recognition of the role and influence that central
district (board) administrators play in the implementation of change was clearly evident in the responses that the interviewees provided in regards to their initial use of the Ontario Leadership Framework. More specifically, they acknowledge both the district and the superintendents’ role in facilitating and supporting the use of the Ontario Leadership Framework in their performance appraisal, as a basis to determine whether or not to promote people to leadership, and as a reference point to discuss professional growth for current administrators.

**Needs.** It became quite apparent that the interviewees of this study began to associate their initial use of the Ontario Leadership Framework as addressing specific “needs.” They explained how they now needed to become knowledgeable of the leadership practices and competencies contained within the Ontario Leadership Framework in order to complete their performance appraisal process, to apply for school or system leadership positions, and to communicate with both their colleagues and supervisors.

While the definition of “need” does include “a want or requirement; circumstances requiring some course of action” (Barber, 2004, p. 1038), it has also been referred to by the interviewees as “strategies which are believed to provide successful routes for the achievement of [a] goal” (Doyal & Gough, 1984, p. 11). For example, if “attaining X, whether X is viewed as a want or need, is doing Y, then Y is referred to as a need” (Doyal & Gough, 1984, p. 12). If we take this reasoning and apply it to this study, the Y becomes the Ontario Leadership Framework and the X becomes the goals that the interviewees are trying to attain through the use of the framework. Hence, the Ontario Leadership Framework was seen as a tool to use to either complete their performance
appraisal process and/or apply for school or system leadership positions, and to use leadership language that was common to everyone. There was no evidence from the interviewees that they changed their leadership practice to achieve this, instead they spoke of becoming familiar with the framework in order to complete a particular purpose. Use of the framework in this respect, where implementation involves the use of something new, has been discussed by Fullan (2007). Fullan (2007) identifies three components “at stake” to the implementation of any new program or policy; of particular relevance to this study is “the possible use of new or revised materials” (p. 30) which relates to how principals and vice-principals in this study have used the Ontario Leadership Framework, something that is new, for performance appraisals and/or to apply for leadership positions, and as a common leadership language.

The idea that “need” was identified as one of the factors that affected the implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework for the principals and vice-principals of this study has empirical basis as well (Berman & McLaughlin, 1975, 1978; Fullan, 2001, 2007; Gross, 1977). Fullan (2007) describes needs as one of the factors that affect the implementation of change and are “introduced because they are desirable according to certain educational values and meet a given need better than existing practices do” (p. 69). Interestingly, the interviewees in this study did not identify a specific need or gap that the prior performance appraisal system or the leadership selection process, or how they communicated about their leadership that warranted the development of the Ontario Leadership Framework. Instead, it became apparent from the responses from the interviewees that the need to use the Ontario Leadership Framework was mainly due to its incorporation in a few of the district’s policies.
Clarity. While it was clear that the principals and vice-principals of this study knew that they had to use the Ontario Leadership Framework in a couple of board processes, it was less clear what it meant beyond this in practice. When interviewees were asked to articulate their perception of what the purpose of the Ontario Leadership Framework was, many of them stated that it was to provide a list and description of leadership practices and competencies that were found to be highly effective for school leaders. While none of the interviewees were able to expand or provide further insight in how this would affect or influence their leadership practice directly, they did feel that they could become “better” school leaders, or more specifically, improve their leadership practices if they made use of the Ontario Leadership Framework. Motives, like self-improvement and professional growth, can encourage users to accept and implement change more readily (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; Gross et al., 1971; Huberman & Mile, 1984).

More specifically, it has been found that “professional growth was a strong motive in many cases and acted as a catalyst for the introduction of new practices” (Huberman & Miles, 1984, p. 49). For example, work from Huberman and Miles (1984) found that users of an innovation who are expressing connections to self-improvement and professional growth expressed the change as an “occasion to keep growing” and the realization “to get better, I had to change” (pp. 46-47). Similarly, as Berman and McLaughlin (1978) state, when innovations “appeal to the teacher’s professionalism; that is, we believe a primary motivation for teachers to undertake the extra work and disruption of attempting change is the belief that they will become ‘better’ teachers” (p. 25). This was especially true of vice-principals in this study who for the most part were
positioning themselves for career advancement, and who readily endorsed and validated the Ontario Leadership Framework as necessary for their professional growth and leadership practice. Hence, there was a strong motivation or incentive for interviewees to use the Ontario Leadership Framework, especially if they wanted to be successful in the interview process.

It is not surprising that career advancements and promotions act as powerful inducements for teachers and school leaders to implement change, “teachers often want to be principals, and principals want to be superintendents” (House, 1974, p. 87). The power and influence of career advancement through the use of the Ontario Leadership Framework was also articulated by the interviewees in the amount of time and effort they dedicated in preparation for their leadership selection interviews. As a result, a number of interviewees were also able to express a variety of attitudes toward the Ontario Leadership Framework ranging from enthusiasm to indifference. Berman and McLaughlin (1977) acknowledge the importance of these attitudes, which they found to be “crucial for the fate of innovative efforts. These attitudes establish the legitimacy of the project, define the priority accorded it in the district, and determine people’s commitment” (pp. 22-23). Interviewees in this study knew that if they wanted to be effective and successful in their interviews for positions of leadership, they needed to become familiar with the Ontario Leadership Framework. In fact, they could not make it through the stages of the interview process, if they did not demonstrate an understanding and a clear connection in their leadership portfolio between their leadership practices and competencies, and those of the Ontario Leadership Framework. However, none of the interviewees provided or indicated if going through this process produced any change in
their leadership practices or competencies.

A number of interviewees in this study also regarded the Ontario Leadership Framework as an affirmation of their work. Interviewees used terms such as “it reflects what I do,” “it affirms for you what you do,” “good example of understanding what is it that the principal, Catholic principal’s job is”, to refer to the components of the Ontario Leadership Framework. Despite the original authors’ intent for the Ontario Leadership Framework not to be used as a “job description” or as a “checklist against which to assess performance” (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008, p. 6), innovations can and do change as they become implemented into a local setting (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977, p. 15). Such adjustments may be necessary for a number of reasons, most importantly for implementation.

Interestingly, the tendency of these interviewees to see the framework as a “checklist” of sorts could represent their way of coping with the change, despite it not being one of the intents of the framework. In some respects this is common, as Berman and McLaughlin (1977) discuss: “school people rarely adopt, without change, an innovation from outside their district” (p. 84). As Berman and McLaughlin (1977, 1978) and Fullan (2007) allude to, an innovation may deviate from its intended purposes or goals to reflect more of those that are directly affected by it. Interviewees in this study found the Ontario Leadership Framework affirmed what they did as school leaders in many ways, but it was not clear if they felt that this was one of the original goals of the framework. The factor of clarity in the implementation of change that Fullan (2007) discusses has been raised in this study. Fullan (2001, 2007) and others (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977, 1978; Gross et al., 1971) speak about the importance of clarity in the
implementation of change. It has been discussed by these authors, that a lack of clarity can become an obstacle or barrier to implementation. Those that are the end users of the change can better implement innovations if they clearly understand what its purposes are (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978, pp. 25-26) and what it is they need to do differently (Fullan, 2007, p. 89).

Interviewees in this study did not articulate, beyond the expectations of the district, what they needed to do differently in their leadership practice. While they acknowledged that the Ontario Leadership Framework was a specific tool in order to participate and complete a few of the administrative responsibilities expected from the district, they did not identify or recognize a change in their leadership practices. Despite the goal of encouraging use in leadership practice from the government and district level, it was quite apparent that this was not occurring with the interviewees. Clarity was an issue in this regard as interviewees in this study were primarily using the framework to complete performance appraisals and prepare for interviews for leadership than applying it to their daily practice as school leader.

**Practicality.** A number of interviewees in this study made reference to the Ontario Leadership Framework in regards to its practicality for their work as school leaders. More specifically, they did this by making comments that were closely associated with ideas of personal “compatibility” or “fit.” As one of the factors related to the characteristics of change, Fullan (1991) discusses how practical changes are those that “address salient needs, that fit well...that are focused, and that include concrete how-to-do possibilities” (p. 72). In this study, a number of interviewees found value and “fit” in what they practiced as school leaders with the Ontario Leadership Framework. These
interviewees spoke more broadly about how they have or could use the framework in certain aspects of their leadership practice. Such recognition has been acknowledged by Fullan (1991) who discusses the practicality of change as involving “fit” with those that use the innovation (pp. 72-73). Interviewees that found “fit” with the Ontario Leadership Framework spoke of “identifying with it” and how “it makes sense” in regards to what they do as school leaders.

This importance of personal “compatibility” or “fit” to an innovation’s use has been studied in great detail by Huberman and Miles (1984) who undertook a three-year project to analyze federally supported educational innovations throughout the United States (p.vii). They found that “goodness of personal fit” was an important user perception in the innovation process. They describe the category in the following way:

When users first saw or heard of it, a sort of “trying on” of the requisite skills and materials, much as one mentally “tries on” a dress or a suit in a store window …these early assessments were hard to shake. When the fit was a good one, the users spoke of it almost somatically: the practice “felt right”…it was “like putting your hand in a new glove.”… By contrast, a poor fit “wasn’t me” or “didn’t fit my style.” (p. 65)

Related to this, they further deconstruct these “personal fit” responses to three “distinct judgements.” Two of them are of particular relevance in this study since a number of responses from the interviewees related to these types of judgements. Huberman and Miles (1984) speak of one of the judgements relating to the “familiarity of an innovation”; here “a good fit occurred when the project demanded skills that were ‘in [their] routine’ or were already ‘under [their] belt’” (p. 65). They describe the second judgement as “normative” or as relating to a “philosophical dimension.” Here users’ “goodness of fit meant it ‘sounded like what [they] believe[d] in’” (p. 65). These two judgements that Huberman and Miles (1984) speak of were present in some of the
responses that interviewees of this study gave. The significance here, as Huberman and Miles (1984) found in their study, was the importance of “personal fit” to the use of the innovation. While not all the schools in their study demonstrated this clearly, they did find that when there was a “high personal fit” to an innovation, it increased the chances of mastery and commitment to the change (Huberman & Miles, 1984, pp. 213-214).

However, in this study, when there was a lack of fit, interviewees spoke of the limitations of the Ontario Leadership Framework.

A number of interviewees perceived the Ontario Leadership Framework as limited in terms of describing the managerial aspects of their work that they conduct on a daily basis. With references such as “does not reflect what I do,” “it doesn’t speak to,” “it doesn’t cover everything,” interviewees were expressing an understanding of the framework based on what was familiar to them, their leadership experience. This sense of making a connection with something that is familiar is consistent with what Marris (1975, as cited in Fullan, 2007) discusses as the conservative impulse. As Marris (1974) describes, whenever something occurs that changes our familiar situations, we usually act with ambivalence: “The will to adapt to change has to overcome an impulse to restore the past” (p. 10). This is not an easy process “since new experiences can only be interpreted in terms of what we already know, we are bound to assimilate them to our present understanding if we can” (p. 10).

There was also a sense of initial anxiety expressed by the interviewees when the Ontario Leadership Framework was first introduced to them, they really did not know what to expect, and more importantly how they were going to implement it into their leadership practices beyond the requirements of their district. This sense of anxiety and
anticipation is to be expected as Fullan (1985) has found; change “at the individual level is a process whereby individuals alter their ways of thinking and doing. It is a process of developing new skills and, above all, of finding meaning and satisfaction in new ways of doing things... the initial stages of any significant change always involve anxiety and uncertainty” (p. 396).

The points that the interviewees raise about the various limitations of the Ontario Leadership Framework also reveal something else of importance, the personal or affective aspects of change. Hall and Hord (2006, 2011) discuss the implementation of change as involving stages of concern. They describe this as an “array of feelings, perceptions, worries, preoccupations and moments of satisfaction for those engaged with implementing new approaches. This personal side of change is important to understand because failing to address concerns can lead to resistance and even rejection of the new way (Hall & Hord, 2011, p. 55). Furthermore, as Hope and Pigford (2001) suggest, “educational polices that compete or conflict with...beliefs of educators are more likely to experience delayed implementation or suffer from superficial implementation” (p. 44).

Interviewees in this study speak to some of these challenges by questioning a variety of aspects connected to the use of the Ontario Leadership Framework and also revealing a need for more clarification on the goals and objectives of the framework. Interestingly as well, there were also some notable differences between the responses of principals when compared to the vice-principals in regards to the Ontario Leadership Framework. Principals for the most part spoke more directly about the managerial aspects of their work, citing aspects of budgeting and financing as well as the “art” of building relationships with all staff. The vice-principals however, spoke more about the volume of
information, citing such examples as “broadly stated…that it could mean anything” and “unwieldy,” but they also expressed a need for more prescription in regards to what it is they need to know to prepare for the role of the principal. To them, the Ontario Leadership Framework fell short of this expectation.

**The role of the principal and vice-principal.** Fullan (2007) discusses one of the local conditions of change as relating to the role of teachers. In this study, Fullan’s (2007) discussion of how teachers can play an important role and influence in the implementation of change is analogous to the position that principals and vice-principals find themselves in this research. Fullan (2007) discusses how “individual characteristics and collective or collegial factors play roles in determining implementation” (p. 96). While the interviewees did not articulate much in the way of collective or collegial factors, they did provide evidence of the presence of individual characteristics that appeared to influence the way in which they perceived their use of the Ontario Leadership Framework. For example, school principals in this study who had become school leaders prior to the introduction of the Ontario Leadership Framework articulated an: “it does not apply to me” sentiment. A large part of this was the fact that many of these school principals were school leaders’ years before the introduction of the Ontario Leadership Framework. They had to learn, mainly from trial and error as some reported, what worked and what did not work. As a result, they had developed the requisite skills and aptitudes that they have found to be effective and successful for them long before the introduction of the Ontario Leadership Framework. Hence, they could not perceive how something like the Ontario Leadership Framework could come along and influence them to change their leadership practices. Instead, they saw the framework as more effective
and valuable for those aspiring to become principals, because in a sense much of what was contained in the Ontario Leadership Framework was representative of what they did as school leaders already.

Interestingly, it appears that the years of experience as a school leader and the role of principal together seem to have produced a sentiment that the Ontario Leadership Framework does not apply to them. Hence, such characteristics may play a specific role here in how they understood the implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework. There is some empirical evidence that suggests that such characteristics can play an important role in the change process. Berman and McLaughlin (1977) found that characteristics of users, in their case teachers, had an impact on the achievement of goals of an innovation and the continuation of it (pp. 135-138). Similarly, Fullan (2007) also discusses the influence and importance that individual teacher characteristics can play in the implementation of an innovation (Fullan, 2007, pp. 96-98).

The important connection to be made here relates to characteristic of “years of experience.” Berman and McLaughlin (1977) found that the number of years of experience of the user was negatively related to the implementation of the innovation. As they state in regards to teachers who were the users in their study, “more experienced teachers were less likely to have changed their own practices…and less likely to continue using project methods” (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977, p. 136). While Fullan (2007) does not specifically speak to this characteristic, he does cite the study of Huberman (1988) which does. Huberman (1988) conducted a study of teachers’ professional life-cycles in Switzerland as it relates to their teaching career and school improvement. What is relevant here is his similar discovery to Berman and McLaughlin (1977) of the
importance of years of experience as an influential factor to school reform. More specifically, Huberman (1988) noted that those teachers with many years of experience (he cites more than 12 years) displayed less energy, less activism, less involvement, less idealism, more scepticism, and more pessimism than their more junior counterparts (Huberman, 1988, p. 129). As Huberman (1988) concludes, as one advances in their career life cycle, “one could expect a pulling-back, a narrowing of interests, a diminution of the energy available for …innovations” (p. 130).

Interviewees of this study also spoke about the importance of reflection for them as school leaders and how the Ontario Leadership Framework could provide them with the opportunity to do so. The importance of reflection in the change process has been discussed by Fullan (2006, 2007). Through the use of Dewey’s work, Fullan (2007) explains the importance of reflection:

people learn not by doing per se but by thinking about their new doing…ultimately it comes down to what is going on in one’s head, but the stimulation comes from new experiences that give us something new to think and learn about…they stem from reflective action. (p. 41)

To highlight the importance of reflection further here, the work of Rodgers (2002), who also examines the reflective work of Dewey, would be useful. Rodgers (2002) states that:

reflection is a meaning-making process that moves learners from one experience into the next with deeper understanding of its relationships with and connections to other experiences and ideas…reflection requires attitudes that value the personal and intellectual growth of oneself and of others. (p. 845)

Interviewees in this study recognized the importance of reflection in their professional practice and the role the Ontario Leadership Framework can play in achieving this. However, interviewees did not elaborate on how this would occur in practice, despite
indicating that they were willing to use the framework as an opportunity to facilitate the 
reflective process.

Another important consideration that Fullan (2007) makes to the role of the 
teacher is in regards to the conditions and the pressure of their work (Fullan, 2007, pp. 
130-132). Interviewees in this study spoke about the challenge of time, and how this 
affected their use of the Ontario Leadership Framework. With such references as “trying 
to find the time in the school year” and “don’t have the luxury, it seems to me, of a lot of 
time,” their capacity to use the Ontario Leadership Framework was limited. To a large 
extent this preoccupation with time is not surprising considering that the work of school 
administrators has “become more complex and overloaded over the past decade” (Fullan, 
2007, p.156). How is the school leader to cope with such a complex and challenging 
scenario? One of the ways is to prioritize the tasks and responsibilities so that those that 
they consider important and essential are given the majority of their time, while those that 
they consider not as important, the least amount of their time (McEwan, 2003).

Within this context then, the indication that interviewees found little if any time to 
use the Ontario Leadership Framework in their daily leadership practice, would suggest 
that they do not view it as important or as a priority. In fact, interviewees spoke clearly of 
the demands of their time on other more pressing issues. Interestingly, there was a 
difference between what vice-principals declared as taking the most of their time 
compared to principals. For example, vice-principals of this study spoke of how their day 
revolved around student discipline issues. In fact, every vice-principal made a number of 
references to the amount of time and effort they spend on resolving student discipline 
issues; some were even able to quantify it. In comparison, principals of this study spoke
more about school improvement plans, culture of the school, and working with the school community. To them, the focus was on improving school and student achievement, not on student discipline. In fact, none of the principal interviewees spoke or mentioned anything about their time being spent on student discipline; interestingly some actually acknowledged this as the role of the vice-principal.

While examining these differences in more depth between principals and vice-principals would be intriguing, it is beyond the scope of this study and has been already well documented in the research literature (Cranston et al., 2004; Hausman et al., 2002; Lee, Kwan, & Walker, 2009; Wong, 2009). However, what is important and relevant to this study is the fact that neither of them found any use or support from the Ontario Leadership Framework to assist them with their identified main tasks and responsibilities as school leaders. Why is this? In regards to the vice-principals citing student discipline issues as taking the most of their time, the Ontario Leadership Framework really does not address practices and competencies that deal with student discipline. Hence, if a large part of the day of vice-principals is devoted to student discipline, of what relevance would the Ontario Leadership Framework have for them? In some respects, this was the same for principals with one important distinction, the Ontario Leadership Framework did speak to some of these leadership areas. However, none of the principals spoke or mentioned how they could use the Ontario Leadership Framework to assist them with school culture or with the school improvement plan for example, despite it being directly covered in the framework. This disconnect is an interesting point. A possible contributing factor to this could be the lack of support or pressure from the central district.
Earlier on in this section principals and vice-principals alike spoke of the need to understand and be knowledgeable of the Ontario Leadership Framework in order to complete their performance appraisal and/or to participate in a leadership interview. Both processes would involve making connections between their current leadership practices and competencies and those contained in the Ontario Leadership Framework. In fact, many did find alignment and some even thought that the leadership framework could be helpful. The difference may lie in the fact that there really is no expectation on the part of their supervisors or from the district to use the Ontario Leadership Framework beyond the performance appraisal process or in preparation for interviews of leadership positions.

Hence, if there is no pressure and/or support from the district or their immediate supervisors to implement the Ontario Leadership Framework outside of these two core areas, the chances that school leaders will do so, is not likely given their increasing workload. As Fullan (2007) acknowledges,

people need pressure to change (even in directions that they desire), but it will be effective only under conditions that allow them to react, to form their own position, to interact with other implementers, to obtain assistance, to develop new capacities, and so on. (p. 123)

This gap or void on the part of senior administrators to provide *administrative pressure* and/or support to the users of an innovation is an important element in regards to the use of change (Hord, 1987; Huberman & Miles, 1984; Miles, 1983). Hord (1987) explains it this way when citing Miles (1983):

when heads or other change facilitators lend the full weight of their authority to an innovation, and thus put pressure on those to adopt it, greater frequency of use results. And this, together with provision of adequate user assistance and other requisite factors, leads in turn to increased user commitment, a key hallmark of successful implementation. (p. 81)
The relevance of this to this study then is that interviewees would be less likely to use the Ontario Leadership Framework without the administrative pressure and/or support of their supervisors, whether it is their principals or their superintendents. Supportive leadership, as others have found (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977, 1978; Fullan, 2007) has a major influence on the implementation of an innovation (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977, p. 188).

**Government and other agencies.** Ontario is one of the few provinces in Canada that still publicly funds two systems of education, one that is secular and one that is Catholic. However, “in an era when change is evident in the theory and practice of education, in its funding and accountability to governments, and even in the composition of personnel, the Catholic educational ethos is no longer an unquestioned element of school culture” (Belmonte & Cranston, 2009, p. 295). Hence, the pressures and demands of the public on the government to revisit this situation continue to challenge the necessity for two systems (Mulligan, 2007). Within this context, Fullan (2007) describes aspects of this as relating to external factors, such as government and other agencies. These external factors, as Fullan (2007) discusses, can “put pressure on local districts…and also provide incentives for changing in desired directions” (p. 99) as a result of public concern with education.

Accountability and what the public thinks about their education system has generated much in the way of initiatives and proposed changes; however, “whether or not implementation occurs will depend on the congruence between reforms and local needs, and how the changes are introduced and followed” (Fullan, 2007, p. 99). The interviewees in this study were very cognizant of this predicament as evidenced by the
sentiments and responses they shared. A number of interviewees spoke about how the Catholic version of the Ontario Leadership Framework provided validation for a system that continues to be questioned and pressured from the public to justify its existence (Belmonte & Cranston, 2009; Belmonte, Cranston, & Limerick, 2006; Mulligan, 2007).

Despite a constitutional guarantee for their presence, many of the interviewees saw their situation as precarious to say the least amidst continued reforms (secular in nature) and budget cuts. For most of them, the fact that the Ontario Leadership Framework came in two versions, indicated to them that their system of education was supported by the government at the least. With this, however, interviewees also recognized the increased demand from the public for greater accountability as is evidenced in one of the dimensions of the Ontario Leadership Framework (i.e., securing accountability). While the Ontario Leadership Framework has endorsed their continued existence as a public system of education, it also has outlined some of the expectations that the government has of them as school leaders.

This idea or concept of accountability is not new to change or innovations in schools, in fact, “major change since 2000 is the growing in-your-face presence of accountability” (Fullan, 2007, p. 211). This in turn has placed “the school or school district in the context of the broader society…provincial/state and national priorities for education are set according to the political forces and lobbying of interest groups, government bureaucracies and elected representatives” (Fullan, 2007, pp. 98-99). While a large part of these forces have called for greater accountability in regards to student achievement and school performance overall (Elmore, 2004; Fullan, 2007; Supovitz,
2006) it has also given prominence to the question of what the larger society thinks of its education system (Fullan, 2007, p. 99).

In a sense, “pressure for increased school accountability is a distinctive hallmark of the present period of educational reform” (Elmore, 2004, p. 134). This accountability movement, as Elmore (2004) describes, expresses society’s expectations about schools and holds them responsible for the education of their children: “over time, if schools improve, increased accountability will result in increased legitimacy for public education. Failure will lead to erosion of public support and a loss of legitimacy” (pp. 90-91).

Interviewees also spoke of how the Catholic element also helped them to discern how they as school leaders were different from their secular counterpart. For the interviewees, the Ontario Leadership Framework did provide some concrete understanding to the work they did as Catholic school leaders. To them, this was important for it allowed them the opportunities to not only reflect on their Catholic leadership practice, but also to inform and educate the public on what it is that makes them different. Interviewees to a large extent felt that this was one of the main objectives of the Ontario Leadership Framework and saw the presence of a Catholic version of the Ontario Leadership Framework as validation to their continued existence. This not only validated them as a system, but also established accountability toward the public and transparency in terms of their work. This is an important point to highlight as the inclusion of the Catholic element in the Ontario Leadership Framework provides a recognition in differences in the way education occurs in the province. Such actions, as Fullan (2007) acknowledges, can provide for stronger relationships to be formed between external (government) and internal (Catholic school districts) groups, and encourage
implementation. Under an increasingly sceptical public that continues to challenge the necessity of two systems of education in Ontario, the Ontario Leadership Framework represents to a number of the interviewees an endorsement and a support for their continued existence. In fact some of the interviewees saw the potential of the Ontario Leadership Framework as a way in which they could discern their role as a Catholic school leader. More specifically, citing once again both their performance appraisal process and the leadership selection process of their district, they highlighted how they used the Ontario Leadership Framework to guide their discussion with their superintendents and provided examples that they could use to demonstrate Catholic leadership in their schools.

The implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework by Catholic principals and vice-principals at Rushmore Catholic district was inevitably influenced by how principals and vice-principals experienced its introduction. Six of the nine factors that Fullan (2007) describes as influential to the implementation of change were present in this study. Each of these factors provided some perspective and insight into the experiences of the participants of this study with the use of the Ontario Leadership Framework. More specifically, it became quite apparent that the experiences that they were describing did not indicate a change, per se, in their leadership practice, rather it described the framework as more of a tool that they needed to use. Interviewee characteristics and their formal position in the administrative hierarchy played an important part in how they perceived and experienced the Ontario Leadership Framework. These elements combined with the emergent themes of this study and the factors that influence implementation have provided insight about their experiences with
their initial use of the Ontario Leadership Framework. As a result of this, it is possible to provide some preliminary discussion on the institutionalization of the Ontario Leadership Framework at Rushmore Catholic district despite it only being in place for approximately three years at the time of this study. While it may be too early in the life of the Ontario Leadership Framework to possibly consider whether or not one can make any specific or clear connection to the phase of institutionalization, there is evidence to suggest that the institutionalization of the Ontario Leadership Framework may occur on two levels. Within this context then, we explore this potential in the next section.

Institutionalization

The last phase of the conceptual model used in this study provides recognition that the Ontario Leadership Framework is continuing as part of Rushmore’s district operations. Considered to be the third phase of educational change, (Berman & McLaughlin, 1974, 1975, 1977, 1978; Fullan, 1991, 2001, 2007; Gross et al., 1971), institutionalization, which has also been termed incorporation, routinization or continuation, refers to “whether the change gets built in as an ongoing part of the system or disappears by way of a decision to discard or through attrition” (Fullan, 2007, p. 65). While there is consensus that this is the third phase of the change process, Berman and McLaughlin (1977) note from their study, that “institutionalization cannot be understood without taking into account the ‘history’ of the project…what happened early in a project profoundly affected what happened later. Institutionalization must be seen as but one phase in a complex local process of change” (p. 17). In this study, it became quite evident that the way in which the Ontario Leadership Framework was initiated at both the
government and district level, influenced the way in which it was implemented by principals and vice-principals of Rushmore Catholic district.

As a mandated change, interviewees were acutely aware of the expectations from the district in how they were to implement it. Such “top-down” approaches can provide a number of benefits for a change or innovation as some have found (Fullan, 2007; Huberman & Miles, 1984; Supovitz, 2006). For example, as Supovitz (2006) states,

the benefits of centralized reform strategies are that they allow for high quality design…tighter quality control because they are standardized…and are more easily supported because they follow more predictable implementation patterns (p.223).

Similarly, Huberman and Miles (1984) found that when educational change or an innovation was mandated, there was a greater percentage of use of the change than in instances where there was not. They also found that when educational change was mandated from the beginning, it did “not matter that users received only moderate assistance, had low practice mastery, felt few benefits or much commitment” (Huberman & Miles, 1984, p. 212); the change effort would become implemented. However, the implementation of the framework was not a change in their leadership practice as was hoped by the government and even the district, but a change in procedure.

Despite interviewees listing and identifying aspects of the framework that they could use, they were not able to concretely describe how it would change their practice.

In addition to this, characteristics of the interviewees (their position, experience, and their work responsibilities) provided further insight into understanding their experiences with the Ontario Leadership Framework. For change or an innovation to lead to anything meaningful, “it needs to become part of the fabric…, [otherwise it risks being] just another passing fad” (Datnow & Stringfield, 2000, p. 196). At the heart of this are those
directly involved and affected by the change or innovation, for it will be them who will influence and impact the potential of the change or innovation moving beyond initial implementation. As Fullan (2007) states, using teachers as an example, “educational change depends on what teachers do and think, it’s as simple and as complex as that” (p. 129). Hence, an important consideration in understanding the institutionalization of a change or innovation is to focus on individual users with regards to their “feelings about the innovation, their behaviors with it and the form or shape their use takes in practice” (Hord, 1987, p. 81).

Based on this last point, institutionalization of the Ontario Leadership Framework will probably occur at both the district and individual principal and vice-principal level as Berman and McLaughlin (1977) have found in their work. While I quote at some length Berman and McLaughlin (1978) discussion on institutionalization, I feel their insight here provides a lucid context for this section.

Institutionalization is particularly hard because of the organizational structure and operations of local school systems. It is altogether possible for district officials to promulgate a formal policy that the teaching staff does not actually follow; conversely, teachers, principals, and whole schools can ascribe to practices without the district’s sanction or knowledge. This “loose-coupling” of educational systems generated an odd situation: On the one hand, for many successfully implemented projects, teachers continued to use the project’s methods and materials, even though the district apparently had no long-run intention of incorporating the project into standard district operations; on the other hand, district officials sometimes mandated their continuation, even though teachers were hardly using the project methods or materials at all. Both cases appeared unstable. The change caused by a project can only be institutionalized when both levels of the school system continue to support project practices. (p. 19)

Not surprisingly then, the interplay between district and school personnel plays an important role in the institutionalization of a change or innovation. In the case of this study, the institutionalization at the district level of the Ontario Leadership Framework
will continue because school and system leaders of Rushmore are still required to use the framework in their performance appraisal and in applying for school and system leadership positions. The continued maintenance and support of these requirements is inevitably tied to the government’s goal of supporting, sustaining and developing quality school and system leadership in the province. Inevitably this will influence and affect the institutionalization at the school principal and vice-principal level.

Institutionalization of the Ontario Leadership Framework at the principal and vice-principal level will occur because, as Berman and McLaughlin (1977) suggest, the very act of putting an innovation into practice can constitute an enduring learning experience that expands one’s use of materials. In other words, the principals and vice-principals in this study institutionalize their use of the Ontario Leadership Framework in order to fulfill the requirements of their district (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977, p. 19). Adapting the framework as a tool, they conform to the requirements of their district. As long as their district requires them to use the Ontario Leadership Framework to complete these expectations, principals and vice-principals of Rushmore will continue to use it in this way.

In many respects, institutionalization “represents another adoption decision” (Fullan, 2007, p. 101) and as in the other two phases of the change process, there can be in play a number of factors or variables which can affect the likelihood of a change or innovation progressing beyond its initial use. This phase of the change process is not only complex, but is affected by the interplay of individuals who implement the change and the environment in which it plays out (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977). One of the premises that Berman and McLaughlin (1977) use to base their understanding of
institutionalization is that it occurs in distinct ways for individuals who implement the change, and more specifically, if institutionalization is to occur there needs to be “some personal adaptation” (p. 19) of the innovation. Hence, the ways in which implementers experience this adaptation, or not, beyond the implementation phase of the innovation, is an important consideration in its continuation. In this study, the institutionalization of the framework for the district was through its continued incorporation in its formal operations, that is; performance appraisals of school and system leaders and in their selection of school and system leaders. Principals and vice-principals in this study institutionalized the Ontario Leadership Framework by adapting it as a tool to complete these expectations.

**Summary**

This chapter was dedicated to a discussion of the research findings in relation to the literature. More specifically, this section was organized around the conceptual framework that was adapted from Fullan’s (2007) three phases of educational change to provide a lens for this study. The initiation phase of the Ontario Leadership Framework occurred at two levels; the government (macro) and the district (meso). The government developed and introduced the Ontario Leadership Framework as part of its provincial leadership strategy to support, sustain and develop effective school and system leaders in the province. This policy change was mandated to all school districts that received funding as a result of their participation in the Ontario Leadership Strategy. In order to maintain this funding, school districts were required to develop a Board Leadership Development Strategy. As one of the school districts receiving this funding, Rushmore Catholic district had to demonstrate how it would incorporate or implement the Ontario
Leadership Framework in its leadership strategy. Hence, Rushmore engaged in a few key changes in their board operations to accommodate the use of the framework. In an effort to encourage implementation amongst its school and system leaders it arranged a number of workshops and in-services’ to take place. How did this translate to the principals and vice-principals of this study?

At the individual (micro) level, principals and vice-principals in this study articulated a number of themes that aligned with six factors that Fullan (2007) describes as influential to the implementation process. Individual aspects and characteristics of the participants themselves also provided insight in how they experienced the Ontario Leadership Framework. The influence of the way in which the initiation of the Ontario Leadership Framework was mandated to school principals and vice-principals of this study greatly influenced the way in which they implemented the framework. In short, their implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework did not represent a change in leadership practice, per se, but rather a change in how they now completed the expectations of their district. More specifically, the Ontario Leadership Framework became a tool for them to use.

The last phase of the conceptual model used in this study, institutionalization, while difficult to analyze completely because of the timing of this study and release of the framework, provided some preliminary findings. Institutionalization of the Ontario Leadership Framework occurred at two levels; the district and the principal and vice-principal. Rushmore continues to incorporate the Ontario Leadership Framework as part of its routine for school and system leaders’ performance reviews and in the selection of school and system leaders. As a result of this, principals and vice-principals
institutionalize the Ontario Leadership Framework because of this expectation and adapt the Ontario Leadership Framework as a tool to be used to complete these responsibilities and expectations.

What does all this mean for the research questions of this study and what implications does this analysis have for the government, school districts and to school leaders? These questions are addressed in the next and final chapter of this study.
Chapter Seven: Conclusions and Implications

This study investigated how seven Catholic secondary principals and seven Catholic vice-principals at Rushmore Catholic district school board have responded to the Ontario Leadership Framework in their district. Through the use of Fullan’s (2007) three phase model of educational change, a conceptual framework was developed in order to understand how these school administrators experienced the Ontario Leadership Framework in their respective roles. More specifically, this study was framed by the primary research question: What has been the experience(s) of Catholic secondary principals and vice-principals with the Ontario Leadership Framework?

To address this primary research query, three specific sub-questions were developed that sought to examine what their understanding of the decision to initiate the Ontario Leadership Framework was, their experiences with its implementation, and the potential of it continuing to be used. This final chapter draws on both the analysis of the 10 themes (chapter 5) that the participants in this research articulated, and the analysis and findings of applying the conceptual framework (chapter 6) in this study. Together, they provide a foundation from which to draw a number of conclusions to address the research questions of this study, and to present implications for practice and research as they relate to the government, the school district, and to principals and vice-principals.

Macro Context of the Ontario Leadership Framework

The conceptual framework and the findings section of this study both included the initiation phase at the government (macro) level. The impetus for including this phase and level in the study was because of insight from the research on the change process that indicates the importance of understanding the background of an innovation to more fully
appreciate what occurs at the implementation phase (Berman & McLaughlin, 1974, 1978; Fullan, 2007; Gross, 1977). Since the Ontario Leadership Framework did not originate from the district, but from the government (macro) level, it became important in this study to provide some context and understanding on the initiation phase of the framework. Through the use of document analysis in which a variety of relevant material to the study from the government (ministry papers, policies, and initiatives) and from Rushmore (district leadership development strategy, leadership program guide, and board policies) was debriefed, it became possible to provide a mainly descriptive account of the purpose(s) and goal(s) of the government’s decision to adopt the Ontario Leadership Framework.

The data that emerged from this document analysis provided a background to the primary focus of this study; that is, what have been the experiences of principals and vice-principals with the implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework. More specifically, recognizing that the Ontario Leadership Framework was mandated and that its purpose was to support and sustain current school leaders with a set of core leadership practices and competencies to use in their professional learning and daily practices (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008; Government of Ontario, 2010a), these data assisted in providing a context from which to understand more completely the implementation experiences of principals and vice-principals in this school district.

**Perceptions of the Purpose of the Ontario Leadership Framework**

The first sub-question probed: How have Catholic secondary principals and vice-principals come to understand the introduction of the Ontario Leadership Framework in their school district? Interviewees were aware that the Ontario Leadership Framework
originated from outside their school district and that its use was mandated by their board in areas of performance appraisals and the leadership selection process. While the literature on the change process makes reference to the idea that change is “introduced because they are desirable according to certain educational values and meet a given need better than existing practices do” (Fullan, 2007, p. 69), this was not as clear in this study as observed from the responses of the interviewees. Interviewees did not provide or identify any particular need that the Ontario Leadership Framework was developed to address. Rather, they began to rationalize why it was created based on their experiences with it. For example, one of the interviewees stated that they (supervisors) needed a measuring stick to evaluate principals and vice-principals; however, the need for this prior to the introduction of the Ontario Leadership Framework was not clear. Interestingly, it became quite apparent that the need that the Ontario Leadership Framework was trying to address was its own creation. In other words, there was no prior need that the interviewees could identify, rather it became the case that since the Ontario Leadership Framework was a new policy change and that they were mandated to use it, its introduction created a need where none existed before.

Realities of Implementation

The second sub-question explored: What experiences do Catholic secondary principals and vice-principals identify in their initial use of the Ontario Leadership Framework? Principals and vice-principals of this study spoke about their initial use of the Ontario Leadership Framework in relation to 10 themes. Each one of these themes provided insight into the experiences that they had and this in turn connected to the various factors that influenced their implementation as discussed in the research literature
(Fullan, 2007). More specifically, the implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework was prejudiced by the mandated nature of its introduction by Rushmore Catholic district. It was made clear from the outset that the Ontario Leadership Framework was a policy change that the provincial government wanted school districts to implement. Hence, in an effort to communicate this, the school district facilitated workshops and in-services to help introduce and encourage use of the framework among all administrators. More specifically, the respondents spoke of how the district embedded the framework into the procedure for applying for positions of leadership and in their performance appraisal process. They soon realized that if they wanted to be successful, whether it was at the interview process or in their performance appraisal, they would need to become fairly knowledgeable about the leadership practices and competencies contained within the framework. Such circumstances did provide motivation and inducements for the respondents to use the Ontario Leadership Framework. This is not surprising as other studies have noted the importance of such influences in implementation (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; House, 1974; Huberman & Miles, 1984). School board support and pressure was a very important influence in their initial use of the framework, and in such high stakes circumstances; administrators recognized the value of investing the time needed to incorporate the leadership practices, competencies, and domains of the Ontario Leadership Framework in these administrative areas. They knew that they had to take the implementation of the framework seriously because their district demonstrated through these actions that they should (Fullan, 2007, p. 94).

Hence, the Ontario Leadership Framework became more like a tool than anything else for them to use. Their implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework did not
represent a change in leadership practice, but a change in requirements that they had to fulfill for their district. While the government made references to how the Ontario Leadership Framework can help educational leaders grow and refine their leadership skills (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008), and Rushmore Catholic district tried to encourage other uses, principals and vice-principals of this study did not provide evidence of this. In fact, the Ontario Leadership Framework was not a stimulus for actual change in practice for them, but a tool for them to use in their performance review and/or in applying for leadership positions in their district. However, this is not to say that they did not acquire any new learning from their use of the Ontario Leadership Framework. Actually, their use of the framework to satisfy their district’s requirements did result in them learning a common language for discussing leadership practices.

More specifically, a number of interviewees spoke about how they were now able to converse about their leadership practices in a language that others would be able to identify with or least understand. Hence, as Fullan (2007) discusses, the respondents in this study did use the Ontario Leadership Framework as a form of new materials; however, there was little evidence of them changing their leadership practice or their beliefs (Fullan, 2007, p. 30) as a result of using the framework this way.

**Continued Use**

The third sub-question explored: What do Catholic secondary principals and vice-principals consider to be important variables that would influence whether or not they continue to use the Ontario Leadership Framework? An important variable that all the interviews spoke of that would influence their continued use of the Ontario Leadership Framework would be based on the actions and decisions of their school district. As was
discussed in both the literature review (chapter 2) on educational change and in the data analysis section (chapter 6), institutionalization cannot be understood without taking into account what happened during the initiation and implementation phase (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Fullan, 2007). More specifically, as was clear in the implementation section above, the Ontario Leadership Framework was mandated to the principals and vice-principals of Rushmore in terms of its use.

It did this in two ways; first, it formed a large part of their performance appraisal and Annual Growth Plan. Even if the principals and vice-principals were not in a year of performance review, they had to complete an Annual Growth plan that had to include leadership practices and competencies that were described in the Ontario Leadership Framework as part of their professional growth. If they were in a year of performance review, the use of the Ontario Leadership Framework would be doubled as they would also have to use the Ontario Leadership Framework’s leadership practices and competencies to develop goals that would support student achievement in their performance plan (Rushmore appraisal process). Hence, at a minimum, all the interviewees would be required to use the Ontario Leadership Framework because it was embedded in their performance appraisal.

Second, anyone aspiring to be a school or system leader at Rushmore was required to complete a leadership portfolio as a part of the leadership selection process. The leadership portfolio was in essence a document that the aspiring candidate would put together that represented their experiences, leadership practices and competencies according to the six domains of the Ontario Leadership Framework. This then would be examined to determine if the aspiring candidate could move on to the next step of the
leadership selection process. Hence, anyone aspiring to school or system leadership would be required to use the Ontario Leadership Framework to prepare them for this. Hence, it would seem quite likely that if Rushmore Catholic district were to continue to require the use of the Ontario Leadership Framework in these administrative areas, then principals and vice-principals would also have to continue to use the framework.

Interestingly, respondents in this study did indicate that their school district continues to require the use of the Ontario Leadership Framework both in their performance appraisals of school and system leaders, and in their leadership selection process. Hence, their continued use, or institutionalized use of the Ontario Leadership Framework in this regard would inevitably also influence the continued use of the framework among the principals and vice-principals of this study.

As has been documented in the research literature on the change process, school districts continue to play an important role not only in the implementation of change, but also in its institutionalization (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Fullan, 2007). At a preliminary level then, the institutionalization of the Ontario Leadership Framework at Rushmore Catholic district will continue because it has become part of the operation of the district (Gross et al., 1971, p. 17). As a result of this, it seems more than plausible that principals and vice-principals will continue to use it as a tool to complete performance appraisals and in preparation for career leadership opportunities with the district.

**Primary Research Question**

So what has been the experience(s) of Catholic secondary principals and vice-principals with the Ontario Leadership Framework? The conceptual model that was used in this study attempted to provide a framework on how the Ontario Leadership
Framework, as a policy change, has been experienced by principals and vice-principals at Rushmore. More specifically, as an initiative of the provincial government to address a variety of concerns with school and system leadership in our schools and school districts, there was a need on their part to develop the Ontario Leadership Framework to address this. In an effort to support districts with their school and system leadership, the government initiated the BLDS that incorporated the Ontario Leadership Framework to help organize and coordinate these efforts. More specifically, school districts like Rushmore, that received funding for leadership strategies in their district, were required to complete the BLDS. This directive inevitably influenced the way in which Rushmore Catholic district introduced the Ontario Leadership Framework to their principals and vice-principals.

In developing their leadership strategy, Rushmore was required to embed the Ontario Leadership Framework in a number of their district operations. This in turn influenced the way in which the respondents of this study experienced this change. They became aware quite early on that the Ontario Leadership Framework was a required element in both their performance appraisal review and leadership selection process. For them, the introduction of the Ontario Leadership Framework represented a need that they had to address (Fullan, 2007). To a large extent this affected their understanding of the framework and in some respects it may have even restricted their use of it beyond this expectation despite efforts to the contrary through in-services and workshops. This is not surprising since innovations can change at the user level despite what innovators may have intended originally (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; Fullan, 2007). Interviewees in this study mainly recognized the Ontario Leadership Framework as a tool to be used for
performance appraisals and in preparation for the leadership selection process. While some interviewees did recognize that the Ontario Leadership Framework could be used in their leadership practice or for professional growth, they did not articulate what this would look like in practice. More specifically, they did not provide any data or information that their use of the Ontario Leadership Framework in this way leads to any change in their leadership practice or competency. While, they clearly demonstrated that they learned a common language that now facilitated their conversations and understanding of expected leadership practices and competencies, this again did not result in any real change in leadership practice. Hence, the only difference that has occurred for the principals and vice-principals at Rushmore has been in the use of new materials (Fullan, 2007, p. 30); in this case the Ontario Leadership Framework, to complete two administrative processes of the district and as a common language of leadership.

There was no clear evidence that principals and vice-principals in this study used new approaches in their leadership or changed their beliefs as a result of the Ontario Leadership Framework. It seems quite plausible that if Rushmore continues to require their school leaders to use the Ontario Leadership Framework for these administrative purposes, principals and vice-principals will continue to use the framework as a tool to complete these requirements.

**Key Conclusions**

What can be surmised from these findings? While a number of conclusions can be made from the insight provided by the interviewees in this study, there are four key points that should be highlighted.

First, there is somewhat of a disconnect between what the government sees as the
The purpose of the Ontario Leadership Framework and what actually is being interpreted by the respondents in this study. The Ontario Leadership Framework was part of a series of initiatives from the government to attract potential candidates to the role of school and system leadership as well as supporting and sustaining those currently in the role. The findings in this study suggest that the first half of the purpose was the only part that was finding success. That is, conversations were occurring between current school leaders and those aspiring to be, with direct reference to the Ontario Leadership Framework. However, none of the interviewees articulated how the Ontario Leadership Framework was supporting or sustaining them in their current role, if anything it might have been creating more stress. The list of effective practices and competencies of school and system leadership did not translate for them as support; in fact some described this list as more of a standard to be measured against than assistance with their current leadership practices and competencies. More specifically, those in their school leadership role prior to the introduction of the Ontario Leadership Framework saw no real professional purpose to it other than validating their current leadership practices and competencies.

Secondly, the Catholic nature of the Ontario Leadership Framework did appear to provide validation and endorsement of the Catholic system of education in Ontario, with a focus on school and system leadership. Two points need to be made here to clarify this statement further. First, of those that did identify or acknowledge the Catholic nature of the framework, few spoke of how it assisted or guided them specifically as a Catholic leader. More specifically, there was no mention on how the framework furthered their faith as a Catholic leader, or helped them to reflect more directly because of it. Rather, interviewees in this study spoke more directly about how the Catholic element was more
of an accountability piece. Second, while they acknowledged that the Catholic framework did speak more directly to them in regards to connections between their leadership practices and competencies and their faith, they seemed more adamant to view the framework as a continued justification for their existence. In a climate of economic cutbacks, many of the interviewees viewed their continued presence in Ontario as tenuous. For them, the fact that the framework came in two versions (secular and Catholic) provided them with some renewed confidence that their system of education would continue. This was further supported by the fact that the Ontario Leadership Framework was not a denominational artifact, but rather a document created and developed with the support of the provincial government.

Thirdly, this study noted a number of insights in how principals and vice-principals responded to the Ontario Leadership Framework. First, while both acknowledged the challenge of making use of the framework in their busy schedules, the reasons that they cited for this was quite different. Vice-principals spoke about how their role was largely dominated by students’ issues, and that student discipline on average consumed 75% of their day. For them, this did not leave any real time for them to consult or even review the Ontario Leadership Framework. Principals on the other hand spoke more easily about how their role was more leadership focused, and how the Ontario Leadership Framework merely acknowledged this. As well, principals perceived the framework to be more of a checklist of those leadership practices and competencies expected of effective leaders than anything else. Much of what was contained in the framework was already being put in practice by principals in their daily routines as a school leader. In short, the framework validated their work. Vice-principals on the other
hand saw the framework as a goal to strive for. They recognized that the framework contained those leadership practices and competencies that were proven to be effective. Hence, vice-principals viewed the framework as an invaluable tool to help them prepare for leadership opportunities. This difference between the two administrator positions may be more reflective of the aspiration of most vice-principals to become principals, and of principals reaching the pinnacle of school leadership.

Another interesting observation in this study was the lack of distinction that principals and vice-principals made in regards to the transformational and instructional approaches to leadership. While the Ontario Leadership Framework draws on and combines both approaches in its leadership dimensions, principals and vice-principals responded to the framework and not the differences between instructional and transformational leadership as was outlined in the literature review of this study (chapter 2). In using the Ontario Leadership Framework, it was clear that the respondents were using its terminology and language to begin to understand the framework, and were not drawing on any distinction between the two leadership models that the framework was based on.

Further, the findings also indicate that principals were able to make more direct connections with the Ontario Leadership Framework than their vice-principal counterpart. While vice-principals spoke of trying to model and practice what the Ontario Leadership Framework contained and discussed, principals found little practical use. To the principals, the Ontario Leadership Framework validated what they did as school leaders. To the vice-principals, the Ontario Leadership Framework provided a standard to meet. The difference between these two groups may be based on the simple fact that most
of the principals have been in an administrative role for a longer time than their vice-
principal counterparts. As a result, they would have had more opportunities to experience
a variety of situations and issues that would have called on their leadership practices and
competencies to be tested. To them, the arrival of the Ontario Leadership Framework did
not offer anything new to them; it mainly affirmed what they had been doing all along.
This was especially pronounced among those interviewees that have been in principal
positions prior to the introduction of the Ontario Leadership Framework. For them, their
years of experience influenced and nurtured their leadership practices and competencies.
The Ontario Leadership Framework to them was not a motivator for change, but rather an
affirmation of the work that they continue to do in their schools.

Lastly, the findings in this study have also raised questions about the purpose and
meaning of the Ontario Leadership Framework. Initially, the framework was part of a
strategy to attract high quality leaders to positions both at the school and system level,
while also supporting and sustaining those already in that role. However, there is
evidence to suggest, from this study, that the Ontario Leadership Framework may be
more about public accountability of what school and system leaders do than about school
and district leadership needs. Evidence of this was shared by the interviewees in this
study who made frequent references to how the Ontario Leadership Framework provided
them with an awareness and understanding of what was expected of them as school
leaders, how it listed and described effective leadership practices and competencies for
them to strive for, and the fact that this information was accessible to the public. Another
point to be made here is the striking similarity of concepts and terms used by the
respondents in their responses to the interview questions. More specifically, respondents
were using terms and concepts in their responses that mirrored those found in *Putting Ontario’s Leadership Framework Into Action* (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008). This booklet, beyond containing the Ontario Leadership Framework, also provides a discussion on the purposes and benefits of using the framework in one’s own leadership practice. Interestingly, these same points have been raised and highlighted in workshops and in-services put on by their district leaders and professional associations. The consistency of this makes one wonder if they have simply taken what they have heard or read as their own meaning of the Ontario Leadership Framework.

A similar observation was made by Fullan (2007) when referring to the work of Berger and Luckmann (1967) in his discussion of the objective reality of educational change. Fullan (2007) speaks of the “danger” of how objective reality of those affected by change may be more a reflection of those who are creating or producing the change and “thus simply a glorified version of their subjective conceptions” (p. 30). This is in keeping with the understanding that “reality is socially defined. But the definitions are always embodied, that is, concrete individuals and groups of individuals serve as definers of reality” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 134). Taking this one step further, there was the sense that the respondents in this study were not really encouraged or empowered to explore any further meaning of the Ontario Leadership Framework beyond the one given to them by their district leaders and their professional associations. To the principals and vice-principals of this study, this may have been more a fact of the mandatory nature of the Ontario Leadership Framework than anything else.

**Implications for Practice**

The accounts of the interviewees in this study support the literature (Berman &
McLaughlin, 1978; Fullan, 2007; Gross et al., 1971) in that there are key variables that play a part in the initiation, implementation, and probable institutionalization of change, in this case, of the Ontario Leadership Framework. The following segments discuss implications of practice for government, school districts, and principals and vice-principals.

**Government.** The primary tenets of the Ontario Leadership Framework originally were to attract high quality candidates to the positions of school and district level leadership, and also to support and sustain those already in the role. However, while the interviewees of this study identified and recognized these two elements of the Ontario Leadership Framework, there was a consistent theme of accountability that emerged from their discussions. More specifically, the interviewees in this study spoke of how the framework provided a concrete description of what they did as school leaders to both themselves and the public, and how it validated the faith dimension of their school system. Despite the government’s commitment to support and sustain the highest quality leadership possible and how the Ontario Leadership Framework will provide a consistent and effective approach of implementing these initiatives (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008, p. 5), there seems to be a disconnect between these intentions and the realities experienced by the Catholic principals and vice-principals of this study.

If those in positions of power are serious about their intentions to attract and sustain the highest quality school and system level leadership in this province, then they will have to take a more critical look at the Ontario Leadership Framework to explore what objectives are really being satisfied. While public accountability is an integral part of our society, we need to be cautious in how we address it. If the government is
concerned about the quality of school and system leadership, they would do well to balance their concern of public accountability with an understanding of the leadership needs of schools and their districts.

The decision to adopt the Ontario Leadership Framework into their leadership practices was not a choice that Catholic principals and vice-principals in this study had. They were required to implement it as directed by their district leaders and by their professional associations. This top down approach did not allow, initially, for any ownership of the framework on the part of the principals and vice-principals as witnessed by the accounts they provided. For the most part the interviewees acquiesced to the expectations and purposes of the framework with little critical reflection. This was evidenced by how they cited similar rationales and advantages of using the Ontario Leadership Framework in their leadership practices and competencies, as those outlined in ministry documents outlining the purposes of the framework.

Such similarities may not be by coincidence. With continued demands on their time and increased accountability, the interviewees may have simply taken all they have heard and read about the Ontario Leadership Framework at face value. If this is coupled with their lack of involvement in the creation, development, and decision to adopt the framework in their district, why would they challenge or critique it at all? If the government is serious and committed to the quality of school and system leadership in their province, then it is imperative that those most directly affected have a voice throughout the change process. Without this concerted effort to involve their participation, any future iteration may simply repeat the complacency that seems to be present among the majority of the interviewees. Recognizing the high level of education
and rich leadership experiences that principals and vice-principals possess, to not tap into this resource throughout the change process would be a great disservice not only to those in these leadership roles, but also to our education system in general.

Principals and vice-principals were grouped together in this study, just as they were in the Ontario Leadership Framework; however, findings in this study suggest that there are some key differences between the two that warrant further consideration. While principals and vice-principals form the administration team of the school, the role and responsibilities that they carry out differ considerably from one another. For example, when the interviewees were asked to describe what role and/or responsibility took up most of their time as a school leader, all vice-principals in this study spoke of how student discipline occupied on average 75% of their day. Hence, they saw themselves as exclusively involved with the management of student behaviour and discipline in the school. Principals on the other hand, saw themselves as mostly involved with more leadership related functions, such as in the planning and development of school improvement, culture, and public relations with the community.

Another important difference that this study revealed between principals and vice-principals is how they reacted to the Ontario Leadership Framework. Principals viewed the framework as merely validating what they did, as a checklist of the leadership practices and competencies that they try to demonstrate throughout the school year. Vice-principals on the other hand saw the framework as a standard or goal to strive for because their district required them to use it in preparation for the leadership selection process for the principalship. Hence, in order to continue to prepare themselves for this future role, vice-principals viewed the Ontario Leadership Framework as a guide and
support for their developing leadership practices and competencies, whereas principals acknowledged it as a validation of what they already do.

These differences between principals and vice-principals suggest that the combination of the two requires further reflection from those responsible in the creation and development of the Ontario Leadership Framework. More specifically, any future iteration of the Ontario Leadership Framework should take into account the differences that exist between these two school level administrators. This does not necessarily mean that there should be separate frameworks for each, but that it should reflect the different roles and responsibilities that exist between principals and vice-principals in practice.

School districts. One of the most important influences that the interviewees acknowledged in this study was that of school district leaders. Beyond supporting the change literature, superintendents of the board played an important role, according to the principals and vice-principals of this study, in facilitating the initiation and implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework in their district. Through the various workshops, in-services and professional development sessions, superintendents made it clear to the principals and vice-principals of their district that the Ontario Leadership Framework was of importance to their leadership practices and competencies.

To further support this, the superintendents of the district aligned the Ontario Leadership Framework with aspects that dealt with leadership promotions and performance appraisals. Despite all this apparent support for the Ontario Leadership Framework by district leaders, principals and vice-principals only made reference to the leadership framework as required by their immediate supervisor. For example, the guide to the Ontario Leadership Framework (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008) makes
reference to the benefits of using it as a problem solving tool for current practitioners, yet not one of the principals or vice-principals have ever used the framework outside of applying to a leadership position or to complete a performance appraisal. If school districts are committed to supporting and sustaining their school leaders, then they will need to play a greater role than simply facilitating or sponsoring professional development events. They will need to take a more vested interest in how their principals and vice-principals are making use of the framework. To not do so, would only reinforce the current practice of principals and vice-principals using the framework only when they are expected to.

If the goal of the Ontario Leadership Framework is to support and sustain quality school and system leadership, then who will monitor this to see if indeed this is happening? No one is in a better position to do this than the school district leader. It is not enough to provide professional development, or to direct principals and vice-principals when to use the framework. If school districts are serious and committed to their school leaders in regards to their professional development, and want to continue to attract future school and system leaders, then they will need to play a more active role in monitoring the impact and influence of the Ontario Leadership Framework on the leadership practices and competencies of their principals and vice-principals. Responsible for the leadership and management of their schools, district leaders are in a situation where they can interact and engage their school leaders for insight and input on how they are responding to various changes, for example, the Ontario Leadership Framework. By creating and facilitating opportunities for professional dialogue with their school leaders, district leaders would not only be in a better position to respond and to address a variety
of leadership issues, but also to demonstrate a commitment to their professional development which is one of the main purposes of the Ontario Leadership Framework (Institute for Education Leadership, 2008).

**Principals and vice-principals.** Despite principals and vice-principals in this study demonstrating awareness and an understanding of the Ontario Leadership Framework, none of the interviewees challenged why the framework was needed in the first place. As a highly educated group of professionals, none of the principals or vice-principals identified any prior issue or concern that they had with their school leadership practices or competencies to warrant the adoption of the Ontario Leadership Framework. If anything, these school administrators were more preoccupied with the challenges of their profession than with the purposes and benefits of using the Ontario Leadership Framework. More specifically, they did not see how the Ontario Leadership Framework could support or sustain their leadership practices and competencies.

While they acknowledged the support of their district and professional association in providing informative in-services and workshops on the benefits of the Ontario Leadership Framework for their leadership practices and competencies, outside of these initial professional development sessions the opportunity to question or to discuss further how the Ontario Leadership Framework will support or sustain their work as school leaders did not occur. If principals and vice-principals are concerned with the growing responsibilities of their roles as school leaders, then they will need to advocate for themselves more actively in this regard. If principals and vice-principals do not see the relevance of the Ontario Leadership Framework for their leadership practices or competencies then they need to let their supervisors know. Otherwise, the opportunity for
principals and vice-principals to have input in the changes that affect them directly may never be realized.

Findings in this study also highlighted the differences that exist between principals and vice-principals in regards to the duties and responsibilities they perform as an administrative unit. To a large extent, principals are more directly involved with the aspects of leading a school, whereas vice-principals seem to be more involved with the management of student behaviour. This does not mean that overlap does not occur between the two, but that such occurrences are few and far between. Hence, despite being grouped together as an administration team and appearing to share the administration of the school equally, principals and vice-principals carry out quite distinct functions. This is in contrast to what is portrayed by the Ontario Leadership Framework. Unlike what was found in this study, the Ontario Leadership Framework does not distinguish between principals and vice-principals in regards to their leadership practices and competencies; it in fact pairs them together as one by its title: *Leadership Framework for Catholic Principals and Vice-Principals*. While one could point out that in the title itself it acknowledges the two separate positions, it does not extend it in any way to the leadership practices and competencies that are listed and described in it. In fact, at no point within the framework is there any distinction made between the two roles.

This is a curious point since the Ontario Leadership Framework has been based on empirical research and “extensive consultation with educators.” While empirical work on vice-principals has received modest interest when compared to principals, there is evidence to suggest that there is a difference between the two administrative roles (Armstrong, 2009; Hausman et al., 2002; Wong, 2009). Within this context, it would
appear that the Ontario Leadership Framework assumes that there really is no difference between the two, as all vice-principals ultimately want to become principals at one point. Hence, the framework is applicable to both. However, Armstrong (2009) warns about such generalizations between principals and assistant principals because it can be “misleading” and lead to “confusion” as a result of “their relative status in the administrative hierarchy and the different types of power and privilege that are vested in these two roles” (p. 17). Such conceptions, as Armstrong (2009) goes on to suggest, only reinforce “hierarchical and static models of leadership” and not the reality that assistant principals face. While there is an understanding that principals and assistant principals “engage in important leadership roles and their functions and duties sometimes overlaps, their experiences are not the same” (Armstrong, 2009, p. 122). Unfortunately for aspiring school leaders, the preparation programs and models that are used to prepare them for the role of school principal or assistant principal does not provide them with the reality that they will face on a daily basis. Principals and assistant principals may be part of the same administrative unit; however, the roles they perform and the power they possess are not the same or equal (Armstrong, 2009, p. 127).

Principals and vice-principals would do well to re-examine these role differences with the support of their district leaders to determine whether or not they are supporting and sustaining their leadership practices and competencies. Such conversations would not only serve to open discussion on what has been customarily thought of as traditional roles of principals and vice-principals, but also to address more intentionally the professional development needs of both.
Leadership Frameworks and Standards in Other Jurisdictions

Ontario is not the only jurisdiction that has in place a leadership framework or set of standards that applies directly to the work of school leaders. For example, places such as Alberta (Canada), the United Kingdom, and the United States also have these as well. Despite the growing prevalence of these standards and frameworks for school leaders, there is a limited amount of investigation about how these standards or school leadership frameworks are actually being used. The next few paragraphs provides a brief discussion of findings from the few studies that have been conducted on these standards and leadership frameworks, and attempts to draw some comparisons between the findings of this study and those done elsewhere.

In 2009 the Principal Quality Practice Guideline (PQP) for school leaders was released to school districts for voluntary implementation (Johnson & Skytt, 2014, p. 41) in the province of Alberta to assist in “principal preparation and recruitment, principals’ self-reflection and daily practice, principals’ initial and ongoing professional growth and principal supervision, evaluation and practice review” (Alberta Education, 2009, p. 3). This guideline eventually was extended and became part of the Alberta School Leadership Framework. Despite a variety of searches, little research was found that investigated the impact of this framework; one study, however, from Thompson (2009), does provide findings that can be compared to this study. First, similar to my study, Thompson found how important and influential the role of the school district was in supporting principals and vice-principals use of the guideline. Thompson reported that the principals and vice-principals had a high level of confidence in meeting the demands of the PQPG largely because they felt supported by their school district through a variety
of activities that they had sponsored for them (professional development, collaborative activities, encouragement, in-services). Another similarity is how this dissertation and Thompson’s research both noted how the framework and guideline respectively provided, according to the respondents, a general description of what they did as school leaders and how it could be used as a measure to evaluate their leadership practice. However, there were also a few differences between the studies as well. Thompson did not find any notable differences between principals and vice-principals responses to the guideline. As well, respondents in Thompson’s study made more direct use of the guideline in their daily work than respondents in my study who used it only for completing performance appraisals and/or preparing for interviews for school or district leadership careers.

Another jurisdiction that has standards for its school leaders is the United Kingdom. In 1997, when the first version of the *National Standards for Headteachers* was introduced, it recognized the key role that school leaders play in “engaging in the development and delivery of government policy and in raising and maintaining levels of attainment in schools in order to meet the needs of every child” (Department of Education and Skill, 2004, p. 2). The standards provide “guidance to all school stakeholders in what should be expected from the role of the headteacher and are also used to identify threshold levels of performance for the assessment framework within the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)” (p. 5). Just a few studies have investigated the use of these standards among headteachers; of those that were found, some comparable findings were able to be made (Alton, 2006; Halliday-Bell et al., 2008; PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2007; Rodger, 2006).
The findings in these works differed in a number of ways from my study. First, the way school leaders were able to communicate about their leadership practices in relation to the standards, and the difference this was making in their schools (Alton, 2006; Rodger, 2006) was seen in a different way. In contrast to my work, none of my respondents indicated or provided any evidence of them using the framework in any aspect of their leadership practice. More specifically, they could not see how the framework could inform their practice or support them in their work as school leaders. A second way that these studies differed was in examining how much of the headteacher’s day was devoted to each of the six standards (Halliday-Bell et al., 2008; PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2007). These studies provided evidence of how the standards were able to provide a description of the work they did as school leaders, the time they usually spent on each of the standards, and how the standards provide clarity in relation to school leaders’ roles and responsibilities (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2007). In contrast to my study, principals and vice-principals did not identify with any leadership dimension when discussing their work as school leaders. More specifically, they spoke about aspects of their work that were not included in the framework, but occupied large amounts of their time (e.g., student discipline for vice-principals and school management for principals).

In the United States the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) “organizes the functions that help define strong school leadership under six standards. These standards represent the broad, high-priority themes that education must address in order to promote the success of every student” (Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 2008, p. 6). In essence, it was designed to “serve as a broad set of national
guidelines that states can use as a model for developing or updating their own standards” (CCSSO, 2008, p. 5). There has been some research done with school principals that provides comparable findings to the ones found in this thesis (Derrington & Sharratt, 2008; Lindle, Stalion, & Young, 2004; McKerrow, Crawford, and Cornell, 2006; Militello, Fusarelli, Alsbury, & Warren, 2013).

First, there were similarities in how the standards and dispositions contained in the ISLLC and those leadership practices and competencies found in the Ontario Leadership Framework were seen as an affirmation of the work they did as school leaders (McKerrow et al., 2006). While this may be in large part because of the consultation that both the ISLLC and the Ontario Leadership Framework did with current practitioners, it nonetheless was acknowledged largely as the work they did as school principals.

Similarly, there was work that also recognized the influence of years of experience on perceptions of the standards of the ISLLC (McKerrow et al., 2006). More specifically, those that began their career at the time of the ISLLC or after found various standards as more important to their practice than their more experienced counterparts (McKerrow et al., 2006). There were also studies that found that the standards did provide a common language where principals could speak about their practice with other colleagues and to discuss their performance with their supervisors (Derrington & Sharratt, 2008; Militello et al., 2013).

Hence, similar to the research findings in this study, use of the standards produced the learning of a common leadership language which brought about consistency in conversations that was used in performance appraisals and also in the hiring of new school leaders (Derrington & Sharratt, 2008). However, in contrast to the findings in this
research where school leaders did not find the Ontario Leadership Framework specifically useful in their leadership practice, work that investigated the perceptions of school leaders with the ISLLC stated otherwise (Lindle et al., 2004). Beyond being able to account for a large proportion of the various activities that principals face in the course of a day (Lindle et al., 2004), it also has been found to provide direction in “solving problems and addressing issues of building community and collaboration” (Lindle et al., 2004, p. 25) for school leaders.

While there were a number of similarities between the findings of this dissertation when compared to the studies noted above, there were also quite a few differences. What is unique about this study is how principals and vice-principals were mandated, by their school district, to use the Ontario Leadership Framework to complete their performance appraisals and in preparation for leadership interviews. This in large part affected their perception of the framework, and the findings that emerged. More specifically, they did not view the framework as a support for their current leadership practice, but more as a tool to complete these two administrative tasks. What is also unique about this dissertation is the fact that the Ontario Leadership Framework is a relatively new phenomenon, especially when compared to the UK National Standards for Headteachers and the ISLLC of the U.S. which have been in existence since the late 1990s. As such, both international examples have had the opportunity to be revised a number of times to reflect and address emerging concerns from various stakeholders in education and evolving work on educational leadership. Additionally, through the benefit of time, these standards have undergirded the preparation programmes that aspiring school leaders have taken, which to a large extent has trained them to meet these standards. Hence, the
differences noted between the findings of this dissertation and the studies cited above, may be more a result of how these standards have now become part of the “fabric” of school leadership in these places than anything else.

**Implications for Future Research**

While this study has highlighted a number of interesting insights and issues related to how administrators respond to changes or innovations that speak to their leadership practices and competencies, further research is needed to build on these findings. For example, this study examined how principals and vice-principals responded to the mandatory initiation and implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework in their school district. It would be interesting to conduct a study where administrators had a choice in the identification of the need to be addressed in their school district, decision making authority to select the change or innovation that would address this need, and influence on its implementation. This then could be compared to innovations or changes that were mandated. One then could examine both descriptively and analytically the differences that may exist between the initiation, implementation, and institutionalization of the change or innovation based on these two situations. Work in this area would provide invaluable insight to both districts and the government when developing and facilitating leadership change.

More research is also needed that goes beyond a single point in time as used in this study. Studies that are longitudinal in nature provide the benefit of being able to follow a set group of administrators as they experience and make sense of changes like the Ontario Leadership Framework in their leadership role. Such work would be invaluable as one would be able to observe changes as they occur instead of depending
on respondents to remember various events that happened in the past, and whether the purpose of the change is being achieved. More specifically, to conduct such a study that would “follow” the Ontario Leadership Framework around as those directly affected interact with it, as the work of Ahmed (2007) discusses, would explore and examine what it is exactly that the Ontario Leadership Framework does for the government, the school district, and ultimately for school leaders. This then would allow for the study to question the underlying purpose(s) of the leadership framework and to examine if there is a gap between the purpose(s) of the framework and the way in which it is being “taken up” (Ahmed, 2007)

**Limitations**

While every effort was made to produce work that is of high quality and insightful, it is also recognized that this study was limited in a number of ways. While the findings of this study represent the personal experiences and meanings of current secondary Catholic principals and vice-principals with the Ontario Leadership Framework, research was only carried out during a single period of time. Since the Ontario Leadership Framework was introduced in the fall of 2008, conducting a study that examines the experiences and meanings of these administrators during the maturity of the framework (4 years later) does limit the amount of insight and information that the interviewees could have provided if involved in a more longitudinal study.

A second important consideration is the size and generalizability of the findings in this qualitative study. Only 14 school administrators were part of the research findings produced in this study. Despite providing rich descriptions and experiences of these fourteen subjects so that “readers will be able to determine how closely their situations
match the research situation, and hence, whether findings can be transferred” (Merriam, 1998, p. 211), it is recognized that the small sample size that this study has examined in one urban school district does impede its ability to clearly apply to populations outside of this study.

Another limitation in this study was the approach that was taken in my analysis of the data. The way in which I carried out my analysis led me to focus exclusively on the similarities among my respondents and less so on the differences between them. Adopting such an approach did limit the possibility of other findings being presented in this study. For example, variations that appeared small or relevant to only a few of the respondents in my study could have been related to broader patterns of differences that would have been more prominent with a larger sample. An exploration of these differences could have revealed aspects of the respondent’s situation or context that also could have influenced their implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework.

Another point of consideration is the use of Fullan’s (2007) model of educational change as a conceptual framework in this study. Although the experiences and meanings that the interviewees provided in this study have informed the findings and conclusions of this research, my use of Fullan’s (2007) model of educational change affected the way in which I interpreted and derived meaning from the data. For example, I found that using this conceptual framework focused my attention on factors or variables that influenced my respondent’s implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework, the various roles that stakeholders played in the process, and the outcome that this policy change produced. More specifically, I found that these three elements directed my focus into trying to discover whether or not my respondent’s implementation of the Ontario
Leadership Framework led to any change in their leadership practice or beliefs. However, this interpretation could have been different if I would have utilized a framework that viewed the implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework as a process where principals and vice-principals attempt to relate it to their previous experiences or knowledge, as in sense-making (Spillane et al., 2002). The focus then would not be on factors, roles, or outcomes of the innovation, but on how those that use the Ontario Leadership Framework make sense of it in their daily practice.

**Personal Reflections**

When I first began to think about a research topic to investigate, I was overwhelmed by the limitless opportunity that lay around me. While my courses had exposed me to many interesting topics and areas of research in the field of educational leadership, it was my peers who engaged me in many intellectually stimulating conversations that allowed me to narrow down my research interests. While I was excited at the prospect of selecting an area of interest and conducting original research, I also appreciated the amount of work that would accompany me during this research process and the challenges that I would face to complete it.

I have always been fascinated in people’s stories and their lived experiences since I was a child. A large part of this comes from the personal stories that my grandparents, parents, and later on, my in-laws, would share with me. To me, they were more than just stories they were pieces of personal information that allowed me to connect more deeply with them. They gave me an understanding and appreciation of who they were and where they had come from. Such information also helped me to understand their various opinions, beliefs, and attitudes to various subjects or issues as it impacted them. In much
the same way, I wanted to understand the Ontario Leadership Framework from the subjective world of those directly affected by it.

While this was a long and arduous process, it was a fulfilling one to me because I was able to give voice to a group of people who were never asked about their opinions or experiences with the Ontario Leadership Framework. Hopefully, they have also found their participation in this study a worthwhile one.
References


Lindle, J. C., Stalion, N., & Young, L. (2004). *Content validity of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium’s (ISLLC) standards for school leaders: To what extent do ISLLC skill indicators describe school leaders’ instructional leadership work?* Paper presented at the annual convention of the University Council for Educational Administration, Kansas City, MO.


Appendix A: Question Guide for Interviews

(Opening Questions)

1. How many years have you been in the teaching profession?

2. How many years have you served in your current leadership position?

3. How many years have you been at this school in this capacity?

4. What are your specific leadership job and/or task responsibilities in your current school, and how are these assigned? Are there leadership job and/or task responsibilities that you are not involved with? Please explain.

5. Which job and/or task responsibility that you have listed takes the majority of your time? The least? Please explain.

(Focus Questions)

(OLF)

6. How would you characterize or describe effective school leadership practices and competencies? In your school?

7. What influences, if any, have affected your leadership practices and/or competencies in your school? Please explain.

8. What is your understanding of the Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic principals and vice-principals and the six dimensions that comprise it?

9. Why do you think the Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic principals and vice-principals was developed? What purpose (s) do you think it serves?


11. Are there practices and/or competencies that you demonstrate in your role as a school leader that are not covered in the Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic principals and vice-principals? Please explain?
12. Do you feel the Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic principals and vice-principals influences your leadership practices and/or competencies in your school? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?

13. Have you ever consulted or referred to the Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic principals and vice-principals when making decisions on how to lead or facilitate a particular initiative in your school, and/or to apply for a leadership position? Please explain.

14. How do you determine whether or not your leadership practices and/or competencies are effective in your school? Please explain.

15. How are your leadership practices and/or competencies affected when a particular initiative meets with success? Without success? Please explain.

16. Do you feel that school leaders will be more effective in their schools if they follow all the practices and competencies listed in the Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic principals and vice-principals? Please explain.

17. Are there any challenges or difficulties that you see with following the Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic principals and vice-principals for current practicing secondary principals and vice-principals? Please explain.

18. What, if any, changes should be made to the current Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic principals and vice-principals?

19. Is there anything you would like to add or change before we conclude our interview?
Appendix B: Telephone Script With Principal/Vice-Principal

May I please speak with (principal/vice-principal)___? Good morning/afternoon. My name is Gino Montanari; I am a doctoral student at the University of Toronto, OISE. I have just been given permission by your school district to conduct a study on the Ontario Leadership Framework as it relates to secondary principals and vice-principals. Would you be interested in participating in my study? [If yes], that is great. Can I have your email address so that I can send you the information/consent letter for your review? [record email address]. As will be outlined in the letter, I would like to arrange with you a time and date that I can come to your school to introduce myself and address any questions or concerns you may have with my study. [answer any questions] What date and time would you like me to come? [arrange date and time to attend meeting]. That’s great. Do you have any further questions for me? [answer any questions]. Thank you very much for your time and I look forward to working with you.
Information and Written Consent Form for the study: *The Ontario Leadership Framework for Catholic Principals and Vice-Principals: Purpose versus Practice*

Dear Principal/Vice-Principal:

I am currently a secondary school vice-principal in the Halton Catholic District School Board and I am enrolled in the Ph.D program in Educational Administration at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto (OISE/UT). I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements for my dissertation and in partial fulfillment of my doctorate degree. The study will be conducted under the supervision of Dr. Blair Mascall.

Please consider this opportunity to participate in a study that I am conducting about the purpose of the Ontario Leadership Framework. Since its introduction in 2008, the Ontario Leadership Framework has provided principals and vice-principals with a number of leadership practices and competencies that have been found to have a positive impact on student achievement. In addition, the Ontario Leadership Framework has set out to ensure a consistent and effective approach for developing, supporting, and sustaining the highest quality leadership possible, and claims to provide a number of benefits to those school leaders who apply it to their leadership practice. Yet, to date, there have been no published studies that have focused on the Ontario Leadership Framework.

In this study, I wish to examine what purpose the Ontario Leadership Framework serves for current practicing secondary school principals and vice-principals. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- Examine if current Catholic secondary principals and vice-principals have adopted the Ontario Leadership Framework in their leadership practice.
- Explore how Catholic secondary principals and vice-principals understand the purpose and utility of the Ontario Leadership Framework in their leadership practice.
• Investigate if there are any variations in how the Ontario Leadership Framework is being practiced in schools by Catholic principals and vice-principals.

To begin this study I would like to invite you to participate in one interview. The interview will be 45-60 minutes long and will focus on your beliefs and perceptions on the purpose of the Ontario Leadership Framework.

Participating in this study will give you an opportunity to professionally reflect on your leadership practices and competencies, and the impact it has on your work with students and staff. This in turn could also foster professional discussions between you and other school leaders on leadership issues. Also, you (if you elect to) will receive a summary of the study’s findings which can provide further opportunities of professional growth. What makes this current research significant is that it builds on a very limited amount of empirical work that is concerned with school leadership that is more closely “connected to the realities of workplace practice” (Gronn 2002b, p.441).

This research will prove particularly relevant to ministry officials, school boards and their school leaders as they work through elements of professional growth and leadership development in their schools. More specifically, this study will encourage further discussion and debate on the purpose and utility of the Ontario Leadership Framework for current and aspiring school administrators, and how it should evolve in the future. This study will also address the limited amount of leadership work that has been conducted in the secondary context.

The interviews will be guided by a list of nineteen questions which I will ask you. The interviews will be recorded with your permission and later transcribed by me. You will choose the date, time, and location on the school site or other agreed upon location to conduct the interview.

All of the information collected will be used to understand what purpose the Ontario Leadership Framework serves for current practicing Catholic secondary principals and vice-principals. I may also use the material gathered for publication or for presentations to interested groups. However, your identity and that of your school, and school district will always be kept confidential. I will be using pseudonyms for you, your school, and your school district. I will not use any information that would reveal your identity. You will have an opportunity to read your transcriptions; I will email you copies of your responses from the interview as soon as they are available. You can make changes by emailing me back within one week, or if you wish, we can meet a second time.

All interview materials, notes, and recordings will be kept in a location locked cabinet at my residence for a period of five years. Only my supervisor and I will have access to this data. After that time, they will be destroyed.

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. You may at any time refuse to answer a question or withdraw from the interview process without consequence. You may request that any information, whether in written form or recorded, be eliminated from the study. At no time will you be in risk of harm, no value judgements or evaluations will be placed on your responses.

You are free to ask any questions about the research and your involvement with it and may request a summary of the findings of the study. If you have any questions related to your rights as a participant in this study or if you have any complaints or concerns about how you have been
treated as a research participant, please contact the Office of Research Ethics,
ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273.

I can be reached at g.montanari@utoronto.ca. My supervisor, Blair Mascall, can also be reached
at blair.mascall@utoronto.ca.

Your signature below indicates your consent for you to be involved in the study.

Please keep a copy of this Written Consent Form.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and support.

I look forward to working with you soon.

Sincerely,

Gino Montanari                                        Dr. Blair Mascall
PhD Candidate, OISE/UT                                Professor, OISE/UT

I have read and understand the information and the conditions. I agree to participate in this study
and understand that I may withdraw at any time.

Please initial if you would like a summary of the findings of the study upon completion:____

Please initial if you agree to have your interview audio taped:____

Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

________________________________________  ______________________
Signature of Principal/Vice-Principal                Date

________________________________________  ______________________
Signature of Interviewer                            Date
Appendix D: Initial Categories of Data by Interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewe</th>
<th>Structure/Organization*</th>
<th>Standard/Measurement*</th>
<th>Thorough/Not Thorough*</th>
<th>Common Language*</th>
<th>Goals*</th>
<th>Time*</th>
<th>Discipline Issues*</th>
<th>Aspiration/Discern if ready for leadership*</th>
<th>Too Broad*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5, 7-8, 12-13, 20, 22</td>
<td>7-9, 11, 20, 22</td>
<td>9-10, 21</td>
<td>8-9, 12, 21</td>
<td>9, 11</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>3, 13</td>
<td>7, 12, 23-24</td>
<td>9, 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5-6, 8, 12</td>
<td>7-8, 14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8-9</td>
<td>7, 12-13</td>
<td>1, 3</td>
<td>5-6, 15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>13, 15, 24</td>
<td>13, 15-16, 19, 20, 24</td>
<td>24, 27-28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4-5-7, 16, 29</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>16, 24, 27, 29-30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4-5, 7</td>
<td>4, 6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5, 8, 12</td>
<td>2, 12-13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4-5, 8, 13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6, 12</td>
<td>6-7, 12, 17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6, 8, 10-12, 12-13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6, 11, 12, 19</td>
<td>6, 8-9, 18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>4-5, 8, 12, 14</td>
<td>5, 12, 14</td>
<td>6, 8-9</td>
<td>3, 5, 8, 10</td>
<td>2, 15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>5, 9</td>
<td>6-7, 9, 14</td>
<td>8, 14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7, 13</td>
<td>2-4, 7-8, 13</td>
<td>2, 7</td>
<td>6-7, 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>4, 12, 14</td>
<td>3-4, 8</td>
<td>3, 6, 10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7, 12, 14</td>
<td>2, 6, 11, 14</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4, 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5, 7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2, 3, 4, 7-9</td>
<td>6, 8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>4, 6-8</td>
<td>5-6, 10, 14</td>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4-5, 8</td>
<td>4-5, 8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4-5, 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5-7, 14-15</td>
<td>6-7, 14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2, 7-8</td>
<td>4, 13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4, 6-8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>6, 8</td>
<td>7, 11</td>
<td>3, 7-8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4-5, 10-12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5, 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>10, 12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>2, 10-11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6, 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Transcript page references used for initial category construction.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewe</th>
<th>Reflection*</th>
<th>Context (Catholic, Accountability)*</th>
<th>Relationships*</th>
<th>Understand own practice*</th>
<th>Can do it all*</th>
<th>Overwhelming*</th>
<th>Support for what you are doing*</th>
<th>Feedback – communication*</th>
<th>Change leadership*</th>
<th>Benefiting students/staff*</th>
<th>VP/Principal difference*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8, 10, 20</td>
<td>6, 12, 17</td>
<td>5, 12, 20</td>
<td>8-9, 20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>13, 14, 18</td>
<td>15, 17-19</td>
<td>5, 17-19</td>
<td>3, 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5-10, 12</td>
<td>4, 12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5, 12, 15</td>
<td>12, 14</td>
<td>6-7, 10</td>
<td>1, 5, 9-10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6, 13-14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>16, 20</td>
<td>2, 6, 8, 10-12</td>
<td>7, 21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13, 29</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19, 21</td>
<td>8-10, 22-23</td>
<td>7-9, 12, 22</td>
<td>2, 7, 29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3-4, 6, 8, 11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3, 9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6, 11, 13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8-9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3, 7</td>
<td>1-2, 7, 12-13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3, 6, 14-15, 17</td>
<td>6-7, 18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10, 15</td>
<td>4, 6, 13-14, 16-17</td>
<td>14, 17</td>
<td>4, 13</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4, 6, 11-12, 15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4-5, 7, 9, 13</td>
<td>4, 13</td>
<td>4-6, 8</td>
<td>4-6, 8-9</td>
<td>4-7, 11</td>
<td>3, 10</td>
<td>1, 3, 11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6, 13</td>
<td>4, 13</td>
<td>3-4, 6-7, 10</td>
<td>5, 9, 13</td>
<td>5-7, 9, 12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4-5, 10, 12</td>
<td>11-12</td>
<td>8-9, 10</td>
<td>2-5, 12-14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>4, 7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7, 14</td>
<td>4, 13</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>3, 9</td>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>2, 8</td>
<td>1, 6, 11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3-6, 8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1, 3</td>
<td>1-3, 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>5, 9</td>
<td>6, 10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4-5, 7, 10, 15</td>
<td>4-5, 11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1, 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>4, 6, 8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4, 8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3, 5-6</td>
<td>3, 7</td>
<td>1-2, 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>6, 13-14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5, 8, 14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3, 9, 12</td>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1-2, 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2, 7-8, 10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>8-9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5, 11</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>5, 9-11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3, 8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5-6, 8, 12</td>
<td>8-9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Transcript page references used for initial category construction.
Appendix E: Example of Response Summary for Interview Questions by Interviewee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee 4</th>
<th>120718_002 July 18 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 1</td>
<td>13 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 2</td>
<td>1.3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 4</td>
<td>Duties as assigned. Principal assigns you tasks and responsibilities. Follow his direction; I deal with attendance and behaviour. Serve on various committees both at school and board level. I am in charge of the literacy committee. Principal does numeracy (pp. 1-2).*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 5</td>
<td>Discipline in terms of attendance and behavior. However, administrative task committees and teacher professional development take the least of my time, but I wish I could do more here. Don’t have much time for proactive aspects that affect student performance and teacher professional development, struggle to find balance. The day to day discipline takes most of my time (p. 2).*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 6</td>
<td>Being responsible to the needs of the students and teachers. You need to be proactive. Leadership needs to be reflective; always looking at what is going on and where there needs to be improvement. What can we do better? Having a vision that one can refer to and articulating it. There should be an emphasis on student achievement, use of data, to help make decisions. Can’t rely on gut feelings. You need to be empowering of others to take on leadership. The way you treat people (p. 3).*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 7</td>
<td>Different models of leadership, was able to see how situations were resolved both good and bad from present and previous administrators. The OLF is a good model for what we should be aspiring to as leaders; it helps to describe the task. I have also found that what I read and the course work has been really important. As a good administrator you should be looking at the literature (p. 4).*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 8</td>
<td>It is like a gold standard, it was like a checklist, a self-reflection tool. It identified many facets of the job. It is fairly extensive. It outlined my areas of strengths and areas where I need to work on. It helped me put my information into the framework pp. 4-5).*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 9</td>
<td>It is an attempt to quantify the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that a school leader has to have. It was an accountability piece, it is hard to see what a principal does and justify why they are paid so much money, so this acts as a way to justify the position by describing it. It sets a high bar for what we are supposed to be doing as school leaders. Useful in trying to choose who are going to be effective school leaders. Good to be used as a base for interview questions for Principal and vice-principal. Annual growth plans can come out of this, once they get through the interview, they are continually developing. They are lifelong learners (p. 5).*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Response page location in transcript.
| Question 10 | There is so much here, that it is unwieldy. There is no way I could sit down and go through this all in a timely manner. I struggle with this. So many descriptors of what an effective leader is impossible to demonstrate all of those. It could be tweaked or adjusted to allow people to make it more user-friendly so it can become more of a day to day, reflection (p. 6).*
| Question 11 | No. The descriptors are very broad (p. 6).*
| Question 12 | A bar is set here of what the principal does. There is not one model or type of person that is a principal. There are many ways to deal with problems, conflict… I don’t think any person could possibly fit all of these. These are things (OLF) that we aspire to do, the way we should be living our lives. But I don’t think missing one of these aspects of the olf is a negative. I do things in the school because I know that it is good for kids, but do I do this because it is in the framework, no (p. 7).*
| Question 13 | I know of other colleagues who have used it as part of their interview process for VP and Principals. It was part of their interviews, so you needed to know about this in order to speak about your weaknesses and strengths. I think I will start to use the part of accountability more. As I balance the discipline part of my job, and get more to the curriculum part, I will reflect on the framework more because there are areas I need to grow in. If you want to move ahead, you will need to. So much good material here (OLF) for self-reflection that it would be foolish not to reflect on this. I have use it for making decisions but not for starting initiatives, I may do this in the future (p. 8).*
| Question 14 | I rely on my principal and SO for input. I also had exit interviews with dept. heads who helped me understand how they felt about administration, whether administrators were being supportive. Important to have good communication. Also had anecdotal evidence from teachers and parents (did parent surveys). Use as much data whether numerical or anecdotal to try informing oneself. Honest feedback. It is also about relationship building (comfortable environment), about empowering people and providing follow-up feedback (pp. 8-9).*
| Question 15 | Successes should be shared and celebrated within a school. Celebrating those that took a big part in that. Those failures, leadership needs to take responsibility for that and state that things can be better. If there are successes I probably do not change my leadership in any real way, if there are failures, I take full responsibility. I reflect on it, changes and adjustments are made, get as much information as possible from the school, from outside other schools, things that will hopefully will meet with more success (pp. 9-11).*

* Response page location in transcript.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Interviewee 4</strong></th>
<th><strong>120718_002 July 18 2012</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question 16</strong></td>
<td>It is difficult for a person to say that they embody all of those different descriptions. The quantity, every person brings a specific skill set; the difficult becomes in the time and effort required to be competent in those areas that need improvement, when you do this other areas may slide a little bit. If a principal is trying to do all these things they will struggle, that’s why you have leadership teams to help with this. One person cannot ever achieve all these things (pp. 11-12).*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question 17</strong></td>
<td>I will use the framework next year when I am doing my annual growth plan; It would be helpful to look at the end of the school year. The difficulty lies in trying to find the time in the school year to use this effectively. Where in the school year can I find the time to go through and look at this and to be able, to use it effectively? (pp. 12-13).*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question 18</strong></td>
<td>It should be pared down. So many descriptors, it is overwhelming and something that might just turn a person off. So big. It should be part of a conversation that principals and vice principals have with their SOs. It should be more user friendly. It needs to become more a part of our practice, more part of the discussions that we have with our peers and supervisors (p. 13).*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question 19</strong></td>
<td>It justifies what a principal does. This is important to us internally, this is what we aspire to do within our schools. There will probably be other refinements made, this is the first iteration, I do see the value in it (p.13).*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Response page location in transcript.