

LEADING LEARNERS; LEARNERS LEADING

by

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in

LEADERSHIP AND TRAINING

We accept this thesis as conforming

to the required standard

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ABSTRACT

This study explored student perspectives, understandings, and conceptions of leadership education and leadership development within a co-educational, residential, and day independent school. The research findings show that student insights could become catalysts for constructive change to further enhance the leadership capacity of youth. The learning community may move beyond a traditional curricular focus to a more integrated and circumcurricular view of leadership learning. Data emerged through two separate and researcher-directed leadership conversations with six students that were recorded and transcribed. Although the study focused on opportunities for constructive organizational change within one learning community, it also considered the obstacles to change within the school. A review of scholarly and professional literature on youth leadership and educational learning communities was conducted. The research was conducted within the parameters of Royal Roads University's research ethics policy and within the framework defined by the policies and practices of the school.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have helped to shape my personal leadership learning and continue to inspire me to explore how leadership education and leadership development of young people might be considered and advanced. Special thanks to those who have shared a river or a lake with me.

Friends, colleagues, students, and campers from the Lakefield and Onondaga years helped to confirm the value, importance, and joy of learning beyond a formal curriculum.

Current and former students and colleagues of Trinity College School have been crucial to this exercise, and it is energizing as we strive to build and maintain a learning community that values and validates disparate forms of learning. A healthy blend of the curricular and co-curricular can co-mingle at TCS.

Dr. Greg Hodges has been an engaging and thoughtful sponsor, and I look forward to our continued work together as we attempt to gain traction from action research. Blessed with an eye for the telling detail and a vision for patterns and themes, I first heard the word *circumcurricular* from Greg. I still think he invented it.

Dr. Jim Force possesses an uncommon capacity to provide insightful and incisive commentary. I am honoured to have been able to spend these past several months with him as my supervisor.

It is late, again, as I write this, and Kathy, Owen, and Graeme are asleep once more. Your love, patience, and understanding both inspire and sustain me. Many thanks, and all my love.

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CHAPTER ONE – FOCUS AND FRAMING

As a member of the Senior Leadership Group of a leading Canadian co-educational, residential, and day independent school, I have a profound interest in and a privileged position from which to affect student and adult learning within this community. The models and lessons that emerge from this learning community may provide insights and learning opportunities for people looking in as well as for those who are immersed in this particular learning community.

Rather than simply pursuing and acquiring subject-specific knowledge, students arguably learn most and best outside the realm of active classroom environments. Young people spend far more time outside of the classroom setting, and the hidden or even explicit *noncurricular curriculum* of leadership education and leadership development of young people takes hold in time that is not formally prescribed as academic time. We are not pursuing extracurricular learning, or the even more encouraging co-curricular learning; rather, the overarching vision is to see whether there is benefit in considering *circumcurricular* learning. Circumcurricular learning encircles and perhaps engulfs the subject-specific curriculum. The layer within which curricular learning is wrapped may be the leadership education and leadership development of young people.

How might a leading school be enhanced as a learning community if the school's central organizing principle became the pursuit of leadership education and leadership development of young people within the prescribed learning community? Furthermore, how do students in the school view leadership education and leadership development within the school? What are their conceptions of leadership and the role of leaders? How may young people develop their personal leadership capacity outside of the traditional

classroom? Ultimately, though perhaps beyond the scope of this paper, but a natural extension of this process of action research, it would be edifying to consider what faculty within the learning community could do—and learn themselves—to encourage and enhance the leadership development of young people.

The Opportunity

It is of more importance to offer leadership to leaders than to lead those keen to follow.

Trinity College School (TCS) is a co-educational, residential, and day independent school of 600 students who range from Grade 5 to university entrance, located in Port Hope, Ontario. TCS, established in 1865, has long been recognized as one of Canada's leading independent schools. From its inception, the school has been well served by entrusting the emergence of the intellectual and moral growth and development of young people to certain central guiding principles.

Independent schools in Canada have traditionally placed primacy on the academic gains that students make in subject-specific classrooms. The value of learning outside of the classroom has variously been dismissed or diminished, or, grudgingly and with an eye towards marketing rather than any fundamental shift in belief, thinking, or institutional organization, gained equal footing—at least in advertising materials. Consequently, the *stuff* of life outside the classroom has moved from being relatively unconsidered to being potentially important *extracurricular* and even *co-curricular*. Regardless, it is still defined relative to and, in practice, less than the central organizing principle—the academic curriculum.

Effectively, the character and nature of educational/learning communities is constructed through the manner, content, style, and frequency of relationships that emerge through conversations. Lambert (1998) acknowledged the importance and validity of ways of knowing:

Whenever a new concept enters our professional lives, no set of explanations can satisfy all of our curiosities or answer all of our questions. Because we will each come to the idea with different experiences, assumptions, and perceptions, understandings will vary. (p. 91)

The intent is to explore a *way of knowing* other than the traditional curricular-centric view of learning.

As we move on to action research, it is worth noting that, according to Stringer (1999), “its primary purpose is as a practical tool for solving problems experienced by people in their professional, community or private lives” (p. 11).

The opportunity exists to modify the manner in which we view the filter—or organizing principle—through which we perceive student learning and development. Good things can emerge from rigorous curricula, and an exploration of the existing literature has helped to reveal whether they best emerge in addition to rather than prior to the growth and development of each student’s personal leadership capacity.

Reviewing current practices of student leadership development could enhance current practices within schools. Effectively conducting a student leadership audit could provide insight into what is already being done well and suggest paths towards improving the leadership development of adolescents within a prescribed leaning community.

Pursuit of this opportunity enabled me to stretch beyond the typical daily obligations that are part of my professional responsibilities and explore the potential for the creation of

conditions through which organizational change and improved leadership development may arise. Having engaged faculty and students in the inquiry process and increasing the awareness of leadership issues within my learning community will enable me to advance further action and future organizational change following the completion of the project.

Significance of the Opportunity

A learning community such as a school described above is a multilayered and highly textured organization that can find cohesion and collective culture through a deeply held common sense of purpose that may arise from a common vision, and the lens through which the view is filtered affects the clarity of vision.

I wear glasses; I visit an oculist, though not as often as I should. Occasionally, a new lens provides improved, crisper sight. It is interesting that I appreciate my improved perception only in hindsight—in comparison to what I now see and understand to have been less than perfect sight—and insight. Likewise, a school's vision can be enhanced by looking through an improved lens.

The central organizing principle of education for many established independent schools in Canada has long been filtered through a curricular lens. The pursuit of student learning, which includes the acquisition, retention, and application of knowledge and information and is verified quantitatively through evaluation, has enabled traditional, discrete domains of knowledge to shape and direct all facets of teaching, both within and beyond the classroom.

I believed that an inquiry into modifying the central organization principle of the school could revise and enhance the nature of the learning community, provided that the modification proves to be constructive. There remains room for assessment and

evaluation in education, and the method and processes employed in the development of student leadership capacity are the fodder for this feedback. How well can we principally be guided by this organizing principle?

Effective learning communities continually strive to improve and evolve. Failure to pursue this opportunity would have equated to a failure to uphold a collective commitment to the relentless pursuit of betterment. Exploration of this inquiry offered no guarantee that the conclusions would help to strengthen the learning community, or even that the conclusions that emerged from the process would be well received and implemented. In the short term, failure to explore this inquiry would have caused no discernible ripple—TCS is in no imminent danger of imploding; however, as a leading educational community, TCS would do well to consider ways of reinventing itself that are consistent with both its history and its vision.

Systems Analysis of the Opportunity

Internally and externally, heightened awareness of the nature and importance of leadership styles is important, especially because in this project I sought to encourage both *the insiders* (teachers, students, and administrators) and other stakeholders to gain a deeper appreciation of both the centrality and the systemic interconnections within *leadership*. Consequently, consideration of disparate forms and theories of leadership continue to assist in the emergence of a systems-based leadership framework, particularly as it relates to the proposed opportunity. “Leadership is learnable” (Goleman, 2002, p. 88), and leaders can learn to move smoothly within a range of styles as the circumstance requires. Awareness of the conceptions of the inherent flexibility of leadership can help to advance the school.

According to Peal and Wilson (2001), throughout this process it was useful to bear in mind that

activity systems are, in fact, in constant flux, always subject to change, in part by helping an activity system to achieve its purpose in new ways, in part by revising participants’ understanding of the activities in which they are engaged. (p. 1)

Some specific external systems that could have impacted this opportunity are presented in Figure 1.

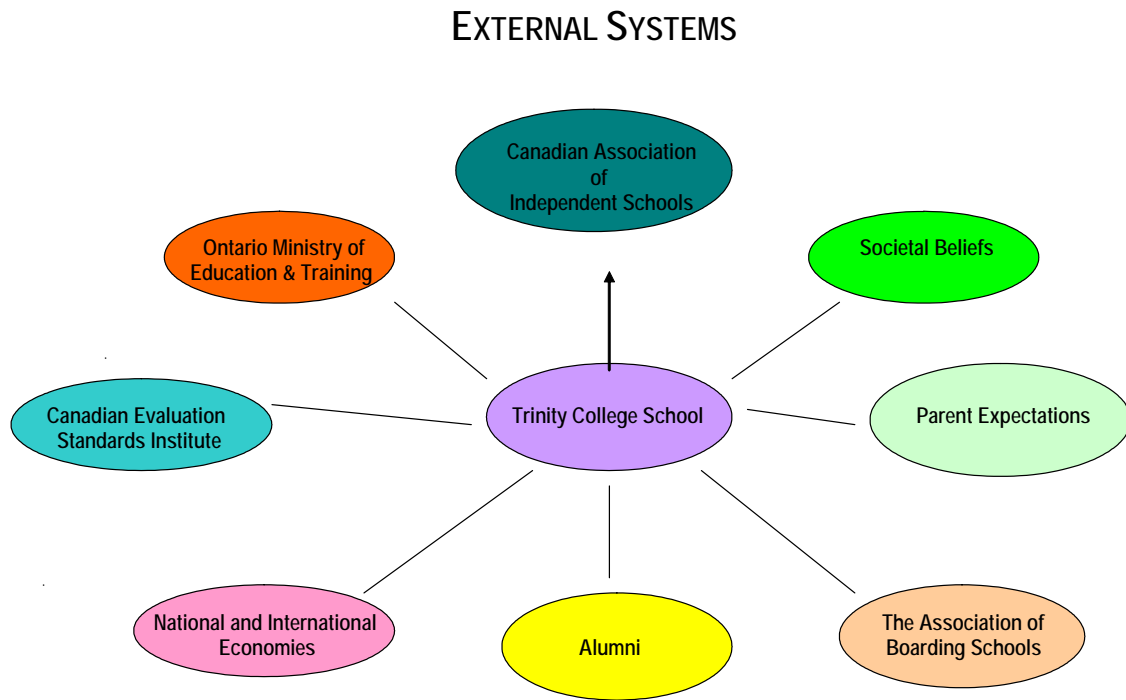


Figure 1. External systems of TCS.

The Canadian Association of Independent Schools, the provincial regulatory ministry, the Canadian Educational Standards Institute, and the Association of Boarding Schools are examples of external organizations that provide benchmarks of organizational standards and behaviours. These benchmarks, in turn, help establish what

pass for *industry norms*. These institutionalized standards affect TCS with respect to both policy and practice.

Key internal attitudes are influenced by the values, attitudes, and beliefs of key external stakeholders. Collectively, these stakeholders help to establish and maintain what is understood to be *reasonable behaviour* and *prudent care* of young people within TCS. These systems include societal beliefs, parent expectations, the state of national and international economies, and the *state of mind* of alumni.

Organizational Context

Beginning with an overview of some key relationships within the organization will assist the reader in better understanding some of the particular organizational context.

The development of each individual's personal leadership potential emerges as people's experience intersects with each of the discrete areas or zones depicted in Figure 2. The interrelationships among what are presented as discrete domains ultimately mean that each individual's experience of leadership development is distinct or personalized and emerges out of his or her particular experience. A conceptual framework exists, and there is tremendous freedom and flexibility within this framework.

Additionally, the management or senior leadership structure of TCS may be seen as a series of interconnections, as shown in Figure 3.

TCS exists under articles of incorporation that the Government of Upper Canada passed in 1864 for implementation in 1865, two years before Confederation. Founded by an Anglican Priest, Father Johnson, who sought to provide a classical education to his

INTERNAL SYSTEMS

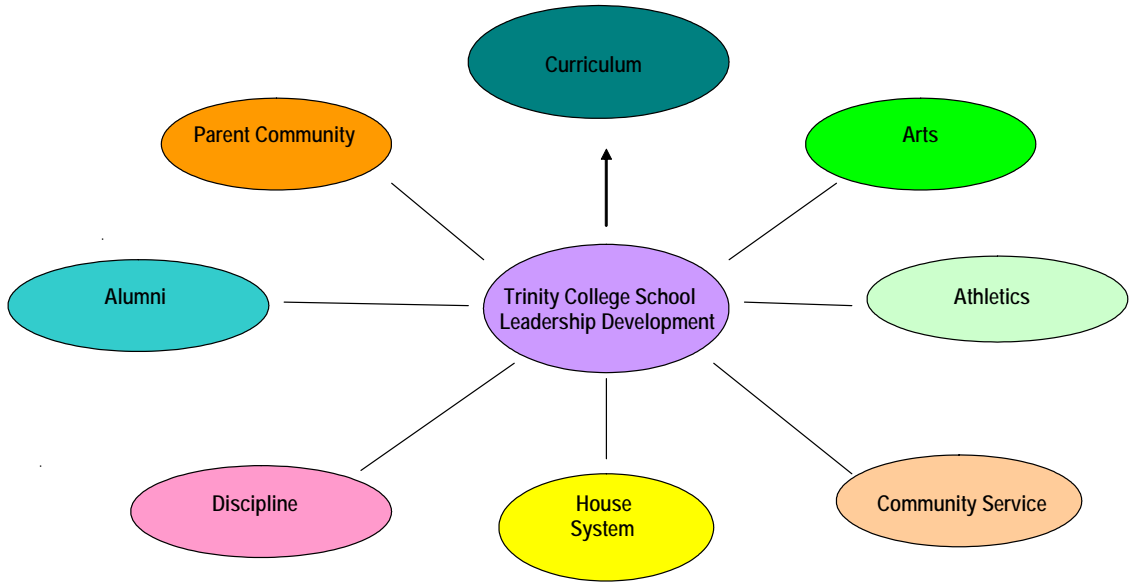
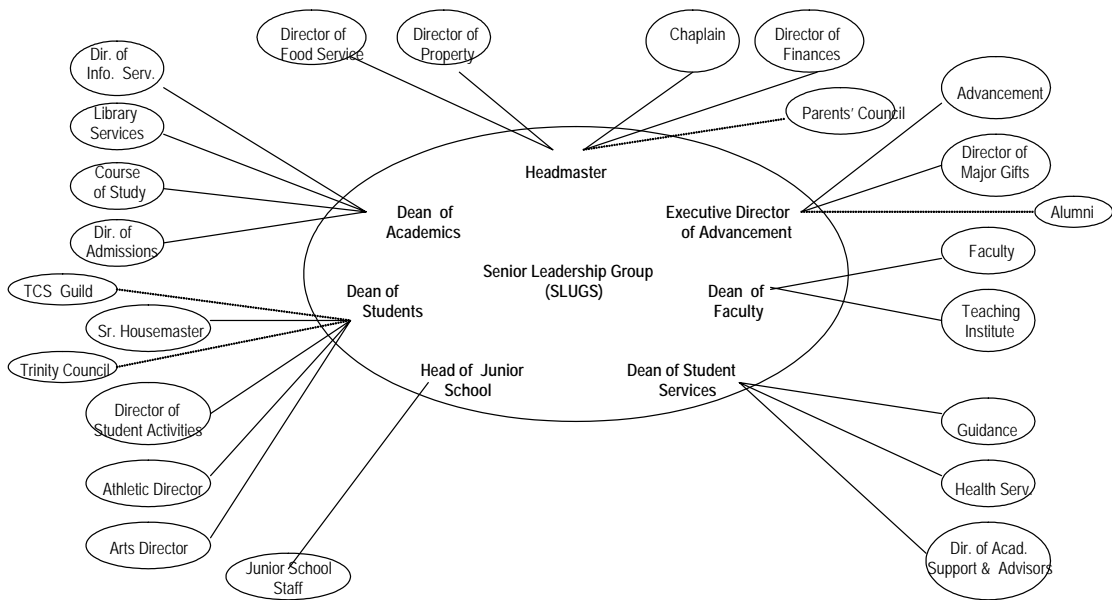


Figure 2. Internal systems of TCS.



TRINITY COLLEGE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION CHART

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Figure 3. TCS organization chart.

three sons and two of their chums prior to their eventual application for admission to Trinity College (University of Toronto), the school grew in scope and achievement over the intervening years.

From its inception, TCS has encouraged scholarly excellence and broad engagement in meaningful co-curricular pursuits. One of Fr. Johnson's earliest students shared his enthusiasm for romping through and observing the natural world in addition to pursuing the requisite study and mastery of classical languages as part of the prerequisite for entry into university. William Osler, later knighted as Sir William Osler and roundly acknowledged as the preeminent physician of his time and of the world, expanded upon his early inspirations and knowledge to provide global leadership within his realm of expertise.

For over 120 years TCS was predominantly a residential school for up to 180 boys. More recent years have seen the implementation of co-education and the augmentation of the day-school population, and the current school is comprised of 300 day students from Grades 5 to 12, and up to 300 residential students from Grades 9 to 12. The student population of day students (who walk to, are bussed to, or commute to the school) and residential students (international, national but out-of-province, and those from Ontario, but from varying distances from the school) results in—or perhaps allows for—healthy tensions among disparate stakeholders.

TCS's mission is to prepare promising young people for success in university and beyond. Although at first consideration parents and other stakeholders might assume that this route passes either exclusively or predominantly through the toll booth of academic achievement, the structure of the administration may affect the learning of both the

students and the significant adults in their lives, so that the tariffs are limited. Globally, TCS is comprised of two distinct structures, each of which is a coherent and complex system. The operations of the school are organized and overseen by the administrative structure outlined in Figure 4. The board, in turn, is responsible for establishing and reviewing/revising policies and ensuring that the operational side of the school is administered according to the policies. This arm’s-length organization is responsible for the hiring and evaluation of the headmaster, and the position of headmaster acts as the nexus between the two distinct systems. The governing body is represented in Figure 5.

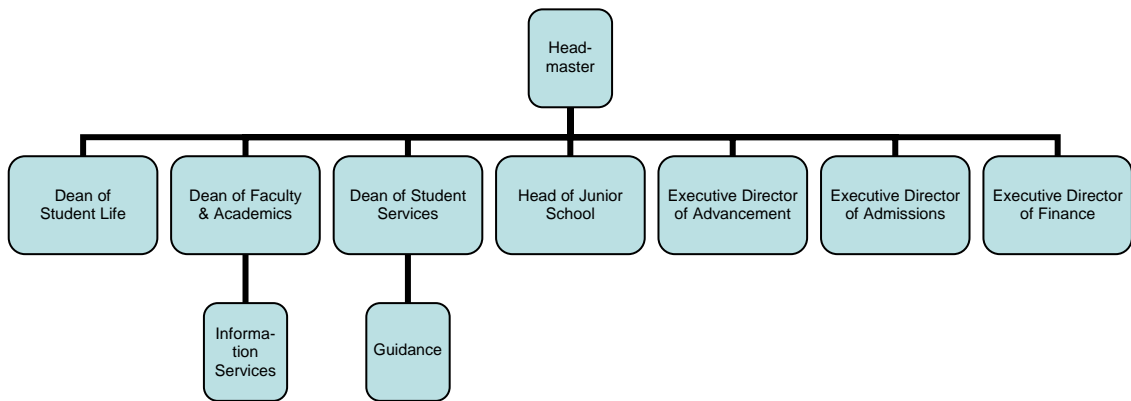


Figure 4. Administrative structure of TCS.

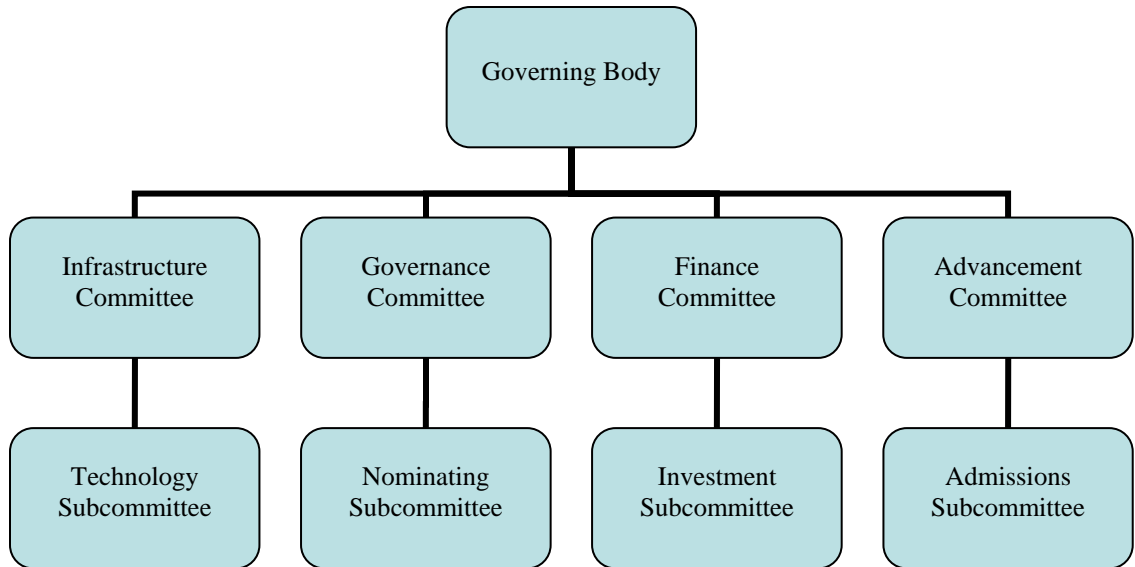


Figure 5. Governing body of TCS.

Potential Project Sponsor

This major project focused on the operational realm of the institution, though awareness of issues and points of possible intersection between the two realms was also important. Ultimately, should this project effect change within the operations of the school, then, at minimum, there will need to be a process in place to ensure that appropriate information is shared with the governing body at appropriate times.

Dr. Greg Hodges expressed a willingness to serve as a potential project sponsor for this major project. As a graduate of TCS, and having received his undergraduate degree from St. John's University and his doctorate from Ohio State University, Dr. Hodges has a deep understanding of educational issues. As a colleague at TCS, he has a keen and current appreciation of the potential pitfalls and benefits of *backyard research*. As one who in graduate studies researched and reflected on ancient Greek and Roman poetry in their original forms while playing a rugged right wing on the university

hockey team, Dr. Hodges brings a unique perspective to what constitutes learning within the academy.

In addition to teaching classics and coaching at TCS, Dr. Hodges is also the director of the Trinity Institute—a summer symposium where teachers, parents, and others from across Canada are encouraged to reinvigorate their area of professional expertise either through revisiting and refreshing their prior areas of study or through exploring new and occasionally unrelated areas of study.

Dr. Hodges is a colleague who ultimately reports to the Senior Leadership Group, of which I am a member, and I was aware of potential ethical concerns that might have impinged at the point at which our current professional relationship intersects with our proposed academic relationship. Potential concerns have not come to fruition because we have maintained clear, appropriate, and professional communication throughout this process.

Within the learning community of TCS, Dr. Hodges was uniquely positioned to provide informed, engaged, and incisive commentary and feedback on ways to enhance the current strengths of TCS as a learning community, particularly student learning viewed through the frame of the development of individual student leadership.

Dr. Hodges has broad and deep connections beyond the campus in Port Hope, Ontario, and I believed that his encouragement and support would help to expand the scope and application of this inquiry even after this initial action research was completed.

CHAPTER TWO – REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

To best understand youth leadership development and leadership education at TCS, it is helpful to explore pertinent literature on leadership to provide a framework for the particular experience at one school. To this end, the literature review is divided into three general areas: (a) Leadership Styles, Relationships, and Change, in which I discuss emergent ideas on leadership; (b) Character and Crisis Converge, which is an overview of two tragedies that befell schools that were pursuing programmes in youth leadership development and education; and Conditions for Sustained Youth Leadership, in which I explore my understanding that creating conditions for sustained student leadership learning and success is an appropriate role for effective schools.

Leadership Styles, Relationships, and Change

Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002) identified six predominant leadership styles and suggested that a wise leader, especially one with a high level of emotional intelligence, can make prudent choices among them. Four of the styles (visionary, coaching, affiliative, and democratic) can foster resonance, whereas the other two (pacesetting and commanding) may be necessary but, if poorly or too frequently employed, are more likely to create disharmony (p. 55). Goleman explained, “Each of the styles impacts the team climate, the emotions of the people who work with that leader” (p. 3).

If the leadership development of youth involves a variety of prescriptive lenses, those who seek to shine the light through a lens need to understand the potentially confounding effects of refraction.

Harris (2005) presented a systems-based approach to understanding and advancing a learning community. She concluded that better schools exist within a framework of better leadership and that the conception of leadership requires alternatives to the heroic or command-and-control styles of leadership.

Distributed forms of leadership—leadership from within the learning community that is sensitive to the dynamic and interdependent make-up of the community—best enables transformative growth of a community (Harris, 2005):

Leaders acting in this mode try to use power with or through other people, rather than exercising control over them. . . . Transformational leaders not only manage structure but they purposefully impact upon the culture in order to change it.
(p. 79)

By way of summary, Harris cited Sergiovanni's definition of leadership as *a moral art* rather than *a technical science*. Interpersonal acuity therefore outweighs objective, dispassionate inquiry. Within a learning community are a number of intertwined and interdependent relationships that are well understood through a systems-based view of the entity.

Conceptions of leadership—both beyond and within the school—intersect with internal operations as distinct leadership styles are manifested within the learning community. The invocation of styles in turn affects decision making, which in turn affects the system. Glanz (1998) asserted that “leaders’ effectiveness is ultimately entwined with the overall efficacy of the school organization” (pp. 14-15).

A systemic view of TCS is congruent with the ideas underlying Zeiderman's (2005) touchstones model, in which disaffected or disengaged youth are pulled (back) into a learning community. Within this system, curriculum, conversation, and activity

outside the classroom “interpenetrate” (p. 1); and, as a result, the process helps the system to “overcome the patterns of dominance and passivity that characterize many academic environments” (p. 2).

Activity theory presents a systems view of a learning community. Peal and Wilson (2001) explained that activity theory strives less to appreciate the learning of an individual who is embedded in the context of his or her community than to understand the social context of the community “to account . . . for the effectiveness of everyday learning environments” (p. 1).

An activity system consists of a group, of any size, pursuing a specific goal in a purposeful way. . . . Activity systems are, in fact, in constant flux, always subject to change, in part by helping an activity system to achieve its purpose in new ways, in part by revising participants’ understanding of the activities in which they are engaged. (p. 2)

Having touchstones, understanding baselines, and appreciating systems provide a clear basis from which organizational change can advance.

Considering a realignment or revisioning of the dominant social paradigm, which Capra (1997) described as “a constellation of concepts, values, perceptions, and practices shared by a community, which forms a particular vision of reality that is the basis of the way the community organizes itself” (p. 4), will assist in effective organizational change.

Leaders can bring leverage to bear by intelligently intervening in a system, and this sort of intervention is required for fundamental change to occur. A timely, well-placed nudge can be amplified exponentially. Meadows (1997) asserted that “paradigms are the sources of systems. . . . People who manage to intervene in systems at the level of paradigm hit a leverage point that totally transforms systems” (p. 12).

We will need to revisit leadership within the context of TCS and to reflect on our own inclinations and tendencies as we head into making advancements within our community. Anderson and Ackerman (2001) suggested, “Like it or not, most of the significant changes in organizations today require leaders to attend to culture, behaviour and mindset, including their own” (p. 30).

Capra (1997) reported that the findings of a study conducted by the Institute for Research on Learning in Palo Alto, CA, on organizational change show that “the most powerful organizational learning and collective knowledge sharing grows through informal relationships and personal networks—via working conversations in communities of practice” (p. 6).

Capra (1997) contended that communities consist of two distinct and necessary structures: designed, formal structures and emergent, informal ones. The more formal structures typically require deliberate and sustained effort to make alterations come to life, whereas emergent structures consist of a system of interaction that allows alliance, friendships, and structures to arise “from an informal network of relationships that continually grows, changes, and adapts to new situations” (p. 8). Thus, emergent systems “are expressions of the organization’s collective creativity” (p. 8). A mechanistic approach to leadership may be successful in designed structures, but within the emergent realm—which is, in fact, the bulk of our life’s work—we must be apt readers of currents and adroit with our paddles.

Constructive organizational change emerges within learning communities that are essentially healthy environments. According to Capra (1997):

You will facilitate emergence by creating a learning culture, by encouraging continual questioning and rewarding innovation. In other words, leadership means creating conditions, rather than giving directions . . . [and fostering] a climate of warmth, mutual support, and trust; but also a climate of passion with plenty of opportunities for celebration and the freedom to make mistakes. (p. 9)

Even a preliminary review of the literature suggests that effective organizational change emerges through an interplay of leadership styles and relationships and that, as Bellman (1990) cautioned, any institutional recalibration must keep as a goal “reaching further understanding of what is happening in an organization” (p. 68). The leadership style that best helps to maximize value during a period of transition or change means “keeping your mouth shut while they learn . . . [and] helping them learn rather than doing their work. It requires patience, humility and self-confidence” (p. 87).

An emerging conception of leadership suggests that it is time to replace a reductionist world view with its concomitant pinpoint focus with an expansionist, contextualized world view that considers global landscape over a microscopic sense of place. Changing world views will affect conceptions of youth leadership development and leadership education.

When Character and Crisis Converge

Insight emerges in hindsight, and youth leadership development and programmes of leadership education may become most acutely public and scrutinized in the wake of tragedy. Striving to build character by enabling young people to learn about themselves through interactions with others, about their place in the world through relationships with entities outside their own skin, and about their responsibilities to others are deliberate goals and outcomes of some leadership development and leadership education programmes.

Schools, including independent schools, that promote high achievement for their students and whose parents expect good value for money or talk in terms of their expected return on investment for their expenditures can engender cultures rife with both explicit and implicit pressures to perform at the highest levels. Like Strathcona-Tweedsmuir School, TCS

has a significant organizational culture and much of this culture revolves around performance, achievement and quality. . . . It is easy to understand how this organizational culture could influence . . . risk tolerance decisions of . . . staff in their striving to provide high quality programs. (Cloutier, 2003, p. 19)

The pursuit of excellence and the desire to be among the elite result in pressure to perform, and restraints need to be properly in place and observed to keep the safety and well-being of youth paramount. Students grow and mature and may, from time to time, learn about leadership. To develop as people, though, they need to survive.

The interplay of risk, leadership development, character education, and experiential learning comes into focus when it is viewed through two school tragedies. On June 11, 1978, a school group from St. John's School encountered a tragedy on their first day of a three-week canoe trip when 13 of 31 participants perished on Lake Timiskaming. On February 1, 2003, seven students from Strathcona-Tweedsmuir School died in an avalanche during a school outdoor-education trip. Even a cursory review of these tragedies shows that, in both instances, the students were engaged in forms of leadership development and leadership education. Youth leadership needs to develop within an environment of reasonable and acceptable risk and informed consent of the participants and their parents.

James Raffan's (2002) examination of the Timiskaming disaster considered the role of schools when they have an unswerving desire to build the character of the students in their charge. The intent of St. John's is to pursue character development through exposure to challenge that enables students to overcome risk. Risk is omnipresent, and "risk, meaning uncertainty, is part of life, especially in the rite of passage from youth to adulthood" (p. 2). Students of all ages are necessarily exposed to risk, and should the manner and amount of risk become unreasonably heightened, then danger may emerge.

Toughing out adversity is part of the foundation of St. John's School. Risk interplays with character in this view and becomes a necessary catalyst for growth and development:

Character is an aspect of human striving that turns volition—the will to do good—into good acts. Adventure, which has through the ages been credited with building character, can tune the adventurer's inner compass. . . . From adversity comes strength: in the early years of the nineteenth century, philosopher William James was among those who took this notion to heart. He railed against "soft pedagogics," and searched to replace educational permissiveness with what he called "the moral equivalent of war" for building human potential. Educators have long sought to inculcate character in their students. In my experience, teachers or parents can demonstrate how to behave properly, or even force a child to exhibit good behaviour, but they cannot force that child to have character. (Raffan, 2002, p. 3)

After reviewing the events leading to the disaster—the tragedy on the lake—and the consequent outcry and concern, more than 20 years after the accident Raffan (2002) interviewed the survivors and the families of those who died on the lake. The respondents had ample time to reflect on the approach of the school and the experiences of the young people before and during the canoe trip. The father of one of the boys who died, airline pilot Captain Norm Bindon, observed that "risk for risk's sake is a wasted exercise. . . .

Challenge builds character, and the obligation of the people [who] are running it . . . is to manage and reduce the risk while still not diminishing the challenge” (p. 225). The mother of a survivor lamented that the parents were not as rigorous in holding the school accountable as they could and should have been:

In my opinion, the responsibility for that particular accident lies solely on the people who organized it. Having gone through a tragic accident with a bunch of students and staff, my final word would be that we trusted the school too much. We didn't question enough. We trusted them. Everything isn't God's will.
(p. 224)

In the case of St. John's School, the pursuit of youth character development and a desire to enable young people to grow as leaders through physical hardship and challenge contributed to a massive loss of life. Although poor preparation, ill-modified canoes, unpredictable winds, and waves all conspired against the group, the prime mover behind the trip, the reason to be on the water in the first place, was the desire to build character through duress and challenge in a wilderness expedition. In hindsight, tragic events can appear like a row of dominoes on end and in line. When the first falls, the last one will, unless there is intervention.

Twenty-five years later, very different circumstances led to a similarly stark tragedy. Outdoor education at Strathcona-Tweedsmuir School remains a central component of both curricular and co-curricular life, even after the deaths of seven students in an avalanche during a school-organized field trip in the Connaught Creek region of Rogers Pass, British Columbia. Following the tragic events of February 1, 2003, Ross Cloutier of Bhudak Consultants Ltd. was brought in to review the school's outdoor education programme, and he submitted his report to a Special Committee to the Board of Governors. Cloutier (2003) concluded that the outdoor education programme of

the school was a well-intentioned and deliberate attempt to facilitate student growth and leadership development.

The official courses, submitted and approved by Alberta Learning, included such intended outcomes as providing “challenging experiences where students can develop self-responsibility and leadership skills” (Cloutier, 2003, p. 11); “enhancing the development of personal qualities such as co-operation, trust, helpfulness and sensitivity to others” (p. 13); and “developing leadership skills” (p. 13).

A link between outdoor programming and youth leadership and personal development is seen in the statement of philosophy that the Outdoor Education curriculum designers at Strathcona-Tweedsmuir School submitted to Alberta Learning, which states, “Outdoor education utilizes progressively more challenging experiences to enhance the individual’s personal growth in the areas of . . . knowledge and understanding, social skills, and appreciation and values” (p. 12). In essence, students would develop personally as the adventure programming became more demanding. Increased demands did not necessitate heightened risk, though, ultimately, the programme did expose students to catastrophic risk. Risks can be managed and kept in the subjective rather than the objective domain; increasing student independence and responsibility for decision making can make a simple hike increasingly demanding. There is nothing compelling educators to increase demands by putting young people in harm’s way.

Any inclination to stretch students’ leadership skills and enhance their self-awareness must be tempered by the recognition of a school’s high level of duty of care, which has at its roots an educator’s version of the Hippocratic Oath: Do no harm. In

considering what is in a child's best interest, one needs to query the appropriateness of exposure to potential catastrophic risk. "Generally speaking, neither society nor parents would support this. However, if a school does decide to programme 'higher risk' activities, it must be recognized that this is out of the norm and that parents must give informed consent" (Cloutier, 2003, p. 36). "The real question in this event, however, is whether or not schools should be programming activities with catastrophic risk potential, and if they choose to, what level of care and parental awareness and permission should be provided" (p. 53).

The Timiskaming and Rogers Pass tragedies are cautionary and disconcerting. Although leadership development and leadership education for youth are necessary and fundamental to the secure future of TCS, perspective must be maintained. Providing challenges for youth can foster growth and stretch opportunities for them, but adolescents must obviously survive the experience to experience growth. Subjective risk—the feeling that they might die if they "mess up" in front of their peer group while participating in a leadership development activity—is a legitimate form of stress for youth, but it is different in kind and order from the objective risk of succumbing to hypothermia in a lake or being buried by an avalanche.

Spiralling costs, educational changes, and heightened competition in the marketplace of schools mean that independent schools, particularly those that are predominantly residential, will need to respond effectively and imaginatively to survive and thrive. Providing challenge in an environment fraught with subjective risk while minimizing objective risk will enable TCS to allow its students to develop and flourish.

Conditions for Sustained Youth Leadership

David MacFarlane (2006) wrote in the *Globe and Mail* about the role that great cities play in establishing and confirming civilization by making excellence possible. Cities may be seen as extended learning communities where the exchange of knowledge and understanding may move from expert “to someone who doesn’t know as much, or is nowhere near as good but who is either interested enough to learn or curious enough to become interested” (p. R7). Cities make learning possible and may “stretch us, challenge us, broaden us” (p. R7), and through the confusion, “something truly extraordinary can sometimes arise” (p. R7). In short:

The one responsibility a city has is the encouragement of the possibility of excellence. The extent to which it addresses this duty is how, in comparison to the great cities of the world, it will be judged. . . . It is not necessarily the city’s responsibility to achieve these goals, or to pay for them, but it is its job to make room for their possibility, and to celebrate when, against so many odds, that possibility becomes reality. (p. R7)

The same may be said about schools: The creation of conditions that allow excellence to emerge and flourish is the foundation of healthy learning communities for youth. I wrote to MacFarlane (2006), an alumni of TCS, and asked:

I wonder whether you thought it might be fair game for me to suggest . . . that [your] language is consistent both with the fundamental nature of a school such as TCS and also with a healthy model of youth leadership development. That is, by creating conditions within which young people may flourish, great schools allow youth leadership to emerge, which in turn allows for the possibility of, well, greatness. If TCS is viewed as a learning community, as a microcosm of a healthy city or the larger world writ small, do you think your language could apply not just to your current city but to your former School? (I. Watt, personal communication, June 26, 2006)

David responded:

I think you're absolutely right. It seems to me that there is a strong analogy to be made. In the same way that a city throws all kinds of things at its inhabitants, so does a school. And I think that's very true of TCS. Surely opening doors, and, once they're open, encouraging the possibility of excellence is what education is. Feel free to use my words as you see fit. (D. MacFarlane, personal communication, June 26, 2006)

It is considered a general truism that North American independent schools generally, and schools with significant residential populations in particular, are in the midst of uncertain times. Schools such as TCS need to reinvent themselves for the good of both their students and long-term institutional sustainability. Educational consultant James Wickenden (2006) wrote, "The theory of the business that served boarding schools well for so many years—their role as the premier launching pad to the most selective colleges and to leadership positions in American society—is long since obsolete" (p. 1). Wickenden argued that schools have fragmented as they have moved reactively in response to management's perceptions of market needs and demands, with insufficient attention to core institutional values. Fragmentation emerges from discordant and insular student populations, which results in insufficient thought given to "the hard work of creating community out of diversity" (p. 3), overreaching curricular offerings, and a lack of willingness to stand firm on institutional values that may not currently be in vogue societally.

Wickenden (2006) predicted the opportunity for success in schools that "forge a social contract . . . in which positive peer pressure reinforces responsibility for self, others and shared resources" (p. 6). By creating a co-operative and caring international community of students and faculty, students will emerge imbued with insights into character and citizenship; they will possess the capacity for leadership: "Boarding

schools that enthusiastically accept the challenge of training students to be active participants and leaders in a civil society can play a vital role in shaping society” (p. 8).

Indeed, leadership development and leadership education of youth may become the touchstone for both curricular and co-curricular programming. According to Professor Jeffrey Gandz (2002) of the Ivey Business School at the University of Western Ontario, “In an increasingly competitive and boundaryless world, leadership may be the only sustainable competitive advantage. That is why leadership should never be left to chance” (p. 10).

Gandz (2002) distinguished between the need for leadership training, which Wickenden (2006) advocated, and the benefits of leadership development. Gandz associated training with the predictability of stimulus-response mechanisms and spoke of behaviourism as a strong example of training: “I am not against training. People need knowledge and skills required to do their jobs. But what does this have to do with leadership?” (p. 8). Predictable and reliable responses are helpful in times of stasis, but in times of flux a leader requires nimbleness and a capacity to see patterns and find routes through what may otherwise appear as unintelligible whitewater:

Organizations need leaders to be able to assess situations that are frequently complex and seldom identical to past situations. Leaders must recognize patterns without assuming that a situation is identical to one they have encountered before. They must be able to use analogies to make inferences, and figure out what to do when they encounter new situations. In short, they must use and develop their judgment to the point where it becomes wisdom. (p. 8)

Michael Fullan (2002) argued that although the model of the principal as the instructional leader of the school had its utility, ongoing and systemic educational improvements will require principals to possess the capacity to provide leadership within

a culture and context of change, and “we must address the even deeper matter of ‘leadership and sustainability’” (p. 1). Sustainable change requires a generosity of vision, an inclusive world view that looks broadly and is not reductionist, “because *sustained* improvement of schools is not possible unless the whole system is moving forward. This commitment to the social environment is precisely what the best principals have” (p. 4). Furthermore, “The concept of sustainability was originally applied to concerns about the depletion of resources in the physical environment. Our concern is the depletion of resources in the social and moral environment” (p. 10). Leadership, and youth leadership education and development especially, may be seen as a renewable resource that can help sustain and maintain schools in the future.

CHAPTER THREE – CONDUCT OF RESEARCH

Research Approach

In my research project I strove to gain an understanding of students' perceptions of and appreciation for the manner and importance of adolescent leadership development within their learning community. In our particular case, the learning community is an independent, co-educational, residential and day school of 500 students in the senior school.

To ensure an inclusive and consultative inquiry, I chose to engage in action research and invited self-selected students to share their stories of emerging leadership (Appendix A). This research approach is both participatory and interpretive and required that I actively be engaged in the project and with other people within my learning community. My determination to engage in action research affected the process through which I collected, collated, analysed, and responded to information and the findings. This approach "seeks to engage subjects as equal and full participants in the research process" (Stringer, 1999, p. 11).

Stringer (1999) and Glesne (1999) advised action researchers to enable meaning to emerge through a cyclical process of data collection (often qualitative, but also quantitative or a mix of the two forms), analysis, validation, and action. Through repetitions of this research process I hoped to facilitate positive changes in my organization. In turn, I hope that the project gains will spin off into further actions beyond the scope of my thesis that engender future elliptical gains. The initial work of my thesis serves as a foundation for future exploration and action.

Qualitative research delves into the interpersonal and is by its nature subjective and situational. Whereas traditional quantitative research aspires to an objective and dispassionate worldview, the messiness of other ways of knowing requires engagement. Just as there is no dance without a dancer, so there is no human observation without human involvement. Wheatley (1994) believed that the findings of modern physics lead to a deeper understanding of the subjective underpinnings of the natural world. Researchers have concluded that “no form of measurement is neutral. Physicists call this awareness *contextualism*, a sensitivity to the interdependency between how things appear and the environment which causes them to appear” (p. 63). We understand the world and share experiences through the exchange of stories. Metaphors help to shape our world view, and we filter and interpret our experiences to gain knowledge and understanding. According to Capra (2002), “Knowledge creation is an individual process; its amplification and expansion are social processes that take place between individuals” (p. 115).

Conceptions of student leadership development emerge contextually through students’ interpretations of their personal experience.

Project Participants

The project participants comprised me as the project lead, a colleague who served as a recorder and transcriber, and six self-selected students who expressed interest in revealing their experiences and thoughts about adolescent leadership development at their school and who, with their parents, completed the required documentation.

The group of six students consisted of one male student and five female students who ranged in age from 15 to 18 and were in Grades 10 through 12. These students had

been enrolled at the school for one to four years, and collectively they have had significant experience in the arts, athletics, and community service; and five of them have been especially heavily involved in team sports. All have participated in instrumental music to some degree. Some held formal positions of student leadership. One student was a day student, and the others were residential students. The group included local, national, and international representation, and although I know each of the students and have interacted with each of them over the course of their time at the school, I have neither taught nor coached any of them.

As a group, the demographics represented were broad, though not completely representative of the entire school population. I did not include students in Grade 9 in the group because I was interested in involving students with more than one partial year of high school education and experience.

Leadership in a school community may emerge beyond the academic classroom. The participating students discussed their experiences in disparate areas of school life, including chapel, community service, competitive athletics, the performing arts, recreational athletics, student houses, and weekend programming. The findings from the students' stories are being shared with colleagues who have supervisory responsibility for these areas. This group meets regularly and will look at how we can become even more explicit in student leadership education and leadership development within our areas of responsibility. Glesne (1999) advocated the creation of such a team: "Practitioners who couple basic research theories and techniques with an action-oriented mode can develop collaborative, reflective data-collecting and analysis teams for their own practices and thereby contribute to the sociopolitical context in which they dwell" (p. 14).

Prior to the creation of the interview group, I invited students via e-mail, posters, and chapel announcements to participate on a voluntary basis. In advance of their participation, I invited them to reflect upon their personal stories and observations of leadership experiences and leadership development at the school, and I asked them to consider how other students demonstrate student leadership at different grade levels. Although upwards of 30 students expressed interest in joining the discussion group, the ultimate number of student participants was six.

Research Method

The stories people tell have a way of taking care of them. If stories come to you, care for them. And learn to give them away when they are needed. Sometimes a person needs a story more than food to stay alive. (Lopez, 1990, p. 48)

The data-gathering process that best suited this project is a form of narrative inquiry. Storytelling is interpretive, reflective, and subjective, and it enables individuals to give voice to their experiences. According to Bruner (1986) making sense of the world through stories is “the most natural and the earliest way in which we organize our experience and our knowledge” (p. 121). Listening to the voices of students may lead to the emergence of certain themes or patterns and additionally may enable a prescient voice to emerge with a fresh, provocative, or informative view.

Narrative inquiry demands that we acknowledge our essential storytelling nature as humans: “Listen, I’ve got something important to tell you”: “We know or discover ourselves, and reveal ourselves to others, by the stories we tell” (Lieblich, Tuval-Masciach, & Zilber, 1998, p. 7). As novelists know, “The truth about stories is that that’s all we are” (King, 2003, p. 153).

Connelly and Clandinin (as cited in Newman, 2000) asserted that narrative inquiry

allows us to explore our personal histories in an effort to understand how who we are impacts on what we value and what we do. The ‘evidence’ consists of narrative accounts of significant moments in our past which helps us understand our values and provides insight into current decision-making. There may be elements of documentary evidence, but on the whole the evidence consists of the narrative reconstruction of incidents which we believe to be important for understanding who we are. (p. 1)

In my own application of narrative inquiry within my action research project, I met with six students to record their narrative descriptions of their experiences and observations. We met in a comfortable sitting-room within the school, and I presented general topics and questions that I had prepared. As the free-flowing discussion emerged, the students tended to riff off the thinking and words of the other participants. The discussion ultimately led to open-ended dialogue within which the ideas of the students took form.

I met with the students as a group in the Guild Room, a comfortable space removed from my formal office. A recorder who took shorthand notes joined us, and we also employed two digital voice recorders and a hand-held digital video camera. Sandwiches and refreshments were available for the participants, and although we convened as a group for a little over two hours, our leadership conversation lasted approximately 90 minutes.

I encouraged the students to speak freely, and as the conversation and discussion developed, their comments covered a range of leadership-related topics. I came prepared to direct the discussion with questions—and did indeed lead with many of the following questions—but the prepared framework worked best when I relinquished the planned

order of questioning and allowed the discussion to flow. In advance of the meeting, I wrote out the following questions:

1. How have you experienced leadership, and what have you learned about leadership while at TCS?
2. How could students better express leadership in our school at all grade levels?
3. How would you define and/or describe effective student leadership?
4. What does it mean to be a student leader, to demonstrate leadership?
5. What and how have you learned about leadership while at TCS?
6. How have you seen or experienced student leadership within TCS?
7. Have you grown as a student leader in your time at TCS?
8. How could students at TCS express leadership at all grade levels?
9. How may young people develop their personal leadership capacity outside of the traditional classroom?
10. How may young people's improved personal leadership capacity affect curricular performance?
11. What might faculty within the learning community do and learn themselves to encourage and enhance the leadership development of young people?

After meeting in a small-group session, I invited the students to share additional thoughts in writing via e-mail. Two students provided further reflections regarding their experiences and conceptions of leadership.

I collected, recorded, and collated information, and the data became the raw material for sense making. Preliminary meaning making and analysis led to emerging patterns and themes.

Ultimately, it was my responsibility to analyse the data and firm up patterns of response. This process of meaning making and theming results in data that are crucial to establishing the findings and conclusions, and I validated the data in follow-up meetings with the participants. After the meeting concluded, I worked with my colleague to transcribe the interview video and tapes and created a draft Word document that I then tightened up by removing various verbal tics and stammers so that it would read better as a document. Each of the participants then met with me and reviewed the document to determine whether the transcribed notes held true to their recollection and experience of the meeting. In each case, the student signed off and asserted that the notes were an accurate representation of the discussion. This occurred prior to the end of the high school year.

Over the summer months I converted the general comments into a metanarrative that captures a collective sense of the key elements of youth leadership education and development at TCS as the students who participated in this project perceived them. Following this analysis, I reviewed my findings and conclusions with the participating students, who offered recommendations for future consideration and possible implementation.

Student suggestions and my own emerging thoughts served as fodder for both informal and more deliberate discussions and meetings with interested colleagues. Collegial feedback helped inform the Recommendations section, which in turn further

strengthened the potential for future success of this organizational intervention. The breadth and depth of student and collegial support for enhancements to student leadership education and leadership development increases the likelihood that action may arise from this example of action research. We can look to move from the inquiry of action research to the traction of a desire for implementation of appropriate recommendations.

Ethical Issues

This study unfolded within the ethical principles and policies outlined in Royal Roads University's (2004) *Research Ethics Policy* and the university's *Policy on Integrity and Misconduct in Research and Scholarship* (Royal Roads University, 2000). I sought approval for the project from the university's Research Ethics Board to ensure that the study would satisfy eight fundamental ethical criteria: respect for human dignity, respect for free and informed consent, respect for vulnerable persons, respect for privacy and confidentiality, respect for justice and inclusiveness, balancing harms and benefits, minimizing harms, maximizing benefit (Royal Roads University, 2004).

Perspective is important, and acknowledging that the participants were partners in rather than objective subjects of this study helped to ensure that I respected the aforementioned criteria and standards. The policies aligned with Palys's (2003) assertion that key principles "guide the way we interact with research participants and the commitment to safeguard their rights and interests" (p. 80).

This study invoked disparate methodologies, including small-group narrative conversations and the submission of written experiences on youth leadership development, and I gathered my data through these methodologies. This form of action research requires appropriate informed consent from the participants and, if individuals

have not yet reached the age of majority in Ontario, from their parent or legal guardian as well (Appendix B). Palys (2003) explained that informed consent requires that participants in action research projects knowingly and freely assent to engaging in the study (p. 88).

The participants in this study were students who ranged in age from 15 to 18. I informed them in writing at the outset that their participation was optional and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any stage of the process without penalty. This ensured that I respected the “humanistic obligation” (Palys, 2003, p. 81) of researchers.

The context of my personal and professional relationships and position as a senior administrator within the school community raised the prospect of researcher and project bias when I created space for a new role as an action researcher within the same community. Allowing the self-selection of participants rather than purely random sampling meant that my participants presented natural biases, and their desire to participate could have been driven by an attempt to please or curry favour. Additionally, the participants’ own tendencies might have resulted in their arriving on the scene favourably inclined towards the project topic, though I did not observe this.

My own professional interest and past practice in this research area made me open to bias. I have considerable prior professional investment in the development of youth leadership within this school, which could have tainted my attempts at neutrality. I have a distinct point of view or perspective, and I was an interested observer and participant. However, as Palys (2003) asserted, “Most researchers do not . . . engage in research on matters that they think are trivial” (p. 103). Additionally, Buchmann (1992) contended, “Although perspectives can be broad in mental grasp and sympathies, they

cannot be neutral. A *specified* position, however, is not the same as a *decided* view, a settled or unquestionable perspective” (p. 1). I consciously tempered my engagement with a commitment to abide by or surpass the requisite ethical standards and thereby ensured that I respected the participants’ right to confidentiality and their capacity to withdraw from the project at any time.

CHAPTER FOUR – RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Data Analysis

As I described in my discussion on narrative inquiry, once I collected the data, I spent several days reading over the transcripts and making notes on emerging patterns of thought and observation as well as attempting to identify distinct and legitimate themes. This proved to be a reflective, creative, and nonlinear process as I became highly attuned to the data through careful and thorough review. Having spent time mapping, I established that there were indeed patterns and themes that could be presented.

The analysis ultimately led to the creation of a monologue of a composite student who is reflecting on her time at TCS and what she has learned about youth leadership education and leadership development through both her own experiences and her observations and understanding of the experiences of her peers at the school. This section is then followed with a series of conclusions which emerge from the comments attributed to specific participants.

Students' comments from the leadership conversation suggest that, individually and collectively, their intuition, perceptions, and understanding of student leadership education and leadership development are sophisticated and reflective of emerging leadership theory. Student experiences at TCS may serve as an anchor for renewed leadership programming at TCS.

Six students participated in the process. Without exception, each student enjoyed considerable academic success and was meaningfully engaged in the co-curricular life of the school. Each chose an alias that they used when our leadership discussion started.

Tinkerbelle was a third-year student at the school who lived in residence. A Grade 11 student, Tinkerbelle lived in the United States and had a brother who also attended the school. Active in team sports and music, she is especially involved in community service. Tinkerbelle returned to school this year having had some experience in a hurricane zone; this student's sense of responsibility to others in need was acute.

Cindy X was a first-year residential student from mainland China who was the first member of the X family to attend this school. Cindy was a Grade 10 student who was active in athletics, music, community service, and debating. She spent much of this year observing cultural customs and interpersonal norms and was eager to make sense of how student leadership plays out within the school culture.

Meredeth Gray was the third generation of the Gray family to attend the school. Meredith was from the Caribbean, had attended the school for four years as a residential student, and held a position of student leadership. Meredith was involved in athletics, community service, and music.

Rugby attended the school for one year, was a Grade 11 residential student from Ontario, and was the first member of the Rugby family to attend the school. She was involved in athletics and community service and was enrolled in a formal leadership course this year.

Laura Blah had attended the school for four years, was graduating this year, and has a brother who was also a graduate. A residential student from Ontario, Laura was very involved in music, athletics, and community service. Laura also held a position of responsibility within the student body.

Keanu was a day student from south-central Ontario, and this was Keanu's third year at the school. Involved in athletics and community service, Keanu is the first member of the Reeves family to attend the school.

Study Findings

Silva is a composite construct of the participants. Silva does not exist as an actual student, but she represents the thoughts, comments, and insights of the participants in our shared inquiry into leadership education and leadership development of students at TCS.

Silva is conceived as a third-year (Y3) student in the senior school of TCS. Initially a day student in Grade 9, Silva has been living in residence for Grades 10 and 11 since her parents moved from southern Ontario to Saudi Arabia. As physicians, her parents have relocated for at least two more years. Silva is an only child, and her father is a former graduate of TCS. She will graduate after her Grade 12 year in residence and is considering universities in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Silva, like 99% of her classmates, will enrol in an undergraduate university programme within two years of graduating from high school. Whereas most of her cohort will move directly into a university programme in the year following graduation, some will take a year off for alternative study, work, or travel.

As a scholar, Silva maintains an academic average above 85%. She has had a broad exposure to a liberal arts education, having completed courses in both the performing and visual arts; she has three credits in a second language; and she has taken a mix of courses that will enable her to apply to a range of university programmes, though she is considering engineering. Silva is meaningfully involved in the co-curricular life of the school; she is active in a variety of community service offerings (having

accumulated more than 250 hours in community service since Grade 9), is involved in team sports two terms of the school year, had a part in the fall play, and is part of a vocal jazz quintet. Respected by her peers, she carries considerable moral suasion within her House though she currently has no formal position of responsibility.

Her thoughts on leadership are as follows, and I constructed or revised my leading questions after the fact to highlight important patterns or themes and to connect Silva's ideas within her responses. As a composite construct or conflation of the actual participants' words, Silva's words represent those of the participating students.

I: What is leadership?

S: Leadership is about responsibility—taking initiative to do something when others won't so hopefully they will get the idea and follow you. [It's about] leading people towards a certain direction and helping them to improve themselves or to get their potential. You do it by example—not in their face; it's more them following you.

Leading by example is very important. It's more about where you are directing the group. You can't be too aggressive, or people won't want to follow you. They don't want to be bossed around, [so as a leader you need to] find balance between being too aggressive and too passive; otherwise nothing will get done because either you're not initiating it, or it won't get done because of how you're treating people.

If you are too assertive or aggressive, then people won't want to follow. If someone's higher than you are and you're trying to push to be a leader and trying to strive to be that almighty person who gets recognized, then people won't see you as a leader; they'll see you as cocky or something. They'll also have a hard time following you. You'll get less accomplished, too.

[Of course, this] doesn't always apply. It depends on the setting. In our school you can't say "Do this!" to another student, [because] someone won't do it. When it's your peers, you have to be more cautious because of feelings, more subtle; you can't be really aggressive. [You need to be] almost like a sheep dog; you have to lead by being supportive, but being willing to be nipping at their back.

I: What does this suggest about the position of leadership? Should the leader be in the spotlight?

S: There's a neat quote from one of the leadership conferences: You can't learn how to lead until you know how to follow. You need to know who you are leading first. The leader as hero still applies, but there are different layers to being a leader, and that is just one. You can lead but not be recognized for what you have done, but if you lead by example, people later on may say, "She was a leader, . . . is a leader. . . ." But maybe it just doesn't stand out right away.

I: Can you be a leader and be invisible at the same time?

S: [Yes and no. Yes,] because in a social group where half your friends are going to do something outrageous and you know it's not right, but you are the invisible one and do not follow, then you are leading by example by not doing what is wrong.

[However,] to be a leader you have to have people following you, so you can't be invisible because people have to notice you. You can be quiet, [even] unsung, like [Student K], who may be the best student leader at school. He does so much in a quiet way, but he is not invisible. To be a leader you have to lead, and to lead someone you can't be invisible, but you don't need to be in the spotlight. People need to be able to follow you. They need to know who you are and what you're doing.

Some of the best leaders are those who aren't in the spotlight. [They are the ones who know it's] important to take input from people you are leading and apply it to situations. [It's important to try to create conditions to] set up the situation to be improved.

I: How important is morality to authentic leadership? How does one earn the authority or legitimacy to lead?

S: If a leader has strength and faith in what he does, maybe this shows through his leadership. In all circumstances of leadership, the leader has to be interested in what they're doing or leading, or else they wouldn't be a good leader. There is a moral component to leadership, [and people can gain moral authority over time]. Student Y is one of the best leaders at the school because he came to the school in Grade 10 and basically did nothing, [but] in Grade 11 he became involved with the environmental action group because he loves the environment, and he became more of a quiet leader, and now he is in a leadership position at the school that allows him to be a leader in what he wants. People listen to him because he has the respect of the student body, but it took him a year or two to gain that respect. It's cool.

I: Does every student at this school have the potential to be a leader?

S: [Everyone at TCS can be a leader] if they want to be, because you provide so many opportunities for students, and it's the students' choice to embrace these opportunities and do what they want with them. If you take advantage of opportunities, you take the initiative of being a leader, but if you sit back and say, "Whatever; I'll get to it later," then you're kind of brushing it off.

You don't need to be book smart, but you need to be intelligent to be a leader. You need to know about the things you are talking about and the things you want to lead in order to be successful. Intelligence is a big thing, [and] everyone is intelligent in something, and so whatever they are intelligent in or passionate about is what they could lead in. Everyone at the school has the potential to lead something; . . . everyone has the potential to be a good leader in so many different circumstances.

It takes a certain personality type, too, . . . because some people have the personality of being a follower. [Not everyone has the desire or need to lead.] To be a leader you have to want to have yourself heard. Some people don't want that; they want to be a follower. [As a leader,] you want to be heard and you want to get things accomplished, whether it's by being heard or doing.

I: Is leadership a steady state? Must you always lead, or can you step up or stand down – lead and then sometimes follow?

S: [The best leaders] can be a leader one day and a follower the next. You have to take a step back and let someone else take a step forward and let them lead you, as well. I see that here all the time. Even in [the adult] Heads of School, the Headmaster might be the leader at one point, and then you are the leader, and then in other circumstances you step back. . . . It happens throughout the school, like with Prefects and even with sports. There might be a captain, but they let others on the team take their stab at leadership. You have to know your place. You have to know when it's your time/job to be a leader and know when you have to listen to other people.

I: How important are ambition and leadership titles?

S: [The ultimate student title is Prefect, but] especially at our school with Prefect selection, people don't vote for somebody who goes out and tries their best to get the position. [They're more likely to vote for] people who don't want it or who don't show that they want it too much. Now, sometimes that could be a mistake, because someone who wants it the most can do the best job because they're so passionate about it. But basically, I don't agree with people who try to get leadership positions because leadership doesn't have to be from a position. You don't need a position to necessarily be a leader. You don't need to be considered a Prefect or Head of House to be considered a leader. You can always just lead on

your own; you still have followers and still do the right thing. You don't need to be considered the top of the school in leadership in order to lead.

I: You mentioned that a leader needs to be intelligent and that there are different types of intelligence. Where have you learned about leadership?

S: In the classroom setting, especially in my leadership class, it's mainly book work, so you can learn about leadership but you can't really apply it. In the classroom, sometimes you can negotiate with the teacher and communicate with classmates, and that's a form of leadership; maybe if there's a group project, a video. Within our group we've all taken the chance to lead, but beyond that, not really. Inside classrooms we can learn leadership, but it's not the curriculum that is being taught that's important. If leadership comes from the classroom it's probably because the teacher is a really good leader. It motivates you more. When I had Mr. B as a teacher, he was so passionate about his subject that it made me want to do the math, and from that I learned leadership. The way to get people to be interested in what you're doing is to be interested in it yourself.

We're so lucky here at Trinity, in talking about different types of leadership. Some leadership positions depend on how you act in class and stuff like that (like being a Music Steward). . . . For certain leadership positions, the classroom is important, but what you learn outside of the classroom is more important. There are so many different opportunities here for leadership that aren't involved in the classroom that it's fair to say we learn more about leadership outside the classroom. Outside the classroom is the real world where things actually happen. In the classroom, you have scenarios and things like "What if?" But when you're actually in the situation, you learn how you will really react. You're not going to react how a book says. You're not going to look at a book all your life.

Study Conclusions

The intent of this process is to gain insights into students' perceptions of leadership education and leadership development at TCS. The students deeply understand their school culture and are able to articulate insights and nuances exceptionally well. Because the learning community is both an academic and predominantly a residential environment, disparate learning takes place both within and beyond the classroom setting. A reader who is part of the MA in Leadership programme at Royal Roads and who has engaged in intensive three- or four-week residencies is well positioned to catch

at least a cursory glimpse of the nature of this learning community where conversations, relationships, and interpersonal dynamics remain fluid, always. Other residential experiences will likewise provide a useful frame of reference.

Key study conclusions suggest, within the context of TCS, that leadership is contextual and that different leadership styles are appropriate in different circumstances. Leaders earn credibility and demonstrate integrity when they lead by example. The capacity to *read* people is seen as central to having good people skills, and good people skills are in turn necessary for effective leadership. Finally, the students believed that their best leadership learning emerged through their noncurricular learning. Given the importance of student leadership learning that arises from co-curricular engagement, the students also explored how leadership education and leadership development might be enhanced if the notion of student leadership was at the centre of all that they do at the school.

Conclusion 1: Leadership Is Contextual

The students at TCS understand the context of their community and also possess a meta-understanding that leadership itself is contextual. Jake observed:

I think it's all contextual; leadership is entirely contextual. You have to figure out what kind of crowd you're dealing with—a flock of seagulls or a pack of wolves. Depending on the kind of thing you're running—you could be running the school as a Prefect, or you could be running a team as a captain, and the way you run those two different things is different. The way you exert your leadership is different. I think that even within our small community there are several subdivisions or forms of leadership that you have to apply.

Application of leadership skills comes in many forms and in surprising circumstances or environments. Jake continues:

Any high school you go to there will be cliques, but even within your respective clique there is still a bit of leadership. Maybe you don't notice it, but subtly there are people who take charge even in the smallest kind of group, and that's just their personality.

Situation and context can determine approach and how one presents oneself to the community. As Rugby said:

For Prefects, I know, running the school for certain things like New Student Fun and Games or a pep rally, you have to be really enthusiastic and charismatic and pump everyone up while leading—not telling them what to do, but encouraging them. There are times when you need to be directive or direct with people and other times when you're more of a cheerleader. [How you hold yourself] depends on the setting.

Tinkerbelle agreed: “Your leadership style should change as your environment changes.”

Other students look to peer counsellors at TCS for support and understanding in what may be a confusing or difficult time. Tinkerbelle observed that

there's also the leadership style of peer counsellors as well. They are leaders in this community. They are in senior grades, but they aren't being enthusiastic and out there screaming House cheers. They can be, but that's not part of their requirements. Their leadership style is more supportive, not in-your-face enthusiasm.

The students likewise also saw the effects of family and culture as important determinants of how they react within certain contexts. Rugby observed that

in relation to environment, it all depends on how you're raised or how you see things as you're growing up or as you're developing. If you're brought up in a really strict household or environment, then you're going to grow up thinking that's the right way to lead instead of an environment where it's kind of, “Okay, you make your decisions; you see what you can do, and I'll help you if you're not going in the right direction.” . . . It all depends on what you see at an early age.

Cindy X identified the importance of a cultural imperative:

I find there's a major difference between Trinity and my school back in China. The culture you're surrounded by is important. In some cultures it's not that good to be assertive and be in leadership positions, especially for women. If you grew up by that, you obviously won't even try to be in a leadership position as a boss.

The students had a clear sense of the most appropriate leadership styles for their own learning community. Traditional conceptions of an egocentric command-and-control style of leadership emanate from a (possibly) charismatic Number One in the spotlight who is far more likely to alienate than motivate in an environment like that in TCS. People who are too overtly ambitious, like to be at the forefront, and seek personal gratification and adulation are less respected and less effective than those who are motivated by clear, genuine, and more selfless principles and beliefs.

Conclusion 2: Leadership by Example Is Crucial

Students of mathematics know that an integer is a whole number; it is complete, and, as such, as students of English may know, it has integrity. Acting with integrity—being whole and complete—is considered crucial to effective leadership at TCS. Vacillation or hypocrisy is antithetical to a leader who acts with integrity, and given the visibility of a leader in a closed community, one is easily exposed when fractional behaviour exists. As Rugby reflected:

Being a leader is like being a goldfish in a bowl. A goldfish is in a bowl or a tank, and it is always able to be watched—the fishbowl approach to leadership. You become public property when you take on a leadership position.

Given that leaders may always be visible, their behaviour helps to establish standards or norms for the community. Keanu recalled:

I experienced it last year after being named a Prefect. The third day after I was named a Prefect, I came to Chapel with a collar button that was broken. A teacher, who will remain nameless, absolutely gave it to me because I was a

Prefect and, because I had this broken button, I was wearing an inappropriate shirt to Chapel. All of a sudden I became this new person who could not do this any more because I had to lead by example, because now that's my job.

Rugby concurred:

Leading by example sets a precedent, because you can have all these rules thrown at you as a new student, but when you see people living the rule, then you think maybe you really should be doing it "because I can't just let it slip by and let it go. . . . I can't be slack about it." It sets a precedent. Even simple things like uniform, your top button done up: If you see people in leadership positions or senior students with it, you think "Okay, maybe I really should do up my top button. It just takes me five seconds; it's not that big a deal.

The students suggested that it is risky to attempt to play both sides of the coin simultaneously. The one who calls, "Heads I win; tails you lose" loses in the long run.

Tinkerbell's experience was consistent with those of her peers:

Other students will call you on a double standard. I held a meeting with students in my House to help explain some rules, and we had a small issue with my uniform. I didn't look at the socks before I put them on in front of all the new girls, and one sock had three holes at the calf and it wasn't so good; everyone noticed. The whole House started laughing and saying, "Oh, you can't get into Chapel like that" and "Can we do this?" and stuff like that. So it was very difficult and funny, and I had to say, "You know, I would never leave my room without checking my socks."

The students continued to consider the notion of duplicity as the flip side of the coin regarding the benefits of providing constructive leadership by example. Cindy X reported:

On the more negative side, if you don't make a good example, then people will see that as an example: "Oh, the Prefects are breaking that rule; I can do that also, so I cannot go to Chapel also." They will see this as an example, something they could do instead of something they shouldn't.

Within this school context, the most resonant leadership emerges when somebody leads constructively by example. Meredith Gray noted that "leadership by example is

very important.” Being motivated to do something that affects positive change within or beyond the community offers a powerful display of authentic leadership to the young people. When *doing* arises from *believing*, students minimize the very real (albeit subjective) risk of losing face or being open to criticism from their peers.

The students advocated for an emergent form of leadership, but also acknowledged that there is a time and a place for a school leader to step up, take charge, and be accountable. Students respect a leader who gives credit to others and takes the blame. “You can’t always be a leader that everyone loves,” noted Laura Blah.

Conclusion 3: People Skills Are Fundamental to Effective Leadership

Given the fluidity of community within this predominantly residential environment, the capacity to read people and the currents that flow and eddy between and among them is essential to positive relationships and effective leadership at TCS. “Leadership is a personal style,” according to Keanu, and “you need to be able to read people.” There are also parallels between reading patterns in interpersonal relationships and high-performance athleticism:

What made Wayne Gretzky a great hockey player was the fact that he could quickly see things that were hard to see. I think that’s part of being a good leader, too. What made him so great was that he could read the plays because he knew the patterns.

Rugby concurred with Keanu: “It takes practice too. The more people you talk to, the more people skills you gain. It’s about being able to read people quickly and then adjust accordingly.”

The students perceived situational leadership as genuine leadership. Tinkerbell suggested that, within relationships, it is essential to

just be able to judge what's appropriate. There are different types of communication. It could be body language, it could be talking to a teacher about getting extra help. You have to be able to judge what's appropriate, what language to use, how to dress, how to hold yourself.

Cindy X built on Tinkerbell's thoughts:

You have to be respected by people enough that they will respect your opinion. For example, you can talk to a person about their troubles, but they might not respect your opinion so much that your opinion or advice would affect their decisions. Good skills with people will be affected by your relationship. Good people skills require you to be respected and your opinion to be respected and taken to heart.

Inclusion is an important component of strong interpersonal relationships.

Engaging others in a common sense of purpose and enabling people to play meaningful roles in effecting constructive change helps to strengthen a community. Rugby explained that

you have to go about people skills by including someone. We have to incorporate people so they feel they have a meaningful role in it as well, because if they feel like they're doing someone else's dirty work because the person doesn't have time to do it, then it's not a positive experience, and it's like they're being forced to do something they don't want to do. If you incorporate people, it is positive leadership and it is positive feelings and things going on with getting stuff done.

Personal style may be malleable, but flexibility in leadership style can be consistent with personal integrity; they are not mutually exclusive. Keanu contended that

you have to find the right way to ask a certain person to do something, and that is a people skill. Asking my best friend to do something would be a lot different than asking a Grade 9 girl that I don't even know. To a Grade 9 girl you don't know, and you want her to help run an event, you have to be a little more careful about how you say it. And this is where you change your style of leadership, and you become this more friendly person rather than a more authoritative person. That's how you change your style. You have to find the right tone to ask. You have to change the way you approach. Reading people affects that tone.

Though potentially counterintuitive, flitting among leadership styles can be consistent with being an authentic member of the community. Cindy X observed that good relations can be enhanced

by changing some of your tones so you don't offend that person. For example, if you're too bold, maybe too true to yourself, you could offend an old lady or a young student. By changing and being more polite, you're not betraying yourself but actually giving that person another face of yourself, because we as people are multidimensional.

Rugby continued:

It goes back to people skills. Reading people, using tone, you have to judge that and use your skills communicating with people to get your point across without seeming too forward or like a creep or anything that would not have things go the way that you wanted them to go.

Keanu concluded:

A good leader makes that change so subtly. You don't even notice, and you wouldn't even stop to think that he isn't really like that. It's just sort of the person he is. I don't think it's manipulating people; it's making a subtle transition.

The school community is comprised of students from many different cultures. The interplay on campus within and among students of common regions and/or values is dynamic. Cindy X noted:

It's quite interesting to see all the cultures blend in together at TCS, because each culture has its own priorities, and sometimes when they blend edges, they blur a bit, and you see them almost emerging. You still see groups, but they're all together within the school, and when it's a House outing, they all go together as one group. So cultures here shift. You don't lose your identity, but you do adapt to other ones.

The participants acknowledged, valued, and validated various modes of intelligence within the community, but they saw the capacity for interpersonal acuity as critical in leading through reading relationships.

Conclusion 4: Co-curricular Learning Helps Leadership Development

Cindy X is well-positioned to distinguish between her disparate educational and leadership experiences:

I find there's a major difference between TCS and my school back in China. The difference is so dramatic because in China you're more focused on academic learning, and the most leadership position you can get is probably leading a group in class. If some people are lagging behind, you help them. It's more academic based in China, but here it's very broad. The society in China and the Western world is so different, so I think the school back in China works for China and the school here works for the Western world.

The learning that young people do outside of the traditional classroom setting at TCS is crucial to the growth and development of their leadership skills. Tinkerbell confirmed that "I personally have found that I enjoy leading through community service and through my residence." She explained more fully that in her first months at TCS,

the only real academic leadership I thought I had was through being obsessed with getting the work done correctly and on time. I was a little bit of a control freak in that sense, and I don't think that was real leadership. When I became involved in sports, arts, and community service, that's when I learned what leadership was and that I could actually become a leader in the Trinity community.

Rugby suggested:

I think it broadens the way you see leadership. If you're working in a sport like rugby, your leadership is more intense, while volunteering with Big Sisters when you're working with five-, six-, seven-year-old girls, you can't be that intense or they'll think you're scary, you're really mean. You have to support them and egg them on. I think co-curriculars help you show leadership in different ways, and then you bring those experiences back to yourself as an overall leader. You just learn how to deal with different situations. My co-curricular experiences have helped me develop a range of leadership styles.

Keanu enthusiastically reported:

I think the neat thing is that you're not just physically learning something; you're constantly learning even when you don't know you're learning. Sitting down and talking to your friends, you're learning; you're always constantly learning and strengthening this experience, whether it's in an organized setting or informal setting. You could talk about being a sports captain or a senior player and how that has taught you. You're getting to be a better leader because you're learning how to deal with people. And that has nothing to do with the classroom; it's not anywhere near the class.

Cindy X asserted:

People skills is a major part of leadership, and by sitting down in class and listening to the teacher, you don't get much about people skills. You do that by co-curricular activities and talking. Even in activities like debating, you learn to lead by not only speaking in the actual debate, but also by gathering around in a group and talking about the topic before the debate. In a meeting you acquire some of the skills that are important for leadership.

Cindy X pointed out, "There are opportunities everywhere to be a leader."

Developing self-awareness, learning about the power of sharing a common sense of purpose, and understanding their place within a cast, crew, band, or team all help to hone leaders' lifelong skills and attitudes.

Conclusion 5: Leadership Education and Leadership Development

Could Inform Everything

The students considered questions about the place or potential primacy of leadership education and leadership development, and their reflections provided insight into potential next steps for the administration of the school. The following data arose from the students' responses to two queries:

1. How can student leadership education and leadership development of each student become a more central goal of the school?
2. How might this improve the school?

Once students adjust to the notion that in a utopian model no paradigm shift is too much, Cindy X proposed that

if every single one of the classes in each of the courses centered on leadership, maybe we could totally ditch the teachers and have all the students in turn teaching or doing the activities. Also, I read that the best leader is the leader who makes leaders, and so I think we should encourage in-class talking—maybe not so much chatty as discussing, where people communicate with others so that the ideas you have transfer to others so that, if you are a leader, you can help others become leaders as well.

The students perceived leadership learning as emerging more naturally outside the classroom than within, though with significant restructuring a classroom setting can become conducive to leadership instruction and leadership learning. Tinkerbell explained:

I noticed in FY [Grade 9] there were many types of group projects. I found it frustrating, but it does help teach leadership in the academic setting. I'm not a big fan of leadership skills being taught in the classroom though. I think it happens more in the hallways and out in a field or in a music room. But I think with the FY classes, if a similar set-up could be continued throughout the senior grades, or just ditch the senior classes, that it could help as well. We should also focus on being involved in every possible aspect of life outside of the classroom. Broad engagement, all sorts of possibilities, making people involved.

Rugby concurred:

I agree with the outside setting because it's more of the real world. A classroom setting is not the setting you're engaged in for the rest of your life. Sure, you're in classes in university and later on in other courses, but it's the outside world where your leadership comes through because that's when you're dealing with different kinds of people; that's when you have to read people. So I think if there was even more emphasis on leadership in the world outside the classroom, that would really benefit making a school really based on leadership. Maybe not more extracurriculars, but more leadership opportunities in extracurriculars. Even in recreational sports you could have different students leading different recreational sports for the term.

Keanu's critique of the status quo suggests that, although there are strengths, revisiting the structures of the early years of high school is necessary:

Social events—dances on Saturday nights, things that involve the entire school coming together and mingling and speaking to one another—help with communication and comfort. I do believe, though, that there should be more leadership opportunities for students in Grade 10, but maybe not FY because they need a year to get a feel of the school. While there's not much you can do to lead the school in Grade 10, there are exceptions, and I can think of a lot of Grade 10 students last year who could have stepped up and done a good job and done some pretty cool things at the school. By giving them a good opportunity we can further their leadership development at a younger age and make these students better leaders by the time they reach Grade 12. Y2 is the key; the school is not as good as could be there.

For a significant pedagogical shift in focus to occur, the students recommended change in classroom structure and course content so that deeper and more consistent consideration can be given to student leadership education and leadership development even within the formal academic curriculum. Rugby's vision was for more explicit leadership learning to occur within the academic day within each of the traditional subject areas: "Teaching leadership and the core subject material would mean changing the way subjects are taught. You would need to revamp it into a whole new approach." Courses would have little or no room for a teacher-centred approach if students supported each other as they moved through the curriculum:

The approach needs a change too in order to focus on leadership. It goes back to the dynamics of teaching and learning as it started. We have to go back in time and absolutely flip it around and make classes longer and incorporate different sorts of classes and courses. There's already so much work to be done [in current subjects and courses] that it's hard to all of a sudden incorporate a brand new leadership curriculum on top of, say, Advanced Placement [AP] chemistry. I think you have to go back to how it was structured in the first place, change that structure, and then start fresh.

Jake believed that

it's so hard to combine all the learning you have to do already and then throw in some leadership. I don't know how you can fit anything in, like in AP chemistry. Inside the class there is so much that has to be done already, forcing so much academics down peoples' throats. I don't think I can picture how it can work. It might work better outside the classroom, or I could see the Y2s stepping up as leaders.

An internal organizational change at TCS would have more effect and currency if surrounding related organizations also became like-minded or at least open-minded regarding our own small paradigm shift. This change would work best, observed Cindy X, if the universities considered leadership development as valuable as AP courses. A true paradigm shift

would involve changing what the universities look for. We take APs to help get into some universities. They see this student has APs and this student does not, so they take the one that has AP. Therefore, we put a lot of effort into AP. However, if there's a way of measuring leadership somehow, and say this student has AP and this student has a level of leadership, the university may say, "Now we want a level of leadership." In that way the schools would change and say, "Oh, maybe AP chemistry isn't as important any more. We have to get some leadership thrown into the classroom."

Scope and Limitations of the Research

As a member of the 2005-01 MALT cohort of Royal Roads University, I was among the first group of students to complete our residencies in the winter term and to seek ethical approval for our major project proposals in the spring. Although the approval process was effective and responsive, gaining ethical approval in late April meant that there was a relatively tight timeline within which to complete the data collection before the students at my school began preparing for their final examinations. My sponsoring organization, my supervisor, and I agreed in advance and following my second residency that my engagement of students would be completed by the school's "focus week" in May, the week prior to examinations.

Virtually all of the students at TCS are minors, and in addition to gaining their consent to participate, I also needed to receive approval from their parents (Appendix B). Because the students at TCS come to the school from more than 30 countries around the world, even gaining parental approval from parents who supported their child's participation took some time.

With a cohort deadline of November 1, 2006, for completion of the thesis, it was necessary to collect as much data as possible in less than a month and to complete it by late May to allow enough time to work through the data analysis and write the final report and to meet the timeline established for this cohort's MALT programme. Follow-up conversations ensued with the resumption of the school year and involved all of the students who had participated in the spring and returned to the school in the fall.

Six students participated in the spring term; after graduation, the four returning students continued with the research project in September and October. Several more students were interested in participating but were unable to do so because I maintained a fairly strict timeline with regard to the students' initial expression of interest in participating and completing the appropriate documentation to satisfy the ethical requirements of the university and the school. Waiting for additional participants ran the risk of failing to complete the leadership conversations in the allotted time.

Rather than hosting several small-group sessions, I determined that we would engage in several individual conversations for just under two hours prior to meeting as a single group. I advised the participants of the general topics for discussion prior to our meeting, and they arrived feeling "briefed." The follow-up session in the fall ran for a little more than an hour.

Allowing the student participant group to self-select may have built in a natural bias towards high-achieving students. All of the students who expressed a desire to participate were highly engaged in the co-curricular life of the school and were likewise strong academically. The six students who participated represented a cross-section of exceptional TCS students who were uncommonly engaged at the highest levels of academics, arts, athletics, community service, and involvement in their school House. Although these students articulated the importance of tempering leading with following, their pattern of school engagement suggests that their individual involvement may have tended to place them more consistently at the fore than the aft, though this is conjecture and suggests a potential area for further inquiry.

My intent as an action researcher was to gain insight into students' perceptions of leadership education and leadership development through descriptions of their own experiences and through their observations and understanding of other students' experiences at their shared school.

CHAPTER FIVE – RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Although recommendations for change arise from disparate groups—representatives from students, faculty, staff, and members of the senior leadership group have all had an opportunity to reflect on or react to this research project—certain patterns emerge within and among the groups. The following recommendations, which cannot serve as actionable items within the current academic year, may be considered for possible implementation in coming years.

Recommendation 1: Early Years Are Key

Focus on the early years of high school. In recognition of the intense academic demands of the final two years of high school, ensure enhanced student understanding of leadership education and leadership development in year 1 and year 2. Ensure that this learning is embedded explicitly and appropriately within each student's formal course of study, and become increasingly deliberate about leadership learning objectives and outcomes within the co-curricular realm of student life. Do not fear fundamental, structural change, but rather recognize that there are occasions for revolutionary paradigm shifts and times for evolutionary emergent growth.

As one colleague observed about the importance of preparation in year 2 for effective future student leadership presence in personal correspondence (J. Powles, September 9, 2006):

Ultimately by Grade 11 a group of students will emerge as being committed to a position of leadership, who have a solid understanding of their responsibilities as an identified leader and who now have the skill set to continue to move the student body forward as well as their own personal development.

Recommendation 2: Leadership Learning Takes Time

Don't give up on student leadership in the latter years of high school, and talk to the teachers. Leadership learning and understanding, and the expression of leadership skills and leadership development, cannot be hurried. Titles do not confer entitlement to student leadership. Although a position may be *won* in a sanctioned election, the moral authority of peer leadership may be evoked and supported by someone who metaphorically or actually did not even make it to the ballot. A relatively small sample of senior students in their last two years of high school will assume titular positions of leadership, and yet it is often the case that late bloomers or rising stars emerge well after the springtime votes for the following year's leadership positions have been tabulated.

Enhanced awareness that falls within the realm of student leadership education that students can effect positive change within their learning communities although not in a titular leadership role will further strengthen the programme of student leadership development. Student understanding of the potentially emergent forms of leadership expression will be advanced as faculty and staff become increasingly aware and open to nontraditional forms and demonstrations of leadership.

Recommendation 3: Do Not Undermine Curriculum While Advancing Leadership

Ensure that student leadership education and development are enhanced, but not at the cost of curriculum. The imperatives of academic success and the presentation of a transcript that surpasses the basic requirements for admission to the postsecondary institution of the student's choice are legitimate and nonnegotiable outcomes for many students and their families. Personal leadership development that comes at the cost of admission to the university or college of choice has the potential to be divisive within the

TCS community. The enhanced understanding of self that arises from reflection on and insights into leadership development may be a more reliable marker of success than a student's marks (K. Graham, personal correspondence, March 3, 2004). Leadership education may enhance a graduate's ability to succeed in university and graduate from a prescribed programme within four years, but the faculty have indicated that families are not prepared to sacrifice entry into competitive undergraduate programmes (by getting lower marks as a result of other distractions) even if the learning that is augmented enhances performance once the students are engaged in postsecondary programmes.

Recommendation 4: Ensure Circumcurricular Leadership Learning

Be aware that curricular and co-curricular learning are parallel and that circumcurricular learning engulfs them both. As a school, we can become even more deliberate about embedding a common language and understanding of leadership education and leadership development within both the academic programme of the classroom and the integrated learning in activities beyond the classroom. In an exchange of ideas, a colleague commented:

The concept of promoting leadership through the medium of every academic course has the potential for being far more effective and more genuine than many of the leadership camps and courses offered across the province. The challenge facing these valued centres for student leadership development is the ability for students to transfer the knowledge and skills learned to their own unique school environments.

Leadership education meanwhile implies that the umbrella of characteristics and traits would cover every aspect of a students' school life, starting in the classroom. Each class, regardless of the topic, could consciously and unconsciously promote and develop the softer skills of leadership like positive interpersonal skills (e.g., effective communication, respect for oneself/peers/teachers, etc.). Interestingly, the HPE curriculum dictates that teachers evaluate these social skills. We should not be limited to one subject area.

Naturally, all students won't be ready to 'buy in' to a comprehensive school approach like this, but those students who aspire to be leaders will be

given the tools to do so. Additional opportunities can be layered onto their classroom experiences where students can continue to challenge their sense of self and their role within a school. (J. Powles, personal correspondence, September, 2006).

Leadership learning opportunities should be further embedded in all core areas of the school.

Recommendation 5: Offer a Student Leadership Diploma

Offer a discrete circumcurricular leadership diploma for students. Over the past five years the school has revised and recrafted course structures and delivery methods to satisfy Ministry of Education requirements for the provision of credits that depend on travel and experiential learning. Within the current academic year, creative credits will be offered in disparate departments, and they will be united through a common, noncurricular approach. Month-long credits in English, French, Spanish, mathematics, outdoor education, art, and history will occur offsite in England, France, and Spain. Other experiential travel education credits will be offered for travel within Ontario and Quebec; to sites of Canadian military significance, including former battlefields, memorials, and museums; and to cities within France, Germany, and Belgium.

Just as travel has previously infused, altered, and enhanced curriculum, now it is appropriate to deliver the core requirements of the course of study concurrently with elements of leadership education and leadership development. Given the circumcurricular framework (Figure 6), the TCS Leadership Diploma would: include and surpass the minimum academic expectations of the Ontario Ministry of Education; include rigorous standards of meaningful engagement in the arts, athletics, community service, and community living; and, additionally, recognize the importance of student leadership

education and leadership development and the manner in which it envelops the curricular and noncurricular learning of young people.

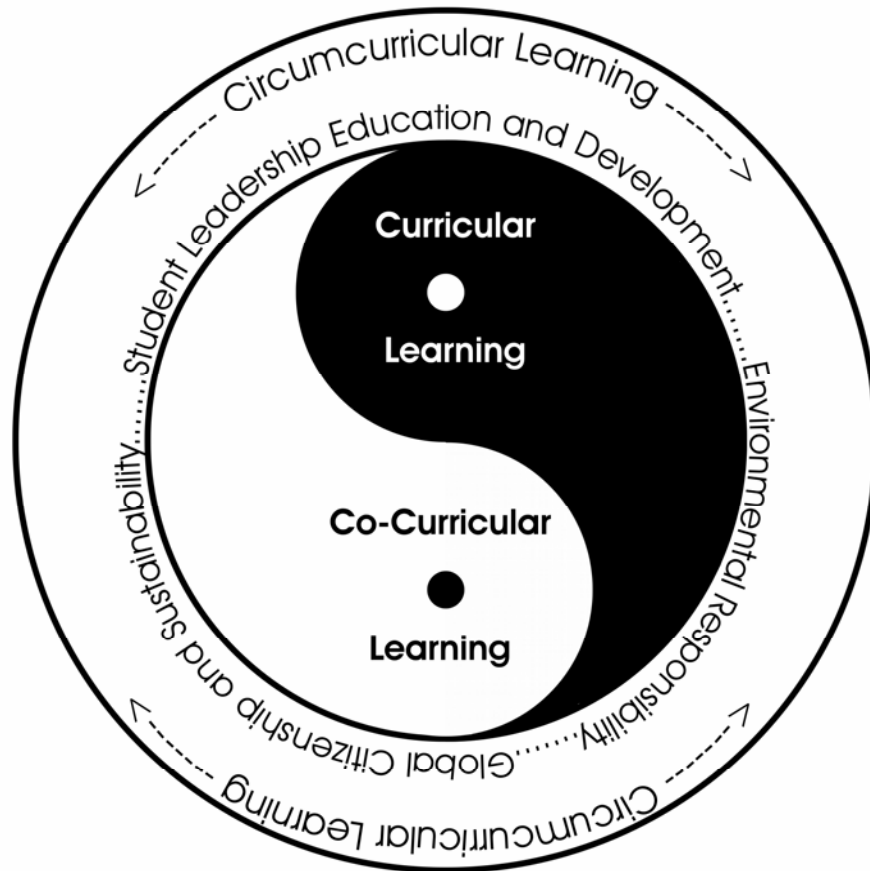


Figure 6. A circumcurricular view of student leadership learning.

All students who graduate from TCS would continue to receive the Ontario Secondary Schools' Diploma for meeting the provincial requirements of the course of study. The awarding of the current TCS diploma acknowledges students who have gone beyond the provincial standard and have secured additional credits in a second language or the arts and have surpassed the ministry's requirement of 30 credits by another 3. A distinct TCS Leadership Diploma could likewise be awarded to graduating students who have achieved certain standards and levels of achievement and engagement in leadership

education and leadership development over the course of their four years of high school. Over time, the Leadership Diploma could become recognized as a marker of past accomplishment and future promise.

Recommendation 6: Build a Student Leadership Institute

Create a TCS Student Leadership Institute. The process of making time for student leadership conversations has been informative and instructive and has helped to advance the learning of the participants. In the short term, the student participants have reported that their discussions and reflections have positively affected their actions and understanding of student leadership within their own learning community. I recommend that the school perpetuate and be willing to direct resources towards the continuation of deliberate, organized, and open-ended student leadership conversations and establish and maintain a student leadership discussion group as a demonstration of the school's commitment to enhanced student leadership education and leadership development.

In 2001 TCS established the Trinity Teachers' Institute. The intent of the Teacher's Institute was to encourage and enable teachers to engage, over the course of three days and two nights at the end of the academic year, in core areas of academic and curricular interest and prior study in the company of like-minded professionals from our own school as well as other independent schools across Canada. I recommend that this model be modified to attend to matters of student leadership education and leadership development in two ways. First, A component of the TCS Student Leadership Institute programme could run on site and through the regular academic year. Students could be invited or selected for participation, and they would be engaged in discussions on topics such as their perceptions of leadership, their experiences of leadership within the school

community, and their vision and aspirations for student leadership within the community in the future. Conversations could occur at regular intervals throughout the year and be recorded, transcribed, analysed, and shared for student and faculty consideration. Data collection and analysis could prove beneficial to enhancing our understanding of student learning and may even provide opportunities for the dissemination of TCS leadership learning throughout communities of like-minded schools.

Second, consideration should be given to exploring how the model of the TCS Student Leadership Institute might simulate the structure of the original Teacher's Institute programme to ensure that interested and motivated participants could gather together for intensive consideration of germane topics or determine whether the subject area is sufficiently deep and significant to allow exploration for an extended period of study, more akin to the school's programme of international travel education. In this instance, students could engage in an intensive programme of study in a site anywhere in the world that lends itself to the exploration of leadership learning.

Recommendations for Further Research and Action

The scope and full potential of an exploration of student leadership education and leadership development at TCS cannot be fully captured in this project. Ultimately, understanding and enhancing current practices increasingly appears to be analogous to walking towards the horizon. Although gains are made as ground is covered and individual obstructions are eventually circumvented or otherwise attended to, the horizon line remains forever distant—not receding, just never getting any closer—which represents merely an attempt to gain appropriate insight into where we currently stand.

This phase of action research concludes as the school engages in formal self-examination and self-evaluation with the Canadian Educational Standards Institute and as it undergoes a period of strategic planning that engages disparate stakeholders in the traditions and the future of the school. The next steps will require broad-based consideration of the manner and place of student leadership education and leadership development, and the timing of this action research may be able to be leveraged into sustained and increased leadership learning within the learning community that is TCS.

To the extent that the research and community engagement of the preceding months have helped to effect positive change within the community in the short term, this project may be said to have played a leadership role. More likely, and more interesting and important, the value of this exercise lies in what others make of it and how and to what extent it helps to shape thinking and future action.

Just as there is more work to be done, so too will new opportunities continue to emerge. If one is willing to place trust in an ongoing process, then suggestions and directions for areas of future study will continue to emerge.

CHAPTER SIX – LESSONS LEARNED

The exercise and journey of the past two years have contributed to my own personal leadership education and development even as I explored the learning and growth of others. Becoming increasingly literate in the language of leadership, comfortable with the power and transferability of leadership imagery, reflective on my own leadership practices and those of others close to me, and cognizant of how the presence of leadership exists far beyond titles and presumptions, but rather exists as an extension of an internal locus of control for each of us, has helped to enhance the clarity of vision as I look through the lens of leadership education and leadership development of young people at TCS.

I have learned about some of the conceptions of leadership of the students around me and some of my own leadership tendencies, and I have learned that, in the months following this action research project, as a result or an extension of this project, it may have occasion to impact my learning community in the future.

Lessons Learned

1. It is important to listen to the collective insight of students. Part of my own learning arises from a deeper understanding of student's perceptions of leadership. Their willingness to engage in a thought experiment, considering what their school would look like if leadership enveloped everything that they do at the school, helped to develop and clarify my own thinking. Leadership may be seen as the unifying or organizing principle within and among the disparate elements of curricular and co-curricular student learning.

2. Research generates more research. This project represents a step, or perhaps a series of small steps, along a much longer trail. As described previously, I can now more

clearly see potential outcomes and objectives regarding the place of student leadership education and leadership development within TCS. It seems clear that action research becomes traction research through sharing information and engaging in learning conversations, which in turn enhances relationships and ultimately enhances community. Discussions have led to ever-deeper understanding and appreciation of the learning community and how the community is (and can be even more) strengthened through common and expanded leadership conceptions and practices.

3. I have learned about my own leadership tendencies. As I reflect upon the actions of recent months and revisit some of the core competencies inherent in this master's programme, I can confirm that my best learning and leading, and learning about leading, emerge through relationships. The student research group began to assume the qualities of a cohesive and enthusiastic team, and team building through the engagement of these young people was central to the success of this project. Building partnerships with others has been crucial and will continue to be an essential leadership skill as I move to the implementation phase of this project and beyond. Ultimately, any willingness to consider and adopt some of the recommendations will arise in part because of my relationships with colleagues.

4. A second five-year plan—two years in the making? I am in my sixth year at TCS and have enjoyed previous opportunities to attempt to effect positive change within the learning community. The following excerpt is from an internal document that I helped create and present to the Executive Committee of the Board of Governors on April 18, 2001. The proposals in this strategic visioning exercise have largely been achieved as of October 18, 2006, and appear to be imminently validated through the

findings of the recent visiting committee of the Canadian Educational Standards Institute.

The operational issue rolling forward is to maintain the quality and collegiality of co-curricular planning as we advance conceptions and practices of student leadership.

By taking advantage of the extraordinary skills and abilities of our current staff, and by attracting, training and retaining the best educators available, we will build an unusual environment. All too often, schools become Balkanized as staff and students put up barriers in attempts to protect their turf from opposing interests within their own school community. Staff leaders at Trinity will work collegially and responsibly to create and institutionalize deliberate programming that will be at the forefront of independent schools in Canada—they will simultaneously serve as advocates on behalf of their discrete area, but will recognize that their area must be compatible both with the other core co-curricular areas and with the rigorous academic programme. In short, staff leaders will model the best behaviours expected of our students: they will be meaningfully engaged in endeavours that are critical to the values and Mission of our school and will always be respectful of the disparate elements of the entire community.

A commitment to the relentless pursuit of betterment means that it is time to advance to the next level in terms of how my own application of leadership may positively affect my own learning community. A circumcurricular view of programming and student leadership learning could see considerations of global citizenship and sustainability enveloping other core elements of programming. Learning related to enhanced student leadership education and development and to environmental responsibility is an element of crucial learning that could surround and infuse key programming considerations.

Core programming consists of two distinct but interrelated and fundamental areas, curricular and co-curricular learning. An integrated model of how interconnections exist and may play out within and among these disparate areas of learning could enable a cohesive, co-ordinated perspective from which student learning, growth, and development may be viewed.

Final Reflection

Over the course of this programme I have occasionally maintained a journal and have even less occasionally played with a storyline about rivers and whitewater canoeists. Although there are a certain flow and interplay among the journal and story, the theme seems larger and more poignant on a personal level, and the story remains contained and tucked away. The following is an excerpt from my journal; it represents a few initial musings that continue to carry some heft, if only as a marker of my own particular vision at this particular time:

We are used to seeing the world of objects reliably filtered in such a way as to either reveal, or at least suggest, permanence and solidity. This chair is real, solid, and objectively exists in the physical world. Manufactured goods are tangible and can be acquired and valued as part of the bedrock of who we are and what we can buy, but there are other ways strength and reliability may be revealed. What about the reliability and stability of flux?

In isolation, static objects bring a sense of solidity and reliability to our impressions of the physical world. This sense of the physical, tactile, and quantifiable world seems consistent to me with an egocentric command-and-control style of leadership. And while static objects and manufactured solids easily come to mind as we consider our surroundings, notions of dynamic stability and stability that arises and emerges through relationships and flux can be just as steady as a concrete object:

We should consider relationship and flow. I have done a fair bit of whitewater kayaking both in canoes and in kayaks, and while the comforts and responsibilities of adult life and parenthood have kept me from the tumult in recent years, we should look at the flow and interplay of relationships and the power of fluidity in moving water.

We could walk together to a spot on the Ganaraska River, and I could show you how the water flowing towards the Great Lake forms patterns in the chaos of a rapid. There are simultaneous and conflicting motions, and patterns; it's hard to see at first, but with practice, vision and patience, and an ever

deepening appreciation of the interplay of complex relationships, patterns do begin to reveal themselves.

Arriving in a new environment can turn each of us into an explorer on the shores of an unknown and perhaps uncharted river. Even if it has been previously travelled, the river's personality changes with the water level; and even if it has been travelled by others in similar circumstances at similar water levels, it remains new and strange to us. If our context and prior experiences are deep enough, our luck holds true, and our skills at reading complex rapids continue to improve, we may begin a journey and know, think, feel, and even misjudge when and how to shoot the rapid and whether and where to portage. Somewhere between uncertainty and adrenaline, perhaps in the noisy silence of a roaring rapid, we may catch a glimpse of something peripherally.

Water flowing over a rock will tend to create the appearance of a wave downstream of the obstruction. The precise amplitude and location of the wave is dependent upon the water flow, the size and location of the rock, the gradient of the ground beneath the river are all part of the network of relationships that—only through their mutual relationships—cause the wave to stand. Provided the relationships don't change, the wave will remain constant. As the relationships alter, so does the wave. Lower the water flow and the rock pierces the surface. Raise the water flow and—again, depending on the relationships—the wave could become transformed into a menacing hydraulic that could pose serious danger to kayakers and become renowned for its power, or the wave could be washed out and become invisible. The wave only exists in relationship. You can surf it on some days and it can trash you on others. It's kind of like leadership. What's the ride likely to be like?

It depends.

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APPENDIX A – LETTER OF INVITATION TO RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

April 20, 2006

Dear Personalized Student,

Thank you for responding to my request for expressions of interest to participate in my research project. If you still wish to participate there are a couple of steps that need to be taken over the next few days, and some important things for you to understand.

Firstly, you will need to review this letter. If you still wish to participate then the attached letter and Informed Consent Form will need to go to your parents for their consideration. Ultimately, should your wish to participate be supported by your parents, I will need both you and a parent to sign the attached Informed Consent Form.

Then we can begin.

This project is part of the requirement for my Master's Degree in Leadership and Training at Royal Roads University (RRU), and is being sponsored by Trinity College School (TCS) under the guidance of Dr. Greg Hodges, who is acting as the liaison between TCS and RRU. My supervisor at RRU is Dr. Jim Force.

As Dean of Student Life at TCS, I remain interested in the learning and growth students experience outside of the formal classroom setting. My studies and research at RRU explore possible links between co-curricular student engagement and leadership education and leadership development of youth. My research project aims to explore the experiences of student leadership within a specific context here at TCS.

Study Purpose: The objective of my research project is to explore students' perceptions and experiences of their leadership development and leadership education within the context of life at TCS. Students will be asked to share their experiences through stories. Students will be asked to reflect and respond to two basic questions:

12. How have you experienced leadership and what have you learned about leadership while at TCS?
13. How could leadership be better expressed by students in our school at all grade levels?

Role of Participants: During the spring term and in advance of the examination schedule, participants in the study will engage in small group narrative circles. Students will be asked to share their *leadership stories*. I will act as the group facilitator, and at least one member of my research team (likely a colleague from TCS) will also be present to take notes. The conversations will be audio-recorded. Themes will be identified from each learning circle and reviewed to consider possible action steps for TCS. Following the narrative circles, students will be invited to submit a brief written reflection on their

leadership experience within the school community and these written submissions will also serve as research data.

Confidentiality: All information in this study will be kept confidential and summarized in an anonymous format into themes and a subsequent metanarrative or story about leadership as it is experienced by students at TCS. At no time will any specific comments be attributed to any individual unless specific agreement has been obtained beforehand. The findings and analysis will be used within my final report, and may be used in subsequent academic and professional discourse through presentations and/or publications.

You are not compelled to take part in this research project. If you do elect to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time with no prejudice. Similarly if you choose not to take part in this research project, this information will also be maintained in confidence.

Should you or your parents have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at any time. You can drop by my office, and your parents can phone me at (xxx) xxx-xxxx, ext. xxxx; or Dr. Jim Force by telephone at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or email at xxxxxx@xxxx.xx. If you would like to confirm your participation in my research project, we will need you and your parents to sign the attached Informed Consent Form in the coming days.

Sincerely,

Mr. Watt

APPENDIX B – LETTER OF INFORMATION TO PARENTS
OF INTERESTED RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS AND
CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS AND PARENTS

April 20, 2006

Dear Parent,

Your child has expressed interest in participating in a research project that I am conducting as part of my Master's Degree in Leadership and Training at Royal Roads University. While I have attached the more detailed letter I reviewed with your child, key excerpts follow:

Study Purpose: The objective of my research project is to explore students' perceptions and experiences of their leadership development and education within the context of life at TCS. Students will be asked to share their experiences through stories. Students will be asked to reflect and respond to two basic questions:

1. How have you experienced leadership and what have you learned about leadership while at TCS?
2. How could leadership be expressed by students in our school at all grade levels?

Role of Participants: During the spring term and in advance of the examination schedule, participants in the study will engage in small group narrative circles. Students will be asked to share their *leadership stories*. I will act as the group facilitator, and at least one member of my research team (likely a colleague from TCS) will also be present to take note. The conversations will be audiorecorded. Themes will be identified from each learning circle and reviewed to consider possible action steps for TCS. Following the narrative circles, students will be invited to submit a brief written reflection on their leadership experience within the school community.

Confidentiality: All information in this study will be kept confidential and summarized in an anonymous format into themes. At no time will any specific comments be attributed to any individual unless specific agreement has been obtained beforehand. The findings and analysis will be used within my final report, and may be used in subsequent academic and/or professional discourse and/or presentations or publications.

Students are not compelled to take part in this research project and they are free to withdraw at any time with no prejudice. Similarly if you or your child chooses not to take part in this research project, this information will also be maintained in confidence.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at any time. You can reach me by phone at (xxx) xxx-xxxx, ext. xxxx; or Dr. Jim Force by telephone

at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or email at xxxxxx@xxxx.xx. If you would like to confirm your child's participation in my research project, we will need you and your child to sign the attached Informed Consent Form in the coming days.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ian Watt
Dean of Student Life

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS AND PARENTS

Royal Roads University, School of Leadership Studies
 Master of Arts in Leadership and Training
 Research Project: How may students' leadership stories affect organizational change?
 Researcher: Ian Watt

This research project is part of the requirement for a Master of Arts in Leadership and Training and is being sponsored by Trinity College School under the guidance and support of Dr. Greg Hodges.

The learner/researcher concerned is Ian Watt. Mr. Watt's credentials with Royal Roads University can be established by telephoning Graham Dickson, Director of the School of Leadership Studies, Royal Roads University at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or Dr. Jim Force, Academic Supervisor, by telephone at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or email at xxxxxx@xxxx.xx.

This document constitutes an agreement to take part in a research project, the objective of which is to examine *how students convey their leadership experiences at Trinity College School through stories that capture their experiences, and how those stories may affect institutional change regarding leadership education and leadership development.*

During the spring term and in advance of the examination schedule, participants in the study will engage in small group narrative circles. Students will be asked to share their *leadership stories*. The researcher will act as the group facilitator, and at least one member of the research team (likely a colleague from TCS) will also be present to take notes. The conversations will be audio-recorded. Themes will be identified from each learning circle and reviewed to consider possible action steps for TCS. Following the narrative circles, students will be invited to submit a brief written reflection on their leadership experience within the school community.

The dialogue will refer to the participants' experiences and views on the role of leadership and how their experiences at TCS have informed their conception of leadership.

Information will be audio-taped and transcribed and, where appropriate, summarized in anonymous format into themes. The ensuing recommendations will be part of the final report. At no time will any specific comments be attributed to any individual unless specific agreement has been obtained beforehand. A copy of the final report will be housed at Royal Roads University and will be publicly accessible.

Prospective research participants are not compelled to take part in this research project. If an individual does elect to take part, she or he is free to withdraw at any time with no prejudice. Similarly if employees or other individuals elect not to take part in this research project, this information will also be maintained in confidence.

Consent Form for Participants and Parents

Royal Roads University, School of Leadership Studies
Master of Arts in Leadership and Training
Research Project: How may students' leadership stories affect organizational change?
Researcher: Ian Watt

By signing this letter, the individual and their parent give free and informed consent to participate in this research project as described in the preceding documentation, and the participant agrees to keep confidential any personal information shared during the learning circle sessions.

Participant's Name: (Please Print):

Participant's Signature:

Date: _____

Parent's Name: (Please Print):

Parent's Signature:

Date: _____