The Influences Shaping Eight Educators' Perceptions of Adventist Education

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to five groups of people, with whom I have enjoyed rich and fulfilling relationships, and who have challenged my personal sensemaking reflection.

Firstly, I dedicate this thesis to God, for my life would be meaningless without him.

Secondly, I dedicate this thesis to my parents, for without their loving examples, guidance, and wisdom, my life would be unbalanced.

Thirdly, I dedicate this thesis to my immediate family for their unconditional love and support.

Fourthly, I dedicate this thesis to my Adventist schoolteachers who had a vision for Adventist Education, and through their examples, helped me make the connection between my faith and my education.

Finally, I dedicate this thesis to my fellow Adventist Education colleagues, for their rigorous discussion over the years pushed me to think deeply about this topic.

ABSTRACT

This research was conceived in response to the need to move forward with authentic Adventist Education in a climate of changing government regulations, changing clientele, and a growing faith-based education sector. The following research question drove this investigation: *How have the lived experiences of eight educators shaped their perceptions of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education?* A qualitative methodology was employed and a bricolage approach, using more than one data-collection instrument, was used to gather "lived experience" data from eight educators working in the Adventist Education system. Inductive coding methods were employed to analyse two-phase, dyadic, semi-structured interviews, and participant drawings were similarly analysed. Analysis through coding revealed themes and categories. Deductive analysis, using the properties of sensemaking as pre-determined categories, was also used. The findings are presented as tables, hermeneutic and phenomenological narratives, circumplex graphs, and written analyses of the participant-drawn diagrams. The key findings revealed a diversity of perceptions regarding the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education, and twelve shaping influences that contributed to these perceptions, and which fell under the themes of authentic relationships and sensemaking reflection. The twelve shaping influences offer insights into how the "lived experiences" of eight Educators shaped their perceptions of Adventist Education and may be used to understand how perceptions mature. The findings may also be used to develop processes that will enhance the clarity of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education in the minds of teachers and administrators. This is significant as the efficacy of Adventist Education depends on the ability of its employees to action the organisation's philosophy, purpose, and praxis in positive and productive ways.

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LIST OF SPECIAL NAMES OR ABBREVIATIONS

ABIDE: A resource developed by Nina Atcheson to encourage and support teachers in Adventist Schools on their spiritual journey.

ACARA: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

Adventist Education: A subset of Christian Education that refers to the education system of schools owned and operated by the Adventist Church. It may refer to any stage of learning, including pre-school and post-school education. In this thesis, it is referred to as an organisation.

ASA: Adventist Schools Australia, The company name of the organisation that is Australian Union Conference.

AUC Australian Union Conference: An administrative region of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia, comprised of nine conferences across six states and two territories.

Christian Education: The education of children and young people in a Christian environment. This is the term that Ellen White used in her writing.

Conference: An administrative region of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Curriculum: The subjects which make up a program of study at any level of education.

ERO Educational Review Office: The government department responsible for school accreditation and registration in New Zealand.

IFL (Integration of Faith and Learning): A teaching approach that embeds the Christian worldview and faith deeply in the learning experience.

PK: Colloquialism for the term Preacher's Kid meaning the child of a minister.

Primary Education: The first stage of formal education in Australia, typically encompassing the ages five to twelve.

Project Blueprint: A voluntary work program for staff and students implemented at Avondale College around 1975-1976. It was based on Ellen White's perceptions of how the Avondale school should operate, however, in a modified form.

Secondary Education: The second stage of formal education in Australia, typically encompassing the ages of 12 to 18.

Sensemaking: The process by which individuals attach meaning to their collective experiences. It offers a way for people to understand confusing, confronting, or equivocal events or issues within an organisation.

Seventh-day Adventist (SDA): A protestant Christian denomination with roots in the Millerite movement, established formally in 1863.

SIP: Shaping Influences Profile, a circumplex graph constructed from the data for each of the participants for the purpose of comparison.

Teacher education: A formal program established to prepare for teaching at the primary and secondary school levels.

The Great Disappointment: October 22, 1844, the day when William Miller predicted that Jesus would return to the earth. Jesus did not return and there followed several months of sorrow and disbelief, before the believers amended their understanding of what the date meant.

PROLOGUE

And so, I embark on a new adventure. I sit poised on the cusp of discovery, and yet my adventure is not really a beginning because so much of what it will be has been determined by what has already been. My quest for a topic has been garnered from the epic of my life, from my lived experiences, dredged up through the memory paths of my mind and stimulated by my interests and desires. Yet, a topic is more than a mere personal indulgence. Its worthiness must pass the test of those for whom it exists. I have to listen to their voices, to be guided in my choice by what has been, and by what is, before I can decide the pathway into what is yet to be known. I must take into account what has been and what is, before I can map what may be.

In this thesis the reader will find three interwoven thematic ideas. First, this investigation is about people. It is about their lived experiences, and how these have shaped who they have become as professionals and what they believe about the organisation to which they belong. People and how they make sense of their situation are crucial to answering the research question, but also important when exploring the literature. People are at the centre of this investigation and their voices will be heard at each stage of the journey. In this thesis most of the people are educators, but there are some important voices calling from beyond the arena of education that must also be heard.

Secondly, this thesis is about organisations. People do not function in vacuums. They are stirred and prompted into action in the social milieu of their lives by belonging to a group of people, often with a common purpose. In this thesis, the reader will observe the interplay of people with organisational behaviour in its emerging stages and also at its maturity. The organisations represented in this investigation are the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church, and stemming from it, early Adventist Education in a North American setting and early and contemporary Adventist Education in an Australian setting.

Thirdly, this thesis is about perceptions. Organisations often have their origins in a single belief or set of beliefs. This thesis explores the perceptions of

beliefs, and the enactment of beliefs that historically led to the emergence of an organisation. Through a historical journey, it tracks the development of perceptions that result in a set of beliefs foundational to the philosophy of Adventist Education, its purpose for being, and its praxis. It then turns to examine how the lived experiences of eight current educators in Adventist Education in Australia have shaped their personal beliefs about Adventist Education.

Sometimes these three embedded themes will appear alone. Sometimes they will touch briefly, and other times they will be closely interwoven, but always they will be present, and with them will be the voice of sensemaking, sometimes idealistic, sometimes pragmatic, but always pushing with a gentle urgency towards the discovery that motivates praxis.

Personal Background: An Autoethnographic Introduction

I am the product of the complexities of life experiences and relationships. Every interaction, every change, every situation creates a new lens of learning through which I view my world (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). One life experience that has forged who I am is my educational experience within the Adventist school system. My association with Adventist Education has been virtually unbroken since my early schooling years. I have been an active participant in Adventist Education as a student, a teacher, a parent, a curriculum writer, an administrator and currently as a teacher educator. Over time, as I changed roles, so did my learning lens, and with each change my perceptions of Adventist Education shifted, refocused and reformed. With each change, I unconsciously re-assessed my position in an attempt to make sense of my environment from a new perspective. This process of understanding my own journey with Adventist Education is, I believe, crucial to my understanding of the journeys of others; therefore, I invite you to come with me and look through my learning lenses.

The Lens of Oblivion: Beds, Beach Holidays, and Ontological Belief

My journey with Adventist Education began as a very small child. Born the third daughter of a Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) pastor and his wife, I never doubted that I was wanted and loved. For me, the family was a safe and secure place, a haven after exciting but sometimes daunting forays into the wide world outside the

comfort of my home. It was an early childhood of story times with my father, voices lifted in singing to the haunting or merry sounds of the harmonica. It was an era of climbing into the middle of my parents' bed early in the mornings, of beach holidays and growing gardens. To my parents, it was a season of scarcity; to me it was a season of love and happiness. I was blessed in so many ways. Life as a pastor's kid (PK) was not without its challenges. My father was often away from home for weeks at a time, and we missed out on the advantages of an extended family. Despite this, I knew that I was cherished, that this was my family and we would stick together. One does not articulate these thoughts at a tender age, but in retrospect, I can identify the strength of the relationships that still hold strong today. For me, the family provided somewhere to belong, and a safe place from which to view and make sense of my world.

The family also helped develop my philosophy of life. Family values were modelled, discussed and expected. My father's home-grown philosophy often came to me in verse and included gems of wisdom, such as:

> "A wise old owl lived in an oak,
> The more he saw the less he spoke,
> The less he spoke, the more he heard,
> Why can't we be like that wise old bird?" (Roud Folk Song Index Number 7734)

Blended with family values were assumptions that formed the foundation for how our family operated. We had a certain ontological belief, our philosophy of "being". In our family, the existence of a personal God was foundational to how we lived, and as a small child, I absorbed this philosophy by osmosis as God and my family together wrapped me in the sense of love. It was within this nurturing environment that I was encouraged to grow, to explore my identity and my world. This was a time of unconscious learning that laid the foundations for how I would view life, and it was with this learning lens of oblivion that I stepped out to meet the world of Christian Education that existed outside the boundary of my home school.

The Lens of Awareness, Angst, Axiology and Emerging Identity

I began my education in a government school in the British colony of Fiji. I embraced the world of school and learning, and fortunately for me, my common-sense parents were not too distressed when I was chosen to be a fairy in the Christmas concert, or when I came home with tales of the "yellow brick road". Two years after I began school, we packed our belongings and boarded an ocean liner for home, whatever that meant. Home, I found out, meant Australia and the opportunity to attend an Adventist school. As my parents discussed Church school with enthusiasm, I had a mixed picture in my seven-year-old imagination of what 'Church' school might mean. It turned out to be not at all like reality.

My introduction to Adventist Education was not a positive one. On my first day in the Prep-2 classroom, I was told to stay in at lunchtime. While the noise of laughter and games drifted in on the February heat, I sat in a strange classroom, practising how to correctly write the letters t and f. I am still puzzled, to this day, why it was so important for me to change this habit on my first day, and why something that was so right in one school could be so wrong in another. At the tender age of seven, I did not understand anything about different styles of writing. All I felt was a gross sense of injustice. I laboriously spent half my lunchtime meticulously writing row upon row of first t and then f with only half a crossbar, compliant on the outside, but frightened and rebellious on the inside. On reaching home that afternoon, my frustrations found a voice, and tearfully, I related the events of the day.

I admire my parents to this day for how they handled this little girl who was suffering culture shock, both from adjusting to a new country and adjusting to a school culture that was so foreign from the one with which she was familiar. Within a week, I found myself in another classroom, with a gentle spinster teacher who loved me as much as I loved her. From this point, I settled in quickly, and this classroom provided me a snapshot of Christian Education in practice.

We began each day with worship and Bible class, and my auditory memory of a classmate playing the pedal organ as we lifted our voices in praise is very clear. I still have a vivid mental picture of some of the illustrations I drew in my Bible exercise book. The words, however, have faded and slipped out of my memory and into oblivion. We read, and were read, character building stories. We were loved and

encouraged to treat each other with care and respect. For two years, I flourished in this nurturing place. It was at this stage of my education that I began to perceive a correlation between what was valued in my family and what was valued at my school and this resulted in my burgeoning axiological beliefs. Like a dripping tap, what mattered in life and how I should live it began to make claims on my attention from that point onwards. I changed classrooms and teachers for my final two years of primary school. My positive memories of these two years are not as strong. The joys of new library books and playing recorder in the school band while everyone marched to class are mingled with memories of playground clashes, bumptious grade six boys and the introduction of decimal currency. This suspension of my growing impressions of what Christian Education was all about lasted into my early high school years.

My student lens was focused primarily on my own educational experience. My immaturity meant that I was not concerned with the philosophy underpinning the school, but merely with the day-to-day experiences of school life. With my primary education completed, I climbed the ladder straight into an Adventist high school. I travelled by train to school each day in a large city so had plenty of opportunities to observe other students making their daily pilgrimage to places of learning. I understood to a very limited extent the distinctiveness of schools. The Scotch College boys wore kilts on Thursdays, the tartan swishing as they walked along in groups. The Presbyterian Ladies College girls always wore their hats and gloves, even on the hottest summer days and were models of decorum on public transport that we never seemed to achieve. But apart from the fact that it was an Adventist school I attended, I never gave much thought to the reason for my school's existence. If I had been asked to describe the difference between my school and any other at this stage of my life, I think I would have answered, "We have Bible classes."

Bible classes were an interesting phenomenon. In those days, trained Bible teachers did not exist in Adventist schools, so one had to take potluck with a history, English, mathematics or science teacher to guide our spiritual growth and development. Unfortunately, the little I do remember of Bible classes was the red textbook called *Principles of Living* and a spattering of factual information. In my final year of high school, the principal was my Bible teacher and I remember his

vivid descriptions of the sword wielding, horse riding Saracens who seemed to feature in his lessons on Bible prophecy. Unfortunately, I remember little else of these classes, although I am sure my biblical history knowledge increased as a result.

What did have an impact on me in this environment was the annual Week of Prayer, somewhat misnamed as it was more of an in-house evangelistic series. I do not remember too much praying, although I am sure it happened. My most vivid memories of these events come from those in which I was involved with the planning or implementation. Strangely enough, I also remember my choir experience. This helped my faith to grow. It was the era of street preaching and I remember several school organised trips into the Central Business District of Melbourne to preach, sing and hand out Christian literature on a Sunday evening. I remember feeling that I was part of a spiritual revival that was shared by students and staff in that final 18 months of schooling. As we prayed, worshipped and shared our spiritual journeys, my sense of identity, my notion of what mattered in life and my developing purpose in life began to take tangible shape in my mind. I also have strong memories of one community service project where we students gardened and cleaned houses for elderly people in our local community. I remember the enthusiasm that this project engendered among the students, and the dawning sense that this was authentic service, as opposed to the weekly report of persons helped at our weekly Missionary Volunteer programs. These events I remember with more clarity than my Bible classes, which were timetabled alongside my other subjects, but at this point my understanding of Christian Education was very limited. Therefore, my learning lens at this stage of my life was largely one of awareness, but in a limited sense, as I connected my faith with my Church rather than my school, although a boarding school experience did blur the lines.

There was something that stood out for me in both Adventist high schools I attended: the teachers. Most are remembered fondly, a couple with amusement—some are barely remembered at all—but others are indelibly printed on my memory. These were the teachers with whom I built a relationship, the ones who took an interest in me and believed in both me and my ability to achieve. My high school years were split between one state high school and two Adventist high schools, both of which were beneficial to my developing identity. Unfortunately, I cannot say the

same is true of all my peers from that time, some who today classify themselves as casualties of Adventist Education, and others as survivors.

The Lens of Emerging Understanding: Avondale, Epistemology, and a Little Red Book

My schooling years successfully behind me, I made the pilgrimage to country New South Wales, as my parents had, many years before. The next step in my journey of Adventist Education was a faith-based College of Advanced Education, Avondale College, which trained ministers and teachers, secretaries and accountants, Bible workers and builders. Most graduates in those days were destined to work somewhere within the SDA church system. My goal: to be a teacher in an Adventist school. I am not sure when I decided to be a teacher. For me, there was no defining moment, just a growing awareness that this was what I wanted to do. It was not a calling at that point in time, but an acknowledgement that my skills lay in communication, and my passion, with children.

My first significant shift in perception came as I began my teacher education course. My lens, although still that of a student, was diverging as I adopted the understandings of a pre-service teacher. It was during my training that I was introduced to the book *Education* (White 1903), a cache of wisdom written by Ellen White, a co-founder of the college I attended. This little red book was widely used by lecturers as a source of quotes on Christian Education, and it was from this book that my early notions of the philosophical underpinnings of Adventist Education began to develop. I owe much of my understanding of, and beliefs about, Adventist Education to the author. One burgeoning area was my understanding of epistemology: what we know, how we know it and what it means for a Christian teacher.

Over the three years of my training, my perceptions shifted as I began to think more like a teacher, and developed a growing consciousness of the responsibility to connect students with God. This learning-lens I have described as emerging understanding.

It was at college that I became reacquainted with my first Adventist school principal, the same individual who had resolved my unfortunate first experience with Adventist Education. We had progressed from inexperienced school principal and

seven-year-old girl to college lecturer and aspiring teacher. This particular lecturer was inspiring. He was ideological, set high standards for Christian Education, believed in his students and backed his beliefs up with affirmation, which continued well into my teaching career. Just recently, we reconnected. He turned up, a dignified man well into his seventies and now a little hard of hearing, at the reunion of my graduation teaching class. For at least thirty years, he has been turning up at these reunions on an annual basis to affirm his students. No wonder he is so loved and respected.

It was not only education classes that impacted my burgeoning philosophy of Christian Education. One core subject, 'New Testament I', made an indelible impression on me. Even now, when I enter the lecture theatre where those classes were held, the memories of that subject and snatches of words spoken there flood back from the past. It was more than a decade later that I discarded my class notes, having used them several times in my own devotions. That class probably impacted my own spirituality and faith more than any other single event in my life. It gave me a depth of understanding, which combined with the sense of purpose derived from my education classes, positioned me for the next great challenge of my life.

The Lens of Responsibility: Teaching, Tacit Knowledge and Taking Responsibility

As I progressed from pre-service teacher to beginning teacher, my lens of understanding brought my perceptions of Adventist Education into sharper focus. A heightened awareness of my responsibility to my students and their parents forced me to clarify the purpose of Adventist Education in my own mind in an attempt to make sense of my role as a teacher. How I interacted with my students became pivotal to my understanding of Christian Education. I made mistakes, I stumbled in my report writing but, overall, I gained an enormous sense of satisfaction from my chosen career. Some of my happiest times were sharing God's love with my students in morning worship and Bible lessons although I realise now that my teaching in this area was more factual than relational. One other dawning realisation came to me: I was modelling my teaching on my own education, rather than on my teacher training.

On reflection, I have no recollection in my first school of staff worships or staff meetings where the underpinning assumptions or philosophy of the school were discussed to any extent. It appeared that there was "tacit knowledge" (Polanyi, 1967), that as an Adventist, one was merely expected to understand and embrace. We always began the day with a reading and prayer but beyond that, I was left to my own devices when it came to the interface between faith and learning in the classroom. My principal was a kind and helpful man who guided me through the minefield of the first year of teaching, but it was as though, having earned my diploma, there was no need for continuing discussion on the topic of Christian Education. Therefore, my focus was on my own teaching practice, and my learning lens became one of responsibility.

The Lens of Transparency: A Tragic Accident and a Turning Point

My lens diverged again when I transitioned into a new role and took on administrative duties. As a school principal, I was compelled to look beyond the realm of the classroom teacher to the ethos of the whole school. I was now expected to interact with parents, members of the school board, sponsoring Church members, and the regional education director for Adventist Education. In that era, teaching principals were not blessed with release from face-to-face teaching, so I juggled teaching my thirty-two students spread over seven grades with administrative tasks. I remember drawing the line at being the school treasurer. While this raised some eyebrows, the person chosen turned out to be far more astute and competent than I was in this domain. I was fully engaged in deciphering cues to help me interpret my role and react appropriately to the broader context in which I found myself.

It was an event while I was a teacher/principal at this school that confronted me with the reason for the existence of Christian schools and provided a turning point in my understanding of Adventist Education. Two brothers were enrolled at the commencement of my second year at this country school. Blessed with physical prowess, they shone on the sports field, yet their seeming lack of capacity for traditional learning pushed my frustration buttons, extending me to the boundaries of my limited experience. Then came the weekend of the local Church camp. Both boys were there, in the care of another school family. We camped on the banks of the Murray, a river known for its dangerous eddies and strong currents. Somehow, the

younger of the brothers went missing, and it was not until hours after the police divers were called in that they found his body, trapped and spinning in an eddy, just metres from where the group had been splashing around, unaware of the danger lurking beneath. That funeral was one of the hardest I have ever attended; our school item, "*He's got the whole world in his hands"*, the hardest musical item I have ever prepared. Facing my class afterward presented its own challenges as I attempted to field the "*why"* questions that I had been asking myself and God. At this point, I realised the fragility of life and the urgency of teaching more than subjects. I recognised the windows of opportunity that may suddenly close.

This was a maturing point in my teaching career. Along with other experiences in administration, it sent me back to the assumptions and philosophy on which Adventist Education was based, and the idea of transparency in relation to beliefs became a strong focus in my lens-learning world.

The Bifocal Lenses of Accountability: Parenting, Perspectives and Flourishing

Unexpectedly, my biggest lens change came with parenthood. The day my first child commenced school, I put on my bifocal lenses and—using my teacher-lens and parent-lens combined—I refocused on Adventist Education. I was now a client of the system, and as a paying client I was intensely interested in getting value for my money. Furthermore, I was entrusting my precious child to another person for six hours a day, to shape and to influence. I became acutely aware that I was paying for more than the three Rs, and that my reasons for choosing Adventist Education for my child were to do with identity, belief and nurture in the faith system I cherished. Simply stated, I was interested in the experience my child was having at school, and my learning lens was one of accountability.

I would like to write that Adventist Education was all that I wanted it to be for my children, but that would be stretching the truth. For one child it was relatively uncomplicated, with minor issues fairly easily resolved by parent/teacher interviews; for the other it was a stage of life to be endured. This is not a criticism of my child's teachers, who were my colleagues and for whom I have enormous respect, but my child failed to flourish. And I realised as a parent, that more than passing grades in numeracy and literacy, more than sporting or music awards, I wanted my child to

flourish, to grow into a well-balanced and resilient adult who could face the world with confidence. I wanted my child to be part of a community that cared and nurtured, that provided a safe place in which to make mistakes and learn.

The accountability that I believed in as a parent impacted my own teaching when I returned to the classroom. The parent perspective added to my effectiveness as a teacher, yet being human, I remember the times when students failed to flourish in my classroom.

The Lens of Integration: Curriculum, Teaching Christianly and Connectivity

With my children at school, and as a full-time educator again, I was asked to be involved in curriculum writing at a national level for Adventist Education in Australia. My curriculum lens focused my attention on what was being taught and how it was being taught, and it was during this phase of my career that I began to clarify the meaning of the terms 'teaching Christianly' and 'integration of faith and learning'. There is nothing quite like robust discussion and putting pen to paper to distil ideas. Writing forced me to clarify the concept of Christian Education and to observe it as something that can be evident in all aspects of a school's curriculum and learning and teaching programs. In this sense, my learning lens became one of integration, as I began to join the dots between philosophy and praxis in a pragmatic way.

The Lens of Vision: Ideology, Inspiration, and Reality

My final lens was that of a tertiary educator. In this role, I began to process all my learning lenses. As I reflected on my journey as a Christian educator, I noted that different learning lenses gave me different perceptions. My interest in the distinctiveness of Adventist Education led me down a focused research path.

As I researched Adventist Education in relation to culture and ethos (Christie & Christian, 2012), worldview (Christian, 2009), and values education (Christian, 2011; Christian 2014; Marks, Christian & Greive, 2015), I began to sense a need for a stronger understanding of the philosophical base of Christian Education. My passion for Adventist Education continued to direct much of my research (Celic, Christian & Matthes, 2016; Christian, 2010; Christian, 2017; Christian & Beamish,

2018; Christian & Kilgour, 2014; Kilgour & Christian, 2017). As I have read, investigated, and pondered the education organisation to which I belong, my perceptions of it have been refined. This has been influential in placing me in a position where I have been able to contribute to Adventist Education.

In 2010 I was invited to join a working party to develop a suite of documents that could assist Christian educators to preserve the purpose and maintain the uniqueness of Christian schools in an era of change. This shifted my focus to how to best infuse Christian educators with a clear understanding of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Christian Education. I realised that everyone has to take his/her own journey, but desired to find a way to bring the philosophy of Christian Education out into the open, where it could be the topic of professional conversations. I describe this as my vision lens.

My vision was to create a user-friendly model that would provide a common language for substantive discussion, be philosophically sound, and offer clear direction to educators in Adventist Education. As chairperson of the sub-committee working on the model, I explored not only the philosophy of Christian Education, but how to package it as a memorable, simple, yet not simplistic model. The ideas of Heath & Heath (2008) assisted in this process. The final result of this two-year journey was a Community of Faith and Learning (CFL) model that was adopted by the Adventist Education system in which I worked (Appendix A).

Other projects I was invited to work on included membership on a steering committee responsible for developing the Adventist Encounter Bible curriculum, and the development of faith-based material development relating to philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education, including values education. This material has been used across the Adventist Education sector in Australia. In 2012, I contributed to the development of a school review and improvement framework for Adventist schools (Adventist Schools Australia, 2013), and again, this demanded rigorous discussion with a large group of Adventist educators in an attempt to clarify and distil the essence of Adventist Education. Another project where I had direct input was the construction of the Adventist Identity Teaching Standards that recognised the distinctive nature of Adventist schooling (Adventist Schools Australia, 2013) (Appendix B). This document evolved in direct response to the

mandated Professional Teacher Standards and was designed to complement the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL, 2011) Professional Teaching Standards.

Each of these experiences has been continually building my knowledge base in this area and—combined with my passion for Adventist Education—has contributed to my choice of topic. I have asked myself the following questions.

Do teachers identify with the materials produced as an outcome of these projects? Have any of these ideas filtered down into their classrooms? Does it resonate with their experiences or do their experiences form their understandings? Has any of this information helped pre-service teachers grasp their calling to the ministry of teaching? Will they assimilate what they are learning into their teaching, or will they teach as they were taught at school? If experience is the best teacher, what experiences could I have given my students to prepare them to be Christian educators?

At each stage of my journey with Adventist Education, I have responded to changed circumstances, changed roles, and the impact of spiritual, personal and professional relationships on my understanding. Each lens represents a liminal phase in my life where I gathered my thoughts, re-examined them and added another layer of meaning to Adventist Education. At the same time, I am very aware that all Adventist educators have their own 'lived experiences', their own stories to tell, and their own perceptions.

Therefore, having reflected on the story of my own journey towards understanding and having refined my views of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education, I am interested in exploring the stories of others. Given the diversity of educators in the Australian Adventist school system, I assume that each individual brings a unique perspective to the terms 'Special Character' and 'Adventist Identity'. This study is primarily concerned with an investigation of the perspectives of eight educators in Adventist Education and the lived experiences that shaped those perceptions.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Preface: My Voice

Exploring my lived experiences with Adventist Education has given me a starting point. But a starting point alone is not enough. I have so many questions. My task is to distil them into a clear purpose that is driven by my research context. A map without a worthy destination may not be worth considering. A map that is not marked clearly may confuse travellers. This map, however, is a mere sketch to point in the right direction. I can only reveal the landscape as the map is followed.

Aim and Purpose of the Investigation

This investigation is about people and their perceptions of the organisation that employs them. In this study, the organisation is Adventist Education in Australia. The people are educators who work in a variety of roles within the organisation, and who hold perceptions of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education.

Adventist Education is one of many faith-based education systems operating across the globe. A faith-based education system is defined, for the purpose of this investigation, as an education system operating within a particular worldview, with a matching belief system that drives its purpose, and a set of operating practices that reflect the chosen worldview. The faith-based education organisation on which this study focuses is Adventist Education, a system of schools operated by the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Christian denomination.

Adventist Education is a worldwide organisation operating the largest Protestant school system in the world. The system has 9,489 early learning services, schools, colleges and universities in nearly 150 countries with 111,360 teachers serving 2,044,709 students (Who We Are, 2022; Adventist Schools Australia, 2023). Comparatively, Adventist Education in Australia is not as prevalent. Australia has 48 schools and 13 early learning services with an enrolment of nearly 17,000 students. The website for Adventist Schools Australia (2023) states that “Our schools and early learning services in Australia are non-selective, inclusive schools, open to all

who want a Christian community that is caring, safe, values-based and sets high academic standards".

Context and Significance of the Investigation

Enrolment in faith-based schools in Australia has been steadily increasing. As early as the late 1970s, educators were starting to notice a change in the market and demand for faith-based education (Independent Schools Council of Australia, 2022). These changes, many of them undocumented and anecdotal, have continued to intensify over the last four decades. Three major changes in education that have been documented, relate to changes in government regulations, changes in the independent school sector, and the changing clientele of Adventist schools.

Changing Government Regulations

Within the Australian education scene, both federal and state governments are making increasing curriculum demands. While excellence in educational praxis is welcomed by independent schools, the prescriptive nature of some changes—including those in the Australian curriculum (ACARA, n. d)—has implications for flexibility in subject material. This has the potential to affect schools that operate out of a particular worldview, especially in the area of curriculum where humanism has the potential to dominate the curriculum frameworks. For Adventist school administrators, this is a crucial area as they seek to maintain an authentically Christian worldview in their learning and teaching, and strive to operate their schools on biblical principles, while remaining inclusive.

Changing Faith-Based Education Sector

The growth of the independent school sector in Australia has been steady, with enrolment rates increasing from 4.1% of total enrolments in Australian schools in 1970 to a market share of 14.5% in 2017, increasing to 17% in 2022 (Independent Schools Council of Australia, 2022), with Christian denominations representing the majority of private education providers (Independent Schools Council of Australia, 2022). This trend for parents to seek an alternative to public education has impacted positively on some faith-based schools, and resulted in growing enrolments. Other faith-based schools have found this rapid independent sector growth an inhibitor to

their own growth through competition from nearby schools offering a similar philosophy and values-based education. An example of this is in the Gold Coast region in the state of Queensland where three Christian K-12 schools are located within five kilometres of each other, one of which is an Adventist school. This has implications for Adventist Education. It means that Seventh-day Adventist parents have more options when it comes to giving their children a Christian Education. It also means that parents from the wider community have more options.

Changing Clientele

The focus on providing a sound academic and religious education for children of faith-based communities, while still a priority, has broadened in some faith-based education systems to be more inclusive of students coming from diverse background and beliefs (Murdoch, 2017). This has the capacity to introduce subtle changes, with some feeling that the distinctiveness of their system has been downplayed in favour of a more generic values-based education system. With the numbers of children from non-Adventist families rising, many Adventist schools in Australia now have more students who do not come from Adventist families than they have Adventist students enrolled. While some Christian schools accept only the children of practising Christian parents, Adventist schools operate on a more missional approach and open their doors to all who are willing to support their school's viewpoint and praxis. What Adventist parents want for their child's education has also changed, with the result that parents are increasingly considering more options than Adventist Education (Christian & Beamish, 2018).

Adventist Education has been impacted by these trends and as these changes have taken root, a conundrum has developed: how to preserve the distinctiveness of Adventist Education within an expanding Christian Education market, and how to offer an inclusive educational program without compromising the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education. This requires an understanding of current forces at work in faith-based education.

Research in faith-based education is growing, with a substantial body of literature relating to Christian Education—its philosophical assumptions, its purpose and its praxis (Cooling, 2013; Cairney, Cowling &Jensen, 2011; Edlin, 2008; Edlin,

2014; Henderson et al., 2006; Naugle, D. K. 2002; Pietsch, 2018; Roy, 2008). The literature has included calls to re-examine the purpose and praxis of Christian Education in general (Iselin, 2009), and Adventist Education in particular (Knight, 2017).

For the greater part, this scholarly activity has been focused on either a top-down approach or student/staff surveys (for example, McIver & Kilgour, 2017). There is limited evidence of research that specifically seeks to understand those who are responsible for the distinctive culture of faith-based educations systems, or who intentionally target the philosophy, purpose and praxis of faith-based schools as perceived by those who belong to the organisation. Additionally, the bulk of evidence collected has been quantitative, which, although excellent for looking at the broad picture, is restrictive when the depth of understanding and thick descriptive data is the research goal (O'Toole & Beckett, 2010).

In order to sustain the effectiveness of faith-based schooling, including Adventist Education, it is essential to understand how those within an organisation, who collectively enact the distinctive features of that organisation, perceive the organisation, including its philosophy, purpose and praxis. It is also important to understand the influences that shape their understanding of the organisation in which they work.

Therefore, this investigation is both timely— in response to the changing profile of faith-based education in Australia—and needed, to extend the research using qualitative paradigms in the faith-based school sector.

In summary, this investigation is relevant to faith-based education systems because:

1. the philosophies of faith-based systems are upheld by their mission statements, and the ability to action their mission statement depends on the clarity with which the stakeholders understand the mission and are supported in that understanding towards action.
2. it is imperative, in the light of imminent change, that clear understanding of the philosophy and mission of faith-based education remains at the centre of faith-based education systems. In order to

> achieve this, it must remain at the centre of the emotions and intellect of the individuals in the system. This research, by investigating the stories of individuals, will work towards developing a picture of what this understanding is, the influences that have shaped this understanding, and the how this understanding shapes the approach each educator takes to his/her work.

This research is relevant in particular to Adventist Education for the following reasons:

1. The participants in this study were all educators within Adventist Education at the time of the data collection; therefore, this study is representative of Adventist Education in Australia.
2. Recent global events (Covid) and growing enrolments in other Christian schools have contributed to a shortage of Adventist teachers in Australia. This phenomenon, coupled with rising enrolments from non-Adventist families, has the potential to challenge school leaders as they attempt to preserve the essential elements of Adventist Education in their schools while operating inclusive learning communities.

Question and Aims That Frame the Investigation

The following research question is the focus of this investigation:

How have the lived experiences of eight educators shaped their perceptions of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education?

Four research aims support the quest to answer the research question:

Aim 1. *To identify the perceptions that eight educators hold of the philosophy, purpose,* and *praxis of Adventist Education.*

Aim 2. *To identify any specific links between the nature of the educators' lived experiences and their perceptions of Adventist Education.*

Aim 3. *To identify any shaping influences that eight educators with diverse lived experiences may share about Adventist Education.*

Aim 4. *To identify what leaders and teacher educators in Adventist Education can learn from the lived experiences of eight educators.*

Establishing the Investigation Genre

The nature of the topic helps determine the research paradigm. This investigation is qualitative in design and narrative in nature, but the investigation is not only mine. It also belongs to the eight educators who were willing to share their stories. Their stories were born out of the memories of lived experiences (Basit, 2010; Charmaz, 2017) and therefore, each participant's story is uniquely his or her own. The reflective nature of stories allows that which matters in our lives to become apparent and meaningful. In this sense, it is "retrospective meaning making" (Chase, 2011, p. 636).

This study uses a 'bricolage' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), or multi-faceted research approach**,** which will drill down into the cognitive and affective domains of a cross-section of roles in Adventist Education, with the purpose of understanding the recollections of educators' lived experiences. As Ellis (2004) suggests, narratives can then be juxtaposed against each other, leading to a greater understanding of the influences that shape an understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Theoretical Locus of the Investigation

This thesis is a quest for sensemaking. It is a journey to discover how Adventist educators have constructed meaning from their lived experience, and how this has impacted their perceptions of an education system with its own philosophy, purpose, and praxis. Sensemaking as a research model was developed by Weick (1995) and is used in two ways in this study. First, it is used as a filter through which the historical development of Adventist Education is examined. Second, it is used as a tool to understand the lived experience of the participating educators so that the influences shaping their perceptions of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education may be identified.

A qualitative design (Bernard & Ryan, 2010) that employs a bricolage approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Kincheloe, McLaren & Steinberg, 2011) both

suits the purpose of the investigation and allows narrative to form a large part of the data collection and communication of ideas (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). By listening to the "memory depositifs" (Basu, 2012) of others through their stories, a depth of understanding into how perceptions of Adventist Education developed for the participants and are played out in their professional lives will be possible.

The research design and application of this project are grounded in the concept of "memory depositifs" (Basu, 2012). "Memory depositifs" are deposits of memory which may take the form of written accounts (newspapers, letters, journals) or verbal accounts (that is, spoken memoirs) of particular events, people or organisations. In this project, verbal recollections will primarily be employed for data collection. Therefore, as the significant memories and recollections of educators are critical components—some of which span an extended period—the format of this thesis includes narrative, to parallel the research approach.

Thesis Overview

Prologue

The prologue sets the direction for this investigation in three ways. First, it introduces the reader to autoethnographic writing as a means of revealing the development of my own changing perceptions as author. The importance of this process is to guard against researcher bias and is outlined fully in Chapter 3. Second, the prologue showcases a hermeneutic, phenomenological writing style, which will be used for partial presentation of the findings in Chapter 4. Third, the prologue builds an understanding of the researcher and the lived experiences that led her towards this topic.

Chapter One: Relevance of Topic, Rationale, Overview

The introductory chapter identifies the topic, defines the key terms, and provides a context for Adventist Education in Australia. It provides insights into the topic choice and builds a case for the timeliness and relevance of the investigation. It outlines the research question and the research aims, and demonstrates how the aims contribute to answering the research question. It also clearly identifies the thesis structure and gives a brief overview of the role of each chapter.

Chapter Two: Literature Review Context

This chapter explores the literature relevant to the topic and creates a cohesive context for the investigation. Chapter 2 is written in two parts. The first part is an introduction to sensemaking theory in organisations taken from seminal (Weick, 1995) and contemporary (Ancona, 2011; Introna, 2019; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014) literature on the topic. It further explores the properties of sensemaking in an organisational context.

The second part of Chapter 2 takes the properties of sensemaking outlined in the first part and uses them as an interpretive tool to explore the historical journey of Adventist Education from its roots, using a sensemaking lens. It explores the world of people, including how their ideas of Adventist Education were shaped and how their ideas shaped the ideas of others. It also examines the role of people within an organisational context and how this impacted their understandings and consequent actions. It spans a period of over two centuries and traverses two countries: the United States of America and Australia. Finally, it tracks the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education and notes organisational changes that impacted and were impacted by the organisational structure and the key players in the organisation. The literature provides a historical background to the topic and establishes a rationale for the research topic by identifying two areas where knowledge is limited. It also introduces the research framework chosen for the investigation.

Chapter Three: Methodology

In Chapter 3, a carefully reasoned methodology is introduced within the research paradigm. The chapter introduces the mitigating factors that led to the development of the research topic and the qualitative research paradigm. It offers a research question and four research aims that contribute to answering the question. The chapter presents a methodological orientation for the reader. As the investigation is qualitative, Chapter 3 introduces a bricolage approach to the data collection, expands on each area of the bricolage and situates sensemaking as a framework into the research design, offering a rationale for this approach. The chapter then proposes an outline for reliable and credible qualitative research, embedded in a culture of

respect and characterised by integrity, trustworthiness, and clarity. Each of these characteristics is demonstrated at each stage of the grounded theory approach. The chapter then gives information about the site and respondents before describing each research instrument and accompanying rationale. The chapter then proceeds to carefully itemise the data analysis procedures, with illustrated explanations of the coding process. This chapter aims to reassure the reader that the methodology employed is without reproach and will answer the research questions. It subsequently bestows on the writer the authority to investigate the topic and disseminate the findings.

Chapter Four: Findings

Chapter 4 presents the data in four ways to ensure triangulation. It uses tables, biographical narratives, circumplex graphs, and participant-drawn diagrams with written analyses to present the data in meaningful ways. Two tables present the overarching themes, secondary themes, and categories derived from the coding process. Biographical narratives written in a hermeneutical, phenomenological style create an emotional bridge between the educators' stories and the reader (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004). Shaping Influences Profiles (SIPs) in the form of circumplex graphs provide both individual and combined visual representations of the categories derived from the coding process. Participants' drawings of their perceptions of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education—accompanied by a written analysis—form the final data presentation mode. Taken as a whole, the findings answer the research question, "*How have the lived experiences of eight educators shaped their perceptions of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education"?* and achieve the four supporting aims of the study.

Chapter Five: Discussion Including Explanation of Grounded Theory Model

Chapter 5 has a threefold purpose. First, it summarises the findings and reports how they meet the supporting aims of the study and the research question. Secondly, it discusses the findings within the context of the historical narrative and sensemaking interpretation from Chapter 2. In this section, the researcher proposes an additional sensemaking property not identified in the literature. Finally, the chapter presents an extensive explanation of the grounded theory model that offers

the ultimate answer to the research question, "*How have the lived experiences of eight educators shaped their perceptions of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education?"* This model also clarifies the relationship of the findings to the sensemaking properties identified, and offers suggestions for further research that are prompted by the finding or lack thereof.

Chapter Six: Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter showcases the research project and acts as an adjudication of the previous chapters. It includes a summary of the investigation, an evaluation of what was presented and a resolution to the research question. Chapter 6 also presents the key findings of the study, along with the implications of the findings, and recommendations for the future. The recommendations apply to Adventist Education as an organisation, teachers, school leaders and administrators.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Preface: My Voice

My preparation for this adventure of discovery must be thorough. If I do not listen to the voices of those who have gone before, I risk either losing my way or treading in the exact footsteps of others. Although I want to create my own map of Adventist Education—identify the landmarks that shape the journey it has been on and chronicle my own epic from the lived experiences of participating educators—I cannot do so without acknowledging the pioneers who have gone before. Therefore, I read the accounts, I weigh up the evidence, and I choose that which will guide the process and inform the topic. I turn to people, their memories, stories, and identity; organisations, their functioning and corporate identity; and people's perceptions, especially the interplay between people, organisations and perceptions.

People fascinate me. I enjoy listening to what they remember, what they think, and how they interpret the world around them. Their stories fascinate me. I gather the memory narratives of people, places and events and hoard them in my mind. Sometimes these memories gradually sink into oblivion and other times they draw me into a state of kinship with the 'author', sparking emerging notions that intermingle with thoughts of my own, to birth new ideas and ways of seeing the world. People are an active catalyst for change in my life. Their words and actions help shape my identity, the essence of who I am. People will feature in this chapter. Some were ordinary people who, when faced with dilemmas, sought to find solutions through sensemaking. Others were early adopters of ideas who challenged the Adventist Church to react to the cues around them. Some were visionaries who called on retrospective reflection and biblical study to create a foundation of belief on which to build Adventist Education. All of them struggled to develop a sense of personal and organisational identity in the social milieu of early Adventism.

Organisations interest me. I enjoy the complexity of an interdependent community comprised of individuals, each bringing their perceptions and perspectives for consideration. People are crucial to organisations, and belonging to

an organisation is crucial to people. It is through belonging to an organisation that I have developed a sense of corporate identity, a concept of "we" and "us". Corporate identity does not override my personal identity but adds another dimension to it. The people you will read about either belonged to or influenced an organisation, or both. In this chapter, you will read about the emergence of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and from it, the development of Adventist Education.

Perceptions intrigue me, as perceptions are people's reality. Perceptions sit firmly at the foundation of how I understand and interpret my world, acting as precursors to my beliefs. At various stages of my life, I have alternatively borrowed, reflected, refined and defined my perceptions about a wide range of issues. This has happened in my personal life, my professional life, and my spiritual life, the latter being the development of a satisfying and cohesive worldview which has shaped my beliefs (Bertrand, 2007; Middleton & Walsh, 1995; Pearcey, 2015; Sire, 1990; Sire, 2004) and ideological stance concerning a wide range of issues, including the bigger life questions of Who am I?, Where am I?, What is wrong? and What is the solution? (Middleton & Walsh, 1995). My perceptions, therefore, not only challenge me to explore my beliefs, but offer me a reference point from which I interpret my world. They also have the potential to shape me, building my identity— not just in life—but in the universe. In this chapter, you will read about other people's perceptions, observe how perceptions change or endure and witness the impact of altered perceptions and behaviour.

Introduction

This chapter serves a dual purpose in the quest to understand how lived experiences have shaped eight educators' perceptions of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education.

Initially, this chapter explores sensemaking theory (Weber & Glynn, 2006; Weick, 1995) as a framework for understanding organisations and the actions of people in them. It briefly outlines the properties of sensemaking identified in research literature, and introduces the reader to sensemaking as a tool to understand how lived experiences impact perceptions, beliefs, and behaviour, both in a personal and organisational setting. This context offers a framework or lens through which to

read the historical literature, and allows the nuances of the historical narrative to be appreciated from a sensemaking perspective. This atypical application of sensemaking as a method for reading the historical literature about Adventist Education lays a foundation for the use of sensemaking theory as a framework in the following chapter.

Having offered an explicit method for examining historical sources, the second purpose of this chapter is to explore the historical literature about the origins and development of Adventist Education from its inception in North America to the present time in Australia. It presents this as a timeline narrative that provides a historical context against which the study participants tell the narrative of their lived experiences in Chapter 4.

This chapter simultaneously gives a historical account of the growth of Adventist Education and a commentary of the sensemaking properties evident in each era. Therefore, this chapter does not focus on validation of historical analysis or critical realism (Roberts, 2014), but on insights into the sensemaking properties at play in the development of Adventist Education. Consequently, I have used a mix of primary and reliable secondary sources, noting where there are discrepancies in perceived events and times but focusing on possible reasons for the timing and choices throughout the narrative in an attempt to accompany Adventist Education pioneers on their journey through time and space.

What you will read in this chapter are the challenges that faced an emerging and maturing denomination and the events that were confusing or did not conform to the expectations. You will trace the journey of those who made up this religious denomination through almost two centuries and empathise with its leaders as they struggle to make sense of their environments to create an organisation called Adventist Education. The evolution of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education will be interwoven through the narrative. The voices and actions of the thought leaders will be heard and seen. This narrative recount spans the early 18th century to the present, and the USA to Australia where the narrative is ongoing.

Overview of Sensemaking

Historically, western traditions of conveying information or knowledge relied on the assumption that knowledge could describe reality and therefore imparting information into the minds of stakeholders in an organisation would enable them to work effectively within that organisation (Dervin, 1999). As this belief began to tumble in practice, new ways of managing knowledge emerged. One of these is sensemaking.

Sensemaking has been an integral concept in the study of organisations since the late 1980s. However, Karl Weick made sensemaking mainstream, and his book, *Sensemaking in Organisations* (1995), is widely cited by qualitative researchers. Although still an authority, Weick's concept of sensemaking has evolved since his seminal volume as critics have questioned its perceived narrow focus (Colville et al., 2016; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015), its emphasis on the retrospective nature of sensemaking (Colville et al., 2016), its lack of acknowledgement about what is not included over what is evident (Holt & Cornelissen, 2014), and its anthropocentric linguistic orientation that relies heavily on narration and stories. Introna (2019) addresses the complexity of sensemaking and proposes that "our seemingly obvious sensemaking practices, and our accounts of them, are always and already grounded in something more immanent, which does not need to become expressed or articulated to be meaningful" (p. 746). Introna (2019) further elaborates on the "flow of life" (p. 747) that enmeshes the sense maker in a world that both gives and makes sense. Dervin (1998) added another dimension to Weick' theory, positing that sensemaking is about the management of knowledge with an emphasis on "people, context, process, creativity, collaboration, diversity, tacitness and initiative" (p. 37).

Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld (2005) define sensemaking as "the ongoing retrospective development of plausible images that rationalise what people are doing" (p. 409). Maitlis and Christianson (2014) put it this way: "Sensemaking is the process through which people work to understand issues or events that are novel, ambiguous, confusing, or in some way violate expectations" (p. 57). Helms-Mills, Thurlow, and Mills (2010) add shock and organisational crisis as catalysts for sensemaking, as well as events that break routine. Change and growth, especially when they are rapid, also trigger sensemaking (Ancona, 2011).

Sensemaking means that individuals construct their own meaning of their environment based on their lived experiences. It also means that every person is continuously engaged in sensemaking as they respond to the environment in which they live. Sensemaking usually occurs when something in an individual's or institution's way of functioning changes, triggering a reassessment. This may occur on one or both of two levels, individually or corporately, as a group of individuals bonded together in some way by circumstances or work. Either way, sensemaking occurs in a social milieu through communal collegiality, ongoing dialogue, and feedback (Maitlis, 2005).

Sensemaking has a practical application to organisations. Ancona (2011) presents it as coming up with a plausible understanding — a map — of a shifting world; testing this map through data collection, action, and conversation; and then refining, or abandoning, the map depending on how credible it is. Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld (2005) speak of sensemaking "as a springboard into action" (p. 409).

Weick (1995) initiated his sensemaking paradigm as a conduit to understanding organisational change. He describes this paradigm as "a developing set of ideas with explanatory possibilities" (p. xi). Elaborating further, he identified seven properties of sensemaking (Weick, 1995; Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005), all of which contribute to the development of perceptions. These properties are identity, retrospective reflection, enactive of sensible environments, embedded in a social milieu, maintaining a sense of continuity, the deciphering of cues, and the quest for sense. Additional to these properties is institutional context, which Weber and Glynn (2006) posit as an unexplored but salient link between institutional and sensemaking perceptions.

This chapter applies these sensemaking properties atypically to explore the historical and contemporary literature and documents written about the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education as a subset of Christian Education.

In this chapter, Adventist Education, in its broadest form, is viewed through a sensemaking lens to understand the historical context, its development over time, and the consensus resulting in common understandings. From this point, a further analysis using sensemaking properties is applied to the roots of Adventist Education and, finally to Adventist Education in an Australian setting. In order to accomplish

this unique way of viewing Adventist Education, a basic understanding of Weick's (1995) sensemaking properties is essential and is briefly described below.

The Properties of Sensemaking Theory

Seven properties of sensemaking form the foundation of sensemaking theory and provide the framework for this literature review. Although these properties interact to prompt synergy for change, each is defined and described individually as a discrete part to enable an understanding of the whole.

Identity

This first property is central to sensemaking as who people identify as being part of their organisation shapes both their behaviour and interpretation of events (Thurlow & Mills, 2009; Watson, 2009). Weick (1995) laid the foundation for identity as a property of sensemaking with his position that the identity of the individual, while important, is never determined in isolation from others and is continually changing in response to changes in the immediate environment. Therefore, in organisations, the first step towards making sense or developing understanding is for individuals to comprehend who they are and where they fit within the system. This requires an understanding of "me", my role, and my contribution; of "them", those in positions of responsibility in the system; and "us", the combination of "me" and "them". It is how individuals understand themselves and how they understand their relationship to their immediate environment. The identity of self within a particular setting shapes how they act and how they make sense of what is happening (Thurlow & Mills, 2009; Weick et al., 2005)

Retrospective Reflection

This property of sensemaking is based on Weick's theory that we use hindsight to make sense of our experiences. Building on Schutz's (1967) concept of retrospection derived from his analysis of meaningful lived experience (Straβheim, 2016), Weick (1995) further argues that sensemaking is embedded in retrospection, that people reflect on what they have experienced and may not make sense of an event until well after it has happened. Although there is some evidence that sensemaking may also be predictive (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014), the bulk of

sensemaking research to date has focused on the retrospective property. Therefore, not only the present context but the past context informs the sensemaking paradigm. Weick's (1995) ideas about retrospective reflection are supported and elaborated across a variety of research disciplines. (Conway, 2001; Haque & Hasking, 2010; Lau, 2020) with evidence that memories play a significant role in how individuals live in the present.

Conway (2001) argues that people remember small pockets of lived experiences in a way that differentiates them from other kinds of knowledge. Lau (2002), with others (Haque & Hasking, 2010; Philippot & Schaefer, 2001; Yang & Ornstein, 2011), identify the nexus between emotion and memory, concluding that memories, rather than being objective and comprehensive, are influenced by the person's emotional state at the point of memory formation in their lived experience. Further, Lau (2002) also claims that several people who experience the same event will remember it differently because of this factor, positing that "memories are affected by the cues that evoke them and the environment in which they are recalled" (p. 677). Ellis and Flaherty (1992) concur, and using unconventional data sources, argue that memories of lived experiences assist individuals in interpreting their world and their place in it, especially when viewed from a social context. Basu (2012) argues from a collective stance that 'memory dispositifs' can shape cultural memories. This combined evidence supports Weick's inclusion of retrospective reflection as a characteristic of sensemaking. Therefore, its inclusion in this chapter as the context is set for investigating the influences that shape individual perceptions of Adventist Education.

Enactive of Sensible Environments

The third widely accepted sensemaking property relates to the notion of action being part of what is sensed and alludes to the idea that people not only react to but create the environment in which they operate. Sensemaking is not merely understanding or interpreting a situation. It involves action. Weick (1988) states that "cognition lies in the path of action. Action precedes cognition and focuses cognition" (p. 307). According to Maitlis and Christianson (2014), individuals engage in sensemaking when they act and then observe the results of their actions.

Additionally, they may act in a particular way to test their sensemaking. When people's actions shape the environment, this leads to further sensemaking and may ultimately change the circumstance which initiated the original sensemaking. Weick (1995) adds a caution here. He reminds us that in addition to enactment creating new environments, it may evaluate or interpret existing environments and may even suspend or confine action, all of which are acceptable outcomes.

Social Milieu

The social property of sensemaking reminds us that sensemaking cannot be separated from social settings (Weick, 1988). Weick also posits that whether people are born poor or wealthy determines how they make sense of our world, as does the type of education they have had, the culture in which they grew up, and the social norms observed by that culture. People and relationships with people, whether in a formal work setting, an informal social setting or an intimate family setting, all impact how people make sense of their immediate world. Within sensemaking, an additional catalyst emerges: conversations with self and others (Maitlis, 2005).

Sensemaking occurs in a social milieu through a process of communal collegiality, ongoing dialogue, and feedback. Maitlis (2005) has built on sensemaking theory and identified animation and control as factors that can impact types of sensemaking. Animation describes the extent to which organisation members are engaged in sensemaking dialogue, and control describes the formal and intentional structuring of meetings around core business. Levels of animation and control can determine whether sensemaking is guided, fragmented, restricted or minimal. Both leaders and stakeholders play essential roles in sensemaking. In her research, Maitlis (2005) identified that guided sensemaking occurred when organisational stakeholders were highly engaged in well-organised and planned meetings. She found that engaged stakeholders who raised issues and suggested solutions but had leaders who did not attempt to harness the animation in productive ways resulted in individualistic ways of understanding. This resulted in fragmented sensemaking. When animation was low, even though the processes were highly controlled, the stakeholders experienced low ownership. This scenario restricted sensemaking. Finally, a lack of animation and control in situations requiring dialogue resulted in minimal sensemaking. Although Maitlis (2005) did her study on regional

orchestras experiencing financial hardship, these levels of sensemaking could apply equally to stakeholders' perceptions of the educational organisation to which they belong.

Sensemaking, therefore, is a social activity that occurs through relationships and conversations. This does not necessarily dictate shared interpretations but indicates ongoing dialogue and conversations. McArdle and Coutts (2010) explored the concept of shared sensemaking in schools to develop communities of practice. Building on the idea of reflection but attempting to re-conceptualise it as a social activity with critical dimensions, this investigation linked shared sensemaking to enhanced praxis. Therefore, sensemaking in a social setting acts as a catalyst for action, and enactment leads to further sensemaking, an idea also supported by Maitlis and Christianson (2014).

Sense of Continuity

Sensemaking does not have a clear beginning or end but endures through the life of an organisation. It does not occur at one point in time, but individuals in a system are involved in constantly making sense. This fluidity means individuals are always "in the middle of things" (Weick, 1995, p. 43). Fluidity impacts the ever-changing scenes of an individual's environment and relationships and acts as feedback from which sense is further distilled. This sensemaking property becomes most visible when the equilibrium or flow of continuity is upset or detained, and tension results (Allard-Poesi, 2005), creating a liminal experience. In turn, this liminal state may act as a trigger to accelerate sensemaking. The continuous nature of sensemaking means that "reality is an ongoing accomplishment that emerges from efforts to create order and make retrospective sense of what occurs" (Weick, 1993, p. 635).

Deciphering of Cues

Sensemaking depends on cues that are offered and deciphered. Cues are structures embedded in a system. Weick (1995) originally defined cues as "simple, familiar structures that are seeds from which people develop a larger sense of what may be happening" (p. 50). Individuals within a system use these cues to help them see and interpret the bigger systemic picture. Cues prompt individuals to decide

whether the information is relevant and what explanations are acceptable (Brown et al., 2007). Cues help provide an internal compass that guides an individual towards a system's philosophical understanding and purpose. Weick (1995) maintains that despite the varying contexts of cues and how they may be embellished, they remain essential for sensemaking as they link ideas cognitively and enable a way forward.

Driven by Plausibility Rather Than Accuracy

This sensemaking property may also be defined as the quest for sense. Plausibility rather than accuracy is the driver of sensemaking (Abolafia, 2010; Brown, 2005). The emphasis is on what works rather than on what should be. In this sense, it is pragmatic rather than idealistic (Helms-Mills, 2002). Weick (1995) originally posited that people engage in decision-making based not on the best evidence but on information that is conflicting, incomplete or inaccurate. He offers the following reasons for this phenomenon. First, plausibility wins over accuracy because plausibility is compatible with action, while accuracy may have a stifling effect. Second, Weick (1995) posits that accuracy does not matter because of the unpredictability of our perceptions. Only in retrospect can people test their perceptions.

Institutional Context

Institutional context does not appear in Weick's original list of sensemaking characteristics. Although in one sense implied, Weick's work has been criticised for overlooking the role of social and/or historical contexts in sensemaking. In response to this perceived gap, Weber and Glynn (2006) offer an additional property of sensemaking, promoting the idea that institutions play a role in priming, editing, and triggering sensemaking. These processes, they claim, are mechanisms that limit sensemaking by shaping expectations of the acceptable. Taylor and Van Every (2000) agree that sensemaking does not happen in a vacuum but is contextualised by the institutional context through interpretation and communication. Institutions prime sensemaking when conversations prompt a course of action, draw attention to cues or problems, and link cues to other organisational components. Editing in sensemaking is a term that refers to how people in institutions interpret institutional norms and determine a personal pathway based on what works rather than what complies. This

results in “retrospective editing of actions and meaning” (p. 1651). What results is a “process of regulation through feedback and moderation, enabling institutions to edit or amend the sensemaking in social interaction” (p. 1653). Institutions trigger sensemaking in two ways; by offering focus points that cannot be ignored and by placing individuals or teams in problematic situations within the institution. This final sensemaking property portrayed in the literature has been included on the supposition that Adventist Education as a system is an institution that primes, edits and triggers sensemaking, both intentionally and unintentionally.

Sensemaking as a Way of Reading Historical Literature

In order to make sense of life, people use their experiences, both present and past, to interpret and shape their beliefs and actions. In order to make sense of history, historians delve into the events and people of an era, and, taking into consideration their lived experiences, gain an understanding of why they were motivated to behave in particular ways. Throughout history, including the history of Adventist Education, individuals have acted with courage and creativity, stepping into a future that is only partly informed by knowledge, and embracing change as they enact it (Dervin, 1998). This is the essence of sensemaking, a process of helping individuals attach meaning to their accrued life experiences, and an accepted way of interpreting the world in which people live (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). Therefore, this examination of the literature will explore not only the content of the literature but also author identity and relationship to the context within which the authors are writing. Williams (2020) maintains that in order to understand historical literature and documents, one needs to be aware of the context, the culture and the characters, but there is also a certain amount of speculation that occurs. I chose to read the literature through a sensemaking lens to diminish speculation about what happened, why it happened, and what the outcomes meant for Adventist Education.

As sensemaking typically occurs within an organisation and by the stakeholders, I have attempted to extend the boundaries set by sensemaking. Therefore, I present the following rationale for a sensemaking approach to reading historical sources, based on an application of the sensemaking properties to the events that mark the ongoing development of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of

Adventist Education. The examples offered here are dealt with in greater depth later in the historical section of this chapter.

History is about people and their experiences**.** Therefore, understanding their self-perceived role and the role placed on them by others in an organisation enhances a reading of history. This quest for Identity (Weick, 1995) precipitated reading about the main characters to establish their role in the Adventist Education narrative and how they perceived themselves in relation to the existing organisation. This approach enabled a glimpse into the lives of the key characters and led to a more complete understanding of the narrative.

A second sensemaking property is Retrospective reflection **(**Weick, 1995)**.** Retrospective reflection makes sensemaking of historical events more intentional and therefore aids understanding and offers perspective. When reading historical sources, I applied Retrospective reflection in two ways. The first was to find any evidence where the main characters self-identified a change or changes to their perspective initiated by reflecting on prior events. The second type of Retrospective reflection occurred when the researcher retrospectively reflected on changes documented throughout the eras of Adventist Education.

In sensemaking theory, people make sense not just by reacting to their environment but also by creating their environment. This is called being Enactive of sensible environments (Weick, 1995) and helps the researcher identify where the main characters reacted to their environment and when they enacted to create a new environment. The reader will observe this property in action throughout the narrative.

Awareness of the Social milieu (Weick, 1995) is important when researching historical literature with a sensemaking lens. Questions I asked to determine the role that the social milieu played included:

- Who made this an issue? Was it raised by one person or a group of people?
- Was this decision made by one person, a committee or by consensus of a large group?
- Were the actions to resolve this issue discussed in a social setting?

A sense of Continuity (Weick, 1995) was observed throughout the narrative in two ways. The first was the Continuity of sensemaking, as seen in the writing and actions of the main characters. Although the historical narrative of Adventist Education spans from 1844-2021, beyond the lifetime of any one person, several of the shaping influencers spent three decades or more as active participants in Adventist Education. Throughout their time as educators, their sensemaking acted as a catalyst that modified their attitudes and perceptions from one era to the next. Examples of this sense of Continuity are highlighted later in this chapter. The second observation of Continuity in sensemaking is associated to ideas, especially those ideas relating to the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education. Although sensemaking sometimes resulted in new ideas, it sometimes prompted further development or elaboration on previously held ideas.

The sensemaking property of Deciphering cues (Weick, 1995) increased awareness of the cause and effect of actions and ideas embedded in the historical narrative.

Plausibility (Weick, 1995) often drives action in sensemaking. In reading the history of Adventist Education, this sensemaking property helped explain why people did not immediately act on the advice of influential others, choosing an alternative action instead, or why people did not follow their own advice.

In sensemaking, Institutional context (Weber & Glynn, 2006) plays a role in prompting, priming and editing attitudes and actions. The early days of Adventism provide examples of Institutional context prompting Adventist Education. The reader will encounter these examples later in the chapter.

Without being in history and able to interview the main characters of the Adventist Education story, the following historical narrative focuses less on historical minutia and accuracy and more on the context, shaping events, and actions of the thought leaders who have taken Adventist Education in Australia from its inception to the organisation it is today.

Historical Perspective of Adventist Education Through Sensemaking

To gain an understanding of Adventist Education, it is imperative to study its roots and explore through a sensemaking lens what shaped Adventist Education and

why it is what it is. As with many faith-based school systems, Adventist Education originated in people drawn together by a common set of religious beliefs and a distinctive set of circumstances. From this background, a new Christian denomination gradually emerged; the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Introduction

Education, defined as systematic instruction about our past and present world with an overarching goal of preparing children and youth to take their place in society, has undergone many forms and transitions throughout history. Moving from parents as primary educators of the next generation to dedicated places of schooling for children and youth has been a gradual process, with many educators and philosophers having input along the journey. One significant, albeit controversial, influence on education in the Western world has been religion (de Wet, 2014; Kane, 1954). From Jewish schools to monasteries and elite grammar schools, religion has been linked to education, with Churches often leading the way in the quest to educate the masses. In many Western countries, schools with religious affiliations preceded public education (de Wet, 2014). Considering this context, exploring educational influences shaping the Western world and the events impacting theology and religion is essential.

The period from 1730-1750 is known in North American religious history as The First Great Awakening (Handy, 2011). During this era, preachers such as Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Samuel Davies and David Brainard waxed eloquently in their sermons about the sinfulness of humanity, the need to confess, the offer of salvation and the subsequent reformation of lives. Taking their cues from each other, a religious groundswell began to dominate the social landscape of the New England region of the United States of America. The goal of all this religious zeal was to encourage people to develop personal relationships with God (Bushman, 1969; Handy, 2011).

The beginnings of Adventism coincided with the end of the era named the Second Great Awakening of 1790-1840s (Loughborough, 1892). Also emerging around this era were the Restoration Movement, the Latter-Day Saint Movement, and the Holiness Movement. The preachers of this era were just as eloquent as those who

preceded them and included the names of Charles Finney, Richard Allen, Francis Asbury, Lorenzo Dow, Joseph Smith, William Miller and Ellen White, a humble woman from a simple background. Many of these preachers expounded post-millennialism beliefs (the doctrine in which preaching the second coming of Jesus was seen as paramount), and their goal was to remedy evil in preparation for the second coming of Jesus Christ (Bushman, 1969; Handy, 2011). It was a time of great religious fervour, birthed in the New England region of the United States of America and spreading outward and westward, galloping across the prairies with astounding energy, urgency, and haste. This fervour was accelerated by the spreading acceptance that the return of Jesus was imminent. People flocked to the churches, seeking forgiveness and knowledge about how to be ready for the second coming of Jesus.

The Incubation Years: Educational Thought From 1740 -1844

According to Kane (1954), education has moved in clear cycles in the past 800 years. These cycles are marked by enthusiasm for new methods or subjects, followed by organisation leading to structure, then eventually prompting discontent, resulting in a new direction embraced with enthusiasm. Although not identified by Kane as such, these phases describe a continuous sensemaking cycle.

By 1740, educators and philosophers in the Western world were looking for new ways to meet the needs of society, and education was beginning to settle into the various forms still evident today in many countries (Painter, 1920). Public schools operated alongside private schools, many of which had religious underpinnings. Education was becoming more than a preparation for the Church or law, and technical education was beginning to appear. In attempting to find their identity, school leaders were listening to the voices of philosophers, teachers, and theologians, who, themselves, were products of their own lived experiences. These voices, proclaiming everything from rigid routines to extremes of permissive behaviour, influenced educational thought leading up to the turn of the 18th century (Kane, 1954). Despite their varied philosophies, educators were united in their quest for education for all, not just the elite, and although the notion of a classical education still prevailed, increasing pressure for education in agriculture and trades emerged in response to the needs of society. Among these educational voices which people both heard and responded to were Rousseau (1712-1778), Pestalozzi (1746-1837),

Benjamin Franklin (1760-1790), Horace Mann (1796-1859,) Oberlin (1740-1826) and (Knight, 1983).

Jean Jacques Rousseau was a unique philosopher and writer whose metaphorical novel, Émile, appealed to those who had suffered a restrictive and harsh education (Boyd, 1963; Mayer, 1966). He promoted education through experience rather than direct instruction, through leading rather than driving, and through example rather than teaching, believing that eventually, the students would arrive at a point at which they could reason and be reasoned with (Kane, 1954). Although lauded publicly for his revolutionary ideas, his methodology was rudimentary and disjointed and few of his ideas were ever applied in practical ways (Boyd, 1963; Kane, 1954).

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, despite his interest in Rousseau's ideas, also failed to successfully implement a practical method. However, according to Kane (1958), he reiterated constantly that "education must aim at the complete and harmonious development of all human powers" (p. 335) and that "democracy demanded school education for every child" (p. 336). Pestalozzi's ideas of education extended beyond the development of the intellect and included ethical and practical aspects (Mayer, 1966). He believed that nature study could contribute more to education than intellectual knowledge and saw tending a garden as a solid preparation for citizenship and a strong work ethic (Hayward, 1979). He promoted the use of object lessons to teach physical science and promoted the vital role of moral and religious training in a child's education. Some of these ideas were to have a lasting impact on educational thought.

Benjamin Franklin, a deist and early educational policy writer, also positioned education as a right of democracy but disdained any association of schools with Church organisations (Kane, 1954). Horace Mann supported this view and campaigned widely to disallow government support for faith-based schools (Kane, 1954).

John Frederick Oberlin offered an alternative approach. Steeped in religion, he transitioned from clergyman to educator by modelling good farming practices to his parishioners, introducing strains of fruit and vegetables suited to their growing conditions, and introducing some cash crops. He then broached the subject of

schools, and getting little support, he went deeply into debt and financed the building of two schools out of his meagre wages. Oberlin's ideas garnered more success in practice than other educational philosophies.

The curriculum taught in Oberlin's schools had implications for the development of Adventist Education a century later, on another continent. In addition to the regular skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic taught in schools, Oberlin added morals and religion and a range of vocational training that included carpentry, shoemaking, blacksmithing, bookbinding, painting and other valuable skills needed in his remote parish. Oberlin's philosophy of education presented as a coeducational holistic and harmonious model, with a balance between book learning and practical skills, undergirded by biblical teaching (Cadwallader, 1958). His positive influence on the wellbeing of those for whom he was responsible attracted the attention of patrons, who donated funds to establish small industries and further improve the living standard of the people.

Such was Oberlin's influence that others took up his innovative ideas. Two men who admired Oberlin's philosophy of education were Presbyterian ministers Philo Stewart and John Shipherd. These two devout Christians decided to set up a College in New England, USA, based on the pattern of Oberlin's schools and in honour of his philosophy they named it Oberlin College (Cadwallader, 1958).

The first prospectus of Oberlin College stated, "While care will be taken not to lower the standard of intellectual culture, no pains will be spared to combine it with the best physical and moral education" (cited in Cadwallader, 1958, p. 12). Further, it stated, "All its students, rich and poor, male and female, are required to labour four hours daily" (Oberlin circular, 1834, cited in Fletcher (1943). This work included such activities as chopping wood, digging potatoes, burning stumps, cooking, mending, sewing and working in the dairy and sawmill. All activities were closely regulated. In addition to mandatory daily work, basic health principles surrounding sleep, diet, exercise and appropriate leisure activities were built into the school's culture

More great minds than these influenced education in the incubation period leading up to the birth of Adventist Education. Others, including Jefferson, Herbart, and Froebel contributed to the shifting landscape of education (Mayer, 1966).

However, more than minds and global events influence education. Sometimes minor events according to world standards can play a major role in sensemaking as will be seen in the next era.

Sensemaking in the Incubation Years of Adventist Education

Change accelerates sensemaking, and the years of 1740-1844 were years of revolutionary change in the Western world. It was the era of the Industrial Revolution that was responsible for the shift from agrarian economies to manufacturing economies. This prompted thought leaders in education to examine the purpose of education and what it should look like in praxis, and consequently individuals began to endorse the ideas of practical training to service manufacturing with competent workers. Industrialisation also paved the way for compulsory education for all, and the opportunity to specialise in areas such as medicine, steam production and the textile industry. Women were granted limited access to education although governments began to offer support for educational ventures, including universities and colleges where teachers could be trained (Painter, 1920).

Adding to social and economic changes offered by the Industrial Revolution (1760-1840), were political actions including widespread colonisation, the French Revolution (1798-1799), and the American War of Independence (1775-1783). Even religion underwent radical changes during this period. To this point, religion was more an inheritance than a choice, except for a few minor religions. Broadly speaking, religion, particularly Protestantism, actively promoted education, (Aston, 2002).

The impact of these social, economic and political changes accelerated widespread sensemaking and education felt the impact of these changes. The thought leaders in education during the incubation years were individually responding to the social milieu of the era and developing their own theories on the philosophy, purpose and praxis of education. Events such as the Industrial Revolution acted as cues and by the mid-1840s educational shapers had begun to espouse new ideas that eschewed a classical education for one that was more practical, purposeful, and catered to all seeking the offer of a free education, at least for the primary years.

The changes in the educational landscape dispersed widely and set the scene for the emerging movement that is the focus of the next historical era of Adventist Education.

Table 2.1

Summary of the Incubation Years of Adventist Education: 1740-1844

	The incubation years: 1740-1844
Philosophy	Varied philosophies in response to revolutionary changes in society with an emerging common theme of education for all, not just the elite
Purpose	To offer education to the masses
Praxis	Gradual shift from a purely classical education to include more practical subjects and some specialisation in tertiary education.
Shapers	Rousseau (1712-1799), Pestalozzi (1746-1837), Franklin (1760-1790), Mann (1796-1859) and Oberlin (1740-1826)

The Formative Years: 1844-1889

With the fervour of religious rhetoric ringing in his ears, a New England farmer by the name of William Miller turned to the study of the Bible to clarify his religious beliefs. Deeply religious, Miller, like others of the time, was fascinated by Bible prophecy, and his study led him to believe that Jesus was coming soon. Miller's quest to understand the Bible continued for more than a decade before he went public with his beliefs and began to attract a growing number of followers who called themselves Millerites and soon formed themselves into a movement (Olsen, 1925). Writing, he said,

> I found, in going through with the Bible, the end of all things was clearly and emphatically predicted, both as to time and manner…After a number of years I was compelled by the Spirit of God, the power of truth, and the love of souls, to take up my cross and proclaim these things to a dying and perishing world (Miller, cited in Loughborough, 1892, p. 31).

In Church history, Miller's claim to fame most likely centres around setting dates for the return of Christ. Although disappointed with earlier date setting, a collaborative approach between Miller and his followers resulted in a new anticipated date of October 22, 1844.

At this point, the Millerites were a loose collection of followers with a common belief. This belief in a fixed date for the return of Christ made the concept of future mission and gospel sharing redundant as they waited for the soon-expected end of the world as they knew it. Unfortunately for them, Jesus did not return on the anticipated date. This crushing event became known as The Great Disappointment.

J. N. Andrews, a Millerite who endured The Great Disappointment, expressed his feelings as he struggled with what had happened. "But those were disappointed who expected the Lord in 1843 and 1844…We acknowledge the disappointment but cannot acknowledge that this furnishes a just reason for denying the hand of God in this work" (Andrews, cited in Loughborough, 1892, p. 90). Despite the failure of Jesus to return, the Millerites still anticipated his soon coming and therefore felt no compulsion to share the gospel with others. This stance impacted more than their beliefs. It had a profound impact on their attitude to the education of their children. It was nearly a decade after the Great Disappointment before the Millerites relinquished their shut-door stance on mission and even longer before the gospel commission of Mathew 28 was taken up by Church leaders (Knight, 2015). This coincided roughly with the adoption of the name Seventh-day Adventists chosen on October 1, 1860 by 25 delegates of the approximately 3000 individuals who were looking forward to the return of Jesus. The name Seventh-day Adventist was chosen to express the fledgling Church's belief in the sanctity of the seventh day (Saturday) as a day of worship and their beliefs about the second coming of Jesus Christ.

It is difficult to imagine a Christian denomination that was neither missional nor believed in education. However, Knight, an Adventist historian, philosopher, and educator, states that "early Adventists were both anti-mission and anti-education" (Knight, 2017, p. 5). When the early Adventists did grasp the concept of mission, they did not associate it with education but saw the two as mutually exclusive for nearly two decades after the Millerite disappointment (Knight, 2018). Education, let alone Christian Education, was generally considered unnecessary given the perceived

imminence of Christ's return. Not all, however, subscribed to this idea. James White, a leader in the emerging Adventist Church, wrote in response to a letter, "The fact that Christ is very soon coming is no reason why the mind should not be improved. A well-disciplined and informed mind can best receive and cherish the sublime truths of the Second Advent" (Review and Herald, 1862, p. 29). His wife agreed with him. She was to greatly impact Adventist Education in the ensuing years.

As the fledgling Adventist Church achieved steady growth and consolidated its position towards a missional objective, it began to develop strategies to help it reach its goals. Some changes in their practice included establishing a publishing house in 1849, the centralisation of Church organisation in 1863, and the emergence of health care in 1866 (Knight, 1983). All these preceded the founding of schools, but eventually, the need for ministers to serve the Church and enact its mission became urgent. Recommendations from this committee included the establishment of a school. The purpose of this school was clearly identified as a training place to support the mission of spreading the gospel message. It also heralded later statements of purpose about the notion of service. In response to this missional purpose, James White proposed that the curriculum reflect biblical knowledge and skills befitting missionaries, teachers, editors, and printers (Knight, 1983). This idea of educating to serve the aims of a Church organisation mirrors the purpose of schools established by the early Christian Church.

While it would be comfortable to presume that mission was the sole motivator for the founding of Adventist Education, there is evidence that this was coupled with more pragmatic motivation. Following The Great Disappointment of 1844, there was a desire to protect children from influences that public education may have on their faith and moral standards. Furthermore, in the wake of 1844, the scorn and ridicule that many early Adventists or Millerites and their children faced prompted retrospective reflection and renewed interest in educating their children where they would find shelter from the scorn of others (Taylor V, 2023). This idea aligns with a castle mentality (Shields, 2007) where schools serve as strongholds against the evil influences of the world and offer places of safety free from derision.

James White was most likely the first to speak favourably about educating children and youth. Had James White lived in the 1960s, he would have been what

Everett M. Rogers calls an early adopter (Rogers, 2003). Although Ellen White, James's wife, wrote more on the topic of education, James was the mover and initiator in the young Seventh-day Adventist denomination. Whether it was the establishment of publishing houses, evangelism or medical work, finance, or Church organisation, James led with a passion, forging the way ahead of his peers (Graham, 1983) and enacting his beliefs.

With a limited formal education of only 29 weeks in school, James became an authorised teacher. However, after two years of teaching, he resigned in 1842, not because he did not enjoy teaching or value education, but because he felt a greater calling to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ (Graham, 1983). This change of direction, however, did not lessen his passion for education.

James White supported the early attempts at starting schools for the children of Seventh-day Adventist families, including those which operated briefly in Battle Creek, run by Bell and Holland (Cadwallader, 1958). White persisted, and with his wife's support, the idea of a school for Battle Creek became a reality. Having achieved this goal, White set a new one: the establishment of a training school for Christian workers. He remonstrated with those who trivialised the importance of education due to their belief in the imminent return of Jesus Christ and wrote, "This is a grand mistake…I know of no branch that needs our attention so much at the present time as the denominational school" (White, cited in Knight, 1983, p. 21). James White witnessed Battle Creek College open on January 4, 1875, and for nearly five years, served as acting president until the appointment of Sidney Brownsberger (Graham, 1983).

Although James White did not live to see the establishment of a Church-wide system of Adventist schools, there is evidence that he was the principal initiator of Adventist Education. He relentlessly pursued the idea of a system of schools that offered an education unique to Adventism, and he did so with passion.

Ellen White wife supported her husband's position and wrote and spoke extensively to the Adventist Church over several decades on the topic of education. Her writing is still held in high regard by many Adventist educators. Lindsay (1978) identifies four distinct events in the early stages of her life that shaped who she was and help explain her influence within Adventism and Adventist Education.

These events were a childhood accident that left her sickly and unable to attend school, an acceptance of William Miller's preaching on the soon return of Jesus, leading her to baptism, The Great Disappointment of 1844, and her first vision shortly after. Throughout these years, Ellen continually struggled to reconcile her health situation with her growing beliefs. Ellen was to go through a spiritual crisis and a time of questioning between the ages of 10 and 14, and it was not until deep soul searching that she reconciled her adversity and her faith in God at age 16 (White, 1915).

The fledgling Church was cautious with her initial claim of what God had shown her. However, after several public manifestations of her visions, Church leaders applied the biblical tests of a prophet found in Isaiah 8:20, Deuteronomy 13:1-5, Matthew 7:15-16, and Deuteronomy 18:20-22, and accepted her as God's special messenger. This acceptance helps explain why White's writings on the topic of education have been treated with respect at the very least, and authority at the most within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Official websites and publications of the Seventh-day Adventist Church promote her teaching and quote her writings.

Knight describes Ellen G. White, on the topic of education, as "the prophetic thought leader from its inception until her death in 1915" (Knight, 1983, p. 28). Her role in the development of Adventist Education is without parallel, and she was the only Adventist leader who maintained a position of significance in the Seventh-day Adventist Church from its beginnings and through those formative years up until around 1910 (Knight, 1983).

Knight (1983) divides Ellen White's writing into three distinct periods: her early writing on Education (1872-91), the 1890s or experimental period of Adventist Education, and her early 20th century writings. Lindsay (1978, p. 18) gives a count of educational articles written by Ellen White during these three distinct periods as: "20 articles from 1872-1890, 41 articles from 1891-1900 and 13 articles from 1901-1915". These articles and personal testimonies written to Church members form the basis of books on the topic of Christian Education.

Ellen White did not intentionally start addressing the issue of Christian Education until 1872, 28 years after The Great Disappointment. Before this time, she had only addressed the parents' role in rearing children. Her earliest significant

writing on the topic of education was a piece aptly titled *Proper Education*, in which she advocated for "the physical, mental, moral and religious education of children" (White, 1875, p. 128), encouraging the Christian teacher to have "an equal interest in the physical, mental, moral, and spiritual education of his scholars" (White, 1875, p. 131). This was a novel thought to those who favoured the more classical education of the day, but resonating with the ideas of Pestalozzi from a century earlier. She also articulated a purpose for Christian Education, stating, "The great object of education is to enable us to use the powers which God has given us in such a manner as will best represent the religion of the Bible and promote the glory of God" (White, 1875, p. 153).

In establishing a pattern for Adventist schools, Ellen White turned to the Bible as her inspiration. In its pages, she found reference to the schools of the prophets (2 Kings 2:3-5; 4:38). Using this as her foundation; she established a set of eight characteristics common to the Old Testament biblical schools and what she desired for Adventist schools. These schools of ancient Israel were founded by Samuel to guide the spiritual and moral development of the youth in an era of corruption and to ensure the nation's leadership was in godly hands (White, 1958, p. 592). Akers & Scarbrough (1993) claim that these schools were the earliest examples of institutionalised religious education, and Ellen White found in them a pattern that she promoted for establishing schools.

The characteristics of the schools of the prophets were biblical, educational, and practical. Biblically, they were based on the study of the Scriptures. The scriptures were their primary textbook, and from it, they learned to trace the benevolent blessings of God through their history as a nation with a curriculum focused on understanding God's character and His law (Taylor V, 2016). They also studied doctrine, including lessons on tithing (Malachi 3:6-12), the judgement (Zephaniah 1:14) and the coming of the Messiah, His role in salvation, and Sabbath-keeping (Isaiah 58:13). As Ellen White studied these schools of the Bible, she discovered that they were not just devoted to the study of the Scriptures but had a balanced curriculum which also included music (2 Kings 3:15), health (Isaiah 38:21), and useful physical activity (2 Kings 6:1-7). The teachers in these schools were godly men who taught the scripture with sincerity and depth but also worked

alongside their students in practical and outdoor pursuits such as tilling the soil, making every aspect of learning sacred (White, 1903; White, 1958). The students developed character in this environment, learning to act justly and live with mercy and humility (1 Samuel 10:25; Joel 3:14; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 7:8-10). As the schools of the prophets aimed to discover the truth about God's character and bring about reformation in the backsliding nation of Israel, the students were also involved in proclaiming the precious truth about God's enduring love for his children.

Ellen White first wrote about the schools of the prophets sometime after she first began writing on the topic of Christian Education. She was always searching for new wisdom, always listening for inspiration, always searching for a blueprint. Skrzypaszek (2017) posits that "Ellen White's understanding of education developed progressively, first concerning the potential for education to contribute to life in the changing world and second regarding its role in Christian mission" (p. 28).

For two decades following The Great Disappointment, Adventist parents were torn between the belief that the Lord's coming was imminent and, therefore, education was not needed and their desire to have an education for their children that was free from secular thought. Many, after deliberation, returned their children to public schools. Others chose to take matters into their own hands and established the first Adventist school at Bucks Bridge. This was a privately owned and operated venture established between 1854 and 1856 (Cadwallader, 1958), with Martha Byington recorded as the teacher (Anderson, 1975). The second school was also a private venture, taught by Mrs. N. M. Osgood, and established to provide primary education for the children of Adventists living in Battle Creek. The school was unsuccessful and could not support the teacher, so it closed. Robert Holland established a second venture in Battle Creek with support from Mary Louise Morton and John F. Byington (Anderson, 1975). This pattern of private schools operating for children of Adventist families and then closing was evident in Battle Creek for five years (Cadwallader, 1958). When the last attempt to start a school ended in 1861, the dream of Adventist Education appeared to have died. A new public school was built in the area and staffed with superior teachers in an attempt by the local government to cater to the Adventists. While their children were in elementary school, this worked. However, when the children entered the public high school, the secular

ethos and perceived undesirable characters of the students sent the local Adventist population scurrying to attempt another Adventist school (Cadwallader, 1958). Goodloe Harper Bell's introduction to the Seventh-day Adventist Church was through a friend he accompanied for treatment to the Western Health Reform Institute in Battle Creek; an institution operated by Seventh-day Adventists. The following year, Bell, who suffered ill health himself, returned to Battle Creek seeking help for his own health issues (Lindsay, 1982). Bell got more than he bargained for. He encountered beliefs that were unfamiliar and peculiar to his thinking. Bell struggled to make sense of what he was hearing, juxtaposing new doctrine against old and weighing up the evidence. Despite the compelling persuasion of his roommate, Osborne, a committed Seventh-day Adventist, Bell clung to his own beliefs, refusing to change his stance on biblical doctrine.

Nevertheless, the Adventist Church acknowledges Bell as one of the most influential educators in the early history of Adventist Education (Cadwallader, 1958; Lindsay, 1982). Where discussion and exposition could not convince him, relationships and prayer, it appeared, could, and did. Bell's perceptions of Adventism changed as his relationship with Osborne grew, especially after hearing Osborne pray for him night after night (Lindsay, 1982). For Bell, this relationship was to shape his perceptions of Adventism to the extent that he joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church, left his career as a successful public-school teacher, and devoted the rest of his working life to establishing a religious education system for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, writing lessons that provided a systematic way for children to study the Bible (Lindsay, 1982).

From all accounts (Cadwallader, 1958; Lindsay, 1982), Bell was a gifted teacher who not only taught thoroughly but inspired his students to achieve their best. He was a product of the education of his times, and his perceptions became his actions. Bell's philosophy of education may have been partially shaped by the ideas of Oberlin, and Oberlin College, situated near where he lived for part of his teen years. However, whether he was ever a student at Oberlin College is a moot point (Lindsay, 1982). Cadwallader (1958) presumes a connection to Oberlin College, citing similarities in some of his ideas about education which he posits may have

influenced Bell's appreciation of Ellen White's counsel on Christian Education, while another historian (Anderson, 1975) claims that Bell was self-educated.

In contrast, Hook (1978) claims that Bell was Oberlin-trained. Background aside, Bell appears to have entered Adventist Education with concepts that resonated with the ideas taking shape within Adventism (Cadwallader, 1958), as the ideologies of White and Oberlin had inherent similarities. Bell is credited with starting the first officially supported Adventist school in 1872 in Battle Creek. Although Bell was influential in shaping ideas about Adventist Education in the early years, he was not appointed principal when the school expanded from teaching the three Rs to include college-level studies that would prepare students for the missional task of proclaiming the third angel's message to the whole world. Sidney Brownsberger, who held an M.A. degree from the University of Michigan, was appointed principal. Although the historical accounts of this period are sometimes conflicting, a clear position emerges. Brownsberger came from a classical education background, and Bell had been influenced by Oberlin and Ellen and James White. This created a conflict of ideas (Kilgour, 2019), so when the Whites returned to Battle Creek from the West in 1874, Ellen addressed the school board, reiterating her previous words that supported the inclusion of a wide range of subjects, not least of which was the study of the Bible (Anderson, 1975).

White further elaborated on where the school should be located and other aspects of the ideal school's operation so foreign to Brownsberger that he responded, "I do not know anything about the conducting of such a school" (Brownsberger, cited in Anderson, 1975). After much dialogue, the school board decided to defer to the familiar. This meant a curriculum that included French, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, physiology, rhetoric, grammar, arithmetic, and geography (Anderson, 1975). It was not until some years on from this incident that Brownsberger is quoted as saying, "Industries are a heresy in a liberal arts college… and I was a young educated fool" (cited in Anderson (1975, p. 5). This statement demonstrates a complete turnaround in the attitude of Brownsberger to the advice of Ellen White.

Dr Alexander McLearn, appointed as principal in 1881, continued the journey that Brownsberger had begun, leading to even more conflict over the purpose of Adventist Education (Anderson, 1975). McLearn, although well-educated, was not a

Seventh-day Adventist and felt no obligation to adhere to the counsel given by Ellen White concerning the recently established college. The unfortunate conclusion to McLearn's appointment was the closure of the Battle Creek school in 1883. Bell and Brownsberger both left Battle Creek to set up new Adventist Schools in South Lancaster (now Atlantic Union College) and Healdsburg Academy (now Pacific Union College), opening the way for Adventist Education to expand (Anderson, 1975).

Interestingly, no Bible classes were built into the school program during these formative years, prompting Ellen White to caution:

> There is a danger that our college will be turned from its original design. God's purpose has been made known, that our people should have an opportunity to study the sciences and at the same time to learn the requirements of His word. Biblical lectures should be given; the study of the Scriptures should have the first place in our system of education. (White, 1899, p. 4)

Her advice in this matter achieved gradual acceptance.

Sensemaking in the Formative Years of Adventist Education

Sensemaking is accelerated during times of crisis or when a turn of events acts as a catalyst for thought and change (Helms et al., 2010; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). Three main events accelerated sensemaking in the formative years of Adventist Education. These events were *The Great Disappointment* of 1844, the formal organisation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1863, and the founding of Battle Creek College in 1872.

William Miller's teachings were central to *The Great Disappointment* of 1844. Miller's personal quest to make sense of Bible prophecy lasted for more than a decade before he began to share his ideas. These ideas spawned a movement. Each person joining the movement had a strong sense of personal commitment, and their association with others was based on the commonality of belief with a strong sense of "us" as the faithful and everyone else as the "lost". This belief gave them a strong sense of identity as they waited for the end of the world.

The end of the world did not eventuate, and there was much retrospective reflection as the small group of Millerites regrouped and searched biblical scriptures for cues to make sense of their dire situation (Loughborough, 1892). Although some left the Millerite movement, discouraged, others drew strength from those around them and did not lose their faith in God's promises. Some looked around for places where they could educate their children, others took the pragmatic approach and sent their children back to public schools, while others perceived this as a denial of their faith in the imminent coming of Jesus. This stance of plausibility over idealism was these early believers' way of making sense of their situation.

The in-and-out experiences with public education provided the catalyst that moved the Adventist Church closer to understanding what they considered a proper education for their children. It also showed that one event can be viewed in different ways by people and lead to different outcomes. Gradually, the ideas of mission and education were challenged by individuals, including James White, who felt that both were integral to the emerging Church's identity and purpose. After nearly two decades of continually questioning their purpose post-1844, the early pioneers began to focus on an emerging sense of mission that included the need for education, but at this point, there was no real institutional context to drive sensemaking.

The second event that acted as a catalyst for sensemaking and opened the door to change was the formal establishment of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1863. The fact that 25 delegates chose this name, through dialogue and discussion, demonstrates the social milieu of sensemaking. This event provided an institutional context that would play a role in the future development of Adventist Education. Up to this point, individuals had spoken out about various issues pertaining to the fledgling Church but there had been no united voice.

An early decision of the newly organised Church was to establish a school committee, and with this action, education was added to the mission of the Adventist Church, although it was nearly a decade before the first Church-sponsored school was established. Education followed the publishing and distribution of literature ministry (1849), the Church's formal organisation (1863), and the healthcare ministry (1866) (Knight, 1983). The Seventh-day Adventist Church was beginning

an ongoing process of responding to the bigger picture of purpose and enacting its mission as members dialogued about their collective purpose.

The third crisis period in the formative years of Adventist Education occurred over an extended period of time and involved the establishment of Battle Creek College. Several people, seeing a need for Christian Education for their children, took a plausible route through the lack of formal organisation and made attempts at operating private homeschools but these efforts were short-lived (Cadwallader, 1958).

Finally, the momentum for a Church-sponsored school gained traction, but when it eventuated, it was for young adults rather than school children. Money was raised by enthusiastic Church members and the school opened under the leadership of James White who had limited education but was willing to work. He was followed by Harper Goodloe Bell whose ideas about education aligned closely to those of James and Ellen White. It was after Bell left and was replaced by Sidney Brownsberger that problems began to emerge. Brownsberger held strong views about education and favoured a classical approach which he began to implement immediately. When individuals with opposing views come together there is bound to be a clash of opinions. Brownsberger was followed by McLearn who had even less knowledge or interest in the ideas of Ellen White on the matter of Christian Education. Issues became too divisive and Battle Creek College was closed in 1881.

Here we observe the social milieu of sensemaking. As key stakeholders brought their lived experiences to the boardroom table, dialogue and relationships played a pivotal role. However, there is a property of sensemaking that adopts plausibility over accuracy, so the school board acted pragmatically and concluded that the school program should align with the popular colleges of the era. Ellen White was not happy with this situation and in 1874, addressed the school board over conflicting issues, one of which was the teaching of Bible.

With sensemaking, dialogue such as observed here and narratives are enacted over time, and perspectives change. In this instance, Brownsberger is quoted as reflecting several years on from this incident, “Industries are a heresy in a liberal arts college… and I was a young educated fool” (cited in Anderson,1975, p. 5). This statement reflects his opinion when he became principal and his retrospective self-

assessment some years after his appointment when he acknowledged the wisdom of Ellen White's views on education.

At the end of the formative years, Adventist Education was still struggling with its identity, institutional context was somewhat haphazard, and individuals were using their own sensemaking to enact Adventist Education. One consistency was the introduction of Bible as a subject into the school curriculum. This period gives a practical example of the time it takes to process new ideas, make sense of them, and eventually begin to put them into practice (Table 2.2). New ideas gain acceptance through time and are often hard-won. It also demonstrates the role of sensemaking in times of crisis, such as the closing of the Battle Creek school.

The formative years of Adventist Education were characterised by individual ideas about Education that alternatively diverged or converged as an organisational approach to education gradually began to emerge over more than half a century. Once formed, putting those ideas into practice was even more challenging, as the next era of Adventist Education demonstrates.

Table 2.2

Summary of the Formative Years of Adventist Education: 1844-1899

The formative years of Adventist Education: 1844-1899	
Philosophy	Early Formative years: Education perceived as unnecessary Post 1872: embryonic ideas of children as created in the image of God (White, 1872)
Purpose	To train Church workers who "will best represent the religion of the Bible and promote the glory of God" (White, 1875, p.160). To foster the harmonious development of physical, mental, moral, and religious education Character Development
Praxis	Inconsistent and dependent on school leadership. The only distinctive to develop was the inclusion of Bible study in the school program.
Shapers	William Miller, Ellen White, James White, Goodloe Harper Bell, Sidney Brownsberger

The Experimental Years (1): Adventist Education in North America 1890-1900

The word experiment contains connotations of testing the implementation of new ideas until those proven replace existing ideas. Adventist Education from 1890-1900 was characterised by experimentation. After the Battle Creek school closed, those who had taught there dispersed to found other Adventist schools and training colleges from the East Coast to the West Coast of the United States of America, each principal experimenting with his own brand of Adventist Education.

It was a time of questioning the persistent model of classical education. Myers (1976) notes that while there was agreement about the purpose of Adventist Education, that is, to train Church and Church institution workers, the praxis was often the topic of heated debate. Some still favoured the traditional classical approach to education, despite the counsel of Ellen White to found schools that were distinct from those already existing. Others wanted to follow her counsel and introduce practical subjects that would be helpful for missionaries, preachers, and teachers but found their efforts blocked by conservative school boards.

On one point only, did they achieve consensus. After the Battle Creek experience, all Adventist schools at all levels began to include the teaching of the Bible as part of their curriculum. Although not rapidly accepted, the teaching of the Bible in all Adventist schools demonstrated that over time, new concepts were objectified and internalised, becoming standard praxis in Adventist schools. During this time of experimentation in Adventist Education, Ellen White continued to uphold the role of the Bible as a subject in schools, positing that “as an educating power, the Bible is without rival” (White, 1894, p. 37). She also highlighted the importance of salvation through Bible study, writing, “God speaks to us in his Word. Here we have in clearer lines the revelation of his character, of his dealings with men, and the great work of redemption” (White, 1894, p. 56). White also began to write about nature as a revelation of God; penning the following: “Nature speaks to our senses without ceasing. The open heart will be impressed with the love and glory of God as revealed through the works of his hands” (White, 1894, p. 54). These twin revelations would be a recurring theme in her writing.

She emphasised Bible reading and expressed concern over the secular reading promoted to students (White, 1894, p. 16). She encouraged discernment in the choice

of reading, music, and recreational activities. Ellen White also turned her attention to the role of the teacher. This excerpt from *Christian Education* demonstrates the importance she placed on the spiritual role of the teacher and their personal connection with God.

> When every teacher shall forget self, and feel a deep interest in the success and prosperity of his pupils, realising that they are God's property, and that he must render an account for his influence upon their minds and character, then we shall have a school in which angels will love to linger. Jesus will look approvingly upon the work of the teachers, and will send his grace into the hearts of the students. (White, 1894, p. 41)

During this era, Ellen White began to expand her ideas about children, born in God's image (See Table 2.3), revealing God's image and the concept of character transformation through grace (White 1894, p. 46). She introduced the terms "higher" education and "true" education, writing that "the true higher education is what makes students acquainted with God and his word, and fits them for eternal life" (White, 1897, p. 23). For White, higher education did not equate with the college education of her day. However, it referred to education with a higher purpose rather than the classical education offered beyond regular school (White, 1897).

While White was elaborating on her ideas about Christian Education, others were modifying or changing their perceptions during this era. Not only was Bible study on the agenda, but issues surrounding the study of physiology and the inclusion of physical activity continued to be debated and eventually adopted. Even Brownsberger, who had resisted Ellen White's counsel while principal at Battle Creek College, implemented a work/study program at Healdsburg College in 1882, with satisfying results (Standish, 1968).

By 1900, Ellen White had begun to actively encourage the establishment of primary and secondary schools (Myers, 1976), promoting higher education and writing about the praxis of Christian Education in Adventist schools. She had the satisfaction of witnessing former opponents of her ideas in North America (e.g., Sidney Brownsberger and S. N. Haskell) accept and implement them as the purpose of higher education began to permeate their minds and become the foundation of praxis in Adventist Education.

Historical Perspective of Adventist Education in Australia Through Sensemaking

Although Adventist Education in North America continued to grow and flourish, this chapter now narrows its focus on Adventist Education in Australia from 1890 until the present. Although developing an Adventist Education organisation that responded to the historical and cultural influences of Australian society, North American Adventist educators have continued to shape the philosophy and purpose of Adventist Education in Australia and challenge its praxis. Ellen White's influence has remained strong, although sometimes dominated by pragmatic decision-making and the operation of a growing number of schools.

The experimental Years (2): Adventist Education From 1890-1900 in Australia

With the Seventh-day Adventist Church firmly established, Ellen White reminded its leaders that they were a movement to take the gospel to the whole world. She encouraged them to look past their limited mindset and explore opportunities beyond the New England region to the West Coast USA, Europe, and Australia (White, 1915). This was a daunting task for a denomination of only around 8000, and consequently, Australia was not perceived as a priority.

Although Adventist pioneers Corliss and Haskell volunteered to travel to Australia, institutional approval was not given for nearly a decade. In 1884, the Seventh-day Adventist Church voted to establish a mission in Australia. Corliss and Haskell led the small group of Adventist pioneers to a country they knew very little about. They settled in Melbourne in 1885, set up a printing press and began to publish a monthly paper, *The Bible Echo and Signs of the Times* (Lindsay, 1978). This action commenced the establishment of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia.

Aware of the Adventist Church's journey in North America, and perceiving their need for trained youth to lead the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia, Corliss and Haskell soon began to consider establishing a training school. In 1888 the newly formed Australian Conference voted it a priority (Lindsay, 1978). Simultaneously the Church leadership, following the counsel of Ellen White, began to think about the education of young people from Seventh-day Adventist families.

Lindsay (1978) posits that it is likely that the controversy about religious education in state-operated schools, an issue that was being vigorously debated in parliament at that time, triggered interest in the educational needs of children. The July 1, 1889 issue of the *Bible Echo and Signs of the Times* published in an editorial:

> We fully believe in the importance of religious training and instruction for children and youth and for that purpose we as a people have established numerous schools and classes where the Bible and its truths form a prominent part of instruction and where they are taught in harmony with the views we hold, but we would not expect that the State would undertake to teach the views of Seventh-day Adventists; and we should emphatically object to our children being taught the very things we have been called on to unlearn. (p. 35)

Concurrent to their quest to establish the right kind of school, the leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia repeatedly asked Ellen White and Willie, her son, to come to Australia to help them establish an Adventist presence. Ellen White was reluctant to leave America, not surprising for a 64-year widow of 10 years when the Church leaders decided she should travel to Australia. She arrived in December 1891 in time for the annual meetings where representatives of the six Australian Churches would make decisions about the establishment of a school.

When Ellen White arrived in Australia in 1891, it was more than two decades since she had begun to speak and write on the topic of education and nearly 20 years since the publication of her first booklet, *Proper Education*, devoted to the topic of Christian Education. With a writing career on this topic spanning two decades and some rigorous discussion on Christian Education, Ellen White continued to develop and clarify her understanding of Christian Education.

Just a few months prior to her departure for Australia, an article by Ellen White appeared in the *Bible Echo and Signs of the Times*, which most likely would have been read by the Australian Adventists. She wrote:

> The true object of education is to restore the image of God in the soul. In the beginning God created man in his own likeness. He endowed him with noble qualities. His mind was well-balanced and all the powers of his being were

> harmonious. But the fall and its effects have perverted these gifts. Sin has marred and well-nigh obliterated the image of God in man. It was to restore this that the plan of salvation was devised and a life of probation was granted to man. To bring him back to perfection in which he was first created is the great object of life – the object that underlies every other. It is the work of parents and teachers in the education of the youth to co-operate with the Divine purpose and in so doing they are laborers together with God. (White, 1893, p. 77)

This passage identifies her philosophy-based purpose concerning the restorative work of Christian Education. Therefore, it was with these strong beliefs that Ellen White landed on Australian shores.

The Australian scenario presented a group of newly converted Seventh-day Adventists, representing six newly formed Adventist Churches, engaging in discussion about the establishment of a school. The site chosen was on St Kilda Rd, in Melbourne. Although it had a central location, the land was certainly not large enough for agricultural pursuits. Despite this, Ellen White approved the site, considering a temporary site that could begin operation almost immediately a better option than waiting to find an ideal location to purchase (Gilson, 1963). There were at least two prevailing ideas about the nature of the school. First, this training school should be patterned after Adventist schools in North America. The second opinion, held by Ellen White, was that this training school should be a pattern school for Adventist schools globally, showing them what true Christian Education looked like (White, 1900).

The first principal, L. J. Rousseau, was an import from America, a man whose ideas about education had been shaped by the educational philosophy and writing of Ellen White (Lindsay, 1978). Ellen White, it appears, had become a virtual mentor to those who read her writings, and the substance of her ideas was spreading widely and influencing Adventist educators. From Ellen White's perspective, however, there were too many distracting influences in America, so it appeared she welcomed the opportunity to influence the curriculum and concepts on which this first Australian Adventist school would operate. She continued to support the school with encouragement and personal donations through the first year of operation (De

Berg, 2017). She travelled to New Zealand, where she recruited more students for the second year of operation (Lindsay, 1978). Despite promising beginnings, the Melbourne school did not complete its third year of operation before it closed. How much this decision was due to the depression and how much due to Ellen White's persistent view that a school should be placed in a country environment on a large tract of land is a matter of conjecture (Lindsay, 1978). While school was out for now, education was still very much on the agenda of the emerging Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia, and a search began for a permanent school site.

Much has been written about the establishment of the Avondale School for Christian Workers (De Berg, 2017; Hook, 1998; Lindsay, 1978). The North American influence was far enough distant that Ellen White could influence and shape this school into what she believed a school should be. This is not to say there were no dissenting voices, challenges, or setbacks during the planning and building phases. On Ellen White's final recommendation, land was purchased at Cooranbong. The doubts of senior administrators in America were appeased by a letter from Ellen White, but opposition came instead from closer quarters. Daniells and Rousseau initially opposed the choice of land, wanting to locate closer to a city (Gilson, 1963; Hook, 2020; Lindsay, 1978). Conflicting views led to the juxtaposition of Ellen White's counsel against the perceived more logical ideas of the Church leaders. This short time of crisis unsettled the Church leaders in Australia, but with considered approval of the General Conference, they reluctantly proceeded with the purchase of The Brettville Estate. That Church leaders of this era would listen to the voice of a woman, let alone one inexperienced in property development, was unlikely, but they did. However, not everyone was happy with the decision.

With no money left and somewhere between 500-1000 Seventh-day Adventists in all of Australia to support the establishment of a school, Ellen White invited young men to come and work as building labourers for six hours a day in return for board and tuition in two subjects (DeBerg, 2017; Gilson, 1963; Lindsay, 1978). The creativity demonstrated at this time showed the passion to reflect and do, to put beliefs into action; yet, even with the building underway, the spartan living conditions acted as a catalyst for discouragement. In an address to the staff and students at the time, Ellen White reassured the downhearted group that God was

leading in this venture in response to an encouraging revelation during private prayer. This address was a turning point for Rousseau, who gave full support from then on (Lindsay, 1978).

Armed with a clearer vision of Adventist Education than ever before, Ellen White chose to settle close to the Avondale school site, where she could influence the developing school program. Remembering the foiled attempts at Battle Creek to establish a school that was different from public schools, Ellen White felt she was in a better position in Australia to establish a school that would be a pattern for Adventist Education (Table 2.3).

This time, the school's location was rural and, in those days, remote, with enough land for agricultural purposes, something she had been advocating since her Battle Creek days. She was involved in choosing committed teachers who loved and honoured God and were prepared to work alongside the students in manual labour. This work included operating a sawmill and working in the brick pit, both meaningful pursuits, which assisted in building the facilities required to run the school (De Berg, 2017). Other practical pursuits included:

> the keeping of accounts, carpenter's work, and everything that is comprehended in farming. Preparation should also be made for the teaching of black-smithing, painting, shoemaking, cooking, baking, washing, mending, type-writing and printing. (Manuscript 170, 1899, cited in De Berg, 2017)

> giving lessons to students how to work the land to produce fruitful gardens, how to fell the trees that must come down, how to frame houses with solid foundations. Cisterns must be made intelligently to hold a supply of water. (Manuscript 186, 1899, cited in De Berg, 2017)

> many things lady students may engage in, such as cooking, dressmaking and gardening. (Letter 60a, 1896, cited in De Berg, 2017)

On April 28, 1897, the Avondale School for Christian Workers was officially opened. Interestingly, Ellen White chose to make educating small children the topic of her address (Lindsay, 1978). She had been writing on this theme increasingly since the mid-1890s, and now that a senior school had been established at Avondale, Ellen White began to refine a pattern that would form a foundation for the

establishment of a system of schools as the Seventh-day Adventist Church grew in Australia. In this task, she was assisted by William Prescott, whose ideas on higher education aligned with her own, with the Church paper reporting that Prescott believed "everything should be studied from the standpoint of the word of God first, the works of God second, and the providence of God third, and that human authority should be subordinated to these" (*Review & Herald*, 1896, p. 378). Prescott also brought rigour to the academic program at the Avondale School for Christian workers during his one-year tenure as principal (Knight, 1983), heralding the idea of excellence in education as a characteristic of Adventist Education. It is interesting to note that Prescott's involvement in Adventist Education extended from the Battle Creek days to his appointment as the first education secretary of the Adventist Church and then as Principal of the Avondale School for Christian Workers, where he brought wisdom and experience to his role.

While lessons at the Avondale school were first and foremost based on the Bible, other learning areas were not neglected, and the sacredness of life was infused into every subject. Practical pursuits were included in the daily program and the school ran a strong agricultural program.

During the experimental years when Ellen White was in Australia, she continued to write, taking her embryonic ideas about the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist education and further developing them, offering a considered and logical framework for the establishment of Adventist schools. Satisfied that the pattern school was underway, Ellen White turned her attention to the establishment of primary schools. Secondary schools were to follow soon after.

Sensemaking in the Experimental Years of Adventist Education

The temporary closure of the Battle Creek College due to leadership issues in 1881, acted as a catalyst for sensemaking. Equipped with their own ideas mingled with the perceived radical ideas of Ellen White, the teachers dispersed to seek Church sponsorship and found their own colleges. Each one took the responsibility seriously and by the turn of the 20th century, all Adventist colleges included Bible as a subject and most included a variety of more practical subjects. This demonstrates the continuous property of sensemaking and highlights that extended sensemaking

over time results in changes in attitudes that may have been rigid in the past. The continuous property is also evident in the lives of some of the educators. Prescott, with others such as Brownsberger and Bell, worked in a variety of roles over an extended period during which their ideas, and consequently their actions, were refined.

Also in North America, another event was being considered. Ellen White encouraged the Church leaders to take their mission seriously and send someone to Australia to establish an Adventist presence there. Although this concept aligned to the mission of the Adventist Church, and two people were willing to go, plausibility put this action on hold temporarily for several years. With a Church membership of only 8000, pushing the missional boundaries was pushing resources too far and so some action had to be deferred. Corliss and Haskell had the opportunity to engage in retrospective reflection when they finally departed for Australia, hoping to use their experience in North America to inform their decision-making in Australia, a land about which they knew little.

Sensemaking in Adventist Education was entering a new time, space, and place, and most of the experimental years in Australia revolved around establishing a training school for Christian workers. Corliss and Haskell requested that Ellen White come and help them in their new school endeavour. It is possible they were responding to cues such as White's article printed some months earlier. They may also have been responding to the current climate of state-run schools. Enacting their belief in the need for a training place, they voted to forge ahead in faith and establish a school despite being desperately short of resources. Ellen White arrived in 1891, just in time to join the discussion about education at the annual Church meetings. There is an interesting anomaly here. The Church delegates voted to purchase property in the city with no dissension recorded from Ellen White who had fought this notion with vigour and lost when seeking a location for the Battle Creek school. Whether plausibility won over idealism, or whether she decided to bide her time, knowing this location was a temporary one, is not known, but it is possible that plausibility was a factor in her compliance with the vote.

Choosing a new site was not straightforward. Those involved came with diverse experiences and opinions, and there was also institutional context and the

social milieu of the emerging nation of Australia to consider. Opposition to the site Ellen White preferred led to a time of crisis and heightened sensemaking. Eventually the rural site was purchased although retrospective reflection in the coming months left doubts about the wisdom of the purchase. In due course, Rousseau, the appointed principal, who had been strongly opposed to the site, gave full support to the location and the proposed program.

We see in the experimental years that each individual in an organisation engages in their own sensemaking journey based on their unique lived experiences, and that dialogue and discussion need to take place over time before individuals can fully defend their position or are prepared to arrive at a consensus. The challenges faced by all who were involved in setting up the first school in Australia remind us that sensemaking is a continuous process, and it also raises the possibility that there is a cyclic element in sensemaking that may prompt changes in how things are done.

The establishment of the Avondale School for Christian Workers in 1897 was the major accomplishment of the experimental years of Adventist Education in Australia. The next era diversified the focus and began the journey to make Adventist Education available to children of all ages.

Table 2.3

Summary of the Experimental Years of Adventist Education

The experimental years of Adventist Education: 1890-1900	
Philosophy	Framed education in the context of the Great Controversy between God and Satan with knowledge of God at the epicentre of education. The Bible and nature as a source of God's revelation working together. Education as Redemption
Purpose	The redemption of students To restore the image of God in each student – character development To prepare students for lives of service Harmonious development of mental, physical, spiritual and social powers
Praxis	Testing and adoption of Ellen White's compiled ideas about education in the establishment of schools in North America, and the establishment of the Avondale School for Christian Workers in Australia
Shapers	Ellen White, William Prescott, S. N. Haskell., L. J. Rousseau

The Organisational Years: 1901-1949

The first four decades of the 20th century slowed the growth of Adventist Education as Australians struggled through World War I, the Spanish Flu epidemic, The Great Depression and World War II. It was a relief to the nation when the end of WWII ushered in an era of soaring economic and population growth that provided opportunities for Adventist Education to gain traction and keep growing.

Although the idea of an Adventist-run system of primary schools had been raised as early as 1893, both personnel and financial resources were limited, and what resources did exist were devoted to the establishment of Avondale (Krause, 1961). Added to this issue was the lack of denominational infrastructure at the Australian Conference (Standish, 1968). However, people and organisations with strong beliefs and a reason for existence will find avenues to achieve their goals (Table 2.4).

In Australia, this meant that single Churches took responsibility for the establishment of what became known as Church schools (Standish, 1968). This responsibility included providing a building, resources, a teacher, a salary and, of course, the students (Standish, 1968). One can only imagine that conditions were less than ideal as most of the first schools operated in the back of Churches. Where these facilities were unavailable, Standish (1968) has given examples of a volunteer-built schoolhouse of wattle and daub and another school that used a tent for lessons.

There is some contention over the site and date of the first Adventist primary school in Australia. Some evidence points towards a primary school opened in 1896/7 with children from the Gambrill, Hare and White families on the same site as the Avondale school (https://www.avondale.edu.au/about/history/early-years/). Other historical evidence claims that the first Adventist school opened in 1900 in North Fitzroy, Melbourne, the same year a teacher training course began operating at Avondale (Standish, 1968). This apparent difference may be reconciled by considering the Avondale primary school as an extension of the Avondale training school and the North Fitzroy school as the first Adventist school independently established in Australia. The North Fitzroy school adopted a missional approach and opened its doors to both the children of Adventist families and families that were not Adventist (Krause, 1961). Fees were charged to cover the operating costs.

An indication of the high esteem in which the Seventh-day Adventist Church held education was the addition of an education department to its administrative structure in 1906 (Standish, 1968). By 1908, every state except Queensland had at least one Church primary school, with a total of fourteen in all (Gilson, 1963: Krause, 1961; Standish 1968). When Hoopes was appointed education secretary for the Australasian Division of the Adventist Church in 1908, he aimed to fill the gap between primary schools and Avondale's more advanced learning (Gilson, 1963.; Standish, 1968). This development was an indicator that Adventist schools were heading towards organisational status. Standish (1968) claims that Hoopes, a member of the Avondale faculty and experienced educator from the United States, was instrumental in establishing a secure financial and organisational framework for Adventist Education in Australia.

Despite Hoopes's determined efforts, this was a chaotic time for Adventist Education. There was no regulation over the curriculum, or how the schools operated, and no established central body to regulate Adventist Education. Hoopes persisted, largely unaided, and in 1910 turned his attention to the curriculum, making the first Australian attempt to implement a distinctively Adventist curriculum. Standish (1968) writes that "the aim was to meet the philosophy of Seventh-day Adventism more fully and to provide a curriculum suitable to all states of Australia and New Zealand" (p. 30).

The lack of coherence between Adventist schools also prompted closer attention to the philosophy driving Adventist Education. There is scant evidence during this period of an overarching holistic or philosophical approach to education in each Adventist school. Rather, it is more likely that teachers drew on the influence of Ellen White's ideas. She travelled widely during her nine year stay in Australia, during which time many Church members met her and heard her speak about education, possibly interpreting and creating versions of her ideas to meet the local context of their Church schools.

Other steps towards organisational status included the extension of primary schools into high schools and offering education to the intermediate level. These schools followed the state-run central school plan and began to appear from 1931-1934 (Standish, 1968). The financial responsibility for schools was gradually transferred, from local Churches to the administration of the Australian Union Conference.

Sensemaking in the Organisational Years of Adventist Education

The main focus of sensemaking in the organisational years appeared to involve the building of an institutional context. In the early years of the 20th century, there was no limited institutional context. Therefore, individuals did what was plausible as the idealistic was out of reach (Helms-Mills, 2002). This prompted single Churches to establish and operate what became known as Church schools (Standish, 1968).

The growth of school numbers prompted the establishment of an administrative department to nurture Adventist Education, and the appointment of

Hoopes as Education Director. Hoopes provides an example of how sensemaking properties operate. Hoopes came into the Australian context, bringing with him retrospective reflection of how Adventist schools operated in North America. Armed with his retrospective reflection, he worked on adapting his prior lived experiences to the Australian educational environment.

Along with retrospective reflection, the sensemaking properties of enactment, plausibility, identity and continuity were drivers for change in the organisational years of Adventist Education. As the middle of the 20th century approached, it appeared that organisational structures were in place ready for the next era in the history of Adventist Education.

Table 2.4

Summary of the Organisational Years of Adventist Education: 1901-1949

The organisational years of Adventist Education: 1901 — 1949	
Philosophy	Based on the Great Controversy between God and Satan with knowledge of God at the epicentre of education. The Bible and nature as a source of God's revelation working together.
Purpose	To restore the image of God in each student – Character Development To prepare students for lives of service Harmonious development of mental, physical, spiritual, and social powers To establish Adventist Education as a cohesive system.
Praxis	Inconsistent, depending on local school leadership. A time when the institutional context was continuously developing.
Shapers	Ellen White through her writings, L. A. Hoopes

The Growing Years: 1950-1980

The 1950s in Australia was a time of optimism and growth. With the significant social, political, and economic impact of two world wars, a pandemic and a depression behind them, Australians were ready to rebuild their society. By the beginning of the sixth decade, the Australian economy was booming, and

immigration was increasing, offering opportunities for Adventist Education to take another step forward.

It is a credit to Adventist Education historians that the narrative of Adventist Education in Australia during this era has been carefully recorded. Educators such as Gilson (1963), Krause (1961), Lindsay (1978), Litster (1982) and Standish (1968) both chronicled and impacted Adventist Education in a variety of ways

The sixth, seventh and eighth decades of the 20th century were a time of growth for Adventist Education in Australia, and it was during this period that administrators began to build on existing organisational structures for the increasing numbers of Adventist schools (Gilson, 1963; Litster, 1982; Standish, 1968). No longer did stand-alone schools entirely operated by Churches exist as isolated places of education. Instead, they operated as part of a system of schools. The education branch of the Adventist Church established several committees during this era (Gilson, 1963; Litster, 1982; Standish, 1968;). These committees served two purposes. First, they brought consistency across already established schools in terms of curriculum and textbooks, and second, they sought to build an identity for Adventist schools, although, as we shall observe, this was not given priority.

By the mid-century, Avondale College was graduating teachers to staff the growing number of Adventist schools, many of which were small county schools (Lindsay, 1978; Standish, 1968). It would have been unlikely during this period to find an Adventist school in Australia that was not fully staffed by Adventists, with the majority being graduates of Avondale College. Graduates from Avondale were entering the classroom with a tacit understanding of what it meant to be an Adventist teacher. However, there is little evidence that this understanding was fostered formally.

One practice that did emerge during this era was the inclusion of teachers in the annual meetings of church employees held by each regional area or conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. These meetings were focused on the mission of the Church and were largely focused on the pastoral and evangelical work of the ministers. While some teachers embraced these meetings, others struggled to see the relevance (Gilson, 1963; Standish, 1968). This latter group increased as the governance of schools in Australia became more prescriptive.

Standish (1968)) explains the organisation, membership and responsibilities of Adventist school boards during this period. Although the list of responsibilities states much about the operation of each school's finances, it includes nothing about the Adventist philosophy or ethos of the school. In contrast, the home and school association was established to play a pivotal role, the purpose of which was to "advance the cause of Christian Education in the home and school and to develop Christian character in all its members and their dependent children" (Standish, 1968, p. 60). The home and school committee was to devote itself to:

(i) the earnest, well-directed study of the principles, purposes and applications of Christian Education in the home, the school, and the Church.

(ii) a more complete understanding, a deeper appreciation, and a greater degree of cooperation, between parents and teachers in attaining the aim of Christian Education.

(iii) establish in the home the atmosphere of love and discipline, of Bible study, prayer, and family worship, and of systematic progressive instruction to develop the children's whole beings – body, mind and soul.

(iv) bring the Church school even more fully into harmony with the principles of Christian Education in spirit, content, and methods.

(v) work to the end of securing the attendance of every Adventist child in a Seventh-day Adventist school

(vi) assist in providing the school with additional equipment and facilities not provided by the conference, thus enabling it to reach the highest standards. (p. 61)

These guidelines are worthy of several comments. It is clear that school boards were strongly focused on management and mostly financial matters. This left teachers and the home and school committees with the task of ensuring the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education was upheld in the schools (Point iv) and homes of the pupils. It is also noteworthy that while point (v) mentions the attendance of every Adventist child, no mention is made of children from

families that were not Adventist, offering evidence that these schools focused on meeting the Adventist Education needs of Adventist families (Murdoch, 2017).

Despite these strong directives to home and school committees, Standish (1968) had a sobering comment to make on the praxis of the home and school associations. “Unfortunately, only some of the Home and School Associations have gone very far towards fulfilling the major purpose of the Association” (p. 62). He further claimed that guest speakers and fund-raising discussions occupied most the scheduled meetings, even though fund-raising was listed last in the aims of the home and school association. It is apparent from Standish’s observations that further clarification of the governing and supporting roles of school boards and home and school committees was required.

At this point, Adventist schools followed the prescribed curriculum for their state, but the time came when the administrators of Adventist Education decided to appoint a curriculum committee (Litster, 1982). This committee aimed to explore how Ellen White’s model for Adventist schools could be preserved in some curriculum areas. One example of how this occurred was the inclusion of agricultural science as a subject in many high schools. This subject aligned with Ellen White’s insistence on the importance of manual labour, particularly concerning agriculture. Ellen White (1903) had long believed that “a greater effort should be made to create and to encourage an interest in agricultural pursuits” (p. 219). Although agricultural science was eventually dropped in city schools, it continued in boarding schools in rural areas. Lilydale Adventist Academy in Victoria, now Edinburgh College, retained this subject until the mid-1970s. Carmel College in Western Australia began teaching agricultural science in 1956. However, farming operations, including an apiary, dairy, poultry, and orchards, declined in that order until agricultural endeavours were closed due to unprofitability (Hook, 2020).

Standish had this to say about the implementation of Ellen White’s ideas: “On the whole, Seventh-day Adventist educators have failed to fulfil, in practice, at the primary and secondary level, the emphasis placed upon agricultural and manual training in the original plan for Christian Education” (Standish, 1968, p. 76). This shift had pragmatic rather than philosophical reasons and it moved Adventist Education further from the pattern established by Ellen White.

However, Adventist schools were encouraged to place greater emphasis on health and hygiene, natural science and sometimes music. Physical exercise began appearing in the school program, although a competitive spirit was not encouraged. Standish (1968) reported of this period, “subjects of the curriculum will often bear a very definite Christian emphasis” (p. 72). This shift in Adventist Education supported a pragmatic approach to curriculum during this era, retaining those subjects that could easily be implemented.

Closely aligned with the work of the curriculum committee was the textbook committee. This committee was established to monitor the content of textbooks used in Adventist schools, including *Principles of Life*, a Bible textbook widely used for several decades.

Adventist Education as an organisation in Australia gained traction, and schools began to adopt a similar praxis in several areas across the schools’ operations. Teachers began to commence the day with worship, modelling this practice to their students. It was during this era that the annual Week of Prayer was introduced into the school program, offering opportunities for students to accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. These weeks of spiritual assemblies or chapels were usually followed up by Bible studies for students, conducted by the pastor/s of the local Church/es in the school area. These in-school activities aligned with the biblical beliefs and missional purpose of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (Standish, 1968).

It was also during these years, that schools began to expand their extra-curricular activities. High schools regularly became involved in the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s annual Appeal for Missions fund-raising campaign, as students doorknocked a given territory, collecting funds for Church distribution. This indicated a strong missional focus, at least for two or three weeks of the year. Schools were called upon, or volunteered, to conduct Church programs in nearby Churches, and the concept of service as a school activity began to emerge in the form of visits to nursing homes (Standish, 1968).

Although the number of Adventist schools in Australia continued to grow, there were no pre-schools or kindergartens in the developing system. In sympathy with Ellen White’s statement that the mother is the best teacher (White, 1903), the

general feeling was that the home was the best learning environment for small children.

It was during this era that a school motto, Nihil Sine Labore (Nothing Without Labour), was originally adopted by the Sydney Adventist High School, and then spread as the motto for Adventist schools across the country (Standish, 1968). This motto reflected a protestant work ethic rather than the philosophy at the heart of Adventist Education. A final feature of this era was the regular inspection of schools. This contributed to the standardisation of Adventist Education. The Adventist Education administrators of this era were confident; both in the praxis of Adventist schools and in their projection of continued growth in the primary school space, as Standish wrote in 1968.

> It is difficult to foresee any major change in the progress of the primary school system. It is not hard, however, to predict a steady increase in the number of these schools in Australia and New Zealand. Seventh-day Adventists believe that of all their schools, the work of the primary school is perhaps the most essential (Standish, 1968, p. 151).

It is not known why more emphasis was placed on primary schools during this era of growth, although it could be due to White's many comments on the education of young children. Standish's prediction was correct, and the number of Adventist schools continued to grow throughout the 1970s. However, the 1980s brought with it a new set of challenges that were to change the Adventist Educational landscape in Australia (Table 2.5).

Sensemaking in the Growing Years of Adventist Education

Rather than confusing or disturbing events, the catalyst for sensemaking in the growing years was rapid change and growth (Ancona, 2011), partly a reflection of Australian society in this era. Adventist Education was gaining its own identity (Weick, 1995) as it grew as an organisation. With school and financial policies in place, it was an opportunity to focus on why Adventist schools mattered, (their philosophy), what they did that gave them their identity or purpose, and their praxis. Although there were some attempts to preserve elements of Ellen White's model for Adventist Education by including Bible in the curriculum, offering agricultural

science as a subject at rural schools, and attempts to teach other subjects distinctively, other opportunities were lost, probably in the settling for what was plausible over what was accurate or ideal.

An example of plausibility (Weick, 1995) shaping the direction of Adventist Education relates to the roles played by school boards and home and school associations during these growing years. It appears a pragmatic decision was made when schools boards abdicated responsibility for upholding the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education to home and school committees. The home and school committees, comprised heavily of parents, likely took the most obvious need to them, that of fundraising, and focused on this aim to the detriment of others (Gilson, 1963). This was unfortunate, as other aims were more in tune with the goals of Adventist education. Meanwhile, school boards were concerning themselves with operational issues.

Another property of sensemaking that emerged in this phase of Adventist Education was a heavier reliance on dialogue through an increasing number of committees. Robust discussion that offers a variety of views prompts action that is then appraised (Ancona, 2011). The introduction of a textbook committee was an example of this. As an organisation, Adventist Education, from an administrative perspective, was maturing as it responded to the educational and social milieus while simultaneously seeking ways to conduct its praxis in accordance with its philosophy and purpose.

Table 2.5

Summary of the Growing Years of Adventist Education

	The growing years: 1950-1980
Philosophy	Based on the Great Controversy between God and Satan with knowledge of God at the epicentre of education. The Bible and nature as a source of God's revelation working together.
Purpose	To support the mission of the Church by training Church workers. To protect and nurture Seventh-day Adventist Children and young people from the influence of the world.
Praxis	Bible lessons included. Some attempt to teach other subjects distinctively. Inclusion of Agricultural Science where practical.
Shapers	Ellen White, W. G. Gilson, Various Committee members

The Integration of Faith and Learning Years: 1981-1999

As Adventist Education entered the ninth decade of the 20th century, it was an expanding enterprise that served the educational needs of Adventist families, still retaining the castle mentality of the previous decades (Shields, 2007). A 15% cap on students who did not come from Adventist homes was maintained by schools, ensuring an Adventist majority in every school (Murdoch, 2017). Many Adventist schools were small, suitable only for the primary years of education and operated out of Church halls or buildings on the Church grounds. Tamworth, and Taree in NSW, Murray Bridge and Mt Gambia in South Australia, and Moe in Victoria were homes to Adventist schools that functioned on the same property as the Church building. During the 1970s, it was common to appoint Avondale primary education graduates to one- or two-teacher Adventist schools in rural areas. However, the growth of high schools had been largely limited to the city schools. Churches gave full support to schools during these years, sacrificing to give their children an Adventist Education.

Subtle changes were taking place in Adventist Education. As Adventist educators reflected on their mission, a sharper focus developed. One example was the change of the Sydney Adventist High School motto from Nihil Sine Labore (Nothing Without Labour) to Nihil Sine Deo (Nothing Without God). This reflected

a stronger emphasis on Righteousness by Faith. Other schools soon followed, some choosing the same motto while others developed their own (Gilson, 1963).

Integration of faith and learning (IFL) became a common term in Adventist Education circles during the 1980s and is still used by many four decades later (see Table 2.6). As already indicated, this era of Adventist Education in Australia built on structures established for a growing number of schools. Schools followed the state curriculum and a close association between the homes of the pupils and the school was ideally fostered through the local Adventist Church and the home and school association. As the baton advocating for the integration of faith and learning crossed the Pacific and landed on Australian shores, it was picked up, examined, then began a new journey. Adventist Educational leaders in Australia were consolidating their belief that Adventist Education was more than just education for the children of Adventist parents. They were also viewing it as more than a secular curriculum sanctified by daily Bible lessons. Adventist educators were recognising that the education they offered had eternal consequences. This is not to say that Adventist schools before this era did not recognise any of these ideas, but a more deliberate approach was now adopted. Having established a system of schools that was running relatively smoothly, the philosophy on which they were founded came into sharper focus and the attention shifted towards placing the gospel at the centre of teaching and learning.

One influential voice speaking in this era was George Knight, who began writing about Adventist Education in 1982 with the publication of the book, *Issues and Alternatives in Educational Philosophy,* backed up with several more books and articles throughout his career. It was in the area of Christian Educational philosophy that he was to make his mark on Adventist Education. Knight's book *Philosophy and Education: an Introduction in Christian Perspective* (2006) is a classic in this field, its editions spanning close on half a century. Knight's writing affirmed the philosophical foundations for Christian Education introduced by Ellen White. He delved into misconceptions about the purpose of education as presented by Ellen White. In clear and unapologetic terms, Knight laid aside the aims of service and character development as primary goals and cut to the heart of the matter that redemption is the primary goal of Christian Education (Knight, 1985). He reiterated

the basics of the controversy between God and Satan, drawing from White's own words to offer a philosophy that included the original nature of humanity and God's purpose in creating humans, the drastic effects of the fall, and God's intention to redeem humanity.

Humberto Rasi, the Adventist Education Director at the Seventh-day Adventist World Church headquarters during the IFL era was the next key thought leader to shape the praxis for the integration of faith and learning. He distilled Adventist Education into four words: wholeness, character, service, and eternity (Rasi, 2000). He was pivotal in setting up The Institute for Christian Learning in 1987, the purpose of which was "to promote excellence in Adventist Education" (Institute for Christian Teaching, n.d.). Over the next two decades, the institute organised international faith and learning seminars for Adventist educators. These seminars ran in at least 20 countries, including Australia, and from them a series of *Christ in the Classroom* monographs was published. The Institute for Christian Learning operated on four objectives as quoted below:

1. To promote excellence – professional and spiritual in Seventh-day Adventist teaching at the secondary and postsecondary levels.
2. To foster the integration of faith and learning throughout the curriculum on the basis of a comprehensive Christian worldview.
3. To focus on the uniqueness, value, and implications of Seventh-day Adventist Education philosophy.
4. To stimulate research and publication in the area of Christ-centered Bible-based, and service-oriented education https://christintheclassroom.org/about_us.html. (The Institute for Christian Teaching, n.d.)

At this stage of its journey, Adventist Education began introducing some terms that were destined to become part of the language of Adventist Education in Australia. Excellence, although inferred by Ellen White, was now promoted as a goal. The term Christian worldview summarises the narrative of the controversy between Christ and Satan, and the aims are still visible in the reference to a "Christ-

centred, Bible-based and Service-oriented Education" that was used with the Adventist Education logo.

Within the published articles from the Institute for Christian Learning, a partial analysis of the first 90 articles with the words integration of faith and learning (IFL) in their title revealed the following themes in order of frequency: IFL in specific subject areas, IFL and its relationship to philosophy, general articles about IFL and case study reports IFL in schools and classrooms. Lesser represented were various approaches to IFL and the role of teachers, administrators and chaplains in IFL. This analysis revealed that the focus of IFL during this period was heavily weighted towards the philosophy and classroom praxis of IFL. Rasi's continued involvement in this project extended beyond his retirement. Although he was not the first to use the term IFL, he was instrumental in making it part of the common language that Adventist educators use, introducing widespread discussion and synthesis of ideas.

In response to the need to equip teachers to effectively integrate faith and learning across the subjects taught in Adventist high schools, Barry Hill, director of the South Pacific Division Secondary Curriculum Unit, enlisted the expertise of practising teachers in Adventist schools and lecturers at Avondale College to brainstorm ideas and develop frameworks for teaching subjects in Adventist secondary schools (Hill, 1990). Introduced in 1989 and 1990, each framework document clearly stated a philosophy of Adventist Education and a Christ-centred rationale for teaching the subject. This was followed by underlying premises for teaching the subject and biblical references to support the underlying premises. All frameworks included a section on integrating values with topics and the geography framework included a section called "The Christian Perspective". Frameworks for English, science, mathematics, history, geography, art, physical education and commerce were developed and disseminated to all Adventist Secondary Schools in Australia (Hill, 1990).

In 1980, shortly before coming to Australia to speak to educators in Adventist Schools, Akers and Moon (1980) wrote, "the single most important concern of Christian schools should be the integration of learning, faith, and practice in every

aspect of the curriculum" (p. 17). Thirteen years later Aker's opinion had not changed and he wrote:

> The real Gospel has to be at the center of true Christian Education, not out on the periphery. Core curriculum if you please. If it is not so located, we short-change a whole generation who come to us looking for cosmic, and personal, meaning. For answers, not for more questions (Akers & Scarbrough, 1993, p.6).

The concept of IFL was gaining traction with Adventist Education in Australia, and people were listening. Those listening included administrative officers of Adventist Education in Australia who took the matter seriously and decided it was time to include teachers in curriculum development and expand ownership.

In 1989, under the leadership of Ian Howie, a steering committee of Adventist teachers began working on a school curriculum for Adventist primary schools that would take the Integration of Faith and Learning concept to a new level. Called *God is Like This* (Internal curriculum document, 1993), the curriculum was designed to embed faith into learning across an integrated curriculum and was based on the following characteristics of God: He creates, He loves, He communicates, He is all powerful, He is all knowing, He trusts, He is everywhere at all times. The document recognised that all learning is God centred, and that God is the source of all truth. Nicknamed *The White Brick* because of its shape and colour, this document was introduced to Adventist primary schools in Australia but failed to gain wide acceptance and use. Masterfully written and groundbreaking in its approach, it was a document ahead of its time and too challenging for many teachers to use (D Murdoch, personal communication, May, 2019). In a version released as a programming resource, an attempt was made in 2005 to summarise *God is Like This.* An edited version stated:

> The underlying purpose of this document is for it to be used as a springboard of ideas as to how the characteristics of God can be infused into all areas of the curriculum. The way we see God is part of our world-view and is inter-twined with our belief system and our belief system determines the Special Character of our schools. (Winzenried, 2005, p. i)

Don Roy was the next person to pick up the baton in the area of primary curriculum. His broad experience in Adventist Education in Australia positioned him to speak with authority on the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education. From 1996-2005, teacher-led teams under Roy's guidance developed a set of primary curriculum documents that integrated faith and learning. Paramount to these was the curriculum document *Growing in Faith* which provided a systematic and relevant way to study the Bible in primary schools. This was supplemented with curriculum documents for English, science, studies of society and the environment, health and physical education and the arts (Internal curriculum documents, 1996-2005). While these documents broadly aligned with the state curriculum documents, biblical principles and a Christian worldview were embedded.

It should be noted that during this era, teachers had greater flexibility in their course design and content than in the following era. The landscape of education in Australia was beginning to change. In response to changes in Australian education trends and the desire to preserve the distinctive character of Adventist schools, the South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church called for summit review meetings in 1996 and 1997 to address "a more efficient and effective system of Adventist Education and to reposition our schools in the broader community as a means towards enhancing the mission of the Church" (South Pacific Division of Education 1996:27, cited in Murdoch, 2017, p. 36). Among the recommendations generated were "quality assurance management and the preservation of Adventist Education ethos" (Murdoch, 2017, p. 37). The first part of this recommendation related to excellence, and the second to the preservation of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education.

The outcomes of the education summit meetings aligned well with what Akers and Scarbrough (1993) had long been saying. Adventist schools were affirmed as having a role to play in the mission of the Adventist Church in Australia. School leaders were able to extend a bridge from Adventist Education to the community. The castle mentality was in retreat (Shields, 2007). Adventist Education was poised to officially play an intentional role in the mission of the Adventist Church in Australia by welcoming students not of the Adventist faith into its schools.

Taking these ideas on board, Roy (2003) wrote a booklet, titled *Towards wholeness: The special character of Adventist Education.* Presented as a discussion paper intended for anyone interested in Adventist Education, but targeting school and system administrators and teachers, the booklet explained the need to understand the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education and provided a snapshot of the ideal Adventist school. Beginning with the foundational assumptions and beliefs underpinning Adventist Education, Roy posited that "all that is planned and happens in the school is anchored in a biblical worldview" (p. 4). This biblical worldview, he maintained, included the Creator God as the ultimate source of life and knowledge and the creation of humans in God's image with the power "to think, choose, act, and relate" (Roy, 2003, p. 4). He followed this with the problem of sin, God's response to the problem, a renewed relationship with God and concluded with hope and destiny in a restored creation, concepts that resonated with those of White (1903) and Knight (1983).

The purpose statement Roy presented also aligned with White (1903), being "the restoration of human beings to the image of their Maker through a saving relationship with Jesus Christ, and the balanced development of the whole person" (Roy, 2003, p. 5). He also commented on the roles of knowledge, the students and teachers, the curriculum within the context of learning and teaching, and the school environment, many of which White had previously addressed in her writings.

This era of Adventist Education in Australia was characterised by strategies to align the school curriculum with the philosophy and purpose of Adventist Education. It was a period when Adventist Education was essentially free from excessive government mandates, but a more prescriptive era was on its way.

Sensemaking in the Integration of Faith and Learning Years

Now that an institutional context for Adventist Education was well and truly established, educators began to re-examine the philosophy and purpose of Adventist education and their implication for praxis. With a drive to reach the ideal, and motivated by the writings of Ellen White and visits by North American educators, sensemaking accelerated with a bout of curriculum writing that included the voices of Australian Adventist teachers. This dialogue, combined with the ongoing nature of

sensemaking, saw Adventist Education both responding to, and shaping, its structure and praxis. This shaping and simultaneous enactment was apparent in Rasi's IFL initiative, which allowed participating educators to engage in retrospective reflection while simultaneously enacting their understanding of IFL. An outcome of Rasi's initiative was that he created a common vocabulary for Adventist educators. This was a significant achievement because common language in organisations is crucial in sensemaking as it enables discussion and storying, leading individuals to enact what they hear and speak.

In the IFL years, we also observe the flexibility that exists when people accept what is plausible over what is ideal. When the *God is Like This* curriculum failed to gain traction with teachers, the key concepts were preserved and organised into a format that allowed greater flexibility. The IFL years were also a period when teachers started to have a say in writing curriculum documents. This social milieu offered opportunities for sensemaking in Adventist Education that extended beyond administrators.

Concerning the Integration of Faith and learning years, Table 2.6 shows a philosophy of Adventist Education that is consistent with previous eras, a synthesis of its purpose into three main areas, and IFL as its focus for praxis. Rasi, Akers, and Knight influenced their Australian colleagues by finding different avenues to direct the spotlight onto Ellen White's writings while Hill, Howie and Roy made a significant impact on the shape of curriculum in Australia by inviting teachers to contribute their ideas in an attempt to keep Christ at the centre of Adventist Education.

Table 2.6

Summary of the IFL Years of Adventist Education: 1980-2005

The integration of faith and learning years: 1980-2005	
Philosophy	God is the source of all knowledge and truth. He desires to mend the relationship broken by evil and restore His image in each student though redemption, so they can live for the glory of God.
Purpose	Redemption, character, holistic development, service remain. To integrate faith and learning in every subject of the curriculum. To establish schools as a bridge between community and Church.
Praxis	Focus on integration of Faith and Learning.
Shapers	Ellen White, Humberto Rasi, George Akers, George Knight, Barry Hill, Ian Howie, Don Roy

The Pivotal Years: 2005-2021

Entering the twenty-first century, Adventist parents wanted greater quality assurance in teaching, learning, and educational facilities in schools (Beamish & Morey, 2013). The growth of Christian schools in Australia also meant that Adventist schools needed to be more competitive to hold their students. Schools were calling for greater autonomy and the option of maximising government funding in appropriate ways: the winds of change were blowing across the educational landscape. Compliance issues began to affect Adventist Education, and discussions about the need for a nationwide curriculum resulted in a National Australian curriculum that was developed between 2009-2012 and implemented from 2013. Adventist Education in Australia, chose at this point, to adopt the National Australian Curriculum, adding distinctive elements to it that would satisfy the philosophical underpinnings and purpose of Adventist Education, rather than submit their own curriculum.

This most recent era of Adventist Education has faced its own set of challenges. Murdoch (2017) identifies trends that have implications for Australian Adventist schools and their philosophy, purpose, and practice. One trend is the domination of enrolments by children of families representing the broader community. This calls for the management of tensions between opportunities for faith engagement and the need to embrace the Adventist identity of schools.

A second trend relates to Seventh-day Adventists' perceptions of doctrines and lifestyle. These perceptions can potentially cause internal conflict of beliefs and associated lifestyles. As the number of students enrolled in Adventist schools has grown, schools have had to step beyond the pool of Adventist teachers to source teachers sympathetic with Adventist Education's mission and values, but not church members. This is despite Knight's (2017) and Rasi's (2008) position that the capacity of Adventist Education to fulfil its mission depends on "the employment of committed Adventist Christian teachers" (cited in Murdoch, 2017, p. 38).

A third trend is the employment of specialist Bible teachers and chaplains. While this appears to be a positive move, it comes with a caution to counteract an attitude that leaves the faith engagement to the specialists while the rest of a school's staff ignores the core purpose of why Adventist schools exist (Christie & Christian, 2012).

Throughout this pivotal era, George Knight has continued to impact administrators' understandings of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education. Knight, who quotes Ellen White liberally in his writing, believes that "a consciously thought-out philosophy of education is not only an educator's most practical acquisition, but also his or her most important one" (Knight, 2017, p. 4). Knight has delved into a philosophy of Adventist Education, building a rigorous case for every educator to examine their core beliefs and then consciously think through the application of those beliefs on "daily life and professional practice" (p. 5). For Knight, Adventist Education has "a distinctive philosophy of reality, truth, and value" (p. 7). In his role as historian, Knight (2015) also reflects retrospectively on Adventist Education and reminds educators that "the Adventist Church in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was repeatedly forced to clarify its educational goals" (p.

7). He then cautions Adventist Education to stay focused on those goals in its quest to be relevant in contemporary society.

There is evidence from the first two decades of the 21st century that Adventist Education in Australia is serious about the alignment of philosophy, purpose and praxis. Multiple projects have been instigated at various school and conference levels in Australia. In addition, the education department of the Australian Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, also known as Adventist Schools Australia and the South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church have implemented short- and long-term projects in Adventist Education. Several initiatives instigated at the Union level or higher to evaluate and preserve the special character of Adventist Education are tabled below (Table 2.7). This table includes the approximate date of the project, the initiating organisation, the lead person responsible, the project name, and the purpose of the project.

Table 2.7

Sample Projects of the Pivotal Years to Align the Philosophy, Purpose, and Praxis of Adventist Education

Date	Initiator	Project name	Purpose
2010	Adventist Schools Australia (ASA), (AUC)	SDA Identity Working Party (n=8) Principals and administrators.	To develop a model of Praxis for Adventist Education
2008-2014 with continual ongoing review	AUC, ASA (Daryl Murdoch)	Adventist Encounter Curriculum. K-10 (Steering Committee – n=15 teachers & administrators)	To create a seamless Biblical Studies curriculum that is 21st century relevant and leads students into a personal relationship with God Approach (adventisteducation.org)
2016 January 26-27	South Pacific Division of SDA Church (Carol Tasker)	Empowering Authentic Adventist Education – two days brainstorming session (n≈20 administrators)	Reporting and visioning to align Adventist Education with the goals of the SDA Church in the South Pacific Division

Date	Initiator	Project name	Purpose
2012	ASA (AUC) (Jacques Calais)	Quality Adventist Schools: A School Improvement Framework (n ≈ 100)	To provide guidelines for the accreditation of Adventist Schools, including Adventist identity Quality Adventist Schools Adventist Schools Victoria (asv.vic.edu.au)
2013	ASA (AUC) (Daryl Murdoch)	Adventist Identity Teaching Standards	To supplement the National Professional Standards for Teachers with standards that support the philosophy, purpose and practice of Adventist Education
Biennial	ASA (AUC) (Daryl Murdoch)	Aspiring Leaders Program	To prepare teachers for school leadership in Adventist schools
2010–-present	General Conference of SDA Church (Robert McIver)	Institutional Workers Survey–- results from teachers in Adventist Schools in Australia (n = 519)	To explore Adventist teachers' perceptions of the mission of Adventist Education in Australia
2015-2017	ASA (AUC) (Daryl Murdoch, Georgie Winzenried)	Transformational Teaching: An Adventist Worldview (Subject specific internal curriculum documents) n ≈ 60	To provide "the foundational worldview from which an Adventist teacher delivers the Australian National Curriculum." (Subject specific internal curriculum document, 2016, p. 1)
2018	South Pacific Division (Carol Tasker)	SPD Teacher Certification Steering Committee n ≈ 25	To write a proposal for developing materials to ensure all teachers in Adventist schools have basic certification in Adventist belief, lifestyle and practice
2018	ASA (AUC) (Jacques Calais in consultancy with Peter Beamish and Darren Morton of Avondale University)	Wellbeing Reference Group	To promote the cognitive, emotional, social, physical and spiritual wellbeing of staff and students in Adventist schools across Australia Framework – Wellbeing (adventist.edu.au)

Date	Initiator	Project name	Purpose
2018	Adventist Schools Australia (AUC) (Nina Atcheson)	ABIDE – A program targeting teacher spirituality (Written by Nina Atcheson, introduced to Conference Education directors and then rolled out across Australia at professional development days)	To support and nurture spiritual lives of every staff member in Adventist Education with the end result of building a" vibrant spiritual culture in our schools that exemplify the love, grace, and compassion of Jesus" Abide Resources–- Adventist Schools Australia
2020/2021	South Pacific Division (David McClintock)	Adventist Ethos Working Party (n ≈ 12 members, mainly administrators)	To identify how Adventist Ethos can be preserved in Adventist Schools

NB: Information on this table was derived from notice of meetings and personnel involved, from the Adventist Schools Australia website, and an article by Murdoch (2020).

Of the twelve projects listed in Table 2.7, four (Special Character Working Party, Quality Adventist Schools, Empowering Authentic Adventist Education workshop, and Adventist Ethos Working Party) focused on the alignment of philosophy, purpose and praxis in Adventist Education, while the institutional Workers' Survey aimed to discover the perceptions of teachers in Adventist schools concerning the mission or purpose of Adventist Education. The remaining seven projects targeted the praxis of Adventist Education in Bible teaching, curriculum, Adventist identity teaching standards, leadership, wellbeing, and teacher spirituality.

It must be recognised that the efficacy of the projects listed in Table 2.7 has depended on the passion of the people driving them, and sometimes traction has been lost due to role changes, lack of clear communication to schools, or insufficient funds to implement the project. For the most part these initiatives have been successfully implemented. In a serious attempt to encourage ownership of the projects, there has been a wide representation of educators from across Australia at varied levels and experience in teaching and administration for each project. While several projects included memberships of eight to twelve educators in steering committees, consultation has been widespread, and scores of teachers have been involved in

writing workshops for the Adventist encounter curriculum, writing the quality Adventist schools framework, and developing the *Transformational Teaching: An Adventist Worldview* series of booklets for each learning and teaching area.

The most recent SPD working party at the point of writing ran through 2020 into 2021. A written statement from one of the members (K. Cameron), included in the report to stakeholders, epitomises the view of the members at the final meeting. Bolding and colours are from the original document:

> As administrators and school leaders we have this same responsibility and privilege to reveal Jesus to our teachers and school staff through journeying **in faith** together **with them** within each **school context**. We need to intentionally and humbly work, in God's strength and through His Spirit, to build **vibrant and dynamic communities of faith** amongst our staff. The 'programs' and 'learning' we provide should support **ongoing trust relationships** and encourage **authentic reflective practice** within **each school staff team**. (Adventist Ethos Working Party, Notes, Meeting no. 5, February 22, 2021, Zoom Meeting)

The current philosophy, purpose and praxis statements listed below are taken from the Adventist Schools Australia website that is accessible to any who may wish to read it. Adventist Schools Australia | A thriving Christ-centred learning community

Our PHILOSOPHY

The Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of education is Christ-centred. We believe that Jesus is the ultimate example of 'love in action' and He wants us to do likewise. As such, Adventist Education is a vital ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and is committed to sharing God's life-transforming love. We believe that Jesus relates to us on a personal level, presenting His character as the ultimate example. His love and grace is the foundation of our relationship with Him. Therefore, Adventist Education seeks to reveal Jesus and nurture all "…to act justly, to love faithfulness and to work humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8 CSB). We are children of Christ and He says to us all, "Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me" (John 15:4 ESV).

By daily abiding in Jesus, we can find purpose, hope, and joy, even during difficult times.

As such, Adventist Education strives to be transformative. It seeks to impart more than academic knowledge through the balanced development of the whole person: spiritually, mentally, socially, and physically. It seeks to develop a life of faith in God and a respect for the dignity of all people. It seeks to guide students "to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other people's thoughts" (White, 1903, p. 17). It promotes loving service rather than selfish ambition: and it embraces all that is true and good.

Our schools and learning services seek to be thriving, nurturing, learning communities where Jesus is central, and where our students and young children may become all that God intends them to be.

Our PURPOSE: to reveal Jesus

Adventist Education exists because we believe in the profound love of Jesus and the hope, peace and joy that comes from knowing Him, and living with Him and for Him. We want to share this good new in our early learning and school communities. We are intentional in everything we do – from our

> attitudes, words, and actions to reflect Jesus to our students, young children, families, and wider community.
>
> Our VISION: to be a thriving Christ-centred Learning Community.
>
> Our desire is to build a dynamic, nurturing inclusive community so that each Adventist school and early learning service will be a lighthouse in their community – shining for Jesus, serving with care and excellence. Every level or our organisation is committed to working in harmony to build a vibrant culture of excellence.
>
> Our MISSION: to enable every student to flourish
>
> Our belief is that students and young children will truly flourish when their spiritual, mental, physical, and social needs are met. We want to inspire and care holistically for each person – equipping them with the beliefs, values, and skills to live a life of purpose, hope, joy, and peace as global citizens for Christ. (Adventist Schools Australia website, n.d.)

While the philosophy of Adventist Education may be reframed occasionally, it has settled into an accepted series of statements that align with a biblical worldview. More prominent than during its history is the notion of salvation through the grace of Jesus Christ, as demonstrated on the cross. The purpose of Adventist Education is still articulated in three main goals: education for now, education for eternity, and education for service based on an understanding of world-wide mission and the imminent return of Jesus (Knight, 2017).

Moving to the forefront of these is the goal to reveal Jesus. The praxis of Adventist Education in Australia is constantly being reviewed in response to changing regulations, clientele, and staffing. This ongoing review is healthy as an organisation that ceases to continually review its praxis will soon lose sight of its purpose. Like White, Akers and Knight, today's leaders in Adventist Education place the teacher as central in the work of redemption. This emphasis is apparent in projects in the South Pacific Division (SPD) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, whose focus has been on this vital area (Table 2.7).

Also, in this era, is the notion of the Adventist school as a bridge to the community, with McIver et al. (2017) reporting that teachers in Australian Adventist

schools increasingly perceive a connection to the community as an important goal of Adventist Education (Table 2.8), emphasising the missional aspect of Adventist Education. As George Knight (2017) says, “Adventist Education at its best stands for something of great importance, rather than representing an escape from the non-Christian world” (p. 7).

Sensemaking in the Pivotal Years

Sensemaking in the pivotal years of Adventist Education has been accelerated by:

- external pressures from the educational landscape in Australia; and
- internal recognition that processes and programs that preserve the social character of Adventist Education must overlay the curriculum and permeate every area of schools’ culture and programs.

When external changes occur, organisations react to the cues around them in sensemaking attempts to find new pathways toward their goals. Tensions have occurred between the Australian curriculum and a Christian worldview, prompting some of the projects in Table 2.7. Internal tensions that involve staff members not of the Adventist faith have also accelerated sensemaking and necessitated new ways of perceiving and doing Adventist Education.

The breadth and depth of educators serving on committees, working parties, think tanks and writing teams have served to highlight social collaboration and its role in sensemaking. What has happened in this era is a focused attempt at structured projects that preserve the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education, giving a high sense of control, as used by Maitlis (2005) to define sensemaking with leadership that gives it a purpose, structure, and means of implementing action arising from the sensemaking. Combined with animation or stakeholder engagement as can be seen in the numbers of stakeholders involved in initial discussion and planning phases and even higher numbers involved in workshops or writing teams, opportunities for sensemaking have been created as a way of confirming praxis and creating new praxis.

Committees, working parties and steering committees, as listed in Table 2.7, are important in sensemaking as rigorous discussion is one way

people make sense of their organisation. Added to this are the sensemaking properties of the social dimension and retrospective reflection that naturally occur when a group of people come together to collaborate. When these conditions exist, sensemaking takes on an increased momentum that leads to action. Each of these projects has, in some way, shaped the official statements about the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education, as found on the Adventist Schools Australia website.

Two decades into the 21st century, Adventist Education sits in a pivotal place. The external pressures and the subsequent responses from Adventist educators have heightened sensemaking activity during this era. Maintaining a balance between inclusiveness and a distinctive approach to education has necessitated ongoing action that has been generated from the ground up.

Table 2.8

Summary of the Pivotal Years of Adventist Education: 2005-Present

	The pivotal years: 2005 – present
Philosophy	Christ centred. See Adventist School's Australia philosophy statement.
Purpose	1.To educate students for life in this world– excellence 2.To educate students for eternity by revealing Jesus as someone the students desire to be in a relationship with. 3.To educate students for lives of service so they can enhance the mission of the Church. 4.To establish schools as a bridge between community and Church.
Praxis	The teacher as the heart of praxis, revealing Jesus in all learning and teaching and beyond.
Shapers	Ellen White, George Knight, Daryl Murdoch, Jacques Calais, Carol Hay, Nina Aitcheson (ABIDE)

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has presented the history of Adventist Education through a sensemaking lens from its roots in 19th-century America to the present day in Australia. It has told the narrative of people wrestling with disappointment, out of which was born a new biblical understanding and a new mission to take the gospel to the world. Within two decades, this group of people, united by common beliefs, formally became an organisation, the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This organisation spawned a sub-organisation: Adventist Education.

Without a doubt, the strongest influencer on the development of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education has been Ellen White, whose writings on education are still read and applied by Adventist educators. Other thought leaders have clarified aspects of the philosophy, purpose, and practice of Adventist Education. George Akers, George Knight, and Humberto Rasi, writing from North America, have been influential. At the same time, Don Roy and Daryl Murdoch have substantially contributed from an Australian context.

People, their perceptions, and the organisation to which they belong, interact in ever changing ways. Each educator in the history of the Adventist Church brought to Adventist Education their own lived experience and perceptions, which they enacted from a Church organisational and personal context. They deciphered cues, adopted, and adapted, and built their identity as Adventist educators and their perceptions of Adventist Education. Some became influential. Some of their perceptions have endured and become the official stance on Adventist Education. Others who are lesser known have shaped their own perceptions of Adventist Education and quietly continued with their administration and teaching, enacting their own beliefs of what Adventist Education is and what they believe it should look like in praxis.

At the end of this literature review, two questions remain. Here is the first question:

1. What impact does an individual's belief system play in how they construct meaning or sense from their lived experiences?

Of the sensemaking properties identified in the literature, none explore faith alignment in depth, yet faith alignment plays a pivotal role in the narrative of Adventist Education.

Linked to the first question but standing alone is the second question:

2. How are an individual's perceptions of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education formed and shaped?

Ideally, the philosophy and purpose identified by Adventist Education (the organisation) should be closely aligned to the philosophy and purpose held by those who work in the organisation, with flexibility around praxis depending on the school context. While the literature has offered an understanding of the development of Adventist Education from a historical stance, the narrative has focused on the thought leaders and protagonists of Adventist Education. These are the people who have left their fingerprints on the elements that together created Adventist Education. What history does not tell are the stories of the ordinary, but committed, teachers who attempted to bring the elements together in their classrooms. What impacted them? Was it the ideas of thought leaders that shaped their perceptions or something

else? How were they shaped by the events and voices speaking into Adventist Education? We may never know. Their voices have been silenced by time.

This historical account has offered historians' and thought leaders' perceptions of the mission or purpose of Adventist Education from its inception to the present Australian context. However, there is scant evidence that explores the shaping of other educators' perceptions of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education. This area requires further investigation for Adventist Education to continue flourishing in a changing world. Knight (2017) maintains that Adventist Education is in a time of crisis and proposes that we give a gift to Adventist Education when we:

- consciously examine our educational philosophy from the perspective of biblical Christianity
- carefully consider the implications of that philosophy for daily classroom activity
- implement that philosophy consistently and effectively. (p. 20)

This chapter has explored the influences that shaped the perceptions of Adventist educators as they initiated, defined, and refined Adventist Education during the 19th, 20th, and early 21st centuries, building organisational identity and a sense of purpose that was the driver of praxis.

A sense of identity and purpose is crucial to the success of faith-based schools (Edlin, 2014; Iselin, 2009; Pietsch, 2018). Changes within faith-based education as a response to the external influences discussed later in this thesis can weaken, alter or strengthen an educational organisation's identity, and consequently impact its purpose and praxis. Therefore, an investigation that explores the stories of eight educators and gathers rich data regarding their perceptions, including how these perceptions have been shaped, has the potential to be a valuable tool in appraising the position of Adventist Education to strengthen it and move it forward.

It is time to listen to some new stories and discover what lived experiences have shaped Adventist educators' perceptions of Adventist Education in Australia in the twenty-first century.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

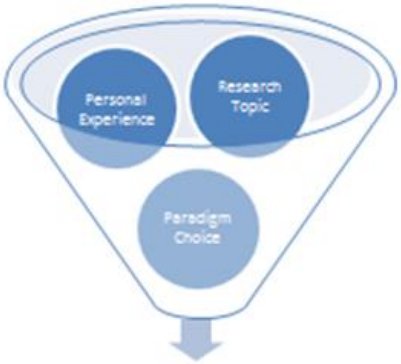
Preface: My Voice

My quest identified, and my preparation complete, my thoughts now turn to the logistics of my research project. How can I document each step I take? No large columns of figures will be pouring in that can be quantified into conclusions. In this epic I will be searching for the deep, rather than the broad. To achieve this, I will need to choose my direction and my tools carefully. I must free my own mind of preconceived ideas and be open to hearing the meaning in the lived experiences of others. I must show respect for those educators who are willing to share, and act with integrity when writing about their beliefs regarding Adventist Education. I need to demonstrate that my analysis is trustworthy and demonstrate the credibility of my findings. It is important that I know exactly what path I am taking through the tangle of data. I need to be able to express this clearly, both for myself and for others who will read this thesis. I have written my story, now I will listen to the stories of others. My own story will act as a foil, but I must not allow it to overshadow or influence my discoveries. I am poised for the next leg of my journey.

Introduction

This chapter outlines and describes the influencing factors leading to my choice of topic. It explains the challenges and choices and ultimate decisions that led me to position this investigation within a qualitative, grounded theory design, using a bricolage of research methods. It explains the research design, including the nature and role of analysis and reflection in dealing with the data and demonstrates how this was done using a validated qualitative process within a culture of respect to ensure the findings are above reproach.

Towards a Topic and Research Paradigm.



There were three motivating influences that drove the direction of the investigation. These were my own personal lived experiences, my current role in Adventist Education, and my personal learning and communicating preferences. Each of these became a factor, not only in choosing my topic, but in determining the research paradigm I would follow.



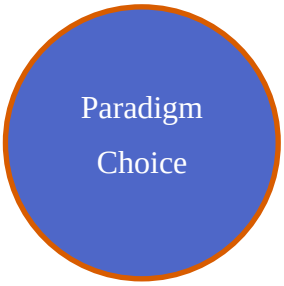
Personal Experience. My own personal and professional lived experience as an educator played a role in determining the direction of this investigation. Education is what I do. Education is what I understand. Education has been a vital part of my life for over 50 years. I have been involved as a student at four levels of education, and as a teacher at three levels. In addition, I have worked with children from ages six to 16 and beyond and with young adults in various Church affiliated programs. My passion for education can be further narrowed to the subset of Christian Education and within that, Adventist Education. I have a long-term interest in Adventist Education as an organisation and how it can function optimally to achieve its goals.



Roles in Adventist Education. My most recent role in education led me towards my topic. Although I explored a diverse range of topic ideas, my role as a teacher educator at a Christian University influenced me, as did my involvement in two projects that pertained to the distinctiveness of Adventist Schools in Australia. Part of my role was to prepare students to teach in Adventist schools. Employers from the Adventist Education sector are continually calling for education graduates who are not only competent classroom practitioners, but who understand the ethos and distinctiveness of the special character of Adventist Education and are able to enact it in their classrooms and the wider school community. This is an area where ideas are born and tested, adopted or rejected, reincarnated, and sometimes they segue into praxis. Therefore, an understanding of the influences that shape praxis is especially important, as this has the potential to inform praxis in the initial teacher education courses. My past involvement in two roles within Adventist Education also prompted me towards this topic. The first was my membership on the steering committee for

the development of a new religious education syllabus for Adventist Education. The second was my membership on a working party to identify the essence of Adventist Education and how Adventist distinctives also known as Special Character can be fostered in the culture of Adventist Education.

Paradigm Choice. My choice of paradigm was determined partially by the topic, and also by my personal learning and communication preferences. The topic is one that requires an understanding of the deeply personal lived experience of educators in Adventist schools. This paradigm facilitates the capturing of raw emotions and responses associated with "memory depositifs" (Van Manen, 2016; Basu, 2010).



I have always been interested in people and how they impact, and are impacted by, the world around them. Although I observe people, I acknowledge that from an early age, my interest in people has been fed through narrative. I grew up in a family of storytellers. I cannot imagine a world without stories. I have learnt history, geography, and sociology through stories. Stories have enticed me with their overt events and hidden messages. I have been able to explore the meaning of relationships through their pages. I am fortunate to belong to a family that has preserved its own history through "memory depositifs" (Basu, 2012) These extensive collections of personal and public letters, newspaper clippings, maps, published materials, and memoirs have enabled me to construct a family narrative that provides insights into my family. On a spiritual level, my belief system and values owe much to the inspirational stories of the biblical narrative. As an educator, I practice the power of narrative in my classes. Writing is an extension of oral forms of narrative; and writing, for me, is a form of thinking. Each word, each sentence that makes its way onto a blank page, represents an idea that has been distilled from a plethora of thoughts. Autoethnography as such is an authentic research approach that gives credence to the researcher's experience as a research topic (Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Marechal, 2010). As an avid reader and writer of stories, I was naturally drawn to a research method and design that both complemented the research topic and resonated with my natural mode of written communication.

Research Question and Aims

The following question underpinned this investigation:

RQ How have the lived experiences of eight educators shaped their perceptions of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education?

From this research question, I established four research aims, each of which informed the answer to the research question:

Aim 1. To identify the perceptions that eight educators hold of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education.

Aim 2. To identify any specific links between the nature of the educators' lived experiences and their perceptions of Adventist Education.

Aim 3. To identify any shaping influences that eight educators with diverse lived experiences may share about Adventist Education.

Aim 4. To identify what leaders and teacher educators in Adventist Education can learn from the lived experiences of eight educators.

Methodological Orientation

This investigation is about the lived experiences of people, and how those experiences shaped their perceptions and beliefs about an organisation, in this case, the school system in which they work. It includes not only the lived experience of the present but the lived experience of the past, the revelation of 'memory depositifs' (Basu, 2012), and the meaning contained within them.

It involves the telling of stories and anecdotes as remembered. As such, more traditional quantitative methods of research are not suitable (O'Toole & Beckett, 2010). Conventional methods, while well suited to some disciplines, can be seen as constricting and parochial, ignoring the multiple voices of multiple people in multiple circumstances and places (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2010). Alternatively, a qualitative research design yields large amounts of in-depth knowledge over a relatively narrow focus area and allows the participants' life experiences to come to the fore (Bernard & Ryan, 2010).

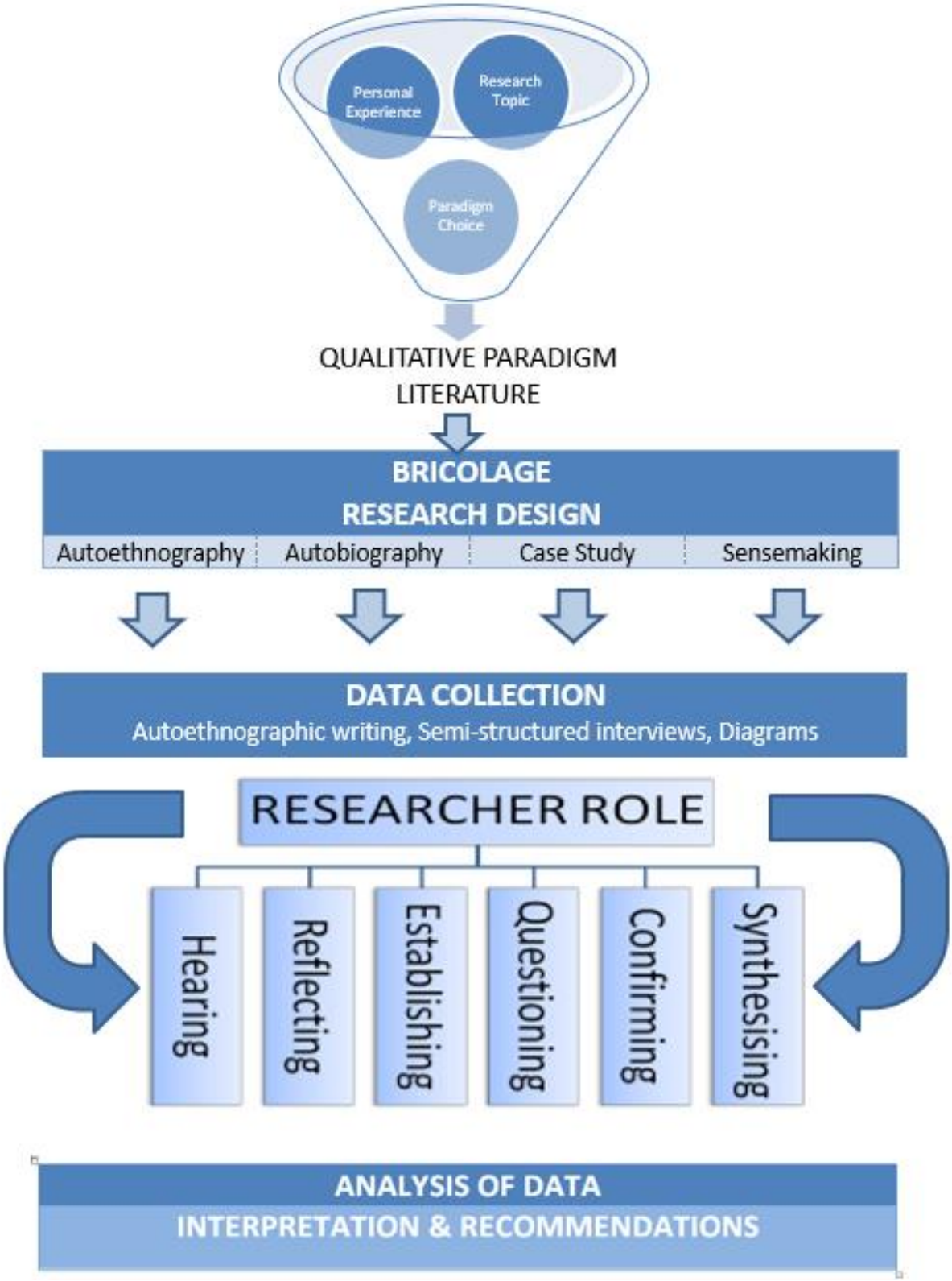


Figure 3.1

Overview of the Qualitative Research Paradigm for This Study

As perceptions of faith-based education systems are personal and may vary from participant to participant, I chose a grounded theory approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Boyatzis, 1998) for this investigation. This enabled me to focus on "the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 16). An overview of the methodological approach can be seen in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 shows the three elements of personal experience, research topic, and personal choice, feeding into the research design and determining the data collection and analysis employed.

Design

Taking into consideration the complexity of trying to extract meaning from past "lived experience" I made an intentional decision to adopt a bricolage research design (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Kincheloe, McLaren & Steinberg, 2011) of four methodologies, including autoethnography, autobiography, case study and sensemaking (Figure 3.1). I believed this approach would be more flexible and thorough than a single mode of inquiry. A bricolage approach, as previously stated, has the advantage of using the tools that suit the purpose of the investigation while recognising the complexity of the research process (Cunliffe, 2016; Kincheloe, McLaren & Steinberg, 2011). Bricolage also facilitates the exploration of that which is not easily observable by allowing the researcher to approach data collection in various ways. In this study, it allowed me to explore the work and life experiences that shaped the participants' individual understanding of the special character of Adventist Education; its philosophy, purpose, and praxis.

Each aspect of the bricolage (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Kincheloe, McLaren & Steinberg, 2011) contained in the research design for this investigation had its own unique role that contributed to the research question or sub-questions. Each aspect worked synergistically with the others to sculpt a multi-dimensional portrait of understanding about the topic under investigation (see Table 3.1). The research approaches that make up the bricolage do not have a hierarchy of importance in that each one functions for a different purpose. They do, however, have a loosely

structured chronological order which will become evident. Each of the various research approaches is outlined below in Table 3.1 and elaborated further in this chapter.

Table 3.1

Description and Purpose of Research Approaches

Research approach	Description	Role in research design	Interaction in research design
Autoethnography	The researcher writes her own story with Adventist Education as a means to analysing her understanding of Adventist Special Character.	To explore Adventist Education Special Character as a researcher-participant and to provide a basis of understanding from which to conduct interviews with external participants.	Starting point and ongoing reflective foil that identifies any bias of the researcher-participant.
Autobiography/ Biography	The researcher interviews the participants to hear their lived experiences and transcribes and analyses them to find their meaning.	To provide thick descriptions of the participants' stories and comprehension of their understanding of Adventist Education Special Character.	The researcher uses a reflexive dyadic interview approach to elicit the lived experience narratives of participants.
Case Study	Participants are drawn from a cross section of Adventist educators, starting in one school and moving up to administration at a national level.	To investigate a variety of perceptions about the same topic.	The case study element is embedded in the autobiographic approach; it provides an ideological framework.

Research approach	Description	Role in research design	Interaction in research design
Sensemaking	Sensemaking properties are applied to the data as it is written up in narrative format.	To offer an understanding of how sensemaking properties interact with the participants' lived experiences, resulting in a shaping of their perceptions of Adventist Education.	Sensemaking is used as a way to read the literature and is overlaid on the participants' narratives to add depth of understanding to the research question.
The outcome will be a compilation of individual stories from a cross-section of Adventist educators that leads to a clearly articulated understanding of the influences that have shaped each participant's understanding of Adventist Education.			

Autoethnography

Autoethnography was the starting place in the research bricolage. Ethnography can be defined as "the systematic study of cultures or subcultures" (Borbasi & Jackson, 2019, p. 150). In this study, the sub-culture was Adventist Education. Autoethnography, therefore, is a research approach that "makes the researcher's own experience a topic of investigation in its own right" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 73), or "a form or method of research that involves self-observation and reflexive investigation in the context of ethnographic field work and writing" (Marechal, 2010, p. 43). Autoethnography allows the researcher to have a voice and invites the readers to immerse themselves morally, emotionally, aesthetically, and intellectually in the story being told (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Although sometimes criticised as being sentimental and unscientific, its strength lies in the fact that it takes the 'self' (auto) and connects it to culture (ethno) to produce something different from both, greater than its parts (Ellis, 2004). Edwards (2021) has examined autoethnography from an ethical perspective. She argues for strong ethical guidelines that respect others who may feature in the researcher's ethnographic writing. She is not the only author to raise the issue of ethics. See, for example, Dilger (2017), Ellis (2007), and Jerolmack and Murphy (2019). Despite the

challenges of autoethnography, I found Bochner's (2017) mini-manifesto for autoethnography, (described later in this chapter), and deemed that this research design was well suited to this investigation. This was because I chose to explore in depth my own journey of discovery within Adventist Education to clarify my understanding of its philosophy, purpose, and praxis, before embarking on a similar journey with others. Although broadly autoethnographic, my research is focused on the use of "memory depositifs" (Basu, 2010), that is, memories of past experiences that have a bearing on the topic under investigation.

As a research-participant, I was aware of several key considerations. One was contextual understanding. This investigation fell into the category of what Bridger (1996) calls a heritage narrative, a story about communities. Although the context in which Bridger (1996) writes relates to the built environment, the notion of community is transferable. In this case, it was a religious education community, although it still remained very much a collection of individual narrative journeys. As a member of this community, I understood the culture and its symbols, the cultural idioms and "language", and the context of the personal narratives of those I interviewed. This positioned me to see relationships between the various participant versions of each narrative and to explore links and themes both within and across narratives. Bernard and Ryan (2010) posit that "meaning after all, is ephemeral, so understanding a text's meaning requires a really solid grasp of local conditions and language" (p. 255).

A cautionary note needs to be inserted here, for the very insider knowledge that allowed for the interpretation of ideas could also have introduced bias into the investigation. This bias had the potential to distort individual stories or impede the course of impartial analysis. The process of writing and analysing my own story was therefore crucial to all aspects of this investigation. Not only did it allow me to take the same journey as those I interviewed, it also allowed me to identify any bias I had and discover any themes in my own understanding (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). This process then allowed me to approach the interviews and analysis of transcripts with a conscious awareness of my own understandings, thereby facilitating a rigorous and impartial approach that strengthened the trustworthiness of the data.

Chronologically, the autoethnographic component of the research occurred early in the timeline. This not only placed me in a position of awareness for the storytelling to come, but also informed the nature of the initial questions that would elicit the narrative responses.

Autobiographic Narrative

The autobiographic narrative was the second research approach in the bricolage design. According to Creswell (2013), "narrative researchers collect stories from individuals (and documents, and group conversations) about individuals' lived and told experiences" (p. 71). As such, they use autobiography as a tool for understanding. Autobiography as a research method is ideal for this project as it provides an inside view of the forces that shaped the perceptions of individuals. Narratives may be collected through semi-structured or unstructured interviews and may be short and specific to one event, cover the events of a lifetime, or relate to one specific aspect of one's life (Chase, 2011). It is the latter that this investigation explored by delving into the lives of educators.

A narrative approach is more than a timeline of events in a person's life. "Narrative is retrospective meaning making" (Chase, 2011, p. 636), that is, it takes past experiences and finds a way to order them into a cohesive and meaningful whole. It differs from a simple chronology in that it communicates "memory depositifs" (Basu, 2012). These include the narrator's perspective and feelings, thoughts, and interpretations of experienced events. These characteristics alone, make it a good fit with a research question that seeks to understand how past experiences have shaped the thinking of individuals and brought them to their present point of understanding about the organisation to which they belong. While the participants told their autobiographies, I shared the responsibility of making their meaning overt where they did not, and re-presenting their autobiographies as biographies written in a narrative style.

Case Study

My bricolage also included elements of a case study. A case study "provides a unique portrayal of people in a real social situation by means of vivid accounts of events, feelings and perceptions" (Basit, 2010, p. 19). Case studies may involve one

or a related group of individuals and are commonly used in conjunction with other research approaches (Lichtman, 2013; Yin, 2014). The case study, in this inquiry, is one vertical slice of Adventist Education. This slice was typical of any other cross-section of Adventist Education in Australia, meaning that it was not chosen for its stand-out qualities or because it was unusual or unique, but because it was representative (Lichtman, 2013). The cross-section was comprised of eight educators, diverse in their backgrounds and experiences, from which a set of cross-case conclusions and recommendations was ultimately drawn (Yin, 2018).

It is important to note that this bricolage research design was an attempt at finding a new way of listening to the story being told by those people sustaining the special character of Adventist Education. Foreman-Wernet (2003) points out that "institutions in our societies have a long tradition of top-down, information-as-description, and communication-as-transmission habits. Habits are hard to break, but developing new ways of listening is of prime importance" (p. 230). It was my hope that the process of facilitating story-telling and reflection, could result in new ways of listening from which may emerge ideas and concepts previously camouflaged by the cultural mores of Adventist Education.

Sensemaking

Sensemaking was the final methodology to complete the bricolage. I have already discussed sensemaking as a methodology in Chapter 2 where I used a sensemaking lens to read the literature concerning the historical development of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education. In this section, I address how I applied sensemaking to the data, resulting in observations. Sensemaking is something that all humans engage in naturally and continuously. It involves reflection and taking action on what we are learning, in other words, making sense of situations in which we find ourselves. Weick (1995), in his seminal work *Sensemaking in Organizations,* took this human behaviour and presented sensemaking as a framework for perception, cognition, action, and memory. His focus, appropriate to this study, is about developing a set of ideas that have the potential to explain certain situations found in organisations. Dervin (1999) supplemented Weick's work with her sensemaking methodology (SMM) and offers sensemaking as a theory of knowing for the purpose of empowering people.

Adventist Education is an organisation that has been shaped over more than a century, and the focus of this thesis is to understand how people's perceptions of this organisation have been shaped by their lived experiences. Therefore, sensemaking played a role, working synergistically with the case study, autoethnography, and biography components, to divulge possible reasons for the participants' perceptions. Weick (1995) acknowledged in the early stages of his writing on this topic that when people write or tell the story of their own life experiences, the resulting narrative filters, rather than duplicates, real life. Rather than seeing this as a disadvantage, participants' personal narratives gather elements of experience into a sequence, positioning them to offer explanations of how perceptions were shaped.

Figure 3.2 offers a summary of the sensemaking properties introduced in Chapter 2 and offers a visual explanation of the role of sensemaking in the bricolage research design.

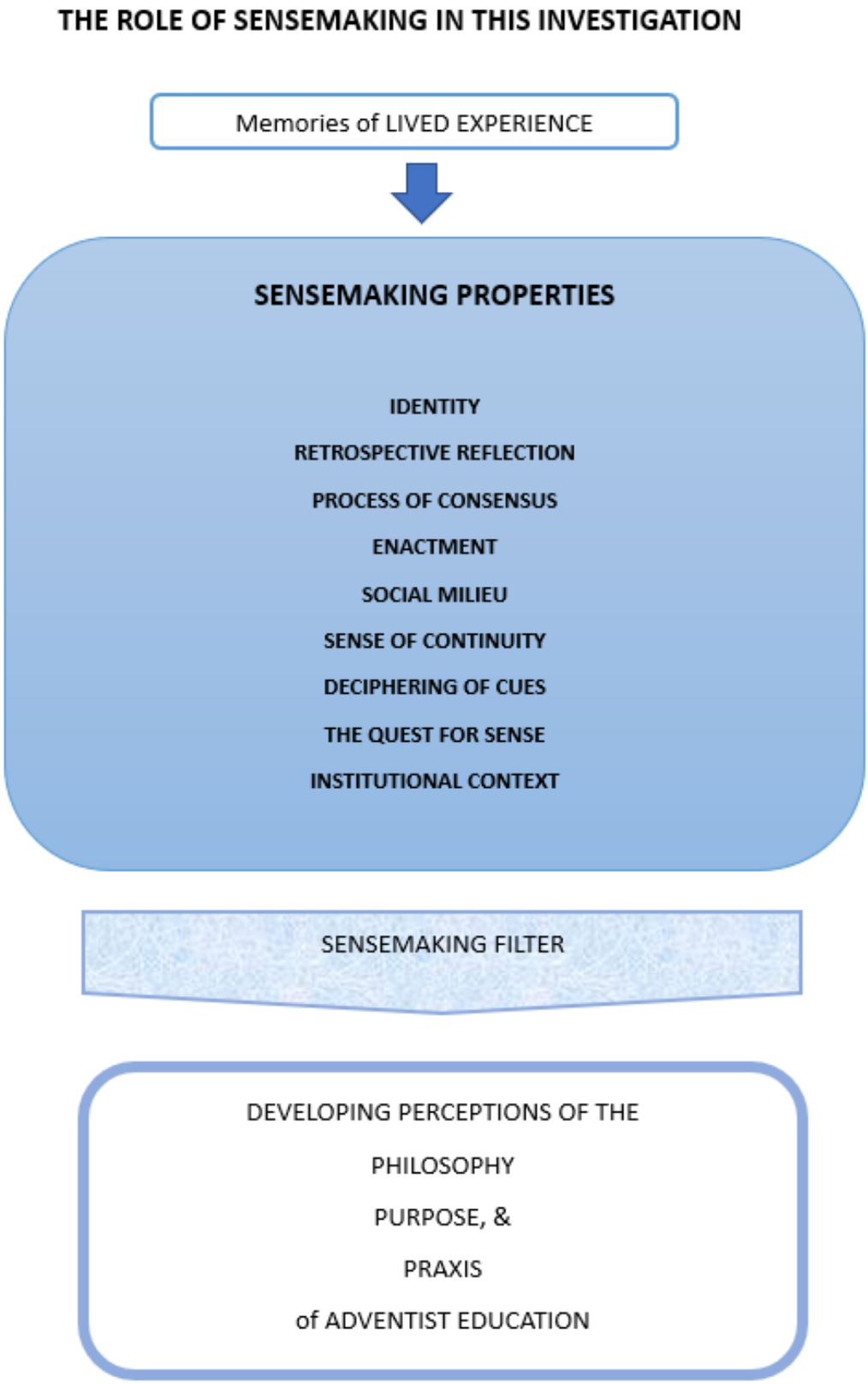


Figure 3.2

The Role of Sensemaking in This Investigation

Each of the bricolage methods listed brings its own strengths to the investigation. Autoethnography contextualised the study and identified biases that could potentially impact the trustworthiness of the analysis. The autobiographical narrative provided thick descriptions of the participants' stories, thoughts, and feelings that culminated in their perspective of Adventist Education: its philosophy, purpose, and praxis The case study approach allowed the data to become visible in one cross-section of Adventist Education stakeholders while including multiple perspectives. Sensemaking crossed the boundaries between the literature and the participants' narratives, offering explanations of how lived experiences have shaped the participants' perceptions of Adventist Education.

Validating Authentic Qualitative Research

Having settled on a qualitative research paradigm, my next task was to determine how I would ensure that each step of the process reassures the reader that this research study was authentic in both design and application. Qualitative research is a widely used method for investigating complex social phenomena in the social sciences, especially when used to study human experiences and behaviour as this study seeks to do. This section explores several reasons why qualitative research was suited to this investigation and how bias could be mitigated.

Sandelowski et al. (2018) posit that qualitative research allows participants to share their stories in their natural environment, rather than in a controlled setting. Interviews used in my research were conducted in the participants' workplaces where they felt comfortable. This is particularly useful when the topic under investigation is sensitive or complex. Sandelowski et al. (2018) also point out that qualitative research is effective in exploring human experiences and behaviour, a concept supported by Arslan and Kelle (2019) who highlight that qualitative research is effective as it allows researchers to delve deeply into the complex and nuanced relationships that exist between individuals and society or, in this study, an organisation.

Another benefit of using qualitative research in the social sciences is offered by Dey (2019) who argues that qualitative research provides a valuable tool for addressing questions and issues that cannot be effectively addressed using

quantitative methods. Several authorities on qualitative research (Kelle & Arslan, 2020; Patton, 2014; Sandelowski et al., 2018; Seale, 2019) believe that qualitative research is the only way to understand complex human experiences and behaviour.

Although there are still some perceived limitations in the reliability of qualitative methods (Francisco, Butterfoss & Capwell, 2001), historical (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and current literature (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021) supports the use of a qualitative research paradigm for this investigation into the relationship between eight educators' lived experiences and their perceptions of Adventist Education. I have chosen to elaborate in further detail using a diagram (Figure 3.3) and accompanying explanation to ensure that the research method employed is valid and the quality above reproach (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021), and to counteract any qualitative research critics who claim subjectivity as a weakness in qualitative paradigms.

It is important to note that the strategies used to validate qualitative research are many and overlap in meaning. These strategies give rise to characteristics labelled as rigorous, contributary, defensible, ethical (Bernard, Wutich & Ryan, 2017), truthful (McNiff, 2007), credible, affective, trustworthy (Borbasi & Jackson, 2016; Chang, 2016; Hoke, 2017; Jorgenson, 2018), transparent, credible, reliable (Bernard, Wutich & Ryan, 2017; Gibbs, 2018), analysable, maintaining integrity (Chang, 2016), having clarity (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Dey, 2019; Flick, 2018; Sandelowski et. al, 2018), coherent (Frechette et al., 2020), plausible (Flick, 2018; Groenewald, 2004; Roller, 2020), and having internal validity (Bernard, Wutich & Ryan, 2017; McNiff, 2007). It is somewhat challenging to identify the difference between the varying characteristics, so I chose a selection of paired characteristics to apply to this investigation to demonstrate its validity as a research project. The first characteristic of qualitative research I chose was *integrity* as a stand-alone characteristic that applied to me, the researcher. The paired characteristics I chose were *trustworthiness* and *transparency,* and *clarity* and *coherence*. An explanation of how I fulfilled these characteristics in my research demonstrates the credibility and reliability of the research process and findings.

Figure 3.3 shows a four-faceted attitudinal approach toward the researcher, the participants, and the data. The chosen research method operates within a culture

of respect. Respect is crucial as Sandelowski et al. (2018) point out, given the highly personal and possibly sensitive nature of the topic under investigation. To ensure a culture of respect, participants were kept informed of the research process, they were given the opportunity to make changes to their transcript if they wished, and always in the interviews, I treated them and their stories with respect by showing active listening and allowing them to talk uninterrupted.

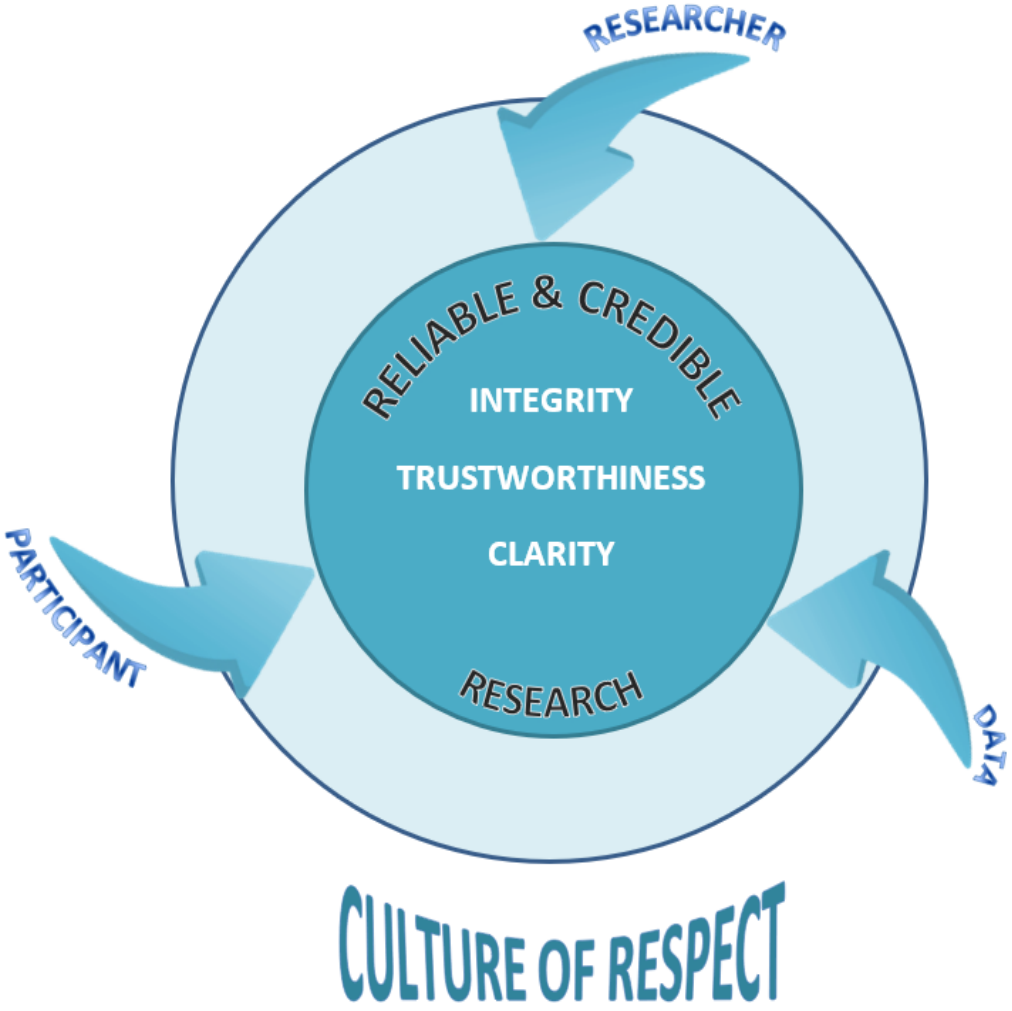


Figure 3.3

Overview of the Criteria Used in This Study to Validate it

Integrity

Integrity is a crucial aspect of qualitative research that refers primarily to the ethical conduct of the researcher throughout the research process. As an inside-outside researcher whose own lived experiences have the potential to influence the findings, I had to be diligent in adopting an ethical and open approach that operated within a culture of respect. This involved respecting the rights and wellbeing of the participants, but it also involved respect for the data-collection process, the data, and the analysis. Chang (2016) comments on integrity as an ethical stance to respect and protect the right of self and others.

This was the integrity I was aiming for in my research. In my study, my integrity as a researcher was demonstrated through my personal interactions with the participants, the consistency with which I approached the data collection, my consistency in dealing with data from different sources, and my consistency in coding.

Integrity also includes ethical behaviour regarding processes. Ethical considerations were included my confirmation application) and subsequent communication with potential participants. My research was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Avondale University College (Appendix C). I sent both an approved information letter (Appendix D) and a consent form (Appendix E) to all prospective participants, clearly outlining their roles and responsibility if they chose to participate.

Trustworthiness

Valid qualitative research also includes the concept of trustworthiness, a term introduced by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and explored in depth by other qualitative researchers (Chang, 2016; Hoke, 2017; Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017; Jorgensen, 2018) attempting to validate or improve qualitative research methods. Nowell et al. (2017) define trustworthiness in data analysis as a demonstration that data collection and analysis have been precise, consistent, and exhaustive. Elo et al. (2014) link trustworthiness with the terms; credibility, dependability, conformability, transferability, and authenticity, and stress the importance of paying close attention to trustworthiness from the initial data collection right through until the reporting of

findings. The trustworthiness of the data collection and analysis is dealt with more comprehensively in another section of this chapter.

Trustworthiness is closely linked to transparency. Transparency refers to the extent to which the research process is open, explicit, and available for dissemination and evaluation and constitutes a basic ethical obligation. Aguinis and Solarino (2019) link transparency to replicability, a somewhat contentious issue in qualitative research. However, qualitative researchers support the practice of demonstrating transparency as it impacts the implications of the research findings for theory and practice. Aguinis and Solarino (2019) identified twelve transparency criteria that I have reworded in the positive. Although authored after my data collection and analysis, I used these criteria as a checklist to affirm the transparency of my study. A tick in Table 3.2 indicates that this study met the criteria listed.

Table 3.2

Transparency Checklist

X or ✓	**Criteria to demonstrate transparency**
✓	Qualitative method clearly identified.
✓	Research setting described.
✓	Author discloses position as insider-outsider researcher.
✓	Sampling procedure for participants identified.
✓	Roles of participants identified and reasons given for choosing them.
✓	Interactions with participants documented.
✓	Author identified when saturation point was reached.
✓	Unexpected challenges and opportunities reported.
✓	Power imbalance between participants and author addressed.
✓	Multi-level coding clearly described.
✓	Data analysis explained in detail.
✓	Data sources disclosed.

Note. Adapted from "Transparency and replicability in qualitative research: the case of interviews with elite informants", by Aguinis, H., & Solarino, A. M. (2019). *Strategic Management Journal, 40*(8). https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.3015.

This checklist confirmed that my research project was transparent at all stages of the research journey.

Clarity

Clarity refers to the extent to which the research questions, method, data, and findings are clearly articulated and explained. It is also linked to the idea of the data being free from contamination and means that the data have not been altered, falsified, misrepresented, or manipulated. There are four ways that clarity in qualitative research may be enhanced. First, clarity is crucial in the wording of research questions (Sandelowski et al., 2018). Second, clarity exists when clear and transparent research methods are fully documented (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, Sandelowski et al., 2018)). Thirdly, clarity is ensured by using thorough data analysis processes (Dey, 2019). Finally, overarching all of the research is the clarity of the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Sandelowski et. al (2018) note that concise research questions help focus the research and reduce the potential for researcher bias. Please note my initial set of research questions below, and the final set of research questions, which demonstrate the changes made to improve clarity.

Initial Key Research Question

What experiences of key stakeholders have shaped their perceptions of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education?

Initial Supporting Questions

- What varying perceptions and praxes exist in relation to the term 'Adventist Special Character'?
- What is the impact of life/work experiences of Adventist educators on their perceptions of the philosophy, purpose, and practice of Adventist Education?

- What is the impact of life/work experiences of Adventist clergy on their perceptions of the philosophy, purpose, and practice of Adventist Education?
- How do individual perceptions of Adventist Special Character impact on participants' understanding of the community of faith and learning model?

Key Question Refined for Clarity

How have the lived experiences of eight educators shaped their perceptions of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education?

Supporting Questions Changed to Aims and Refined for Clarity

1. To identify the perceptions that eight educators hold of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education.

2. To identify any specific links between the nature of the educators' lived experiences and their perceptions of Adventist Education.

3. To identify any shaping influences that eight educators with diverse lived experiences may share about Adventist Education.

4. To identify what leaders and teacher educators in Adventist Education can learn from the lived experiences of eight educators.

A comparison of the earlier research questions with the final research questions reveals greater clarity which was achieved by narrowing the topic to educators only, and removing the questions that related to the community of faith and learning model. Reference to this model became redundant as my topic was refined.

1. Changing the key question from a "what" question to a "how" question. This fits better with a qualitative research paradigm.
2. Changing terms, for example, from "experiences of key stakeholder" to "lived experiences of eight educators", and "practice" to "praxis" to position the questions in the field of education better.

3. Crafting the sub-questions so that they did not duplicate the key question, but rather contributed to a deeper understanding of the topic (Q2 and Q3).
4. Linking Q4 to the practical application of the research.

The final change in the pursuit of clarity was to keep one research question, supported by several research aims.

Another way to ensure clarity in qualitative research is to use clear and transparent research methods (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell et al., 2017). This includes the clarity of research instruments. I wrote and reviewed the questions for my semi-structured interviews (Appendix F) several times, and asked colleagues to read them for clarity before conducting my interviews. Member checking also contributed to clarity, allowing the participants to confirm that their lived experiences were recorded accurately (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). These methods are documented later in this chapter.

A third way to improve clarity, according to Dey (2019), is to ensure thorough data analysis processes. This reduces the potential for researcher bias, an important consideration for my research. I have detailed my systematic and rigorous data analysis techniques later in this chapter. Clearly documenting the process is crucial to achieving clarity.

A final consideration for clarity involves the research process. According to Sandelowski et al. (2018), this involves clarity within the overall research project by documenting all research processes in detail, including research instruments and all data collected. I have included evidence of this in the current chapter. Clarity also includes peer reviewing and publication. Clarity is an important aspect of valid qualitative research as it ensures the research process and findings are transparent, understandable, and could be easily replicated in a different context.

Paired with clarity is cohesion. Cohesion describes the extent to which the various components of a qualitative study are logically linked and internally consistent. A coherent study will be logical and easily understandable to others. Cohesion, like clarity, involves clear and concise research questions. However, it also means that each component of the research process is clearly related to the

research questions. I have done this throughout this thesis. Another area where coherence strengthens the research process is when the research questions and the data collection align. For example, a research question that begins with “How” is best paired with focus groups or an open-ended or semi-structured questionnaire.

Having put measures in place to ensure the integrity, trustworthiness, and clarity of my research, I was satisfied that my research project was both credible and reliable (Northcote, 2012), and I was ready to take this study to the next stage.

Site and Respondents

This is a study about people, their perceptions of their employing organisation, and what shaped those perceptions. Therefore, in taking a case study approach, I had to be intentional about choosing participants that would represent multiple perspectives (Chang, 2016). After deliberation, I concluded that I would select participants based on their roles in Adventist Education. This made the process of choosing participants transparent and gave me the multiple perspectives required for my research.

The people at the centre of this study were all educators, a purposeful term in this study that encompasses teachers, school administrators, and system administrators. It includes only those individuals who were employed by Adventist Education and not the clients of the system. These educators had varying knowledge, understanding, and experiences and were responsible for the education of the children enrolled in Adventist schools either on a day-to-day classroom basis or in an administrative role.

The participants were chosen based on their role in Adventist Education. Initially, I included a school chaplain and/or minister of religion from a neighbouring Adventist Church in my list of participants. This role was eliminated from my list because I did not want to compromise the case study approach by introducing data from someone with a theological background who was not an educator. I did, however, retain a school board chairman in my list of participants. The chairperson who was selected was also an educator with broad experience across the public education system as well as experience in both teaching and administrative roles in Adventist Education.

All four teacher participants were drawn from the same school. The school was based on the convenience of its location and the willingness of the principal to allow research activities in the school. To preserve the integrity of the case study, I did not choose the participating teachers as I knew several of the teachers at the school. Instead, I gave some guidelines to the principal which included:

- Preferably two primary teachers and two secondary teachers.
- Teachers who had taught in a variety of schools both inside and outside of Adventist Education.
- Teachers whose employment with Adventist Education ranged from less than 10 years to more than 40 years.
- People who would be willing to share their lived experiences of Adventist Education.

From the principal, I received four names and contact details. While only one name offered was a primary teacher, a second teacher worked with children from K-12 in a support capacity. I decided that this was acceptable and therefore did not need to ask for another name. The other four participants included the school principal, the school council chairperson, and two administrators in Adventist Education, one from a regional state office of Adventist Education, and one from the national Adventist Education office. Once I had the names of all the prospective participants, I sent an invitation to each, inviting them to participate in my research project with the choice to accept or decline. All accepted. Table 3.3 indicates the role of each participant at the time of the data collection.

Table 3.3

Participants by Their Role in Adventist Education

Roles of participants in Adventist Education	
National education administrator	1
Regional education administrator	1
School principal	1
School council chairperson	1
Teachers (1 primary, 2 secondary, 1 special needs K-12)	4
Total participants	8

At this point in the study, I had the opportunity to demonstrate my integrity as a researcher of narrative inquiry through the use of ethical practice (Flyvbjerg, 2011; Josselson, 2014). Due to the relatively small size of the Adventist Education system, and my broad experience as a teacher and tertiary educator in the system, I was familiar with the participants, having had limited shared experiences with some of them throughout my career. Therefore, I scrutinised my professional relationship with each participant I knew, to determine if my prior contact with them was likely to influence their responses. I had not taught any of them, and neither had I worked as a colleague with any of them at the same school. Those I had known for a long time had taken a different educational journey from me with limited or no contact over the years. All were mature teachers and administrators, confident in their roles. I had only spoken previously about the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education to one participant, and that was in the context of a committee meeting with representatives from Adventist Education. This person was the national director of Adventist Education, and I concluded that this participant would not in any way feel intimidated or influenced by me, based on prior interactions.

An additional way I ensured that researcher bias would not influence the data was by using open-ended methods of data collection. Both the semi-structured interviews and participant-drawn diagrams allowed the participants to structure their own lived experiences and share meaningful moments. The clarity with which I explained the task, my intentionality in not disclosing my ideas and/or experiences,

and my assurance of confidentiality also acted as safeguards against the possibility of participants responding to please, align, or conform with my personal ideas.

Four research locations operated for this investigation, each one being the workplace in which the participants normally carried out their regular work, except for one participant who chose a different setting. Participants were given the option of choosing their location to facilitate their comfort when participating in the investigation. Three participants chose to be interviewed in their offices, and one chose an interview room at the researcher's workplace. Of the classroom-based practitioners, two chose to be interviewed in an interview room at their school and two chose to be interviewed in their classrooms. The first round of interviews was completed within a two-week period. The second round of interviews was completed over three consecutive days.

I took measures to maintain confidentiality for the participants. Each participant was given a pseudonym, and with the exception of Avondale College, references to schools, cities, towns, and other personal places or names of people were replaced with generalised terms. I also sent the final narratives that I wrote from the interviews to the participants for checking, commenting, making any changes, or deleting anything they were not comfortable with, or thought could identify them to others.

Data Collection

Data collection was varied and suited the elements of the bricolage research design outlined in a previous section. The first phase of data collection included my own hermeneutic, phenomenological writing. The second phase of data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews which yielded both oral data, later transcribed into written form, and visual data in the form of pictograms (Banks 2018). Additional member checking and data collection took place through an additional round of interviews (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) that were also used to ensure a high level of transparency and trustworthiness of the data.

Four types of data were collected over three separate occasions. A summary of these is given in Table 3.4. Round one interviews and participant drawings were collected during the same session. Round two interviews are listed separately as the

nature and purpose of the second round of interviews varied from the first round of interviews. Table 3.4 is followed by a rationale for each data set, a description of the data collection process, and a detailed explanation of the data analysis. I have presented this in the chronological order in which the data were collected, using the headings listed in the table.

The final row of the table indicates that the data, combined with sensemaking theory, were used to construct the grounded theory model and write the participants' biographical narratives in a hermeneutic, phenomenological style. How this occurred is explained explicitly towards the end of this chapter.

Table 3.4

Summary of the Bricolage Data Collection

Data collection tools	**Purpose of data collection**	**Research aims met**	**Contribution of data to the research question/aims**
1. Researcher's hermeneutic, phenomenological writing	To explore the topic as a participant researcher for suitability, to identify any bias the researcher may have, to develop a suitable interview process. To act as a foil as other participants shared their lived experiences.	Predeterminant of suitability of topic and research question.	Lay the foundation for answering the research question, offer clarification to the topic.
2. Reflexive, dyadic interviews (Round 1)	To elicit the participants' lived experiences with Adventist Education, leading to an understanding of the influences that have shaped their perceptions of Adventist Education.	Aim1 Aim 2 Aim 3	Data contributes directly to Aim 1 Data works with other data to provide triangulation for Aim 2 and Aim 4

Data collection tools	Purpose of data collection	Research aims met	Contribution of data to the research question/aims
3. Participant diagrams	To summarise the participants' perceptions of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education and for triangulation.	Aim1 Aim 2	Contributes directly to Aim 1 by collecting data on the participants' perceptions. Contributes to Aim 2 by proving data for triangulation
4. Round 2 interviews	For clarification, member checking and triangulation.	Aim1 Aim 2 Aim 3	Contributes to Aims 1, 2, 3, and 5 and provides further triangulation.
Data collection tools and sensemaking combined	To enable the construction of a grounded theory model, and to inform the writing of participants' narratives.	RQ Aim 4	The grounded theory model provides possible directions for leaders in Adventist Education.

Hermeneutic Phenomenological Writing

Rationale. The data collection initially occurred, with me, as an inside-outside researcher engaging in hermeneutic, phenomenological writing (Van Manen, 2014) of my own journey toward understanding the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education. This type of writing is narrative in genre, yet analytical in purpose, as it seeks to explain perceived reality. This approach highlights "how prior understandings and prejudices shape the interpretive process" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 16). My purpose for engaging in this form of data collection was to write a personal narrative of my own lived experiences with Adventist Education, interspersed with my developmental journey towards an understanding of Adventist Education, including philosophy, purpose, and praxis in an educational context. As such, the interpretative analysis of the text was embedded in the story I was telling,

to distil my lived experiences into a "textual expression of its essence" (Van Manen, 2006, p.36). Using hermeneutic, phenomenological narrative writing both suited the nature of the investigation and is a genre with which I was totally comfortable. Hermeneutics offers researchers "an image of how human understanding operates in the world" (Jardine, 2006, p. 269), making it suited to this study.

As an educator with over half a century of immersion in Adventist Education, I knew it was highly unlikely that I would find eight participants about whom I knew nothing at all. Partly, this was due to my length of time in Adventist Education, and because of my role in teacher education for more than two decades. This made it crucial for me to identify any bias I may have had so that I did not overlay the participants' perspectives with my own perceptions, thereby shifting the findings toward my own point of view. It also enabled me to gain a thorough understanding of my topic as I engaged in the writing process.

Data Collection. Bernard and Ryan (2010) suggest six stages in a phenomenological investigation. I chose to use the first two stages as a framework for my initial hermeneutic, phenomenological writing at the beginning of the investigative process.

Stage 1 is to clearly identify the focus of the investigation. Before beginning my writing process, I spent time clarifying my research questions and the focus of my writing. As my goal was to understand how the eight educators' perceptions of the Adventist Education organisation had been shaped by their life experiences, I became aware that I would have to write about my own life experiences within the context of Adventist Education.

Stage 2 involves an initial recognition of pre-existing biases and/or concepts. This step was designed to minimise the chances of overlaying the participants' stories with my own understandings so that I influence the outcomes. For me, this became a time of reflection as I sorted through my memories of my lived experience of Adventist Education, writing notes that pinpointed events and people that had impacted my understanding of the three components of Adventist Education I was exploring: the philosophy driving Adventist Education as an organisation, the purpose for its existence, and what it looked like in everyday operation.

It was only after these first two stages, posited Bernard and Ryan (2010), that I was ready to move into the third writing stage of collecting narratives, in this instance, my own. I wrote my own story over a period of time and examined it carefully for additional biases/concepts not identified in Stage Two.

Analysis. The analysis of hermeneutic, phenomenological writing is contained within the writing process. As I wrote, I would stop and reflect, and then write again. Sometimes my memories were unleashed and I wrote quickly, intuitively. Other times I would come back to my writing after a break, and add more. I had decided to write chronologically, hoping that clear ideas would emerge at each stage of my lived experiences. I wrote about myself: my understanding or lack of it, my emotions, and the liminality I encountered as my life situation changed. I wrote about significant people who impacted my life journey with Adventist Education. I wrote within the framework of one organisation, Adventist Education, and I used this context and embedded cues to make sense of my own journey and to hone my beliefs about the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education.

At the end of my parallel writing and reflecting, I had identified eight lenses that road-mapped my journey to my present understanding of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education. I used the term lenses because each one identified how I was seeing the world of Adventist Education at a particular stage of my journey with Adventist Education. I was using my lived experiences and 'memory depositifs' (Basu, 2010) to make sense of the organisation to which I belonged (Adventist Education) and to clarify my beliefs about this organisation. I named these the lenses of:

- oblivion
- awareness
- emerging understanding
- responsibility
- transparency
- bi-focal lenses of accountability
- integration

- vision

As each lens stacked on the previous one, I was able to see how my own lived experiences had influenced my personal and professional beliefs about the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education, and discover how my sensemaking had helped consolidate those beliefs.

My own hermeneutic, phenomenological writing informed the next phase of data collection. I was ready to move from my story to hearing the stories of others.

Reflexive, Dyadic Interviews

Rationale. Stage 3 of Bernard and Ryans' (2010) phenomenological investigation involves collecting narratives about the topic under examination. I chose semi-structured interviews for data collection because they complement both the research design and the research questions. Stories and experience are crucial to answering the question, especially as there is a need to understand the thoughts and feelings of the participants. Chase (2011) supports this notion and highlights the importance of treating "the interviewee as a narrator, both during the interviews and while interpreting them" (p. 652). In this study, the interviews were dyadic as the form taken was that of a conversation between two people, while reflexive interviews "allow participants to signal agreement, suggest changes, disagree about the interpretation, supplement information, or clarify obscure points that emerged upon previous contacts between interviewer and interviewee" (Pessoa et al., 2019).

The four characteristics of responsive interviews as outlined by Rubin and Rubin (2012) formed the basis of the interview design. First, the focus was on contextualising the stories and seeking rich data by probing for detail and depth, example and nuance. This facilitated the expression of different ideologies, an important component of the investigation. Second, the interviews were conversational or polyphonic in a style that was reflexive and dyadic where the interviewer was free to share parts of her own story as a catalyst for the participants' stories (Boje, 2007; Ellis, 2004). This approach fosters open dialogue, and is not only flexible but stimulating (Ellis, 2004). The third characteristic identified by Rubin and Rubin (2012) is the presence of a meaningful relationship between the interviewer and interviewee. This does not mean prior acquaintance, but rather denotes shared

interest or experience that puts the interviewee at ease. In this case, the shared interest is Adventist Education. The final characteristic was a flexible design which allowed the researcher to hear what the participants have to say.

Embedding these four characteristics into the interviews resulted in eight individual stories that follow a scaffold consistent with the autoethnographic narrative. However, the stories were allowed to develop naturally and maintain their uniqueness as indicated by Bernard and Ryan (2010).

Data collection. This phase of the data collection involved an initial responsive semi-structured interview to elicit in detail the experiences, thoughts and perspectives of the participants (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). These interviews followed the format listed below. I did not want the participants to gather responses prior to the interview process. However, I recognised that time for each interview was limited, so prior to starting the audio recording I gave each participant a stimulus diagram, consisting of an outline of a person and eight arrows pointing towards the person (Appendix H). I invited them to identify key factors that they felt had shaped their perceptions of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education and write them on the arrows. This was to serve as a prompt as they told the story of their lived experiences with Adventist Education. I also gave a couple of generic examples of influences, for example, family, and colleagues, and allowed a little time for them to reflect. I was purposeful in keeping my examples generic so that I did not influence the shared narratives in any way. This exercise was for the benefit of the participants and not collected as part of the data.

As writing my own story in chronological order had made the transition from one thought space to another easier to identify, I requested that the participants loosely follow a chronological order in sharing their lived experiences of Adventist or alternative education, beginning with pre-career experiences and progressing to early career and then late/r career experiences. The reflexive dyadic interview style allowed me to affirm the participants' feelings, ask probing questions, and gently redirect the interview without driving it in any direction, except to focus on the participants' personal history with Adventist Education and their own perceptions and understandings of its philosophy and purpose. My interview plan contained a limited number of key questions that were pre-planned and structured to scaffold the

interview, some probes to manage the interview, and some follow-up questions to elicit depth and detail (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 81) (Appendix F). These questions were used only when required, allowing me to record as much of their lived experience as possible during the allotted time of the interview (≈ 90 minutes). Figure 3.4 gives an excerpt from an interview transcript where the interviewee was sharing his perspective on how he challenges his students to think Christianly in geography classes.

Analysis. Initially, the audio recordings of the semi-structured interviews were sent to a reliable transcribing service. I then read and listened to the transcripts concurrently to correct any errors that I found in the text. These related mainly to the spelling of place names, and terms or acronyms that were specific to education and Adventist Education in particular. I then emailed the transcripts to the participants for member checking. This gave me accurate transcripts of the interviews from which to work and ensured the trustworthiness of the data. (Appendix G).

Interviewer:	Cultural understanding.
[redacted]:	Cultural understanding, it's an idea, driving it with that. A little bit of World Vision. So, I guess there's in that respect there's quite an inherent drive to Adventist in there. In other parts just without coming into… and this is Adventist or Christianity, this is on this idea what would be a Christian worldview or a point on that.
Interviewer:	And geography is the most wonderful subject to do that.
[redacted]:	With recent topics looking at estranged populations or the refugees and a whole bunch of things and say, "Okay, we're a so-called Christian democratic country but are the current policies, would …why are some churches happy with this and unhappy?" And literally, what should Christians be doing here and why is it that some countries which profess to have a Christian faith are acting in a way that is not caring and loving for your fellow man? So, in that way without a thing, I feel any Adventist church has made sure to accept refugees this way, from housing to the kids. Well, well, from your understanding of your time here in Christianity, what would be a solution… forget government policies and money? What would be the Christian thing to do?
Interviewer:	And that's really the best way to do it isn't it?
[redacted]:	Yeah.

Figure 3.4

Sample of an Interview Transcript

I used a constructivist grounded theory analysis approach. Constructivist grounded theory as a research methodology was pioneered by Glaser and Strauss (1967), developed into a distinct research method by Charmaz (2017), and aligned with other qualitative researchers, including Boyatzis (1998) and Bernard and Ryan (2010). It is a research method in which the data is collected, then analysed inductively through a process of rigorous coding, allowing categories and themes to emerge from the data (Basit, 2010; Charmaz, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2016;). Bernard and Ryan (2010) posit that "the study of human experience is always exploratory, and is best done inductively" (p. 266). An inductive process suited my case study investigation as the theory needed to be grounded in the data, and did not require a large number of participants (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Following a prescribed order of analysis provided clarity and transparency for the process.

Creating Memos. I chose to begin the analysis process by using the technique of applying unbiased intuition to each of the transcripts This is the fourth stage recommended by Bernard and Ryan (2010). As I read, I added memos to each transcript in the form of comments designed to record emerging information (Figure 3.5). These comments were my first impressions of what I was reading. According to Birks, Chapman, and Francis (2008), memo writing is a flexible strategy that enhances the research experience. For me, it provided a record of my initial impressions and formed the basis of my first set of codes. Although I did not attempt to organise these impressions on paper at this point, two broad ideas emerged unbidden from the data. I noted these and set them aside to revisit later.

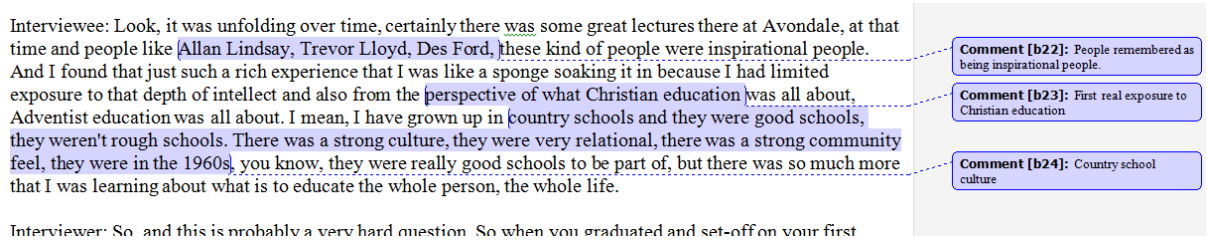


Figure 3.5

Sample of Memos

Line-by-line Coding (Level 1). Codes are one or two-word labels that are assigned to ideas extrapolated from the data. Each code represents a single concept that has significance for the topic under investigation. Line-by-line coding, (Level 1 coding), or open coding as it is sometimes called, is a rigorous process that involves reading each transcript in detail and searching for "clues" that may be used to construct meaning out of the narrative. It is an inductive process that allowed me to create codes directly from the narrative transcripts, rather than using a deductive process in which the data is searched for evidence of pre-determined codes. To assist me in this process, I took particular note of gerunds, metaphors, verb groups, and noun groups that could be considered significant to the narrative, and wrote the ideas they suggested in a comment box for each group of meaningful words in every line of each transcript. My purpose in line-by-line coding was to begin the process of identifying categories that were emerging across the set of eight transcripts (Figure 3.6). Beginning with the first transcript, I methodically worked my way through it, assigning codes as I went. As I analysed each new transcript, I cross-checked with the previous transcripts before adding a new code. At the end of the line-by-line coding, I copied the comments and clustered them into groups of similar codes, resulting in a total of 29 codes or concepts that were related to the topic under investigation.

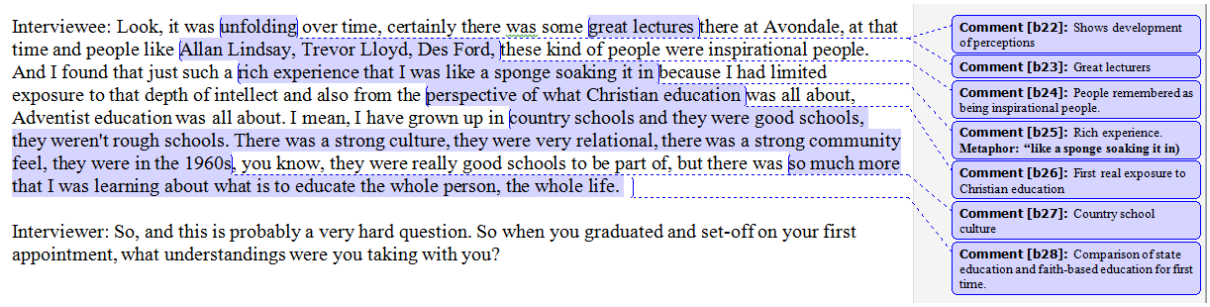


Figure 3.6

Sample of Line-by-line Coding

Focused Coding (Level 2). The next stage of my data analysis was focused coding, the purpose of which was to refine the 29 codes into tighter concepts (Figure 3.8). I examined each of the 29 identified codes in a systematic way. Beginning with the first transcript, I reread the open-coded comments and applied the 29 categories for fitness of purpose. During this process, two steps were followed. First, I identified

those comments that had no bearing on my research questions. Not all categories were related to the research topic as sometimes the participants' memories wandered down side roads during their interview. Those comments that were off-topic were set aside but not discarded, in case further analysis revealed a connection to the research question. This process reduced the number of concepts from 29 to 25.

Next, I examined the concepts for overlapping keywords or ideas. Similar concepts were collapsed and formed into eight categories. I did not determine the categories based on the frequency of the responses, but on the uniqueness of the ideas (Figure 3.7). This practice is supported by qualitative research practice (Charmaz, 2014).

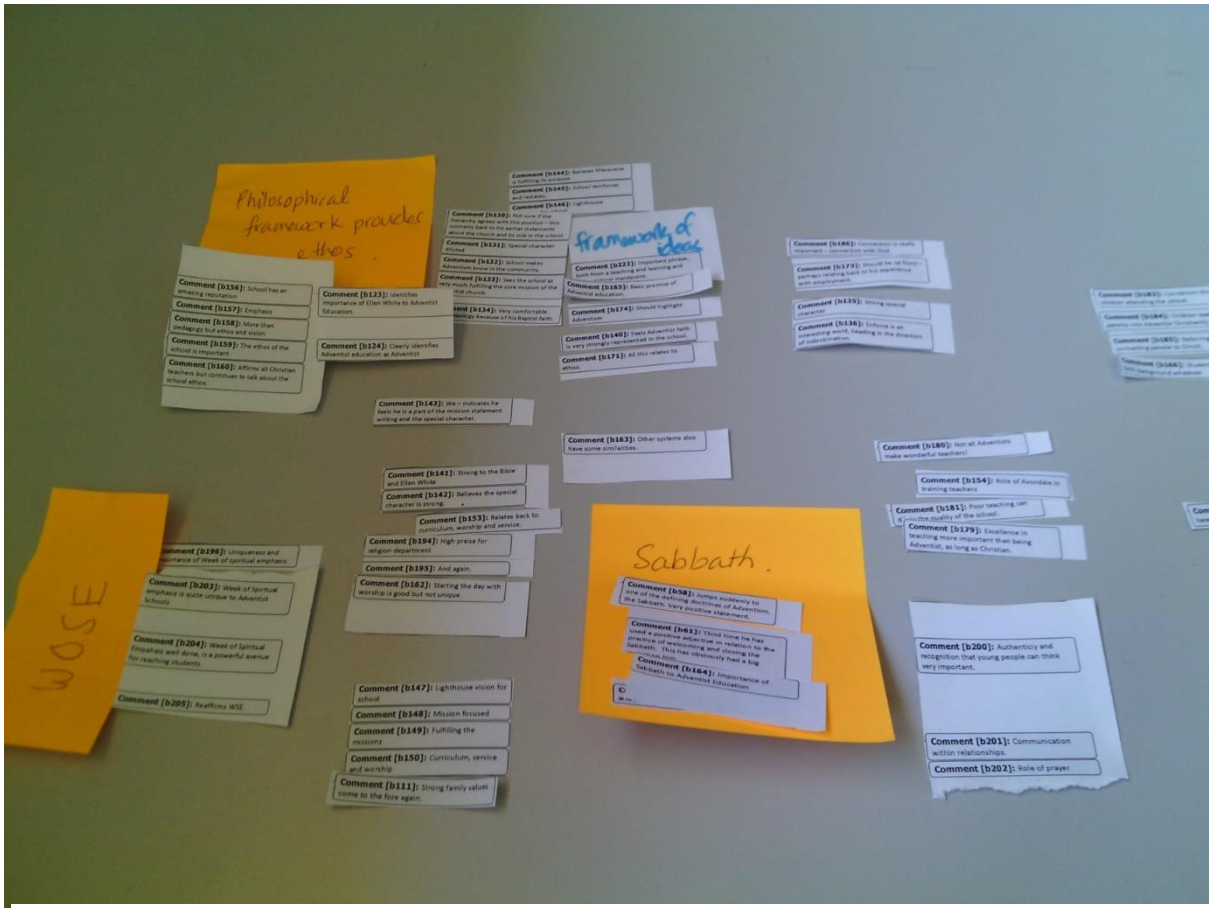


Figure 3.7

Focused Coding (Level 2) from one interview transcript

Conceptual Coding (Level 3). Conceptual coding was a rigorous process in which the categories were refined and tested against each of the transcripts (Figure 3.8). It aligns with Bernard and Ryans' fifth stage of a phenomenological investigation where they advocate matching categories with exemplary quotes taken from the narrative. To ensure reliability, each of the eight categories was identified in the transcripts using supporting quotes and my comments from the line-by-line coding. I created a table in which to place this information. This was a lengthy process as I continued doing this until I was satisfied that all new knowledge of the lived experiences of the participants had been extracted from the narrative, which is Bernard and Ryans' (2010) fifth stage. The result of this process was a list of twelve categories across the transcripts and also a profiled list of categories for each individual transcript.

	system to really think deeply about Adventist education and special character and not be lazy in terms of defining and putting it into practice. here we had boards of trustees who were part Adventist, part non Adventist and we had a government looking on. So, it really put our hand to the fire, in terms of having to think deeply that they had special character. It was very clear that the tenets of the Seventh Adventist Church, our fundamental beliefs and distinctiveness was the essence of that special character that we couldn't lose.	not just in terms of special character, but in terms of pedagogy as well.	
Parents generous in serving the church with time, talents and money"	"I came away concerned about the way we managed the human resources and the fact that we were putting people into leadership positions, who were often very young and ill prepared for the role." "But in terms of system morale, in terms of the right sort of culture and meaning and purpose of the system, that was only strengthened.	PhD topic – Challenges and concerns of principals in small primary schools.	"actually quite jealous of young people who did go to Adventist schools." Felt a little on the outer
Allan Lindsay, Trevor Lloyd, Des Ford "these kind of people were inspiration people' – "rich experience' "soaking it in because I had limited exposure to that depth of intellect and also from the perspective of what Christian education was all about." "Learning about what it is to education the whole person, the whole life."	Collegial approach – Dean of studies, dean of students.	Secondary school principal	"Relational" culture of country schools was a positive experience and influence.
Ellen White through the book *Education* "children are in God's image, made in God's image, and as a result they need to be treated with dignity too with respect and they are very special in	I think, just as a general statement, I think having children, having a family of your own is one of the things, that I think makes you a better educator	Becoming a parent	

Figure 3.8

Sample of Conceptual Coding

At the end of this process, I had two overarching themes, two secondary themes and twelve categories and was satisfied that the data analysis of the interview transcripts was complete.

Participant-Drawn Diagrams

Rationale. Embedded in the first round of interviews was another data collection point. After the participants finished telling their story of their journey with Adventist Education, I asked them to draw a model of their understanding of the philosophy of Adventist Education, its purpose and how it worked in praxis.

I used the participant-drawn diagrams to help achieve the following research aims. They directly answered the first research aim.

Aim 1. *To identify the perceptions that eight educators hold of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education.*

Once the answer to this question was established, triangulation with the interview data facilitated the answer to research Aim 2.

Aim 2. *To identify any specific links between the nature of the educators' lived experiences and their perceptions of Adventist Education.*

Clandinin (1986) was an early supporter of the use of visual images as "the mediator between the unconscious and conscious levels of being" (p.17). She maintained that creating images takes the abstract from the unconscious and gives it a concrete form. "Images are thus seen as the source of inspiration, ideas, insight and meaning" (Clandinin, 1986, p.17). Purchase (2014) dates research using diagrams to post-1997 and confirms their relevance and usefulness in collecting data, but cautions care when translating the semantics of diagrams. Banks (2018), Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) as well as Hurdley (2019) also support the practice of using participant-constructed diagrams as a way of collecting data. Crilly et al. (2006) identify graphic elicitation as a means of obtaining information that may be difficult to obtain by other means, while Biddulph (2014) links drawing and thinking. Bowen and Evans (2019) go one step further, claiming that diagrams are a type of contemporary hieroglyphics. Adding to these researchers who promote the use of diagrams as a means of collecting data are Umoquit, Tso, Burchett & Dobrow (2011) who provide a multidisciplinary systematic review of diagrams for this purpose.

The use of multiple types of data to generate grounded theory is supported in theory and practice (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Harris,1999), and Hurdley (2018) points

out that researchers are increasingly using participant drawings to collect and represent data. They posit that topics including memory and the organisation of ideas are represented differently in a diagram or picture than when spoken, (as in an interview), or written, (as in a written response on a survey). This perspective is supported by Drucker (2014) and Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006). Furthermore, creating a diagram allows the participant to refine their own thoughts, including what is important to them, and deciding how much information to include (Hurdley, 2018). Strauss and Corbin (1990), early proponents of grounded theory, also support the use of diagrams in the research process, suggesting that diagrams assist with conceptualisation. Buckley and Waring (2013) maintain that diagrams are underutilised as tools in analysis, and they promote their potential as a tool for understanding qualitative data. They also posit that participant-drawn diagrams can be used in interviews as an alternative source of data (Buckley & Waring, 2013). All the participants engaged fully in this process, another advantage of this form of data collection (Hurdley, 2018).

Explanatory diagrams are comprised of geometrical shapes, lines of varying types, arrows, and sketches, populated by words in a variety of font sizes and styles. Their purpose is to provide a visual overview of how "people, things, ideas, influences, actions et cetera interrelate" (Harris, 1999, p. 148).

Data Collection. In this investigation, participants, at the end of their first interview, were asked to visually represent their understanding of Adventist Education through a labelled diagram or picture. This functioned both as a summary of the interview and a process that synthesised and made the participants' thinking visible. It also functioned as a form of triangulation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

The timing of the drawing exercise was strategic. To answer the question, "What is your perception of the philosophy, purpose, and practice of Adventist Education", participants needed lead time to process their thoughts, and then organise them into a diagram. It was my intention that participation in the semi-structured interviews would act as a catalyst in preparing the participants to draw a diagram. Although the level of thought processing required to create a diagram including philosophic, strategic, and practical ideas is usually developed over time, I did not give advance notice of this activity to the participants as I did not want

participants to look to existing documents for ideas or to present ideas that they thought were “right” or “official”. What I was intent on discovering were their own perceptions. Each participant was provided with one piece of A4 paper, a pencil, a black pen and a yellow highlighter. No suggestions were made, and this activity took place in silence. The resulting diagrams and explanations for each one will be explored in Chapter 4.

Analysis. No instructions were given as to what form the diagrams should take and this resulted in a wide variety of representations. This posed the question of how to analyse the diagrams in a way that was trustworthy and provided clarity to the viewer. To satisfy these criteria, I analysed each diagram in two discrete yet connected ways. First, I used a process of design analysis, which looked at the structural composition of the diagram, Secondly, I used concept analysis, which extrapolated ideas from the words and relationships depicted in the diagram, and was supplemented with verbal explanations from the participants.

Design Analysis. I used design analysis by examining the structural composition of the diagram to observe the meaning of shapes, lines, and fonts. This proved challenging as I could not find agreement on all the meanings for the design elements and had to use several sources, as indicated below (Table 3.5), to compile this list. It should be noted that the conceptual analysis relied heavily on the participants’ verbal explanations to avoid misrepresentation of their meaning based only my design analysis. Using these elements helped to establish a hierarchy of words in each diagram, identify relationships, and position concepts, which gave a foundation for the more important concept analysis.

Table 3.5

Design Elements Used in Diagrams

Element of diagram	What it indicates
Arrow – one way	Dependency or causal relationship
Arrow – two ways	Interdependency or causal relationship that applies in two directions
Shape of arrow	More about appearance than function but could encode relevant information
Shape – regular or irregular,	Regular shapes suggest organisation, irregular shapes indicate fluidity
Shape – open or closed	Closed shapes fixed indicate structure. Open shapes indicate an openness to change
Size of shapes	Relative importance
Overlapping shapes	Describes a relationship between two or more sets of information
Lines	Indicate interdependent relationships
Broken lines	Indicate a less interdependent relation or may be used to differentiate from unbroken lines
Lines – weight or thickness	Thicker lines indicate a stronger relationship
Lines – variation in colour or shape (dotted, broken)	To differentiate one line from another
Fill - colour, tone, pattern	To make a shape stand out
Font - case	Uppercase letters for emphasis and to signify importance. Lowercase letters for secondary ideas and concepts
Font - Size	The larger the font, the more important in the diagram
Font - Boldness	The bolder the font, the more important
Drawings of objects	Often a recognised symbol that replaces the use of words

This table is a compilation of elements taken from several sources (admin, 2022; Harris, 1999; Heiser & Tversky, 2006; Saif, 2019).

Concept Analysis. Concept analysis relates to the meaning extracted from the words used to label the diagram and the relationships that exist between the various components of the diagram. In concept analysis, the knowledge gained from the design analysis is combined with diagram labels and symbols to construct meaning. Fortunately, I did not have to rely on my intuition alone for concept analysis as each participant explained their diagram as part of the audio-recorded semi-structured interview. The findings from these analyses are in Chapter 4.

Second Round of Interviews

Rationale. At this point in the analysis, I conducted a second round of interviews. These interviews were used to safeguard the integrity and credibility of my research and served a dual purpose. The first purpose was for member checking. Each participant was given a list of the categories that the data revealed had impacted their perceptions of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education. I showed respect for the participants by allowing time for them to read, seek clarification and respond to my initial findings. Participants were invited to adjust or add to the transcript, and comments on the categories assigned to them.

The second purpose of the interviews was for me to seek clarification on parts of the transcript I felt needed further explanation and to allow me to probe deeper into areas where the transcript made only a passing mention of events.

Data Collection. The data collection with each respondent for the second round of interviews took place in the same venue as the participants had chosen for their first interviews. Although this round of interviews contained some elements of the dyadic, reflective approach taken in the first round of interviews, I also shared my initial findings with them and invited their comments.

Analysis. Armed with transcripts that clarified or confirmed sections of the initial interviews and with some questions of my own resolved, I went back to check the interview transcripts against the categories. This time, instead of using only inductive coding as described earlier, I also used a deductive process, using the eight categories from my previous analysis as pre-determined codes. At the end of this dual process, as outlined for the first round of interviews, I split three of the original categories, making an additional three categories. I also identified an additional

category. This resulted in an increase of categories from eight to twelve, and forced me to hone my labels. Overall, I was pleased that the integrity of the initial analysis had held up during this second cross-checking process, and that member checking had clarified and enabled a better representation of the categories derived from the lived experiences of the participants.

With twelve categories now in place, I began grouping and regrouping to collapse the twelve categories into themes. I revisited my initial impressions from the memos and found that my intuition on the overarching themes was validated. One of the themes remained the same as my initial impressions after the memoing stage. The second overarching theme aligned broadly with my second impression, but at this point, a more accurate label was given to this broad theme. These labels will be explained fully in Chapter 5, along with a detailed description and explanation of the grounded theory model developed during the data analysis.

After the member checking, as I re-coded, I noticed two more codes or concepts emerging from the data. These codes did not fit with the categories, but neither did they fit with the overarching themes. Rather, they were subsets within the overarching themes. For the purpose of explaining my analysis, I called them secondary themes (Figure 3.10). At each phase of my coding journey, I experimented with a visual representation of the findings from the data. This visual journey towards a grounded theory model can be found in Appendix I.

The Role of Sensemaking in Applying the Data

Rationale. Sensemaking played a secondary, yet important role in the data analysis. Although sensemaking is often applied inductively to data, in my research, I used a deductive approach, with the nine properties of sensemaking as listed in Figure 3.2 acting as pre-determined categories.

In taking this approach, I was aware that I was moving from grounded findings where I examined the lived experiences of Adventist educators using inductive logic to generate a model of shaping influences (theory), to applying sensemaking properties deductively in an attempt to understand more deeply the phenomena of lived experiences. Although more commonly associated with mixed

methods research, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2018) acknowledge that deductive knowledge has a place in the cycle of research in most investigations.

Data Collection. After the inductive analysis had taken place, sensemaking properties were applied to the data provided by the interview transcripts. The timing was important as it was crucial to allow the categories and themes to emerge naturally from the data without any preconceived ideas. The sensemaking process, on the other hand, was a deductive process, designed to confirm the sensemaking properties in the data.

Analysis Using Sensemaking. The sensemaking properties identified earlier in this chapter were used as pre-determined categories to help explain how lived experiences activate sensemaking properties. At this point, I also included spirituality as a pre-determined category as this concept had emerged during the inductive coding process and I wanted to test it further. Table 3.6 offers a sample of what this deductive analysis looked like.

Table 3.6

Sample of Deductive Analysis of Sensemaking Properties in Transcripts

Sensemaking property	**One quote from interview transcript where this sensemaking property is evident**
Identity: Who am I? Where did/do I fit in my employing organisation?	Now I believe at the time and my memory could be false that we were the only non-Adventist children at [Name of School], the first to be accepted at that time.
Retrospective reflection: What memories evoked reflection, and what meaning did they make**?**	There were also the years that I went through the real questioning, "What do I believe?" I hate hypocrisy in the Church for the first time and that was hard, and what do you do when you see the hypocrites? So, when I went there to teach, I was quite confident, yes, but it was those extra things that made all the difference. Which is why when I get young teachers come to me, I go and I put the extra in… And I take my release time to go do their demo lessons for them, cause I have never forgotten, what that felt like to have that done for me, and what a difference it made

Sensemaking property	One quote from interview transcript where this sensemaking property is evident
Enactive of Sensible Environments: How did I conduct myself and why did I act that way?	That was my experience, through it all I didn't lose my faith in God, didn't. But I wasn't going regularly to Church, I had to distance myself from all that because I was figuring it all out. That was college for me.
Social Contact: How did relationships and conversations impact me?	[Name of teacher] is still teaching in our system and she is brilliant, she just was a brilliant experienced teacher and [Name of teacher] said - had it all organized for me… For the first week I got to take a seat...because it was a multi-grade room, three grades, I got to watch her teach, the second week we team taught, the third week she watched me and critiqued me. The most beautiful woman on the planet, she was loving and kind, an absolute Christian woman. We're still friends, whenever we see each other it's with great joy, great joy and so because I got those three weeks, I was able to walk in, I got in and I could fly. So, for me that was what it was, but what I built was this amazing community. And within that, they were all Christian people who lived by Christian principles, and it was a common goal, and it was beautiful, and we are all friends to this day. [The principal] would come in and sit with me and my fellow teacher, [name] who is still a great mate, and say to us, individually or together, whatever, "And how you going with God? How are you? How are things?" So, he took a spiritual interest in us, because he knew that if we were spiritually okay, then what we were doing in our rooms would be; and I love him for that. And I love that that mattered to him, and he mentored us. Knew us. Cared about us. Did a lot of mentoring with the males, on that men do things spiritually different to females, and he would buy them books and talk to them about it. I could be real with [my principal]. I could be incredibly real, I could be who I am and the very godly man, (pause) the word comes out again, blessed to know him. Blessed to have taught under him.

Sensemaking property	One quote from interview transcript where this sensemaking property is evident
Ongoing Events: Over time, what prompted changes in my thinking?	After moving to work in a state school, "I missed being able to teach holistically. I missed being able to, whenever I could, at Christmas and Easter and the kids all knew I was a Christian. But I missed being able to being open. Like when you are in a Christian school, like this morning I said to the kids in my worship this morning, I read this, and so we are just going to do this exercise together, because it was about heaven, a visualizing thing
Deciphering Cues: How did I decipher cues for understanding?	But the fact that they are your children forever is what a Christian school is all about. Rather than next. Next. Next. … And smile when you see them in 'The Record', having achieved something or hear through the Adventist grapevine, something they've done.
Plausibility: Was I more concerned with plausibility or accuracy?	What I found in some of those tough schools, is that the staff's much closer. They are far more collegial. They have each other's back, there's less negativity, less whinging, because you can't survive if you don't have each other.
Institutional Context: How did my employing organisation impact my perceptions?	We have to be on top of our game, we can't be lazy, Adventist teachers, it's almost a double crime to do that.
Spirituality: How did my big beliefs help me make sense of my situation?	And I, I'm blessed. For me that's what it is; and if I get to model that, then they're getting to see that that's what God is as they take that into their lives.

Bringing Data Analysis Together

At this point in my coding journey, I was ready to draft a coding framework that would represent the organisational structure of the coding process. I chose to create a hierarchical framework as it was important to demonstrate the relationship of the codes to each other. My code frames, both categories and themes, were quite stable at this point, although the labels I gave them were still fluid as I searched for

terms to accurately reflect the data. I represented this hierarchy in a grounded theory model that can be seen in Figure 3.10 This model has the following characteristics:

- A circle shape to represent the dynamic nature of an education system.
- Two overarching themes, represented by the outer circle and a vertical line bisecting the circle to show that each overarching theme was related to either the left or right semi-circle.
- Two secondary themes, represented by the middle circle and a horizontal line bisecting the circle to show that each secondary theme was related to either the lower or upper semi-circle of the model.
- Twelve categories, three in each of four quadrants, formed by the horizontal and vertical lines dividing the inner circle.

The model can be further explained as follows. Categories in the top left quadrant are a subset of overarching theme 1 and secondary theme 1, while categories in the top right quadrant are a subset of overarching theme 2 and secondary theme 1. Categories in the bottom left quadrant are a subset of overarching theme 1 and secondary theme 2, while categories in the bottom right quadrant are a subset of overarching theme 2 and secondary theme 2.

This model will be fully explained in Chapter 5.

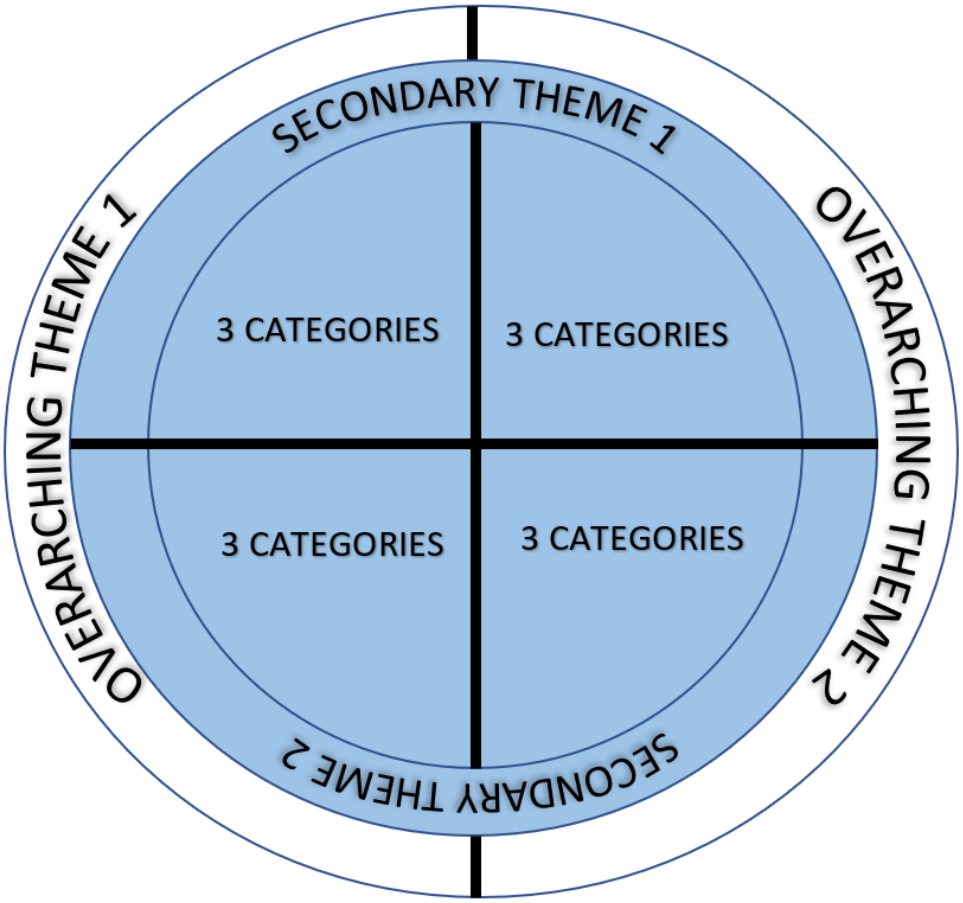


Figure 3.9

Framework of Grounded Theory Model

Developing Visual Participant Profiles Using the Categories

By the end of the transcript analysis, I had a list of twelve discrete categories grouped under the two overarching and two secondary themes. Using these twelve categories, I was able to create a visual profile for each of the participants in the form of a circumplex graph. I labelled these graphs "shaping influences profiles" (SIPs). In keeping with qualitative research methods, the variations in the profiles were determined by the wording in the transcripts (Seale, 2019). This took into account both the regularity that words relating to a category were mentioned and the tenor of the participants' voices. I used a combination of interview notes, audio recordings, and transcripts of the semi-structured interview transcripts to create circumplex graphs that offer a visual overview of the analysed data.

The representation of the shaping influences in graph form provided an additional way of looking at the data and assisted in answering the research question: *How have the lived experiences of eight educators shaped their perceptions of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education?* It also answered research Aim 3: *To identify any shaping influences that eight educators with diverse lived experiences may share about Adventist education.*

Please note that each participant's SIP, a blank example of which is given in Figure 3.10 supports the narrative that it accompanies. These are reported as findings in Chapter 5. While the visual representation using circumplex graphs is useful for purposes of comparison between the lived experiences of the participants and shows the extent to which the categories (shaping influences) featured in the lived experiences of each, these weighted graphs are not crucial to the development of the grounded theory model, although the categories (shaping influences) themselves are.

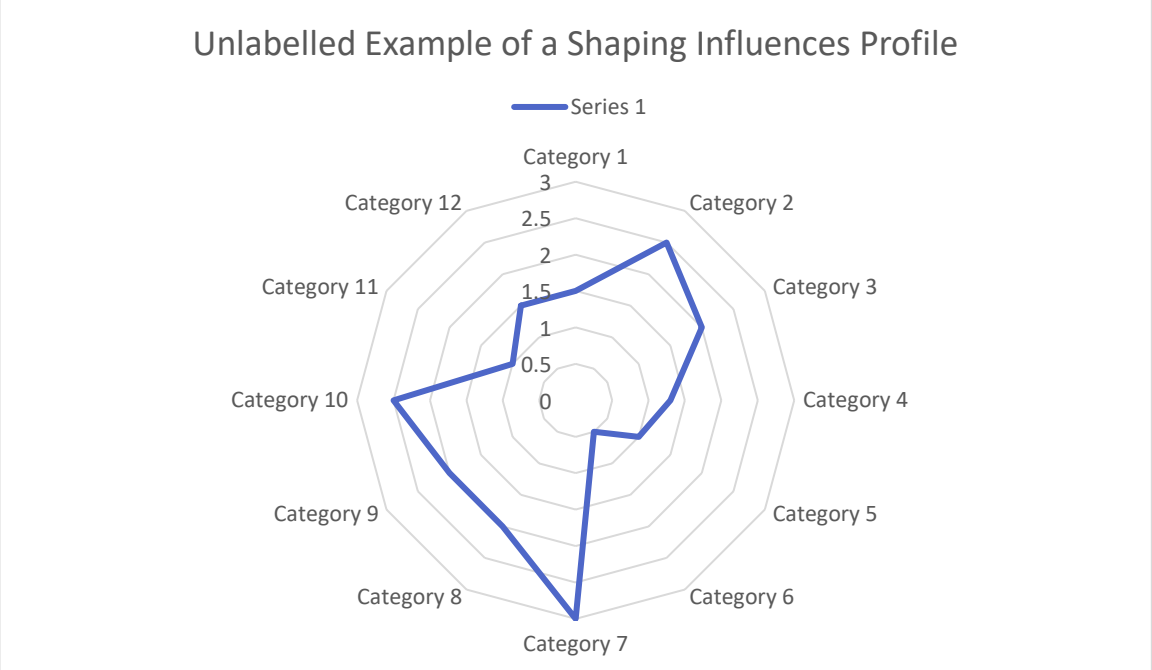


Figure 3.10

Unlabelled Example of a Shaping Influences Profile

KEY

A score of less than 1 – This category was evident in the responses made by the participant but was peripheral and not central to the lived experiences they were relating.

A score between 1 and 2 – This category was central in the participant's responses to several areas they were articulating.

A score of 2 or above – This category is central, occurring frequently and with emphasis, verbally and physically, in the participant's responses

Writing Hermeneutic, Phenomenological Narrative Based on the Data

In this section, I describe the process of blending the interview transcripts, SIPS, and sensemaking properties from the eight participants into eight third-person narratives that are analytical in purpose but narrative in genre, keeping in mind that "narrative is retrospective meaning making" (Chase, 2011, p. 636), and aware of my ethical responsibility to preserve the meaning. The combination of narrative ethnography with retrospective reflection results in creative non-fiction and is described and supported by Tedlock (2011).

I equipped myself with the original transcripts, my coding tables, my classified list of categories and secondary and overarching themes, my shaping influences profile, and an analysis of the sensemaking properties identified from the data for each of the participants.

I chose the participant with the pseudonym Jason as my demonstration example. Jason's complete interview transcript can be found in Appendix G.

From Transcripts and Diagrams to Biographical Narratives

My choice in bringing the data together in biographical narratives demanded careful consideration of the process. I was aware that I would be taking my participants' private lived experiences and making them public. I made the decision to re-present the biographical narratives in the third person, a process that resulted in interpretive stories. Although my aim was to present the narratives so they could be read as an outsider looking in, I preserved the voice of the participants by using direct quotes from the interview transcripts with a change in person indicated where relevant. McCormack (2004) was an early developer of using a narrative approach to re-present in-depth interview conversations, and I have drawn on her ideas for my own journey of transforming interview transcripts into interpretive narratives. In

order to achieve this, I focused on three areas of narrative writing; structure, content, and features of text

Initially, I focused on the structure of the narratives. I broke my participants' stories into chronological chapters, but then closer analysis revealed that while the chronological division of: pre-career influences; early career influences; later-career influences; and now – the time of the final interview; provided an overall picture of each participant's journey of lived experiences, there were many chapters within chapters in each part of the participants' journey. Therefore, I employed my love of narrative writing. Using the interview scripts, I created a chapter summary (McCormack, 2001) for each initial transcript (see Table 3.7). I reread each transcript with a narrative structure lens and used quotes from the transcripts to help define the elements of the structure. Using participant quotes ensured that the narrative structure remained true to the essence of the original transcripts.

Table 3.7

Summary of Jason's Narrative Using the Transcript to Identify the Structure

Jason's story	**Narrative element**
Fitting into Adventist Education: Mentors really matter	Title
"I had no experience of Adventist education or Adventists in general…and the school hadn't really employed many non-Adventists at that point."	Orientation to provide a context
"There were some staff here who made it very clear that you weren't Adventist… and were just waiting for a time to replace you. And I certainly had that experience from a couple of people, Conference as well."	Complication: the issue
"There's been a lot of teachers here who you know couldn't be more welcoming and supportive to non-Adventist teachers in the system. They see all the gifts that we bring and a different perspective from ways looked at differently elsewhere. You know it's quiet colleagues like [name of teacher] who filled me in and I shared an office with [her] when I first arrived and she lessened the shock when I first arrived. I think if I had not had those people around me, I would be gone. Which would have been sad because I would have missed out on all the great things that have happened since. And yeah, I would have been giving in to those people."	Series of events

Jason's story	Narrative element
"I am in a great college and a great school, surrounded by, you know, good people and that's what I was called to do. I genuinely feel I was called to do that. I think if this school continues to do the things it does well, in the future I think that will be a wonderful picture of Adventist education."	Resolution
"So whether I am in, you know, head of department or teaching, whatever it is, I'm very happy here."	Coda

After creating the summaries, I gave each chapter a title, using my own words but including transcript words where suitable. This helped me to create a consistent narrative structure for each transcript. I decided that I would still use the headings: pre-career influences, early career influences, later-career influences; and now, at the time of the second interview. My aim for using this structure was to facilitate the sense of journey for my readers, acknowledging that for each time period, there could be a new orientation and complication that would prompt new events/shaping influences and possible resolutions.

My second focus area was content. The content was determined by the interview transcripts and was defined by the analysis process which led me to the categories and themes as illustrated by the shaping influences profiles constructed for each participant (Figure 3.10). I was aware that I needed to interlace the actions in each narrative with the meaning of those actions to achieve the hermeneutic, phenomenological writing I desired. I also was aware that sensemaking properties could enhance the richness of each narrative.

I have included here an example of how the three strands of content — the actions of the lived experiences, the shaping influences, and the sensemaking properties — entwined to create rich content drenched in meaning. In this portion of the transcript, Jason is sharing with me his early career impressions of the close relationship between the Adventist school in which he is employed and the regional conference (administrative) office of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to which the school is accountable.

Key:

Red text indicates actions, thoughts, and feelings relating to lived experiences.

Blue text indicates the shaping influences identified through the inductive coding process.

Green text indicates the sensemaking properties identified through deductive analysis.

Portion of Jason's Transcript From First Interview

Jason: Yes, it's not really strange, little adjustments–I think—within Adventist schools, and I sort of still had my own Church so there was, you know, was very unusual (pause) not usual at this point, that the difference between a school and local Church and how they to some extent interfered or influenced each other's decisions was very different and I hadn't worked in a place where often you know things that were going on in school were obviously being criticized or critiqued from...

Interviewer: A church?

Jason: Yeah, a church and... so that was unusual. The school really wasn't standing on its own and then – and there seemed to be this body above. I don't think anymore but I think in times there has been people being very fearful of" "The Conference", and I didn't come from a system that had that. There was a kind of this overbearing fear that , I found it fascinating, because I've never worried about my lifestyle or anything like that, but some people would worry that their lifestyle would get found out by the conference and – So those are some of the really odd structural things that I did not understand and not that it concerned me but yeah, that was some – that was not just the principal of the school, that there was a director and people above them that (long pause)

Interviewer: The people felt accountable to the Church?

Jason: Well yeah, all that might have, you know, been a stamp [of approval] or something. Those are a bit more unusual, I guess essence around that, but again that didn't worry me because I didn't–it's not a part of me, you know, it's –(Pause) I've got my Church and I guess that was unusual when at first people would talk around those hushed tones of – (Pause) that affected what went on here and often you'd hear comments from people on high within the school about you know the decisions being made at the school but not upsetting the local ministry or something like that was, you know. I don't think that really exists any more but certainly in a lot of those times did. That was probably the biggest one for me.

Here is a colour-coded portion of Jason's interview re-presented as a hermeneutic, phenomenological narrative.

Key

Red text indicates actions, thoughts and feelings relating to lived experiences.

Blue text indicates the shaping influences identified through the inductive coding process

Green text indicates the sensemaking properties identified through deductive analysis.

Portion of Jason's Interview Represented as a Hermeneutic, Phenomenological Narrative

Jason has not been at his new school for very long when he starts to observe some differences from his previous school. He begins the process of trying to interpret what he is seeing using his previous lived experiences as a guide. This proves very challenging in one area. In the staffroom, and in general conversation, he starts to feel an undercurrent of "them" and "us" that is spoken about in "hushed tones". Not having known a "them" and "us at his previous school, he is puzzled, not by the "us", but by the "them". Gradually the "them" assumes an identity of an additional level of administration that exists above the school administration. It carries the rather unusual title of "The Conference" and it is not long before Jason realises that "the school [isn't] really standing on its own…there [seems] to be this body above." It is not that there are levels of hierarchy within Adventist Education that puzzles Jason; it is the somewhat "overbearing fear" that he finds "fascinating". There are staff members who express concerns, not that their professional behaviour will be called into question, but "that their lifestyle would get found out by "The Conference"". The more of these conversations he hears, the more Jason feels that the school is not autonomous. Jason struggles to understand this relationship between the school and the Church administration structure and decides that as it does not affect him, he will not worry about this rather "odd structural" situation. He has no qualms about his lifestyle, so he lets the issue settle on "someone who cares."

My third focus area was on the features of narrative text. Interviews do not always follow a linear pattern and mine did not. Although I encouraged the participants to take a chronological approach where possible, their stories jumped through time as memories of events prompted other memories that may have occurred earlier or later in the participants' lived experiences with Adventist Education. In addition to being non-linear, the interviews were somewhat fragmented

as the participants paused, thought, and reframed their words, sometimes repeating themselves for emphasis, and sometimes adding additional information as they remembered it. This was an important process for the participants, and it helped to build a comprehensive picture of the lived experiences that shaped their perceptions of Adventist Education.

The challenge to me as both researcher and writer was to preserve the meaning of the transcript while using the language and form of narrative to construct flow. My thanks for providing a process to make this possible go to McCormack (2001), who posited that there are three language features that should be considered in this process: "what is said, how it is said, and what remains unsaid" (p. 98). I used these three categories and further broke them down into specific examples

What is said included the following:

- word groups that identify the speaker's role in Adventist Education at a given point in time and provide a context (e.g., graduate, department head, principal)
- words that imply tacit knowledge of the topic (e.g., you know, you understand)
- words that indicate the processing of thoughts (e.g., er, uhm)
- specialised Adventist Education vocabulary (e.g., The Conference, Avondale, Special Character)
- words that are key to the research topic (e.g., experience, Adventist Education, influence, philosophy, purpose, practice)
- words participants used to talk about their perceptions of self, relationships (professional and personal), and their school environment (e.g., family, colleagues, staff room, school council)

See below for an example of "what is said" taken from Jason's transcript. The tacit knowledge indicated by the bolded words is Jason's way of saying that the interviewer would be aware of differences in how schools and Churches operated.

Words That Imply Tacit Knowledge of the Topic in Jason's Interview Transcript

Interviewer: So, what were some of the things that were culturally strange?

Jason: Oh, nothing was strange. (pause) Yes, it's not really strange, little adjustments (pause) I think within Adventist schools, and I sort of still had my own Church so there was, **you know**, was very unusual (pause), not usual at this point that the difference between a school and local Church and how they to some extent interfered or influenced each other's decisions was very different and I hadn't worked in a place where often, you know, things that were going on in a school were obviously being criticised or critiqued from (long pause).

Interviewer: A Church?

Jason: Yeah, a Church and (pause) so that was unusual.

How it is said includes the following features:

- ❖ sentence variations (statements, questions, exclamations)
- ❖ imagery, including metaphors, similes, and analogies
- ❖ repetition

See below for two examples of "how it is said" taken from Jason's transcript. Bolded words indicate the first group of repeated words, bold and italicized words indicate the second set of repeated words, and underlining indicates the third set of repeated words. This repetition indicates emphasis. Jason's repetition in this excerpt demonstrates that Jason really **enjoys** teaching at this Adventist school. He backs it up with more repetition to show that he was staying at this school by ***choice*** and finally uses repetition to clearly indicate <u>why he stayed</u>.

Repetition in Jason's Interview Transcript

> Jason: Yeah, **I love** this school passionately, I really do. I really do **love** it passionately. **I love it here**, my kids both go here, **I do love this school** deep to my core, but I think after about the second year had I not had those <u>good people around me</u> who tempered those attitudes (pause) I ***was being offered jobs*** around the place, ***I got one from grammar, I got constantly re-offered my job in Sydney***, I think had I not had those <u>people around me</u>, I would be gone.

The third language feature relates to what is not said but alluded to in the transcript.

This includes:

- hesitation, pauses, and longer times of silence
- speed of delivery (e.g., slow and deliberate, fast)
- tone and tenor of voice and emotions (e.g., calm, angry, nervous)
- body language (e.g., animated expression, leaning forward, arms folded)

An example of hesitation and pauses, and tone and tenor of voice and emotions from Jason's interview is included below. Jason's hesitations and pauses, together with phrases that almost appear disjointed, indicate that although he now claims to be content with his current situation at the school, he had not forgotten his early career experiences and the confusion they caused. Pauses are indicated by bold text and the section spoken slowly is underlined.

Pauses and Tone and Tenor of Voice in Jason's Transcript

> Jason: And that was a little bit of re-adjustment that I had to make, but certainly wasn't made clear at any point that as a non-Adventist you wouldn't hold [a position]. It was never, never… **(Long pause)**
>
> Interviewer: articulated?

Jason: …articulated that those positions were out of reach, so as a head of department, I love my position, I really do, I genuinely love the role that I have, knowing that really that's where my, you know, admin qualities will top out, is fine with me now. But when I first arrived here having those scenes of, after a while basically bluntly put to you, well hang on a minute, I was **(hesitates)** it's sort of **(pause)** and once I had a family, my **(pause)** once I had my first son, [name], my… **(long pause)**

Interviewer: aspirations?

Jason: …aspirations and tracking adjusted very quickly because, you know I probably became comfortable with that and that's **(pause)** I know where things are at and certainly, I've got no intention to leave the college [reference to current school] at all in the near future.

This process of examining the transcripts as I would a narrative and adapting McCormack's (2001) framework of "what is said, how it is said, and what is not said", gave me the tools I needed to re-present the participants' lived experiences transparently and in a trustworthy manner as I re-presented their stories as a narrative biography of their lived experiences with Adventist Education.

After the first round of interviews, I discovered that some parts of my participants' narratives were incomplete, or that I needed more information to complete my own understanding. This guided my questions for the second interview. I was then able to repeat the process and complete the biographical narratives of lived experiences.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has presented the methodology developed and used to answer the research question, "*How have the lived experiences of eight educators shaped their perceptions of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education?"* The chapter documents how my topic and research paradigm were developed for the purpose of answering my research question. I then provided evidence that a bricolage

design within a qualitative research paradigm was most appropriate for answering my research question, allowing my interest in the participant's "voice" to be central. I explained that paramount to this investigation are people and their perceptions about Adventist Education, and the organisation to which they belong. Therefore, I demonstrated in this chapter that respect for the participants, their perceptions and their ideological stance has been upheld at all stages of the study and that the research methods employed in relation to the participants' sensemaking of their lived experiences have been treated with integrity.

I have provided a rationale for each type of data collection and clearly outlined how the data were collected and analysed. I further demonstrated how the integrity of the research process was maintained, and how the conditions of trustworthiness, credibility, and clarity were met concerning the collection and analysis of the data. I have offered step-by-step documentation of the approach to the various types of data analysis ensuring the most appropriate means of communicating the findings and aligning these to best inform the resolution of the research question and the study's aims.

I have explained how the data came together to create a model grounded in theory. This included the presentation of two figures I constructed through the analysis process. The first, a grounded theory model, shows the relationship between the final themes and categories. The second, a shaping influences profile (SIP), one for each participant, shows the relative importance of the categories and acts as a visual reference to illustrate the participants' narratives. Both these figures will be populated with data and expanded in the following chapter.

Finally, I have given a detailed account of the process used to transform the data in the form of raw transcripts, coded transcripts, and identified sensemaking properties into eight hermeneutic, phenomenological biographies written in the third person that are presented as findings in the following chapter.

Equipped with an understanding of the methods used to conduct this investigation, I collected and analysed the data. The next chapter will present the findings that answer the research question: *How have the lived experiences of eight educators shaped their perceptions of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education?*

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Preface: My Voice

I have been entrusted with eight distinctive and precious stories drawn from the memories of eight educators in Adventist Education. I have to preserve their wholeness and essence, and at the same time allow the reader to walk beside them through the hallways of their memories. To achieve this, I have chosen to present the findings in four different formats, designed to build layers of understanding. First, I present the findings of my data analysis as shaping influences in table form. These findings represent all my participants. Next, I add context and emotion by presenting a series of biographical narratives. This allows each participant's voice to be heard.

I have chosen to write each biographical narrative using the third person and present tense, with indications of person and tense changes in brackets. I have switched from the word participants to educators. This is intentional, as I have presented each educator's biography as their story. The writing style is hermeneutic phenomenological, which allows me to embed the findings in a present tense descriptive style. Each narrative is presented chronologically to preserve the accumulative effect of the shaping influences as they emerge. Each narrative is divided into four chapters: early pre-career shaping influences, early career shaping influences, later career shaping influences, and the present or now. However, within each chapter you may find new orientations, complications, and series of lived experiences that shaped each educator's perceptions. There may be more than one resolution within each educator's narrative. This structure and writing style most accurately represents the "memory depositifs" (Basu,2012) of the lived experiences of each stakeholder.

Third, I present the findings in visual form to support the biographical narratives. This allows the reader to quickly identify what lived experiences shaped the perceptions of each Educator, and relate them back to the biographical narrative.

Finally, I offer a written analysis of the participants' perceptions of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education as seen in the diagrams they produced during the interviews. I have included photos of the diagrams for transparency and understanding.

I invite you to enter the lived experiences of these educators with me and explore the influences that have shaped their perceptions of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education. In this chapter, you will see the interaction between people, the organisations that employed them, and their perceptions of the organisation known as Adventist Education.

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to report the findings that answer the research questions and aims, except Aim 4, which will be answered in the final chapter.

I have presented the findings in four different ways. In keeping with the bricolage research design of this study, each presentation of the findings complements the others, resulting in an overall picture that answers the research question. Table 4.1 summarises what raw data was used, how it was analysed, how the findings are presented, and the research aims each finding met, along with the purpose for presenting the findings this way.

Table 4.1

Overview of Presentation of Findings

Raw Data	How data was analysed	How Findings are Presented	Purpose
Interview transcripts	Inductive coding	Tables	RQ1, Aim 3
Interview transcripts	Inductive and deductive coding	Hermeneutic, phenomenological narratives	To answer RQ1, Aim 2 and Aim 3 in a personal way that demonstrates how the shaping influences were outcomes of individual lived experiences.

Raw Data	How data was analysed	How Findings are Presented	Purpose
Interview transcripts	Inductive coding	Shaping Influences Profiles (SIPs)	To answer RQ1 and Aim 3 and to provide visual support for the individual narratives.
Participant Drawn Diagrams	By examining each diagram using design element and by concept.	Written findings of analysis with original diagram.	RQ1 and Aim 1: To identify the perceptions that eight educators hold of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist education

Research Question

How have the lived experiences of eight educators shaped their perceptions of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education?

Research Aims Reported in This Chapter

Aim 1. *To identify the perceptions that eight educators hold of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist education.*

Aim 2. *To identify any specific links between the nature of the educators' lived experiences and their perceptions of Adventist Education.*

Aim 3*. To identify any shaping influences that eight educators with diverse lived experiences may share about Adventist education.*

Shaping Influences Tables

Two tables are presented with the findings from the inductive analysis of the participants' interview transcripts. The tables (4.2 and 4.3) describe the two overarching themes, the two secondary themes, and the twelve categories that emerged during the coding of the first and second round of interviews. The categories have been collectively renamed shaping influences and each one has been given a defining label. These tables represent the combined findings of all the transcripts.

Table 4.2 indicates six different types of relationships that emerged from the educators' narratives under the overarching theme of authentic relationships. This

theme is further broken down into two secondary themes; ongoing relationships and transient relationships. The first column contains the name and brief description of the shaping influence derived from the process of coding. The second column identifies examples of the significant others indicated by the educators to be part of their relationships. The third column briefly outlines the nature of the influence on the educator.

Table 4.3 identifies the six different types of sensemaking reflections collectively identified in the educators' lived experiences. As with authentic relationships, these reflection types are divided into the secondary themes of ongoing practice and trigger experiences that act as a catalyst for reflection. Ongoing reflection is continuous and leads to incremental changes in perception over an extended period of time, while a trigger experience such as a single event or experience may accelerate reflection over a short period of time, resulting in a somewhat quicker change of perception.

Table 4.2

Shaping Influences Resulting from Authentic Relationships

Shaping influences resulting from authentic relationships		
Ongoing praxis which indicates enduring or long-term relationships		
Name and description of shaping influence	**Others in the relationship**	**Shaping nature of this relationship**
Spiritual relationship: a relationship that exists between an individual and God with the belief that God can and does interact in people's lives.	God	A heart relationship out of which an individual orders and lives their life. This relationship inspired the educators to live a life of worship.
Personal relationship: An enduring relationship that exists between the educator and another individual who is connected in some way other than through their work.	Parents, sibling, spouses, children, close friends	Acted as encouragement and affirmation of their profession.
Professional relationship: a relationship between two individuals that exists in a professional rather than personal capacity	Teaching and administrative colleagues	Motivated dialogue and reflection on a variety of aspects of Adventist Education
Trigger experiences which indicate a transient relationship or connection for a fixed amount of time.		
Mentoring relationship: A relationship where one individual intentionally mentors another in ways of thinking and doing.	Significant others in an educational setting (teacher, Principal, department head, year coordinator, educational administrator)	Facilitated changes in perception and praxis due to evaluation, discussion and support, generally for a fixed time.
Modelling relationship: Where one individual looks to another for clues on how to operate within a particular work culture without seeking direct advice or input.	Significant others in an educational setting (teacher, Principal, department head, year coordinator, educational administrator)	By taking cues from people's actions, participants learned to fit into school culture, first vicariously and then through enacting their role.
Virtual relationship: A relationship with ideas that develops through interaction with a significant person's ideas and concepts.	Most likely an author or presenter that the participants have heard or read, but may never have met in real life	Participants developed an affinity for the ideas of a particular author or presenter, who exerted an influence on their perceptions and actions.

Table 4.3

Shaping Influences Resulting from Sensemaking Reflection

Shaping Influences Resulting from Sensemaking Reflection		
Ongoing praxis indicates continual incremental changes in their perceptions over an extended period of time		
Name and description of influence	**What initiates the reflection**	**Shaping nature of this reflection**
Inducting reflection: reflection initiated by participating in a particular school culture.	Engaging in the following aspects of school culture, e.g., worship, chapel, service projects, staff worship	As participants engaged in the culture, they adopted the perceptions, ideas and practice. A developing awareness of 'how things are done around here'.
Informing reflection: Reflection based on observation and knowledge of how a particular culture operates.	Observing the features of school culture, e.g., worship, chapel, service projects, staff worship	Similar to inducting reflection, informing reflection is ongoing in response to what the participants observed in praxis.
Inspiring reflection: Reflection that grows out of spiritual events and experiences	Spiritual events and experiences, e.g., staff retreats, Week of spiritual Emphasis.	Ongoing reflection as a result of engagement in school-based faith events. Contributed to a big-picture understanding of Adventist Education and its nexus with mission and worldview.
Trigger experiences such as a short-term single event or experience which speeds up reflection on an important aspect of Adventist Education		
Name and Description of Shaping Influence	**What Initiates the Reflection**	**Shaping nature of this Reflection**
Translating reflection: Reflection that is stimulated by moving from one school system into another.	Moving employment from one education system into another *[e.g., from Catholic into SDA system. From SDA into public school system and back again.]*	Reflection which offered a point of comparison and contrast between education systems and acted as a catalyst to translate or make sense of the new school culture It included socially fitting in.
Transforming reflection: Accelerated reflection on a single or short-term event.	Significant events including Professional Development days, Adventist Distinctive programs, Curriculum Days (CAPE/CASE)	Sped up reflection on Adventist Education for a contained period of time. During this time, perception changed fairly quickly and a new mindset was developed.

Name and Description of Shaping Influence	What Initiates the Reflection	Shaping nature of this Reflection
Transitioning reflection: Reflection that results from a role change within the context of Adventist Education.	Changing roles, for example, from teacher to deputy or principal, from principal to area administrator, from teacher education student to graduate teacher, or from teacher/administrator to post-graduate student.	Reflection from a new perspective prompted educators to question themselves about their new role and helped reshape their perceptions of Adventist Education.

Narratives

The purpose of the hermeneutic, phenomenological narratives was to create a sympathetic connection between the participants and the reader using eight lived experience narratives that draw the reader into the lives of the educators who willingly shared the stories of their journey with Adventist Education. Presenting the findings in this manner reveals the shaping influences that contributed to each participant's unique perspective of Adventist Education. These findings will answer the key question:

How have the lived experiences of eight educators shaped their perceptions of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education?

The narratives also address Aim 2:

To identify any specific links between the nature of the educators' lived experiences and their perceptions of Adventist Education.

To personalise each narrative, yet retain anonymity, pseudonyms have been chosen for each participant. These were chosen based on the most popular female and male names for the decade in which the participant was born. There is no meaning attached to them.

The order of the narratives, however, is important. After exploring a number of options, including completely random order selection, I decided to start with the youngest participant and progress by age to the oldest participant. This roughly also coincides with years of experience teaching within the Adventist Education system, except for Patricia, for whom the majority of the experience was with the public education system. Ordering the educators from least to most experienced enables the

reader to see how, if at all, the years of experience impact on educators' perceptions of Adventist Education.

The narratives function as biographies of the educators' journeys with Adventist Education and their development of perceptions pertaining to the philosophy, purpose, and practice of Adventist Education. They describe the circumstances that acted as shaping influences, and allow insights to the private world of feelings and cognition where perceptions are formed. The narrative, the SIP and the analysis of the participant drawn diagrams have been presented as findings for each educator separately to offer a complete picture of each individual educator.

Table 4.4 provides a brief overview of the participating educators to orient the reader to the diversity of the narratives. At the time of the interviews, all the educators except Patricia were full-time employees of Adventist Education. Patricia was recently retired but active as a school council chairperson.

Table 4.4

Overview of Participating Educators

Pseudonym	**≈ Years in Adventist Education**	**School system/s taught in**	**Roles held during career in Adventist Education**
Michael	10	Public, Adventist	teacher, head of department, wellbeing coordinator
Jason	15	Catholic, Adventist	teacher, head of department
Lisa	20	Adventist, Catholic	teacher, special needs teacher
Karen	25	Adventist, Public	teacher, stage coordinator
John	35	Adventist	teacher, school and system administrator
Rob	40	Adventist	teacher, school and system administrator
James	40	Adventist	teacher, school administrator
Patricia	5	Public, Adventist	teacher, school administrator, school council chairperson (after retirement)

Shaping Influences Profiles

After each narrative, a summary supported by a SIP is presented. To understand the SIPs, an explanation of the terms used is given in Tables 4.2 and 4.3. The left side of each SIP pertains to six different types of relationships the educators experienced and the extent to which they shaped the educators' perceptions of

Adventist Education. The right side of each SIP pertains to reflection that was either ongoing or occurred after a fixed event as a result of some type of change in the educators' lived experience with Adventist Education. The SIPs provide an individual profile of the shaping influences and allow the reader to see which shaping influences were most prominent for each educator. The SIPs also allow for a comparison between the educators in the matter of shared shaping influences (Aim 3).

Participant Drawings

When the educators were asked to draw a diagram of their understanding of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education, the resulting visual representations varied from complex diagrams with many parts to a simple list of words. Therefore, the diagrams have been included in the findings, along with a brief design analysis that explains the visual graphics, and a concept analysis drawn from both the diagrams and an analysis of the verbal explanation given by the educators.

The remainder of this chapter includes eight biographies, each containing a narrative of the educators' lived experiences, a SIP to visually support each narrative, and eight diagrams of the perceptions of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education, with explanations offered by the educators.

Michael's Story

"Velcroed" Onto Adventist Education: Engaging the Culture

Michael sits in an interview room opposite me. He is relaxed and smiling. He is old enough to have nearly a decade of teaching in one Adventist school behind him, young enough to exude an energy and enthusiasm that hints of visionary thinking and action. His beginnings are not in Adventism, so his understandings of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education have been influenced primarily by his own experiences with Adventist Education. Here is his story.

Pre-Career Shaping Influences.

Michael watches his house and family farm recede into the distance as his family drives down the track leading to the main road. Excitement lights up his face. It is finally happening. He is going on a family adventure. Family is important to Michael. Being with family 24 hours a day, seven days a week for the next few months is something he is looking forward to. He is not disappointed. The trip consolidates family relationships, and for Michael, develops his sense of identity. From this point in his life, relationships with his family and with other significant people in his life help to shape what he thinks and who he becomes.

Michael listens to his sister as she talks about what she has been doing at Pathfinders (a youth club run by the Adventist Church that is similar to Scouts). He doesn't spend too much time wondering about these people his sister spends time with, until his parents, after travelling for several months, return to their hometown and begin looking for a new school for their children. Their experience with the Pathfinder club has been positive, so an interview is arranged at the local Adventist school.

Michael sits with his parents in the principal's office of this small Adventist school and wonders if his parents will pick this school for his education. He has already been to four schools, two in the public system and two other faith-based schools. Each time he starts at a new school, he has to read the cues and adapt to the culture. As he reflects back on his previous school experiences, he is mildly curious whether this school will be any different to the others. Michael watches and listens to

the adults in the room. Michael feels the “instant rapport” and “trust” flowing between his parents and the principal. He knows when his parents “click” with someone, so he listens carefully. He decides he can trust this “guy” too. Michael is enrolled in the school.

Michael enters the classroom in his new school and finds himself in that uncomfortable space where everyone is checking out the new student. Pairs of eyes turn his direction. Some are smiling, others are assessing him. Confident and secure in his family relationships, Michael’s transition into this Adventist school is relatively smooth. He meets “teachers [who] care a lot.” One of his teachers is the principal he met on his first visit to the school. This man shows respect for all students. He cares deeply about their wellbeing. He speaks passionately about his beliefs in Bible classes, yet is inclusive of all. Michael’s respect for this principal grows, and he becomes one of the “individual people who [has] the biggest impact” on the direction Michael chooses to take in his life. There are other teachers who make a profound impact on Michael. He takes his cues from them on what it means to be an Adventist Christian. One teacher opens up about his relationship with God. He shares willingly through the social activity of storytelling how this relationship sustained him through extremely difficult times. As Michael listens, he appreciates the vulnerability and authenticity of this teacher. He is seeing Christianity in action and is being drawn to it through the relationships that are being developed.

Michael quickly makes friends, one of whom is still his best friend. In addition to the school community into which Michael is quickly assimilated, he begins to hear both student and teacher conversations that hint of a community that “exists outside of nine to three,” and yet still appears to be very much a part of school culture. He listens to conversations about “things like Friday night vespers” and “Pathfinders.” Michael is young and adventurous and so he dips his toe into the waters of Adventism at the invitation of his new found friends and “slowly, slowly, [he] start[s] getting involved in the Church community.” He embraces Pathfinders, which “provides a good segue into the Adventist Community,” and enjoying this experience, backs it up with Church run summer camps and Big Camp (Adventist Church family conference) experiences. At Big Camp Michael enjoys the activities and new friends. Each evening he sits in meetings with his friends, and each year a

perception of Adventist Education and the Church to which it belongs is being shaped.

Michael proves to be a good student. He is not sure that his education is "particularly academic," but he is having such a good time at school that he doesn't really care. "[He doesn't] think it [matters] that much…The core part of what they are offering, in terms of caring about us is what really [matters]." Michael is a "small country kid" in a "small country school" and he is thriving and happy there.

The years pass quickly. Michael is well into Year 12, his final year of school, when he attends an assembly where a representative of Avondale College speaks and offers a "President's Scholarship" to attend Avondale. Michael doesn't know it, but this is a pivotal point in his life. With encouragement from his teachers, Michael, who is ambivalent about his plans beyond high school, fills in an application and submits it. He then promptly forgets all about it. When a response arrives, and he finds out he has been successful, he is surprised, yet not over-excited. Avondale is little more than a name to him. His scholarship success, however, solves one problem for him: the issue of what to do the following year.

Michael makes the trip to Avondale, not knowing what to expect. What he finds is something like an extension of his school, only bigger. He likes the sense of community at Avondale but feels a little disappointed that the university-style environment he was anticipating is absent. However, what is lacking from a university environment is soon made up by the many opportunities that Avondale presents. Michael likes to be involved, and so he takes every opportunity that comes his way, and like "Velcro" dots, he starts to "get so many things holding [him] in" that he discovers it is "quite a tearing away process" when he thinks about leaving at the end of the year. He doesn't leave. Relationships become the glue that holds him at Avondale and he graduates with a teaching degree four years after he first steps foot on the Avondale campus. In the social milieu that Avondale offers, Michael begins to make sense of Adventist Education.

During Michael's education at Avondale, some of his relationships begin to transition from personal to professional. As Michael continues his journey towards being a teacher, his burgeoning relationships with his lecturers take on a professional orientation. Michael is simultaneously reacting to his environment and shaping it as a

participant. Throughout his course, he encounters a variety of lecturers, including some who challenge his worldview, his perceptions of teaching, and his approach to life. The lecturers to whom he relates best are those who challenge him, and it is from these individuals that he extracts the cues that help him discern relevance and explanations that are shaping his perceptions. These same individuals mentor him as a beginning professional. He is a "product of the post-modern generation" and "temperament wise…quite a left leaning person." In one class on religion during his teacher education course, Michael is exposed to the writing of Muqaddar Mera and Kahlil Gibran, among others. He discovers that the world is "not monochromatic." In another class, he explores the Reformation period and is forced to think about issues of "What is your origin? What's your starting point?" He begins to feel that his Avondale experience is exposing him to diverse ideas and likes that it is making him think. He begins to work his way through the plethora of ideas he is encountering. Like Aristotle, he feels that "the mark of an educated mind is to entertain an idea without accepting it." Rather than encountering confusion, he is energised and so is ready for his final year class in Philosophy of Christian Education where he is challenged with difficult questions. He feels as though the lecturer is purposefully attempting to destroy his students' neat and tidy perceptions of Adventist Education, and appreciates the ensuing cognitive dissonance and the deeper understanding that results. He feels like he is translating everything he hears into a context he can understand. As he sits in history classes and tries to "unpack ideas" about origins he begins to realise that "there is nuance and there is variation" in the exploration of ideas. The exposure to new ideas prompts changes in his thinking.

Michael's spiritual journey is almost imperceptible. He is beginning to search for his identity in Adventist Education. Taking his cues from his lived experiences, gradually, in two different Adventist institutions and with the support of a Church family and close friends and their parents, he is drawn into a relationship with Jesus Christ. He explores all options. He is open-minded. He takes his time. His relationships with people act as a catalyst in his spiritual journey. He watches closely, asks questions, ponders answers, and makes his own decisions.

Early Career Shaping Influences.

Even before he graduates, Michael picks up a contract position at a local public high school. This initiation into the life of teaching is fast, furious and very valuable. After graduation, Michael secures a position at an Adventist school. This switch from public education to Adventist Education offers points of comparison for Michael and allows him to translate what he is observing in this new environment. He doesn't like being ignorant and is an avid reader, so he tops up his knowledge of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education by reading "what the [Adventist] system stands for." This gives him an awareness of idealistic Adventist Education. Keeping this in mind, Michael engages in the culture of his school, and notices differences in how the teachers approach their work to the four other schools he has experienced while completing his teacher education studies.

At previous schools, Michael is used to hearing conversations of complaint, where "everyone's having a whinge about this school and these kids who do this and this principal who does this." He identifies a sense of "I'm there to do my duty and collect my pay check," but at this Adventist school, he doesn't have to even think about coming to work. He is beginning to see teaching as his "vocation", a ministry, and starts to realise that it is because "what we are doing here matters, is for a reason".

Michael has plenty of opportunities to observe the teachers with whom he works in the early stages of his career. He begins to extract cues from the modelling these teachers provide which helps to make sense of these schools and shape his perceptions of Adventist Education. Watching more experienced teachers, he observes how they build relationships; observing the principal, he begins to understand that "students can only understand the intangible nature of love, as they see it demonstrated practically". It is also through the school ethos that Michael's perceptions of Adventist Education are shaped. He is walking across the oval when he encounters two Year 9 girls. They call out to him and give him a high five. He ponders why this happens, when at his previous school, he has been "told to F off" by students. He comes to the realisation that school culture is cultivated and doesn't come about by chance. Michael begins to enact this environment and to contribute to this culture.

In his early years as a teacher, Michael attends the professional development days for Adventist schools in his state. He finds this “corporate gathering, something bigger” than a staff meeting, is important to his “identity formation” of Adventist Education. He starts to put together a bigger picture of the philosophy which underpins Adventist Education and how it plays out in practice. The meetings give him a sense of belonging to something greater than just his individual school. Michael is starting to find his identity as a teacher in an Adventist school and in the institutional context of Adventist Education. The liminality he first felt in those early days of teaching in an Adventist school is being superseded by a sense of belonging.

Michael settles into the culture of the school and looks around for a niche where he can make a contribution beyond his teaching. He wants to engage in the culture. He notices that each teacher seems to have a project. Michael wants to make a difference in the lives of his students. He reads the work of Kurt Hahn and remembers his own experiences in Pathfinders and at an Adventist high school. This retrospective reflection on what elements of his lived experiences as a teenager impacted him most prompt Michael to adopt the Duke of Edinburgh program for schools as his project. Alongside his teaching and learning duties, Michael is exploring beneath the surface of how young people develop resilience. He hopes to make a difference in this space.

Later Career Shaping Influences.

Michael is well developed in his teaching skills. One of the things he likes about teaching in an Adventist school is the hidden curriculum. He believes that “our worldview or our Christianity” is not “just for an hour of power on the weekend”. He believes in a transformative Christian worldview that “informs every conversation and decision”. Consequently he teaches social justice through history, respect for others in English and God’s forgiveness through everything.

Michael becomes head of department, and his “emerging sense of an understanding about why all this [biblical understandings] is happening” begins to consolidate. He sits in meetings, with staff, with parents, with students. He develops “a greater sense of accountability”. It is a new feeling. As he transitions into his new role, he is forced to reflect in new ways and develops new ways of thinking about

Adventist Education. Michael is passionate about the wellbeing of his students. This passion leads him to read widely on the topic and to explore a variety of practical options to enhance wellbeing in his students. He enacts his ideas and they become reality. Michael becomes a wellbeing leader in his school, safeguarding the mental, emotional and physical health of both students and staff.

Now: At the Time of the Second Interview.

Michael's early engagement with teaching as a vocation has continued to strengthen. He feels strongly that teaching in an Adventist school is not only his "mission" but his "calling." He also reflects that "this is where I've done the bulk of my learning as an educator", although he has also completed "a master's degree through Deakin University." Michael perceives post-graduate study as further equipping himself to be an educator.

Over several years of working with students in the area of outdoor education with an emphasis on emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing, he has moved on from the Duke of Edinburgh scheme and is in the process of developing a tailor-made program to help the students at his school develop a variety of skills that will equip them for a successful life. He admits that "what [he] [loves] and what is important to [him] is, I guess, just student wellbeing and connecting with kids". Connections are really important to Michael and this shows in his statement, "So really like any process people belong through social connections". For Michael, social connections are the "Velcro" that help to make sense of situations and engage him in the organisation. Michael sees revealing Jesus through community as the purpose of Adventist Education.

Coda. "If you introduce people to a set of rules or a system or any kind of process, that's all it is, it's pretty weak. But if you introduce someone to a person, to Jesus, then it's life changing."

Summary

Michael's SIP (Figure 4.1) indicates the nature of the influences and their trigger events that shape his perceptions of Adventist Education. Early in his interview, Michael picks up on the theme of relationships, which he predicts will be

a recurring theme in his interview, stating, “so probably part of the theme that will come through my story today is that it’s very much been individual people who have had the biggest impact.”

Initially, the most influential relationships were ongoing personal relationships, which transitioned into professional relationships and were paralleled by an emerging spiritual relationship with God. In addition to these enduring or ongoing relationships, Michael also experienced transient relationships that lasted for a defined amount of time. Notable is Michael’s acknowledgment of mentoring relationships which began during his teacher education years and continued through his early career years. While relationships do feature in Michael’s narrative of his lived experiences as he predicted, his sensemaking reflection also emerged as a strong influence as can be seen on the reflection side of his SIP (Figure 4.1). This occurred particularly as he was inducted into his teaching role, through his own reading, and as he transitioned into new roles within his school. Although he is an avid reader, he has an eclectic taste in educational reading so his SIP does not show a preference for any one author’s ideology, although Kurt Hahn and Ellen White both featured as shaping his ideas about Adventist Education and what it should look like in praxis.

A naturally reflective person, Michael thinks deeply about Adventist Education. He had several initiating experiences that acted as a catalyst for his reflection. These included school/Church-related events that shaped his early perceptions of Adventist Education and the Adventist faith in general but extended further to his undergraduate studies at Avondale. His main trigger experiences for reflection once he became a teacher were Professional Development days run annually for Adventist educators in his state. Michael was also informed of the praxis of Adventist Education by observing what went on around him in his school, but the largest cause for reflection emerging from the interviews was actually engaging in the culture of the school and finding a place to make a contribution that fitted with the school’s ethos. Moving into a head of department role accelerated this sensemaking reflection process as did his passion to increase student well-being.

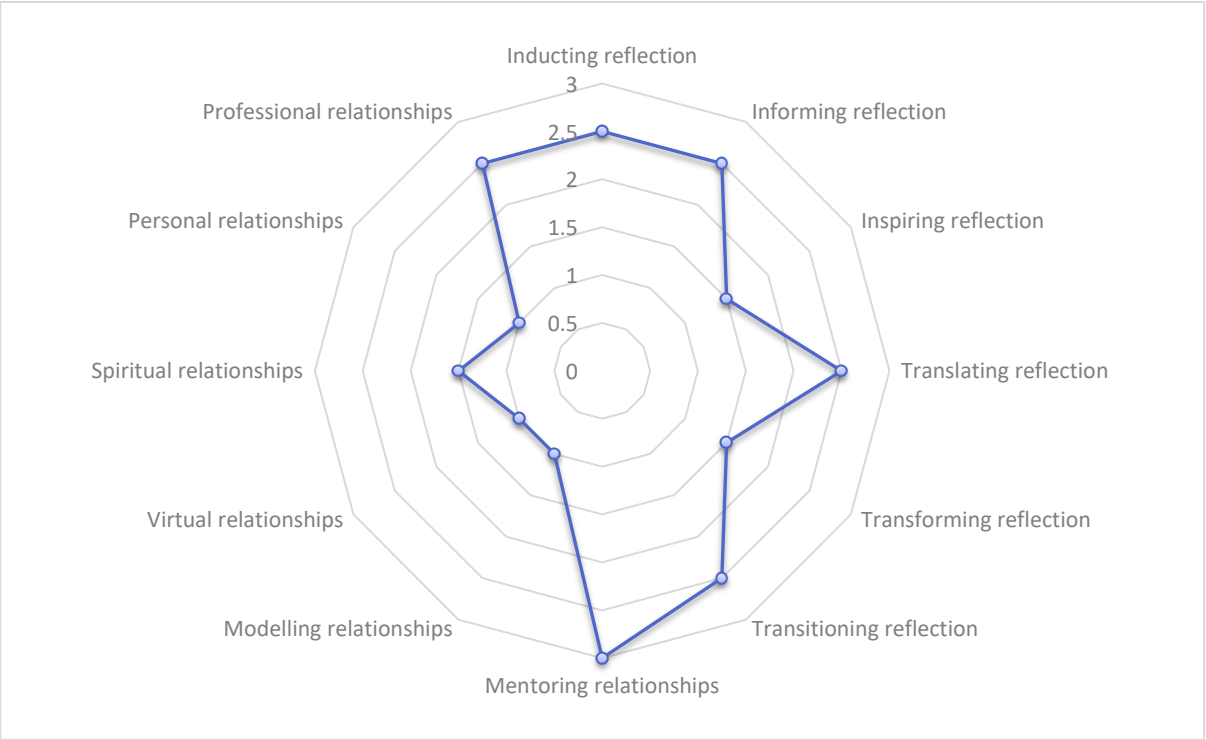


Figure 4.1

Michael's Shaping Influences profile (SIP)

KEY

A score of less than 1 – This category was evident in the responses made by the participant but was peripheral and not central to the lived experiences they were relating.

A score between 1 and 2 – This category was central in the participant's responses to several areas they were articulating.

A score of 2 or above – This category is central, occurring frequently and with emphasis, verbally and physically, in the participant's responses

Perceptions of the Philosophy, Purpose, and Praxis of Adventist Education

When Michael was asked to visually represent his understanding of Adventist Education, including its philosophy, purpose and praxis, he produced Figure 4.2. He was able to articulate what the various elements of his diagram meant.

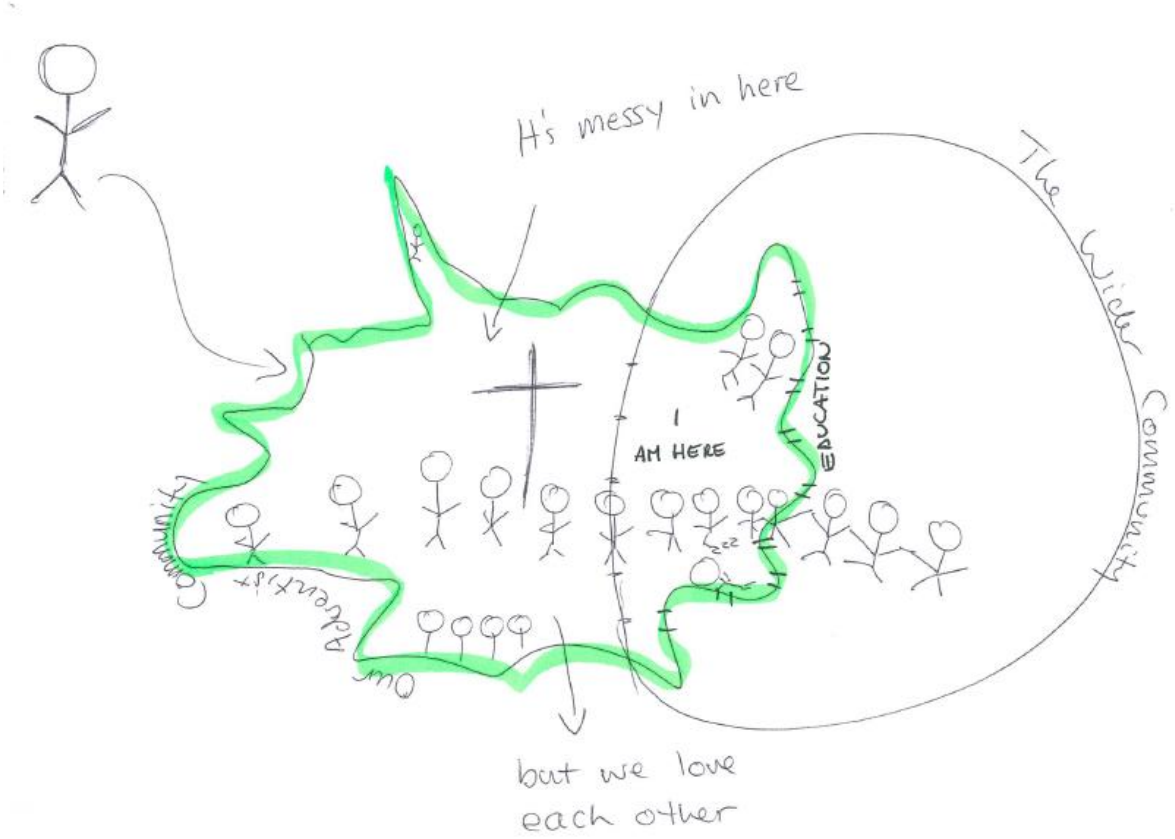


Figure 4.2

Michael's Diagram of Adventist Education

Design Summary. In this visual representation of Adventist Education, Michael identifies students as entering a space that is irregular in shape, indicating fluidity. In the centre of this shape is a cross and a number of stick figures across the centre, bottom, and extremities of the shape. One stick figure is lying down and asleep. A circle transects the irregular shape, and some people are in the circle. They are joined to those in the shape by holding hands. This diagram has elements of a Venn diagram in it, with common space to both shapes. There are two solid arrows crossing into the irregular shape and one coming out. These indicate causal relationships. Most labels are uniform in size and case, although two that indicate where Michael sees himself and the word education are in upper case letters, indicating greater importance. Where the edges of the circle and irregular shape cross

into each other, short parallel lines cross the boundaries at regular intervals, indicating a crossover between the two areas.

Conceptual Summary. Michael was able to clearly articulate the meaning of his visual representation. Regarding the philosophy of Adventist Education, Michael's placement of the cross as central indicates his belief that both Adventism and Adventist Education are based on the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

Michael also clearly articulated what he believes is the purpose of Adventist Education. This is evident in three goals.

Goal 1. to give all students the opportunity to accept Jesus Christ as Redeemer.

The irregular shape represents students who may be pushing the boundaries or who come from a different perspective to Adventism. All are welcome in this "messy" space as they create their own story that leads them to the cross. The stick figures near the extremity of the irregular shape also indicate the various journeys that students may be on, while the position of the stick figures indicates the attitudes that may be adopted by students. Some are in a line, some in groups, one is sleeping, some are alone. One is reaching through the "semi-permeable membrane" with the community to connect with community people.

Goal 2. to make authentic connections between Adventist faith and the wider community.

Michael believes that a second goal of Adventist Education relates to this "semi-permeable membrane". He sees the role of an Adventist school as connecting to the wider community and believes that Adventist Education should be a "segue between a community that doesn't care and a community that does care". He perceives Adventist Education as providing "a sense of meaning and purpose".

Goal 3. To see the creativity and character of God reflected in students.

Michael's passion for wellbeing also emerges as he explains the facets of his visual representation of Adventist Education. He speaks of "dark strongholds in our lives, things that we struggle with", and proposes that we "can also have Godly strongholds in our lives". These "habits, where your default or go-to

mechanism, is a really positive one". He likens it to the "embodied energy" of the cathedrals of Europe or the pyramids of Egypt. These masterpieces of engineering and workmanship are more than a building. They are actually human creativity manifested in something tangible. In a similar way, Michael sees his students developing with godly creativity manifested in someone tangible.

Regarding the praxis of Adventist Education, Michael believes it is all about relationships that flow out of an individual's relationship with God. Although he mentions the integration of faith and learning in the "hidden curriculum", the largest area in which he believes Adventist Education is practised is in the ethos of the school, and more specifically, in relationships that are formed between the staff member, between students, and between staff and students. Therefore, the areas of praxis that matter to Michael are: the Christian ethos of safe, authentic relationships the school which is built and; the hidden curriculum or integration of faith in God and learning.

In Michael's story, relationships play a role in shaping his perceptions of Adventist Education, and this matches Michael's strong focus on relationships in his diagram. Within the diagram the following relationships that relate to his articulation of his first and second goals are apparent: relationships between members of the school community and Jesus Christ as indicated by the cross; and relationships between those in the school community and those outside the school community.

The third visible relationship is between members of the school community depicted by the close proximity of the individuals in the community and also the words, "but we love each other".

Relationship Between Lived Experiences and Perceptions of Adventist Education

Michael's diagram is very relational, and this reflects his career, which has been built on strong relationships. However, he has also reflected on his role as a teacher in Adventist Education. His notion of students reflecting the creativity and character of God is a perception shaped by ongoing involvement in an Adventist school, supplemented by role changes and professional development days that prompted reflection.

Jason's Story

Fitting Into Adventist Education: Mentors Really Matter

Jason enters the interview room. He has a friendly and open demeanour. As head of department, he exudes an aura of confidence and efficiency. He has been teaching at this Adventist school for 15 years, having previously taught in another faith-based school. His roots are not in Adventism. He was not a student in Adventist schools in his youth, and his present faith affiliation is with the Protestant denomination of his youth. Jason's perceptions of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education have been shaped primarily by his own experiences in the school in which he currently teaches. He is openly enthusiastic about this school and repeatedly uses the phrase "I love this school" throughout his interview. Here is his story.

Pre-Career Shaping Influences.

Jason runs along the shore of the lake ahead of his family. His small lakeside community is an ideal playground for a young lad growing up. Like many young boys, Jason enjoys school, participates enthusiastically in sport, is nurtured by immediate and extended family… and goes to Church on Sundays. For Jason, Sundays are different from other days of the week. He sits and listens to his grandfather, and sometimes his father, preach, so family and doing Church become intertwined. God and family blend in a way that endures as he enters adulthood.

Growing up, Jason is fortunate to have a stable family life and extended family members living nearby. Like most teenagers of his era, he lives comfortably in his own world, with little or "no experience of Adventist Education or Adventists in general". He succeeds at school, does well at sport, and on finishing high school, attends the regional university that is not too far from his home. Each day he drives from home to university and back again, and each day he passes a "school on a hill". He is vaguely curious about it as he has plans to become a teacher. Several years later, on graduating, he seeks a full-time teaching job and relocates to Sydney where he secures a position at a large faith-based school. His family supports him as he

makes this move into a new life. His teaching career flourishes. He builds professional networks. He is perceived as an aspiring leader and invited to leadership days where he is mentored.

He thrives in this professional learning community. He enjoys his work, but less so the separation from his family members. After five years Jason begins his search for another school that is closer to his family. Family relationships matter, so he includes his family in his quest for a new teaching position. He sees an advertisement for a teacher at the school on the hill, the same school he passed each day on his way to university. He feels he meets the criteria, but he knows nothing about the school and is somewhat cautious about applying for a position there. His father offers insights, wisdom, and encouragement to apply for the position. He assures Jason that Adventists are Christians who have much in common with their own family's chosen denomination, "including a few niche things which are unique to both organisations". Backed with this reassurance, Jason applies for the position, motivated more by a desire to find work in the area where he grew up than by an empathy with the philosophy and purpose of the school on the hill.

Early Career Shaping Influences.

Jason is successful in gaining a teaching contract at the school on the hill. He looks forward to developing professional relationships similar to those at his previous school where the "staff were incredibly engaging about [him] being from a different faith." What Jason does not know is that he is only the third person to be appointed to that school who is not an Adventist. Therefore, he walks unsuspectingly into a situation where some staff are not sure how to relate to him and he very quickly discovers the implications of being, not only a newcomer but a newcomer who is not a member of the Adventist faith.

On Jason's first day at school, the teachers meet in the morning for staff worship. The teachers enter, share some spiritual thoughts for the day, and pray together, asking God's blessing on their school, families, and students, sometimes as a whole, sometimes individually. Jason soon realises this is a daily event, not a start-of- year ritual. He has never seen anything quite like it before in his previous school and he decides that "starting your day that way…framing your day in that way" is

very positive. It registers with him that this praxis is a characteristic of Adventist Education. It aligns well with his own Christian heritage and he quickly and easily becomes a participant. Staff worship is not the only "unique" corporate behaviour he is inducted into. Roll groups are spiritually focused, chapels are Christ-centred, and "good speakers in chapel…continually reframe [those] important conversations" about God and life that are continued in roll call groups. Jason observes that the students have an "opportunity for service". Jason likes what he is seeing.

Jason steps into his first class. He experiences the hollow feeling in his stomach that is a mixture of first-day nerves and excitement. If only he had someone to go to, someone to confide in, someone who would answer his questions without making him feel incompetent! No person steps forward and says, "I'm your mentor while you settle in." He is not given the name of anyone to go to if he needs answers. And he needs answers—not about the curriculum, not about classroom management, but about how things work around here. There appears to be tacit knowledge that is not found in policies or handbooks. He doesn't want to make errors, but he feels like he is walking a fine line between ignorance and making. Jason is trying to establish his identity, his understanding of where he fits in this new environment. It is during this liminal state when he has cut ties with his previous school, yet not established connections in his new school, that Jason is vulnerable to an identity dilemma.

Shortly after arriving, while in a state of liminality, Jason experiences his first "shock". In casual conversation, a staff member suggests that he is only there for a short time until they can find a suitable Adventist teacher. This makes Jason feel like "an unneeded temporary fix". Overtly, the staff members are pleasant but somewhat distant and so Jason experiences a sense of exclusion. This is a foreign emotion as he did not encounter this at his previous school, even though the differences in beliefs were wider there than with Adventism. Jason is forming impressions of Adventist Education. He sees it as having a castle mentality and wonders at the anomaly of having an open and inclusive enrolment policy but an exclusive attitude towards employing teachers. He also wonders whether he will stay for very long, whether he can cope with this silent division that appears to exist. He feels this difference keenly, in the little things like the way people answer his questions. It makes him feel "ignorant and excluded." He continually feels that he needs to justify being there.

Fortunately for Jason, help is on the way. It comes in the form of a department head with whom Jason shares an office. This teacher reaches out to him as a professional, an equal, not an inferior counterfeit, and from these beginnings, Jason is able to build professional relationships with a circle of teachers who are accepting and open. At those times when the sense of not quite fitting in threatens to overwhelm him, he reminds himself that "those people who [are] important to me and important day to day don't make me feel that way" [excluded]. The department head offers additional support. This serendipitous pairing proves to be a lifesaver. The teacher is refreshingly open and helpful. To a certain extent, she acts as a translator and "[is] able to fill [him] in" when it comes to understanding process and shows him what "really works" within the school culture. In an unofficial capacity, this teacher adopts a mentoring role, and in so doing "she lessen[s] the shock" of entry into this foreign atmosphere. How this teacher operates begins to shape Jason's perceptions of Adventist Education and counteracts his first uncomfortable impressions.

One other person sees Jason's potential. The principal continues to support Jason, and Jason feels that this individual has a "vision of getting people in who aren't necessarily Adventists." This belief reassures Jason. A transparent relationship grows, and Jason develops a great respect for his principal. He also meets the conference education director and although he is a little uncertain of this person's role, he appreciates the encouragement of this "wonderful guy" who "[spends] time talking to [him] when [he is] first starting." Jason accepts that his new work environment is made up of all kinds of people. Gradually over time, he eases into more professional relationships. Each one gives a snapshot of Adventist Education. This networking further shapes Jason's perceptions of Adventist Education.

Now that Jason has an ally or two on staff, he settles in and begins to observe his working world. He unconsciously searches for cues to help him decipher the school culture. He learns very quickly from observing his teaching colleagues that there are expected behaviours in this school that go beyond the normal professional expectations. Initially, he learns from those who share his staffroom. Listening to conversations, he sometimes wonders how Adventist teachers "tick".

One day, in the staff room, Jason hears people talking about Ellen White. He is curious as to who this person is and does some finding out. He discovers that much of the philosophy that guides Adventist Education is based on her book *Education (1903).* After a brief exploration of the book, Jason is satisfied that this fits with his own notions of Christian Education, puts the book back where it came from, and gets on with teaching.

One day, after Jason has decided he can make a place for himself at this school, a principal from another Adventist school comes to visit. Jason is immediately attracted to this individual, who is strongly relational in his approach to Adventist Education. Here is someone he relates to, someone who has similar dreams for education. They enjoy several discussions in which the visiting principal shares his perceptions of, and dreams for, Adventist Education. Jason is inspired by this brief interaction.

As Jason is absorbed into the school culture, he starts to form perceptions of what drives this school, of why it exists and is able to match this to the culture he is experiencing. He begins to make sense of Adventist Education through continuous participation. He is starting to learn what is done, what is not done and why. He is aware of the purpose of staff and roll call worships, chapels, and service trips. Throughout Jason's settling in period and beyond, he is also able to step back and observe the culture and praxis of the school before engaging in it. This reflection also informs Jason and shapes his perceptions of Adventist Education. He is initiated into the overseas Year 12 service project, first through observation, then participation and finally, after several years, leadership.

Jason's teaching field is one that facilitates the integration of faith and learning through the curriculum. He is excited to do this and he reflects on his classroom interactions with students regarding ADRA [Adventist Development and Relief Agency] and the relationship to government policies relating to overseas aid and refugees. He is "fascinated" that there are Adventist students in his classes who do not know what ADRA is.

Jason is becoming attuned to the school culture and ethos. He is feeling settled in his teaching and feeling less like an unwanted immigrant when he starts to hear talk of WOSE [Week of Spiritual Emphasis] around the staffroom. He is more

comfortable now and knows whom to target with his questions, so quickly establishes that this acronym means Week of Spiritual Emphasis. He learns that it amounts to a chapel every day for one week, usually built around a theme. It involves worshipping through music, prayer and sharing faith stories and often includes a guest speaker to challenge the students in their spiritual growth. He anticipates this week-long event with curiosity. He wonders at the time and effort being put into this single event, "a big draw down on the school week as far as time and energy" are concerned. When WOSE arrives all the staff attend, Jason included. He is impressed with this aspect of school culture. When it is over, he discovers that it is not really over. The connections made during WOSE seem to last. The conversations that are triggered by the speaker are relevant, raw, and real. He can't help but reflect thoughtfully on his previous school where they had masses and similar types of events and concedes that "they were very much structured events, rather than great stories and outreach". Involvement in this aspect of the school's culture raises Jason's level of respect for what the school is doing, and when WOSE week is announced the following year, Jason is enthusiastic. When WOSE triggers conversations in roll call that he has been "waiting to happen", with students the staff have been praying for, he feels excited to be part of a culture that helps young people face realities, find hope and learn life skills. He feels inspired knowing that, "when they're [WOSE] done well, they're incredible".

For the next 14 years, Jason is an active participant in WOSE. He sees them either as "a wonderful blessing to everyone in the school community" or an event that completely "miss[es] the mark". Fortunately, "12, 13 of them [are] wonderful", with only a couple of "misses".

While Jason experiences some high moments that shape his perceptions of Adventist Education in a positive way, not everything he sees and hears is positive. Jason has not been at his new school for very long when he starts to observe some differences to his previous school. He begins the process of trying to interpret what he is seeing using his previous lived experiences as a guide. This proves very challenging in one area. In the staffroom, and in general conversation, he starts to feel an undercurrent of "them" and "us". Not having known a "them" and "us" at his previous school, he is puzzled, not by the "us", but by the "them". Gradually the

"them" assumes an identity of an additional level of administration that exists above the school administration. It carries the rather unusual title of "The Conference", and it is not long before Jason realises that "the school [isn't] really standing on its own…there [seems] to be this body above". It is not that there are levels of hierarchy within Adventist Education that puzzles Jason; it is the somewhat "overbearing fear" that he finds "fascinating". There are staff members who express concerns, not that their professional behaviour will be called into question, but "that their lifestyle would get found out by The Conference." The more of these conversations he hears, the more Jason feels that the school is not autonomous. Jason struggles to understand this relationship between the school and the Church administration structure and decides that as it does not affect him, he will not worry about this rather "odd" situation. He has no qualms about his lifestyle, so he lets "the issue settle on someone who cares".

Jason weathers the first couple of years as a teacher in an Adventist school and is starting to feel as though he understands the essence of Adventist Education. He is accepted as a professional and the niggling sense of not belonging is rarely ever felt anymore. He is a full participant in school life and accepts his share of extra-curricular activities. Then one day, "out of the blue", Jason receives a summons, along with two or three other staff members not of the Adventist faith, to attend a series of after school meetings. Jason sits through the first session. It is about Adventist Education. Jason tries to listen, but keeps asking himself, "What is the sub-text here?" Jason is either familiar with what is being presented or fails to see the relevance of it. The afterschool meetings are intentional. Their goal is to familiarise teachers not of the Adventist faith with the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education; but by now, Jason feels comfortable with Adventist Education as practised by his school and wonders why he is required to attend. His mind wanders. He is not particularly engaged.

Later Career Shaping Influences.

The years pass and Jason begins to assume responsibility in various areas of the school's operation. He transitions to a head of department role and explores ways to enhance the culture of the school. He feels responsible for leading his department well.

One way he contributes is by leading the overseas service trip to Vanuatu. An opportunity for transforming reflection arises with a new awareness of Sabbath observance and opening and closing Sabbath worships. Although this is new to him, Jason feels that the Sabbath understanding causes “no cognitive dissonance”, and the concept of Friday night Sabbath observance, although not his custom, is something with which he is quite comfortable. He finds himself thinking on the service trip to Vanuatu, “it’s actually a wonderful way to start and close the Sabbath”, and, “respect[ing] that tradition”, he implements this praxis of Adventist Education on future trips. The institutional context is impacting his perceptions and enactment as he engages with the culture.

Jason extends his earlier attempts at integrating faith with learning in his lessons. Teaching geography offers many opportunities to embed the Christian worldview values into the content. When exploring “estranged population or the refugees”, Jason poses questions of social justice to his students:

- “Okay, we’re a so called Christian democratic country but are the current policies - why are some churches happy with this and [others] unhappy?”
- “What should Christians be doing here?”
- “Why is it that some countries which profess to have a Christian faith are not acting in a way that is caring and loving for your fellow man?”
- “What would be the Christian thing to do?”

Jason enjoys challenging his students to think, and is fascinated with their answers. One day he invites a representative from ADRA to come and talk to his class. They are studying NGOs [non-government organisations] and he wants his students to know that the Adventist church is a player in the not-for-profit humanitarian world that unselfishly cares for people. To his surprise, some of the Adventist students in his class are totally unaware of ADRA or what it does. He is quietly confident that how he conducts his classes is what praxis in Adventist schools should look like.

Now, at the Time of the Second Interview.

There is a wistfulness about Jason as we conclude his second interview. He reflects on what has been, on his journey. When I ask him where he sees himself in Adventist Education, he responds, "Well, I'm head of department through the school which in itself has an important role in Adventist Education". He also sees himself as a person of influence, "I have a role to heavily leave an influence with my department and also within the school". He is very aware that his influence in the system will not extend beyond head of department, "even though I'd love to, would have loved to, probably not anymore, loved to have gone on further but that… I guess my…well I'm very happy…that's where that influence sort of ends I guess in that stage".

Listening to Jason talk, one gets a sense that this man is very comfortable in his relationship with God. He is neither effusive in, nor apologetic about, his faith. He doesn't speak a lot about his faith or spiritual connection to God but reveals it when he talks about where he is now at the school. He appears satisfied with the position that he holds. This satisfaction stems not only from his fulfillment in teaching but from his sense that this is "what I was called to do". The word "called" indicates his openness to being attentive to God and contains a sense of mission. Jason, 15 years beyond those uncomfortable settling in months reflects, "I think we sometimes forget the gift of being in God's place". For him, this school is God's place, and God's place for him. He sees his opportunity to work here as a "gift" from God. He feels as though he has developed an understanding of Adventist Education and states that he always attempts "to act in the best interests of the school", although he doesn't think "too deeply a lot of the time about the best interests of Adventist Education".

Jason looks back on those early days with a realistic perspective. He doesn't try to minimise the confusion and sense of exclusiveness he experienced during his first weeks at this school when he felt "like an idiot or an outsider", but 15 years on, Jason has changed and so has the school culture. Jason has high praise for the professional relationships he has developed, stating, "there's been a lot of teachers here, who you know, couldn't be more welcoming and supportive of non-Adventist teachers in the system. They see all the gifts that we bring and different perspectives

from ways that are done differently elsewhere". As a department coordinator, Jason has developed many professional relationships and feels accepted by the staff, saying, "I'm very happy here".

As Jason reflects retrospectively on his years in Adventist Education, he comments, "I wouldn't have stayed in this system for as long if I didn't love the school firstly, but really deeply respect the ethos". He sums up his experience by commenting, "if this school continues to do the things it does well, in the future I think that will be a wonderful picture of Adventist education". He adds a plea for Adventist Education to strengthen mentoring in the system, especially at "leadership" levels. This single statement highlights the important role of professional relationships in Jason's experience, and how mentoring relationships contributed to his perceptions of Adventist Education. Fifteen years on, Jason feels that his perception of Adventist Education has changed to understanding.

Coda. "I love this school passionately, I really do. I really do love it passionately. I love it here, my kids both go here, I do love this school deeply to my core, but I think if I had not had those people around who tempered those attitudes…I would be gone".

Summary

Jason's SIP (Figure 4.3) reflects the nature of his lived experiences with Adventist Education. Apart from family, no other personal relationships emerge in Jason's story. His family influences relate to Christianity in general rather than to Adventist Education. This is not surprising given that his only point of connection with Adventist Education is the school environment in which he teaches. For many teachers in Adventist schools, there is a blurring of professional and personal relationships as teachers may work together and worship and socialise together. This is not the case for Jason. Despite holding a Christian worldview, he has maintained a separateness between his professional life and his personal life. Jason feels that teaching for 15 years in the one school has put him in a unique position to observe people respond to change, and during that time, he has seen attitudes change and a shift in school culture. Nearly all of Jason's perceptions of Adventist Education have come from his experiences as a staff member at one Adventist high school, although

as a department coordinator in his school now, he has had further opportunity to engage with other Adventist schools. Sensemaking reflection initially played a big role in shaping his influences of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education and over time this perception has been refined by the development of professional relationships.

The notion of sensemaking reflection has been strong for Jason, given that in the early years of his employment at this school, he was continually trying to make sense of what was happening around him. For Jason there was no prior picture of Adventist Education, so he found himself, as a new employee in an Adventist school, trying to make sense of Adventist Education against the context of the secular schools in which he had been educated, and one other faith-based school where he had taught for five years. This placed him initially in a state of liminality, as he struggled to make sense of his new environment.

It is important to note that inducting and informing reflection were both influential in shaping perceptions of Adventist Education, but that these two areas actually attracted negative responses from Jason. He felt neither well-inducted nor well-informed in his early career stage and found himself struggling to understand the culture in which he was trying to work.

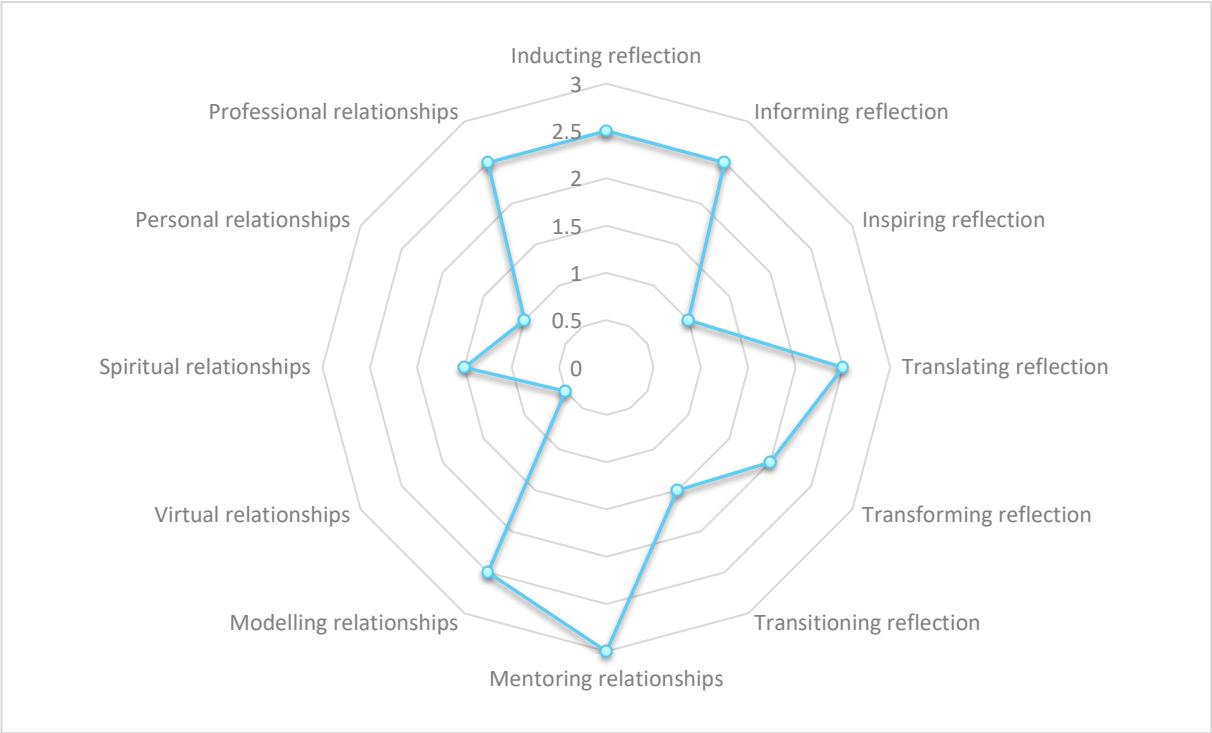


Figure 4.3

Jason's Shaping Influences Profile (SIP)

KEY

A score of less than 1 – This category was evident in the responses made by the participant but was peripheral and not central to the lived experiences they were relating.

A score between 1 and 2 – This category was central in the participant's responses to several areas they were articulating.

A score of 2 or above – This category is central, occurring frequently and with emphasis, verbally and physically, in the participant's responses

Perceptions of the Philosophy, Purpose and Praxis of Adventist Education

When Jason was asked to visually represent his understanding of Adventist Education, including its philosophy, purpose, and praxis, he produced Figure 4.4. He was able to articulate what the various elements of his diagram meant.

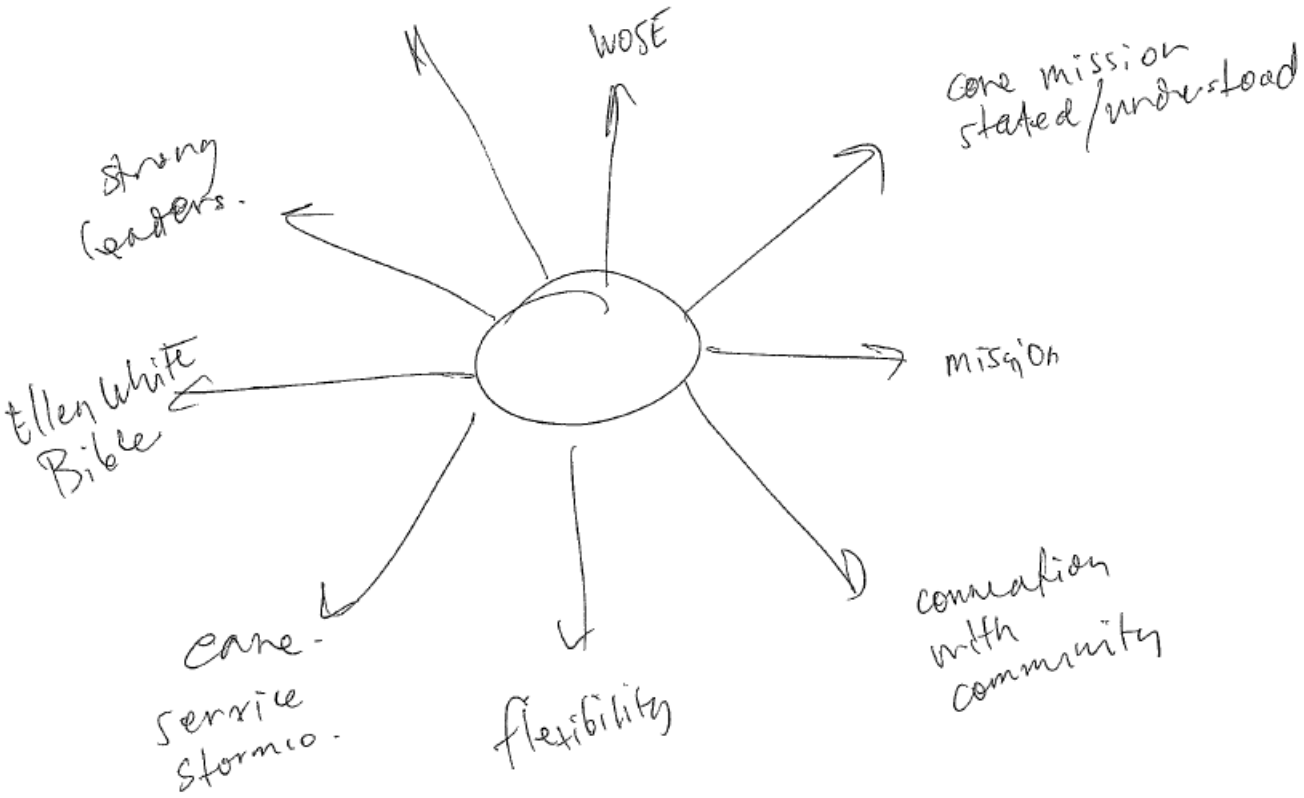


Figure 4.4

Jason's Diagram of Adventist Education

Design Summary. This diagram appears to be a list in visual form. A series of solid arrows radiate from a central circle that is unlabelled. It does show, however, a common point of contact. In the second interview, Jason identified the common point as being Adventist Education. The radiating arrows are one-way and solid, both these design features indicating dependency or a causal relationship. All text is lower case, except for the acronym WOSE (Week of Spiritual Emphasis). Uniform case of

the wording indicates that all ideas and concepts included in the diagram are of equal importance.

Conceptual summary. Jason identified characteristics of Adventist Education that radiate out of an unnamed central hub. He later orally identified this hub as being Adventist Education. These characteristics may be clustered as philosophical (core mission/Bible/Ellen White), practical (Week of Spiritual Emphasis, care, service, e.g. STORMCo), and relational (strong leaders, flexibility, and connection with the community). The learning program of the school and how it fits with the rest of the characteristics has not been included. Jason later clarified that learning and teaching were not included in his diagram as they were a part of every school and not distinctive to Adventist Education.

Relationship Between Lived Experiences and Perceptions of Adventist Education

Jason entered employment at an Adventist school knowing little about Adventist Education. This impacted the influences that shaped his perception of Adventist Education. Initially, Jason's lived experiences in another faith-based school gave him a point of comparison. When speaking about his early years in Adventist Education, Jason made several references to "how things were done" at his previous school. It was as if he was trying to translate the ethos and culture of the Adventist school, using his previous school as a comparison point and discovering that the interpretation was deficient. Fortunately, this was not the only influence to shape Jason's perceptions.

Initially, modelling relationships combined with informing reflection, began to build Jason's perceptions of Adventist Education as he had limited knowledge to draw on. This did not satisfactorily fill in the gaps in his understanding so it was fortuitous when a self-appointed mentor took Jason under her wing and inducted him into the ethos and the culture of the school. The mentoring relationship that developed from this generous gesture grew into a professional relationship as Jason negotiated the tacit knowledge of what it meant to teach in an Adventist school.

Over the 15 years Jason taught at the school, his perceptions of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education were gradually shaped, with a

greater interest in praxis and a focus on one school rather than Adventist Education as an organisation.

Lisa's Story

Committed to Adventist Education: Anticipation and Disappointment

Lisa is quietly spoken yet exudes an air of confidence when she talks. Initially reserved, she opens up and her passion for Adventist Education becomes apparent. Her background is in Adventism; her schooling is not. Her teaching experience has been both in Adventist schools and other faith-based schools. She has observed Adventist Education both from within and without the system. She brings the perspective of a parent as well as a teacher to the interview room. Here is her story.

Pre-Career Shaping Influences.

Five-year-old Lisa witnesses her parent's baptism with wonder. For her mother, it is a moment when "her heart just opened as though she had been waiting for it for all her life." For her father, it was a return to the faith of his childhood. The small country Church they attend is "very inward looking and certainly not very friendly towards community although [the members] did a lot of service things". As Lisa grows up, she takes her Seventh-day Adventist religion very seriously. This makes her feel different from the other children at the local public school. At school she makes friends, but her candidness in what she believes limits her from developing strong and enduring friendships. She feels that the other children think she is a little "weird".

At Church, she is the only child her age. She feels sort of "soaked in Adventism from an early age". She sits in Church one Sabbath morning listening as a visiting preacher promotes Avondale. This happens every time a visiting minister comes to preach. Her imagination is captured and for her, Avondale is "like a little golden bubble where all the Adventist world, the Adventist young people were", and the thought of becoming a student at Avondale gradually becomes a longing fuelled by promotions at Church regional meetings and summer camps. She thinks, "Oh, if I could just get there, I would really like that". She begins to anticipate the day when she will attend Avondale.

One year, a young female teacher arrives at Lisa's local state high school. She is a Christian and belongs to Scripture Union, a not-for-profit, non-denominational

organisation that aims to connect children to Christ. The teacher begins to mentor some of students and runs a small group where people can express their Christianity openly and honestly. Lisa admires the way this teacher lives her faith. At the same time, she is developing a love for "reading and books and literature and poetry and all that kind of thing". When her school days come to an end, she makes the long trip to Avondale and commences her higher education to become a teacher, focusing on the English that she enjoys.

Lisa arrives at Avondale with the "golden bubble" analogy still in her mind. Then the bubble bursts. This liminal experience confuses Lisa. It dawns on her that "just because you're an Adventist going to college, it [doesn't] mean that you had a conversion experience". She quickly realises "that a lot of the kids were there to have a good time…they weren't really there to study". Setting her surprise aside, Lisa settles into her studies, pursuing a degree in secondary education. She enjoys learning and rises to the challenge that her teachers set. One class Lisa looks forward to is Bible class. She has never been in a class to study the Bible and is excited. This turns out to be a disappointment as the teaching style comes nowhere near that of her English high school teacher. "After all these years of being out west by myself," Lisa has expectations of what Avondale would be like. She feels let down, and then she takes a class in Philosophy and Christian Education. Both the class content and the teacher make this a memorable experience. Lisa has "no idea of what it mean[s] to be in an Adventist school". She has come from a state school where "you just didn't talk about spiritual things, and in science, there was no question that evolution was the way that it all happened". Lisa is intrigued by this class and gradually as she listens, the shape of Adventist Education begins to form in her mind.

Lisa gets to choose schools in which to do her professional experience placements. For one placement she goes to her old school and now has a comparison point with Adventist schools. In her mind she translates the difference, gradually starting to discover for herself the distinctiveness of Adventist Education. For her final placement, she chooses a large Adventist school where she starts to discover her identity in Adventist Education. Each day commences with morning worship for the staff. Lisa enjoys this time of focus on God before commencing the school day. She also noticed other differences, but one big difference she notices is in the staff. The

staff culture is very different from that of her old school. There is no talk of "weekend parties" and exploits. There are fewer disparaging remarks about students. Instead, it seems that the "teachers really care" for the students. She observes a big cultural gap between the two schools. As she listens to the staffroom chatter, her mind slips back to her placement at her old school. She retrospectively observes herself entering the staffroom, that mysterious sanctum where teachers disappeared during breaks and spare periods. It feels strange to be on the inside, in a teacher role. She keeps to herself but listens and observes. Much of the staffroom chatter centres on time out of school; the weekend parties, the drinking and what comes after, the long service hours and what the teachers would do with them. Lisa knew that teachers had different attitudes to their teaching careers but being in this staff room clarifies this point in Lisa's mind. Through observation, through comparison, Lisa is reflecting and beginning a continuous sensemaking journey from which her understanding of Adventist Education will be shaped.

Early Career Shaping Influences.

Lisa graduates. Entering her classroom, she looks at it in dismay. During her spring cleaning, she opens the filing cabinet and finds "one little sheet of paper with five handwritten questions on *To Kill a Mockingbird* staring at [her]". She finds no other planning documents. She prays, "Father, I'm going to need some help". Help in the form of a mentor is not even thought of by the school principal. She starts the teaching year, full of hope. There is no alternative, and each year gets a little easier. She learns to interpret what other staff do and gradually becomes privy to the tacit body of knowledge about Adventist Education that no-one has thought to share with her. She discovers it is up to her to decide "how an Adventist teacher [is] meant to perform".

She also is inducted into the school culture. This involves setting up the hall and playing the piano for chapel each week. She feels inadequate for the latter, but there is no-one else. She teaches under a succession of school principals during this time.

At the end of two years of probation, an education director comes to watch her teach. She is trained in English and history and feels confident when teaching

these subjects. His available time coincides with a physical education class she has been given to fill her teaching load. She is disappointed and delighted; disappointed that she cannot showcase her teaching in her area of expertise, delighted that her Physical Education trained teacher husband has been coaching her. Probation completed, she teaches a further two years at that school before taking time off to extend her family.

This new role of mother is accompanied by a move to another state where her husband takes up another teaching position. While he sets up the physical education program at the school, Lisa is kept busy mothering. After another transfer, and with her youngest child now a toddler, Lisa decides to re-enter the workforce on a part-time basis, doing casual work at local high schools. She approaches the local Adventist school first and then decides to extend her teaching to the Catholic system. She discovers that this is a complicated and thorough process which requires reading "a fairly, um, detailed statement about their beliefs". She also has "to sign off each descriptor saying that [she] agree[s] to abide by that and that [she] [isn't] going to undercut or reverse anything they had in place for the kids". It impresses her how seriously they approach their hiring of even casual staff.

Lisa steps into a Catholic school classroom for the first time. She feels a sense of familiarity, the desks and chairs, the board, the posters decorating the walls…and then she catches sight of a small shrine occupying a prominent position at the front of the classroom. This is something very new to Lisa and prompts her to think about this visible reminder of the faith heritage of the school. She is relieved that she is not expected to do anything with it and maintains detached respect. She is prepared for what she may see in her next classroom. As she scans the teacher's notes for the day, she finds a prayer written out. Apparently, she is supposed to read this prayer out to the class before she begins teaching. She reads it. Some of it sounds familiar, but other parts sound quite foreign to her Adventist-style prayer attuned ears. Lisa is using retrospective reflections to make sense of her new teaching environment. She simultaneously has to translate each new experience in an attempt to understand her situation. A few moments of calm prevail before the unleashed energy of a high school classroom takes over.

She notices differences in the staffroom too and listens carefully as the festivals and holy days of the Catholic Church calendar are celebrated throughout the year. “Today is the day when we celebrate St Pius and such and such”, and she decides that Catholic schools are “quite proactive in, you know, talking to kids about the saints and Mary and Jesus and all the rest of it”. She compares this to the conversations she hears in the Adventist school staffroom and comes to the conclusion that both schools are proactive and open in sharing their philosophical and religious culture, but in different ways. While the Catholic school is focused explicitly on the Catholic faith and the traditions that accompany it, Adventist schoolteachers tend to talk more broadly in terms of Christian values and service. She reaches the conclusion that Catholic schools have a very strong Catholic identity.

It is during this phase of her teaching career that she consolidates her belief that teaching is not neutral, that the personal values and beliefs that teachers aspire to are transmitted silently to their students. Casual teaching in Catholic schools gives an opportunity for sensemaking reflection, as Lisa tries to interpret or translate the way education is done in this system. She uses Adventist Education as her benchmark, and this reflection process helps Lisa further refine what Adventist Education is, and what she thinks it should be.

Lisa’s employment in Catholic education comes to an end when she accepts a part-time position at the local Adventist high school where her own children attend. She returns to Adventist Education with broader life experience than when she first began as a graduate teacher. She has experience teaching in another education system and several years of mothering knowledge, which provide points of comparison.

Lisa discovers that mothering impacts one’s view of teaching. When her first child commences school, there is a time of deep reflection. As a parent, she “want[s] the absolute best for them”. With her own schooling experience in state schools, she felt “the teachers were a little more remote from us kids than the teachers in Adventist schools”. She develops clear ideas of what she wants Adventist Education to be for her children. As her children grow, she is mostly satisfied. One problematic area is that of the Bible curriculum. Her children have grown up in an Adventist home where faith and Bible are shared. She feels that her children are not always challenged spiritually. They find “that Bible classes here [are] quite boring”, with

everything generalised. One day her son says, “You’ve wasted your money, Mum We know all this stuff already.” She wishes that somehow, they “could actually really study Adventist life” as there is “nothing to challenge them to dig deeper and find out”. This is because of the makeup of the school population, with only a minority coming from Adventist homes, some coming from committed or nominal Christian homes, and others experiencing no faith foundation in their homes. Faith development is not lacking, however, with her children negotiating the social experience of being in a diverse school population, and Lisa is thankful “for the Christian teachers we have here who do uphold at least Christian beliefs”. Lisa perceives Adventist Education as an “integration of Adventist belief and education and practice and values and community”. She knows “there [is] never any question for [her] that [she] would want [her children] anywhere else”.

Later Career Shaping Influences.

As Lisa settles into the later part of her teaching career, she observes several changes taking place in Adventist Education. When she first began teaching in an Adventist school, most of the students came from Adventist homes, but now, as she enters the classroom, she is aware that she may be interacting with students from other Christian denominations, students of Hindu, Islamic or other faith traditions, or students who experience no faith in their families. Lisa concludes that her school is a “tremendous mission field”, a place of opportunity to share the redeeming love of God’s grace with her students. She makes the most of openings “to present the Christian perspective”. “Some kids back right off, but most kids sit and listen. And you know, quite often they say, I haven’t really thought about that or I haven’t understood that, or you know, it’s just interesting to see how some of them open up”.

Although Lisa enjoys these opportunities to share her faith in open discussions with students, she is mindful that the changing school demographic to broadly Christian is changing the ethos of the school. She sees it as a continual battle to preserve the Adventist understanding of Christianity in her school. She believes that “morning worship with the staff sometimes helps with that and think[s] it’s a really good start to start the beginning of the day by saying, you know, this school is in your hands, God. Be with us and give us opportunities and help us to do our best”. During these morning devotions she and other teachers model to teachers not of the

Adventist faith so “they get to see what other teachers do and so it’s modelled for them…what they present”. She likes to make her staff worships spiritual, but notes that sometimes they simply take the form of “a personal experience of a little story”. Once a week, the staff in each department meet together and “talk about the various kids and [they] pray for what [they] feel is needed”. Lisa really likes this time spent together. “ [She] like[s] the feeling that [they are] all on a team...working for the same goal and that is the salvation of these kids”.

Lisa transitions to a new teaching role during this phase of her career. She becomes a member of the support department. No longer teaching English, but instead working with children who are challenged by learning in a regular classroom environment, Lisa rethinks her role as a teacher in an Adventist school. Teaching becomes less about integrating faith in subject content and more about nurturing children facing challenges.

Lisa has her own sense of personal mission. She reflects that “teaching the kids has probably taught me far more about myself than going and doing my teacher training, and I guess being in an Adventist school has allowed me to see the benefits that are received as a child growing up in a Christian home”. In respect to her students, Lisa “want[s] to present Christ to them in an attractive way, so that in some point in their life, they might fall back on him”. She is acutely aware that not all her fellow teachers share her passion, but see their roles as Christian teachers differently. She recognises the impact the school culture has on students and observes that “if you put a group of kids amongst Christian teachers and you provide Christian activities like chapel and service projects like STORMCo [Service to Others Really Matters Company] and Pathfinders and Bible classes, it’s interesting that children will gravitate towards the Christian end of things”. She believes that the Holy Spirit speaks to them through the school culture.

Now, at the Time of the Second Interview.

Lisa is somewhat bemused at how she arrived in her current role in this Adventist school, but she is very happy in her role as a learning support person. She expected to still be an English teacher but reflects that her further study in boys’ education may be partly responsible for the position she now holds. She admits that

her perception of an ideal Adventist school is not always a tight match with where she works and shares her concerns that Adventist Education may be losing its distinctiveness.

As an educator, Lisa feels "comfortable with who [she is]. And she feels[s] comfortable sharing [her] faith, when it is appropriate. [She] feel[s] comfortable, integrating it into learning, when it's appropriate. And [she] like[s] the fact that [her] faith and [her] teaching, undergird the philosophy of this school".

Coda. "I wouldn't want kids to leave my classroom and not know that I am a Christian, and not know that I'm an Adventist Christian. You know I want it to be obvious in the way that I treat them".

Summary

Lisa's SIP (Figure 4.5) focuses more on her reflection of her professional journey than on relationships, with one exception, that being spiritual relationships. Lisa's relationship with God emerged as a clear and strong influence in shaping her perception of Adventist Education. In listening to Lisa tell her story, no mention was made of mentoring as a shaping influence. In fact, Lisa maintained she received no mentoring either when she first began in Adventist Education or when she returned to it after time off from teaching. She did not indicate any particular writers or speakers who influenced her ideas about Adventist Education except for Ellen White.

Lisa's early career was characterised by her induction into the school culture and being informed by what she observes. Lisa also worked for some time outside of Adventist Education, where she experienced several schools in a different school system. This resulted in translating reflection both on her exit from Adventist Education and on her re-entry as she sought to interpret the differences between the two systems. Because she has changed roles and schools within Adventist Education, she has also been able to reflect on her role during her transitions, and this has also helped shape her perceptions of Adventist Education. She began her teaching career as an English teacher and now works in a support role for special needs children. Lisa's SIP indicates that she is a reflective practitioner who makes sense of her work environment by thinking deeply about it. The types of reflection she has engaged in

reflect her lived experiences and have influenced her perceptions of Adventist Education.



Figure 4.5

Lisa's Shaping Influences Profile (SIP)

KEY

A score of less than 1 – This category was evident in the responses made by the participant but was peripheral and not central to the lived experiences they were relating.

A score between 1 and 2 – This category was central in the participant's responses to several areas they were articulating.

A score of 2 or above – This category is central, occurring frequently and with emphasis, verbally and physically, in the participant's responses

Perceptions of the Philosophy, Purpose and Praxis of Adventist Education

When Lisa was asked to visually represent her understanding of Adventist Education, including its philosophy, purpose and praxis, she produced Figure 4.6. She was able to articulate what the various elements of her diagram meant.

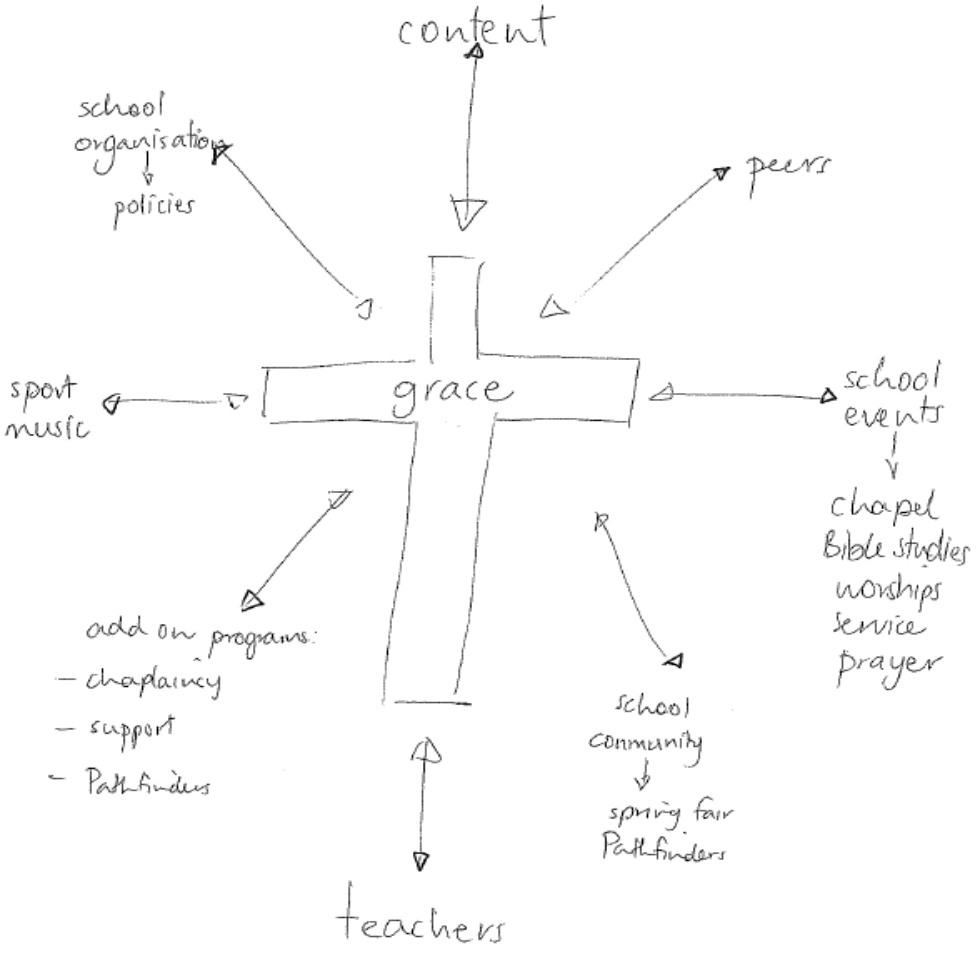


Figure 4.6

Lisa's Diagram of Adventist Education

Design Summary. This diagram has a central image in the shape of the cross which is symbolic of Jesus as the centre of Adventist Education. The cross is labelled grace to show the emphasis is on forgiveness. Radiating from the cross are double ended arrows made with a solid line. Double ended arrows indicate interdependency or a causal relationship that applies in two directions. Solid lines indicate a strong

relationship between the labels and the cross. Three of the radiating labels have an additional arrow extending from them to a subset of labels.

Conceptual summary. Lisa believes that the grace of Jesus Christ should be central to every aspect of the school program and operation, so she places the cross at the centre of her diagram. She believes students should "see the cross through the content". A comprehensive list of school events, personnel, administration, and learning content with arrows pointing from each to the cross suggest that each part of the school's operation should both be motivated by the love of Jesus and pointing to or revealing Jesus Christ and His saving grace. This diagram includes content and links it to faith through the cross.

Lisa's diagram is comprehensive and covers nearly all aspects of the school's operation, showing that in praxis she sees the grace of Jesus permeating every aspect of school life and its operation. She was able to construct this diagram quite quickly, giving evidence of having reflected on this in depth over a period of time. Personnel, including teachers, chaplain, support staff and peers, are included in this diagram although relationships, (except for spiritual relationships) did not appear in her shared lived experiences as influencing her perceptions of Adventist Education.

Relationship Between Lived Experiences and Perceptions of Adventist Education

Lisa's journey with Adventist Education included lived experiences both in and out of Adventist Education in her pre-career, and early career phases. Her first shock after her public-school education was at Avondale where she resonated with the philosophy and purpose of Adventist Education as taught but began to wonder if the praxis aligned with what she was hearing in class. Her school placements during her teacher education course confirmed that Adventist Education did have distinct praxis, but this realisation was short-lived when she took up her first appointment and tried to implement her learning in a new school culture.

The next phase of Lisa's lived experience was in the role of mothering where she consolidated what was important to her regarding the education of her children. When she returned to teaching, it was as a casual teacher for the Catholic system. This gave her another model against which to compare Adventist Education. By the time she returned to Adventist Education as a full-time teacher she had established

her perceptions of Adventist Education which she continued to refine, often within the context of what she wanted it to be for her children, but also in the context of a changing role from mainstream classroom teacher for special needs teacher.

In the area of relationships, Lisa spoke openly about her relationship with God, but professional relationships were not a strong shaping influence on her perceptions. This is consistent with her teaching in and out of Adventist Education where enduring relationships were impacted by changing schools and/or roles.

Karen's Story

Negotiating Adventist Education: Relationships & Community

Karen is a vibrant mid- to late-career teacher with an outgoing personality. I wait while she ushers the last of her students from the room and deals with their questions. She gives them her undivided attention and jokes with them a little. They obviously adore her. She has experience in both Adventist and state schools. She speaks expressively as she recounts her involvement with Adventist Education, darting from one experience to another, and using lots of emotionally charged words and phrases. Her journey is full of anecdotes and stories that prompt both laughter and tears. Here is her story.

Early Pre-Career Shaping Influences

As the chords of the organ resound around the Anglican Church, Karen obediently stands and joins in the hymn singing while her father provides the accompaniment. She loves singing and it is something her two sisters and brother are used to. Music is something that defines their family. Church going is an opportunity to experience music, so Karen sings, but with less focus on the words than on the soaring melodies. Her first singing appearance on television at the age of four is a bigger deal than singing in Church. Home is a warm and caring place, and every night Karen kneels beside her bed with her mother and prays, "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, Look upon a little child." Karen feels loved by her mother and by God, although she really knows very little about God, despite her Church attendance. This safe family space provides security for her as her father's work commitments mean that at the beginning of nearly every year, Karen fronts up to a new primary school with her siblings. Fortunately, she loves learning and views each successive school as a new adventure. Her sisters head off to boarding school when they reach high school. She expects to do the same.

One day her father announces that the family is moving interstate. They are off on another family adventure together. They temporarily reside with an aunt until an appropriate property can be found to purchase. There is a private school in the small town where her aunt lives. Seventh-day Adventists run it. It ticks all the boxes.

The family settles and purchases a property as this new job provides long-term employment stability for the family.

It is nearly the end of the school year when they arrive. Karen is in Year 6 and will be starting high school next year, so her parents enrol her for the last few weeks of the school year. Karen does not know at the time that she is one of the few, if any, children in the school who are not from an Adventist home. She has no reason to worry that she will not fit in. She always makes friends easily. She looks forward to seeing what this new school is like. She "cannot believe the difference". Her teacher takes an interest in her. He treats her with respect. She feels a bit of a novelty to the students, but they are friendly. She believes she is going to enjoy this school. One lesson is about the human body. Karen loves it and thanks the teacher. Later in the day, the teacher hands out assignments. Each student has a different person to research. The name on Karen's paper is Zachariah. She panics. She has heard of Edmund Barton and Sir Edmund Hilary. She is familiar with "the Beatles and the Rolling Stones." She "know[s] who Shane Gould and Evonne Goolagong are, but [she has] never heard of Zachariah". By the time she arrives home she is "bawling [her] eyes out" because she doesn't have a clue who this person is. Her mum is unable to give assistance. Fortunately, they are still living with her aunt, and together with her cousin, they open the Bible and introduce her to Zachariah. She feels her confidence returning.

Karen quickly makes friends and is welcomed into their homes by their parents who "treat [her] like [she] is their child; warm, caring, terrific". This experience of moving into an Adventist school for the first time begins to shape Karen's perceptions of Adventist Education. As she translates the new school culture into concepts she can understand, it is the overwhelming sense of belonging that creates lasting impressions.

Karen often finds herself at odds with Adventist culture, but "not in a threatening way". As she joins in worship and social activities outside of school hours, she quickly discovers much behaviour that is normal to her is outside of Adventist culture. She struggles to understand why the girls are fascinated by her jewellery and their family's colour television. She does not understand the fascination with clubbing as her dad has been a musician all his life and often played

in clubs. She struggles to comprehend the taboo on alcohol. She was given her first sip of beer when she was in third class accompanied by two pieces of advice from her mother, “You won’t like it. It tastes revolting and, darling, ladies don’t drink beer.” It is the first and last time Karen tastes it. Through all this time, Karen is engaged in sensemaking reflection as she tries to understand the culture of the school in which she is becoming increasingly comfortable.

Karen learns from some “wonderful, beautiful” teachers “who [are] just brilliant”. “They [are] good, they [are] kind, they [are] loving, they [are] caring, they ignore [her] when [her] behaviour deserves to be ignored”. One family of a school friend calls her their “third daughter”. She thrives in this welcoming, supportive community. She is observing how this school community works and is gradually building a picture of Adventist Education. She is inducted into the school culture as a student and starts to see herself as part of it. “[She] learns about God at school. [She] learns about Christianity. [She] chooses to be baptised. She saves her pocket money to go and buy Ellen White’s book, *Steps to Christ* … to read at home between Years 7 and 8 because [she] wants to”. She loves reading and loves knowing. She sifts through what she believes to be nonsense and not related to her growing relationship with Jesus. She is loving life. Some of her peers are not so fortunate. They feel the teachers show favouritism. She senses their pain but cannot identify with it. Her world is wonderful, but she recognises and stores their hurt in her heart.

Karen’s outgoing personality makes her a likeable “rat bag at school” who is “never a bad, naughty” student, but…”is always where there [is] fun to be had…helping it happen”, so when the deputy stops her in the corridor one day, her immediate thoughts are, “What has he found out that I did this week? How many kids did I have in my van at the beach?” The deputy has a different agenda in mind. He has observed Karen on the school ski trip and wants to plant an idea in her mind.

“I got to know you really well at the snow and I’ve been impressed to tell you that I believe God wants you to be a teacher,” he says. “The skills I see in you and your personality and your nature—you are born to be a teacher.” Karen is surprised. She has been nurturing this desire herself. At that moment, she feels “like God [is] talking to [her] in his own voice”, and thinks, “this is what I was born to do”. She

feels affirmed in choosing her career path, even though her friends had predicted a career in nursing for her.

She chooses Avondale to study for her teaching qualifications. Her school years had been joyful, but her Avondale years are "hard". She has heavy work commitments, does not socialise a lot, meets "hypocrisy in the Church for the first time", and feels disconnected. These are years of "real questioning, real challenging". She drifts away from Church attendance, but she never loses her faith in God. Approaching graduation, she interviews with other prospective graduands for a teaching position in an Adventist school.

The interview does not go well. She is not asked about her curriculum knowledge, her approach to teaching, her management strategies or even how she will help her students develop a relationship with Jesus. She is asked about her Adventist connections, her family, and her earrings. She is puzzled. Do they want to employ a teacher? Is the fact that she is the first Adventist in her family an issue? Apparently, it is. She is told that they would be taking a "risk" in employing her. "[She] feels disheartened. She knows her prac. teaching results [are] up there with the very best in [her] class, but [she] does not have the pedigree, and therefore [she isn't] seen as good". She leaves the interview feeling "unacceptable…judged as unworthy, absolutely". She waits, but without much hope of employment. November, December, January; the months pass. In April, she receives an unexpected phone call. A teacher is needed for a regional Adventist school. She has been recommended by the father of one of her school friends. He is a well-respected pastor. He recommends they "give her a chance". The disappointment of rejection takes second place to the excitement of employment. She packs her bags and sets off, not knowing what to expect, but confident that God is with her.

Early Career Shaping Influences.

Karen feels "blessed". She meets the teacher she is replacing and feels a connection. There is a three-week overlap. Karen observes this woman the first week and concludes that she is "the most beautiful woman on the planet…loving and kind, an absolute Christian woman." The second week Karen team teaches with this wonderful mentor and the third week Karen assumes full control of the class while

her mentor “watches [her] and critiques”. At the end of this induction period, Karen is ready to “fly”. She believes that “God had his hand over [her] the whole time, and this marks a turning point for Karen. [Her] faith [grows]”.

Karen is busy. “[She] works seven days a week”. The Church expectation is that she leads out with the children’s Sabbath School at Church, so she gets no down time, but she has “the Church community behind [her] 100%” so she doesn’t mind, even when her numbers grow to “43 children across four grades”. A kindly Church lady offers to help. She acts as an unpaid teacher’s aide “and gives [Karen] a day a week” of her own time.

Karen hears from some of her friends in other schools. Some are “sinking, floundering and burning out”. She feels “like a pig in mud, happy as Larry” until the day she is told it is her responsibility to care for the primary school athletics program. “[She] doesn’t do sport”. All her life she has avoided it, so she comes up with a plan. She visits the retirement home. She rallies the old retired ministers … “to come up one afternoon” to help run athletics. She musters the “help of one or two high school students to set up the equipment”. The high jump is set up. “Show us how to do it,” call the children. Her response is, “Kids, I don’t know how to high jump. If I can’t walk over it, it doesn’t happen.” She wishes she hadn’t been so “slack” about sport when she was in school. It becomes a team effort; teachers, high school students, parents, grandparents, and retired ministers all coaching children into would-be athletes. The retired ministers “man the high jump and long jump and rake” the pits, “and they know all the kids’ names.” When the carnival day arrives, the volunteer cheer squad turns up in full force, and the school surprises everyone by winning over larger schools.

Without realising it, Karen is helping to build an “amazing community” of “Christian people who [live] by Christian principles”. “It is a common goal and it is beautiful”. They build friendships that will endure for many years to come.

Years pass and Karen’s life circumstances change. She marries and then takes time out of teaching to be a mum. She wants to re-enter the workforce in a casual or part-time position so decides to try the public school system.

Karen steps into the classroom at a local public school. It is morning and she has to consciously refrain from commencing the day with worship. She "[misses] being able to teach holistically". She is acutely aware that how she lives her life may be the only Bible some children ever read. At the end of recess, she says to one of her five-year-old students, "Line up, sweetheart, the bell's gone. Line up." He turns, eyes her off, and double Fs her. She only just manages to hide her surprise. She reports the student's language to the head teacher who looks at her and asks somewhat sarcastically, "And where have we had the privilege of working?" The differences between this school and her last school are becoming increasingly obvious, and it is only her first day. She recognises that idealism may need to give way to plausibility.

She notices other differences. It is harder to talk to parents about their children's issues. There is not a shared desire for the child's common good and prayer with a parent is out of the question. So is prayer in the staffroom. Using the Adventist school as a benchmark, Karen realises how much she has taken for granted. She hopes she will be able to fit in.

Some differences she observes are positive. She has better access to experts to help with learning and behaviour challenges. She comes to appreciate the staff culture where everyone "has each other's back". The tougher the school, the more supportive the staff seem to be. Some of the things that were issues in the Adventist school seem inconsequential when juxtaposed with the issues facing the schools she teaches in now. After one harrowing classroom incident, a teacher steps into her room. Karen flinches. Was her classroom that noisy? The teacher smiles sympathetically and says, "Go and have a walk. Go and get yourself a cuppa. I'll look after your kids for a while, just go and take some time." That is it; no condemnation, no explanations required; just empathy and action. As Karen heads for the staffroom, she cries with relief. She knows she can be real. She does not have to be a "martyr" hiding behind closed doors, pretending everything is all right. She feels safe with her colleagues. She reflects that teachers in Adventist schools could learn some valuable lessons about transparency and care from her teacher friends in state schools.

Later Career Shaping Influences.

After several years, Karen finds herself back at her first Adventist school of employment. Still not wanting full-time employment, a new pre-kindy position offers just what she wants. Back in familiar territory, Karen brings experience and wisdom from the "outside" and blends it with her own brand of Adventist Education to create a warm and caring learning environment that is real and puts Jesus at the centre. She engages fully again with the program of the school and writes a program that reveals Jesus.

It is Father's Day. The Church is full, and the children are wriggling with excitement. The music is joyful, the video presentation is heart-warming, and the art display created by students bring smiles to everyone's faces. An inspiring sermon for the day focuses on fathers. This is a community of faith and learning in "celebration" mode. Karen is living in a "place where they [seek] out every opportunity they [can]" to "touch children's lives with a picture of God," through strong and authentic relationships. As she reflects, Karen realises that this Fathers' Day has become a spiritual inspiration, not just for her, but for the whole school and Church community.

Karen loves her school. She loves her students. She loves her Church. She loves her God, and she loves her husband, so that is why she allows him to follow his dream that takes her away from this school into which she has invested so many years of her life. She has learned so much here about relationships, community, and belonging. She trusts God to take her where she can make a difference.

It is her first day at a new Adventist school. Karen stands on bus duty and watches the line of buses spill their human cargo onto the pathway. Bodies dart everywhere, dodging, ducking, or ambling as they make their way toward their classrooms, their tidy uniforms indicative that everything in this school is organised. It is a "culture shock" after being in a smaller regional school. Karen's confidence is wavering until she stands facing her new class. Eager faces gaze up at her. She knows just what they need. They need someone to show them the love of Jesus in action. Other things matter too: academics are important, but Karen has a higher purpose.

She settles in. Her initial uncertainty vanishes, although she is aware that her teaching style sometimes astonishes her principal when he visits her classroom. He visits one day for a chat. Karen wonders why he is there. He makes some small talk and then asks outright, “And how are you going with God? How are you? How are things?” Karen loves the fact that he [takes] a spiritual interest in [her]. This is a new experience, and she gains a real sense that he believes “that if [she] is spiritually okay, then what [she is] doing in her room would be and [she] loves him for that”. As she observes, she notices her principal spiritually nurturing all his staff in ways that are appropriate to each individual. His spiritual mentoring gives her a sense that she can be real with this principal. She feels “blessed to [be teaching] under him”.

She immerses herself in the school culture and strives for excellence in all she does. She has a personal philosophy that she must teach her “academics really well, because if [she doesn’t] do that, it makes a mockery of everything else [she] tells them and teaches them”, including what she teaches them about Jesus. She guides her students in their prayer life and feels “lucky” to have a job where she gets to enact kindness, patience, and compassion, every day, and model Christianity in a practical way to her students.

She remembers her own school days when some of her friends felt like outcasts and determines that no child in her class will ever feel that way. All her children are recognised, affirmed, and encouraged. Her classroom is one of fun, laughter and learning, but first and foremost, she helps her children to encounter Jesus in ways that encourage relationship building.

Now, at the Time of the Second Interview.

Karen is now a stage coordinator at her school. She is pensive as she looks back over her life before and after becoming a teacher. She expresses very strongly the belief that God was with her, directing her path in everything that happened, and encouraging her to hang on when times were tough. She trusts God implicitly. This is what she wants for the children in her class. Her goal is to help them flourish in every aspect of their lives.

Coda “I might be the only one who tells them about God.”

Summary

Karen's memory of her lived experience indicates that she is a very relational person (Figure 4.7). Her story takes the form of a testimony of how God has intervened and worked in her professional life. It is very clear that Karen's relationships with people have strongly influenced and shaped her perceptions of Adventist Education. The only type of relationship that does not feature in Karen's SIP is virtual relationships. Karen's outgoing personality is influenced more by living relationships than by vicarious ones. Karen has also engaged in reflection that has shaped her perceptions of Adventist Education. This reflection was strongest at two points in her life. The first was her experience as a student entering Adventist Education for the first time, and the second occurred when she first began teaching in state schools as a casual teacher and then re-entered Adventist Education. This accounts for the spike into the reflection half of the circumplex graph. Karen also feels there have been inspiring moments in her career where her reflection on spiritual events and experiences have made her think about the aims of Adventist Education and times when an event has transformed her thinking about an aspect of Adventist Education.

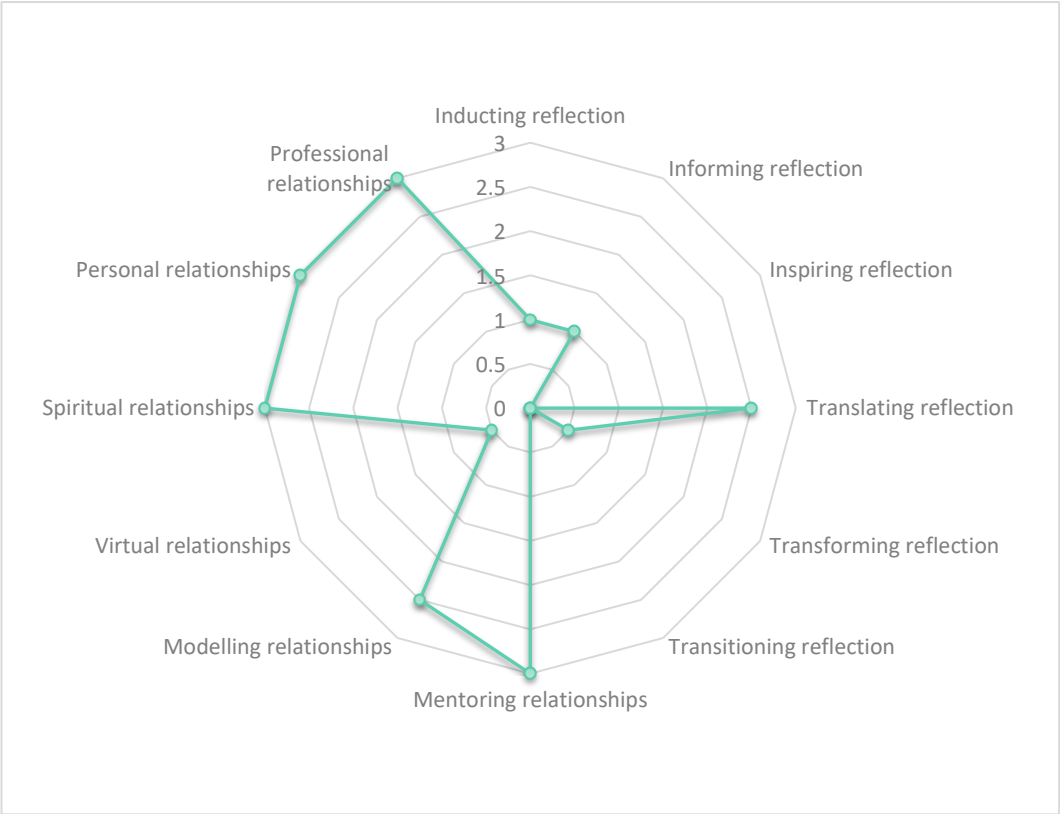


Figure 4.7

Karen's Shaping Influences Profile (SIP)

KEY

A score of less than 1 – This category was evident in the responses made by the participant but was peripheral and not central to the lived experiences they were relating.

A score between 1 and 2 – This category was central in the participant's responses to several areas they were articulating.

A score of 2 or above – This category is central, occurring frequently and with emphasis, verbally and physically, in the participant's responses

Perceptions of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education

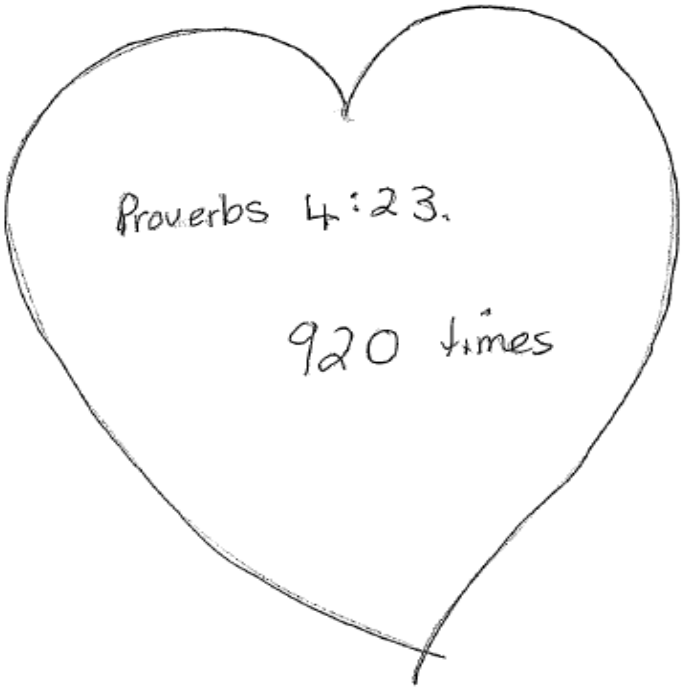


Figure 4.8

Karen's Diagram of Adventist Education

Perceptions of the Philosophy, Purpose, and Praxis of Adventist Education

When Karen was asked to visually represent her understanding of Adventist Education, including its philosophy, purpose and praxis, she produced Figure 4.8. She was able to articulate what the various elements of her diagram meant.

Diagrammatic Summary. This is a straightforward pictorial diagram with two labels within an enclosed heart shape which symbolises love.

Conceptual Summary. The Bible reference of Proverbs 4: 23 ("Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life") suggests that this diagram is all about Adventist Education guiding children's hearts towards God. The "920 times" indicates emphasis and the high importance placed on heart learning. Karen feels that if Adventist Education focuses on the heart of the matter, everything else will fall into place. There is no mention of the integration of faith and learning, school policies, extra-curricular activities or the curriculum. Karen is single-minded

in her visual representation of Adventist Education. Jesus and his redemptive love is at the centre of everything.

Relationship Between Lived Experiences and Perceptions of Adventist Education.

Karen's lived experiences focus strongly around people and the relationships she built builds with them. Even during her transfer out of and back into Adventist Education, when circumstances forced her to reflect on the differences she was observing, those differences revolved around people and her relationship with them. When it came to drawing a visual representation of Adventist Education, the relational influences were at the forefront, with Karen drawing a heart shape, a symbol of both humanity's relationship with the Trinity and with other humans. Karen's philosophy for Adventist Education is to keep her heart focused on God and to be diligent in leading students into a rich and rewarding relationship with Jesus Christ.

John's Story

New Roles in Adventist Education: Changing Perceptions

John is confident as we prepare for the interview. He has a family heritage of Adventism and a long association with Adventist Education, which has been unbroken since he was eight years old. He is now a leader in Adventist Education. He is sure of himself and certain of what he believes is the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education. Here is his story.

Pre-Career Shaping Influences

John looks up at the solid walls surrounding the compound in which he lives. They are big walls and all the windows on his house are barred, but for him this is normal in the large Asian city in which he lives with his Adventist missionary family. He feels secure and loved. Every morning and every evening the family gathers for worship time, and John hears the "grand stories" from the Bible over and over so that he practically "[grows] up on those" stories. John is aware "from an early age" that his family belongs to something "bigger". His parents have "a network of friends who [are] all scattered around the world".

His first introduction to school is going along with his mother to a local school that is taught in English. She teaches and John listens, but the English words sound foreign and he wishes he were outside playing with his friends "and wandering around the countryside. [He has] an adventurous childhood" that suits him very well, especially as he knows nothing else; but his education is not progressing that well. When he is eight, his parents have to make a choice: to let him keep attending the local school, send him to an American boarding school in a neighbouring country, or return to Australia. They decide to return to Australia with their two children. After the long trip, they take up residence across the road from the local Adventist school while some family health issues are resolved.

John starts at the school across the road. Waves of confusion ride over him on his first day. The English he knows is not the English he hears spoken there. "No-one [can understand] what he is talking about and [he cannot] understand them", but as

this makes him a “novelty”, and he enjoys being the centre of attention, he survives those first few months of education in Australia.

With all medical issues happily resolved, John’s family move to another state and John starts at another Adventist school. Again, he enjoys “celebrity status”. He is tall for his age but is put into Grade One because of his limited English skills, so he towers over the other children in the class. This liminal experience is confronting for John who can speak Hindi fluently as well as some Nepalese, but he very quickly catches on to English. No-one moves to shift him out of Grade 1. His parents sense his discomfort and talk to the school. John moves up to the next classroom, completes Year 2 and does Year 3 and Year 4 the following year. By the end of primary school, he is assimilated into school life and looking forward to moving on to high school with his friends. It is not to be.

John’s father is transferred to another state and John starts at another Adventist school. This time he settles in quickly. One of the teachers has a passion for model airplanes and flies them after school. John joins in and enjoys this extracurricular activity very much. This teacher becomes one of his favourites. John is surprised when his dad announces they are moving again. He has made good friends in the last two years.

Johns enjoys the last four years of his schooling in the one Adventist school. He is heavily involved in sport and builds good relationships with the teachers who organise sporting events. He observes some inconsistencies in the behaviour of some of the teachers, but for the most part, he sees them living the values and faith that is modelled in his own home. He is used to the rhythm of Adventist Education, which complements his home faith, and he views Bible classes at school as a routine part of the school. He chooses to be baptised into the Church of his parents, but for the most part, school activity dominates his life. He completes Year 12 and sets his sights on Avondale. His mother believes he would make a good accountant; his father wants him to be a Church pastor. After sampling accountancy, he decides to become a teacher.

John finds his education course very content orientated and does not take time to reflect on what it might mean to be a teacher in an Adventist school. He is “playing too much sport to worry about things like that”. His girlfriend claims he is

only studying teaching so “[he can] play sport and get paid for it”. He skips classes where he can. After four years of sport and a little study, he graduates and takes up his first appointment at a regional K-12 school. He is not sure what it really means to be an Adventist teacher.

Early Career Shaping Influences

John walks into the school where he is about to begin his career as a teacher. A large notice board catches his attention. On it is printed a list of values. It is there to remind both students and teachers of the values espoused by this school. John makes a mental note of the values and then launches himself into the life of a teacher. He is focused on “getting the best results”, so apart from a couple of staff retreats and a Church convention, he does not “necessarily reflect on the philosophy” behind the school system. He has “energy to burn’ and channels it into sporting events and extracurricular activities that are part of the school culture. He is inducted into school culture through his involvement in the many facets of school life and relies on his observation of his teaching colleagues to cue him as to the expectations of Adventist Education.

John “is thrown into deputyship at 24. No one else [will] do it; [He is] stupid enough to put [his] hand up”. One of his roles is to care for the discipline of students. This is a new challenge that starts him thinking that “some of the stuff” written by Ellen White “in the book *Education* [is] more and more important”. He vaguely remembers references to this book during his teaching degree, and now he feels he needs to read it. “[His] lights [are] slowly coming on” as he faces each new “crisis” with discipline and upset parents. His ideas start to shift from “flicking, getting rid of the kid”, to the concept of “redemptive discipline”. He grapples with how to make this work in Adventist Education. He [does] a lot of reading and soul-searching as to how to achieve this best so that everyone – all parties can understand why [he] is doing that; where it is going. He unearths a compassionate side to his nature as he becomes an advocate for the students. His change of role is transitioning his ideas about the praxis of Adventist Education to a closer alignment with what he reads in the textbook he used during his teacher education. As he faces tough situations, he reflects them back to the school philosophy and then revises his attitude.

John settles into his new role and then further fills his life with additional study, completing a computing degree in response to changes in education. He continues to play sport and runs the youth program each week at Church. This time is a "very busy blur in [his] life. [He] is young and naïve and [doesn't] know the word no". There is little time for reflection in his life.

John is in his early 30s when everything he has been experiencing in his spiritual and professional life starts to come together and make sense. This is a natural maturing process, and as he takes on the deputy position in another Adventist school, his perceptions of Adventist Education are challenged even more, and then again when he takes on the role of principal. He also takes on further study.

John is tackling a master's degree when he meets a Uniting Church minister who is researching organisational change. Several discussions later, John is looking at Adventist Education from a systems perception, and realising that the structure of the Adventist Church which governs Adventist Education does not facilitate agile change due to the multiple layers of administration. He wishes there were not so many committees within the system. He is also challenged by his new acquaintance's perceptions of Christian Education. Although [he] is tempted to ignore them, as his peer is a "non-educator", these new thoughts do challenge his thinking, and reflection on them helps to crystallise his own position of what Adventist Education is and how it should operate.

After his second job as principal, John is approached to become a system administrator. In this position, he gets to observe the inside working of many Adventist schools.

Later Career Shaping Influences.

As a system administrator, John has many opportunities to visit Adventist schools in his region. In this new role, he becomes an outsider looking in, rather than a participant in each school he visits. This opportunity to observe Adventist Education through a different lens helps him to clarify and refine his understanding of the philosophy on which Adventist Education is grounded, the purpose for which it exists, and its praxis in school life and culture. One day he makes a routine visit to one of the Adventist schools in his state. The school sign indicates that it is striving

for academic excellence. He wonders, “Is this what Adventist Education is all about?”

He no longer feels he is “navel gazing” as he did when he was a principal “running [his] own school”, and one day he has an epiphany. He sees each principal as a juggler, trying to keep four balls in the air at once: “social, physical, mental, and spiritual.” The next time he walks into a school, he senses how the school is going, and immediately looks around to see if any one of these dimensions is missing or weak. He thinks, “We’ve missed the whole point. Adventist Education is about the four balls in the air and no-one really sees it that way.” He looks over the school’s paperwork and can see if the four balls are in the air. “He walks in a few classrooms and it reinforces [his] view.” He is excited to have made the connections. He has over three decades of experience in Adventist Education behind him and finally, it is all beginning to make sense. He is starting to “connect the dots.” “He feels [he’s had] a good rounded view of the world as far as roles [have given him] and [believes] that a lot of people sometimes dive to the top of the tree” rather than taking time to explore the roots. He links his ideas back to what Ellen White has written. He believes that all four dimensions are essential, that White does not make any one “more important than the rest, and that the rest just sort of smoulder away in the background”, but rather “she puts the whole four up all the time as being very important.” He studies her writings. “[He] cannot see anywhere where she says to put spiritual above them all, academic above them all.” He shares his new understandings with everyone he meets.

Now, at the Time of the Second Interview

John is confident in his view of Adventist Education. He believes he has arrived at an understanding which is compatible with the book *Education,* authored by Ellen White. He perceives that he is in a position of influence and uses it to help others come to the same understanding.

Summary

John’s SIP is shown in Figure 4.9. John’s pre-career experiences in Adventist Education did not appear to have much impact on shaping his perceptions of Adventist Education. The shaping commenced with his first teaching appointment,

which occurred before the value of mentoring young teachers was realised. His SIP reflects this, with scant or no reference to mentors, teachers he looked up to, or professional relationships. He did, however, connect both family relationships and his relationship with God to his understanding of Adventism, and therefore, Adventist Education. Although relationships have not had a strong shaping influence on John's perceptions of Adventist Education, three kinds of reflection have had a strong-to-medium impact. John's induction into the school culture appeared to be a strong shaping influence. His observation of other teachers also informed him, but his strongest points of influence occurred at those points in his career when he took on a new role in Adventist Education. The two role changes that appeared to have the most significant impact were his first role as a deputy principal and then, many years later, his transition from school administrator to system administrator. This shows up on his SIP as a transitioning reflection spike. Although this latter transition occurred during his later career phase, John identified that it was shortly after this event that he suddenly had an epiphany of what Adventist Education was all about. Although John commented freely on other education systems, he has not spent any of his career outside of Adventist Education and this is indicated by a very low rating on Translating reflection.

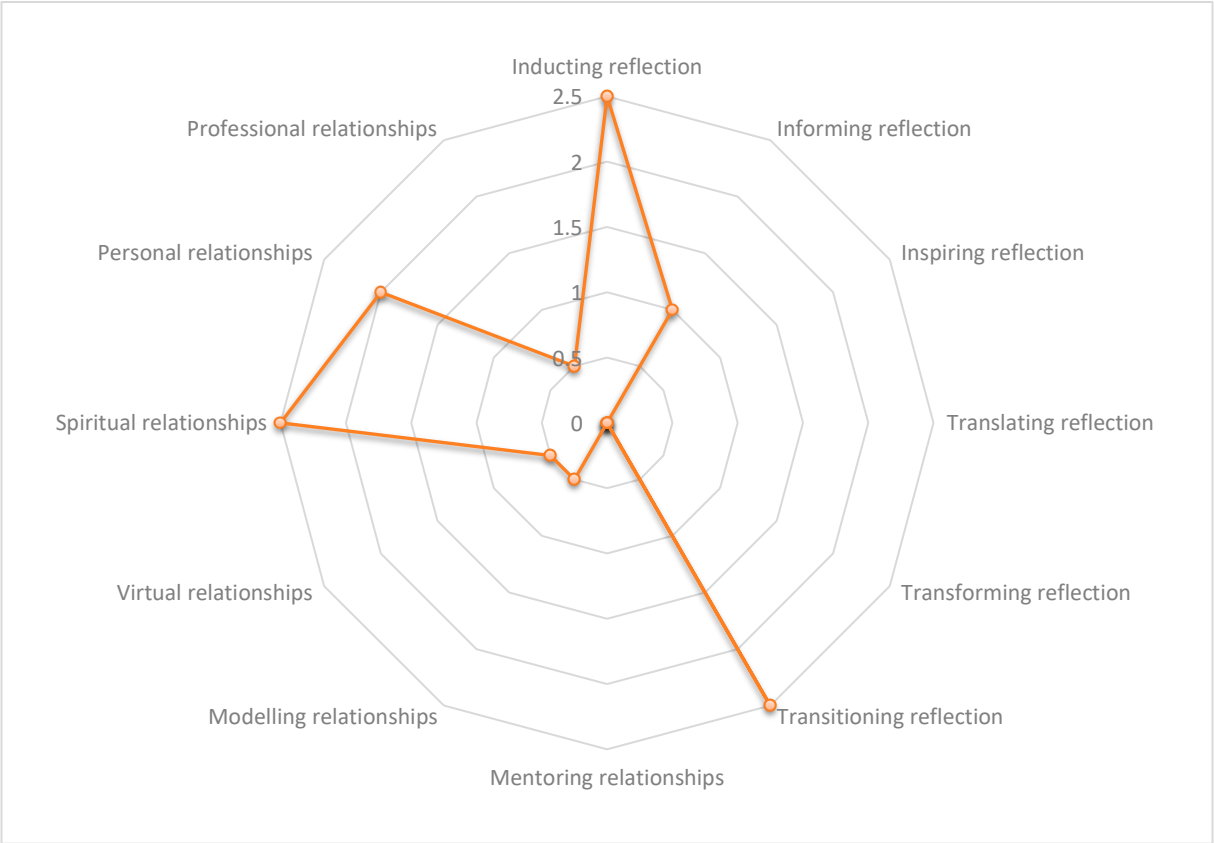


Figure 4.9

John's Shaping Influences Profile (SIP)

KEY

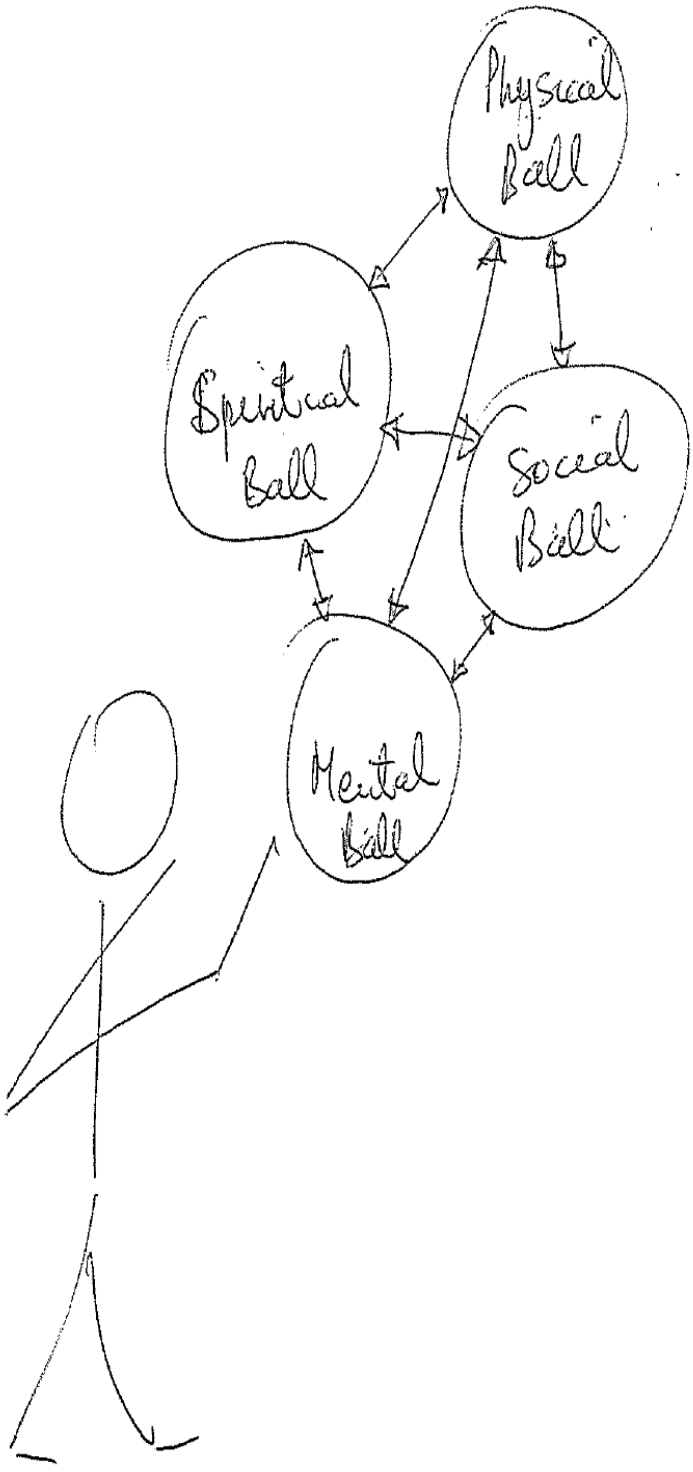
A score of less than 1 – This category was evident in the responses made by the participant but was peripheral and not central to the lived experiences they were relating.

A score between 1 and 2 – This category was central in the participant's responses to several areas they were articulating.

A score of 2 or above – This category is central, occurring frequently and with emphasis, verbally and physically, in the participant's responses

Perceptions of the Philosophy, Purpose and Praxis of Adventist Education

When John was asked to visually represent his understanding of Adventist Education, including its philosophy, purpose and praxis, he produced Figure 4.10. He was able to articulate what the various elements of his diagram meant.



All balls have to be in the air to ensure the school is fulfilling its philosophy.

Figure 4.10

John's Diagram of Adventist Education

Design Summary. This diagram is attempting to capture a process of continual movement. It consists of a picture of a person juggling four balls labelled physical ball, mental ball, spiritual ball, and social ball. Each ball is connected to the other three balls with a double-ended arrow. A statement beside the picture reads, "All balls have to be in the air to ensure the school is fulfilling its philosophy."

Conceptual Summary. This diagram represents the participant's belief that there are four essential components to Adventist Education: spiritual, physical, social and mental. Adventist Education is out of balance if any one of these components is not being addressed within a school program. It includes the learning components and links it with the other juggling balls.

Relationship Between Lived Experiences and Perceptions of Adventist Education

John has spent his whole career in Adventist Education. He acknowledges that this has resulted in a lot of "naval gazing", that is, looking at his familiar brand of Adventist Education at the expense of a broader view encompassing Christian Education. His SIP is fairly inconclusive about how his lived experiences have shaped his perceptions of Adventist Education. He did not seem to shift perceptions based on interactions with other professionals and this may reflect his lived experience, including his transition to administrative roles in regional schools quite early in his career. It may have been his isolation from other school administrators that impacted his dearth of professional relationships. During the early stage of his career, Adventist Education was offering limited professional growth for educators in leadership roles.

Role changes within schools and across schools did result in Transitioning reflection as seen on his SIP (Figure 4.10). It is interesting that a change of roles in his later career brought him to his current perception that Adventist Education should be a balance of catering for the physical, mental, spiritual and social needs of the student. He gave no indication that this perception was a gradual development, but rather indicated it came to him as a fully developed perception.

All of John's career has been spent in Adventist Education so there was no opportunity for translating reflection. There was some informing reflection and a high indication of inducting reflection in John's narrative. This is compatible with

role changes that John experiences, within a school or when relocating to a new school, where his role determined immediate engagement in school culture and activities.

Rob's Story

Unfolding Adventist Education: The Wisdom of Wide Experience

Rob sits across the desk from me. He leans slightly forward and smiles. I can tell he is looking forward to this conversation. After nearly four decades of employment in Adventist Education, including teaching and administration in both primary and secondary settings, he is quietly confident of his understanding of Adventist Education. The son of a public-school educator, he did not attend Adventist schools as a student, but his own career has been exclusively in Adventist schools. Here is his story.

Early Pre-Career Shaping Influences

The school bell rings to end the day and Rob dashes outside to play with his friends. When they are all gone, he heads home to the house next door. After tea in summer, he heads back outside for a game of tennis on the school courts or to play on the swings. Before bedtime, he sits with his mum and dad and they share the love of God with him. It is just the three of them, now his older siblings have left home. His "parents are very spiritual, very godly people." He soaks in the Bible stories and learns to love the Bible. Rob attends the state primary school where his father is the principal. He grows up in a culture of education. He also grows up in a culture of Seventh-day Adventism. His father is a leader, not only at school but also in his church. He serves as a head elder at more than one church they attend during Rob's childhood. He sits on state- and Australia-wide committees for his church. Young Rob sees generosity modelled in how his parents support their church, "giving to the Church in time and money." He learns about "living a life of service" and what it means to become a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Rob completes his primary schooling in several schools and begins high school. He sometimes wonders wistfully what it would be like for him to attend an Adventist school. He knows such schools exist. He attends regional church meetings occasionally in the city and is very aware that he is "a little on the fringe", but his father's work is at country schools so he makes the best of both worlds. He connects with a group of friends who are supportive of his spiritual journey. When the family

finally moves to the city, it is with the realisation that the Adventist school only offers education up to Year 10, so Rob completes his education with the state system.

Rob wonders what to do for a career. He has grown up with education in his blood and is rather attracted to it. He works for a year before making his final decision. He is accepted into the university and the teachers college nearby, and "[loves] children". His parents "[are] keen [for him] to [follow his] dad's footsteps. Having never attended an Adventist school, he makes a choice and travels interstate to attend Avondale College. He does not regret his decision.

He arrives at Avondale as "a blank slate" when it comes to a knowledge of Adventist Education. He sits in classes and listens to some great lecturers, all of whom he finds "inspirational". Like a "sponge", he soaks in his educational experience, both because his intellect is being challenged as never before, and because he really knows nothing about Adventist Education. He sits in class and mentally compares his country public school education with what he is learning. His schools were good schools with a strong learning culture, but now he is learning "about what it is to educate the whole person, the whole life."

In his second year, one of the lecturers he holds in high esteem begins a program called "Project Blueprint." It is all about involving students in manual labour, and along with his classmates, Rob helps with the beautification of the college campus on a voluntary basis. He learns how Ellen White emphasises the importance of "acquainting kids with the lessons of nature and growing things and the lessons that can be learned from growing plants". This has a far-reaching impact on shaping his views about Adventist Education.

He is introduced to the book *Education* and the students "look long and hard at [it]" in their classes. Some ideas distil in his mind. When graduation approaches, Rob takes to his first appointment several threshold concepts. He recognises that his future students are "made in God's image. As a result they [need] to be treated with dignity [and] with respect too, [as] they are special in God's eyes." He also takes with him the concept of "redemptive discipline." He is determined that he will not "ridicule [his students] or punish them in a public space, [but] treat them with the respect and dignity that is afforded for [himself]." He also takes with him the concept of a "balanced curriculum", keeping the spiritual in equilibrium with the physical and

social while endeavouring to foster the intellectual. He decides that he wants to be a teacher who endeavours to bring "Jesus and spiritual lessons in all aspects of what [he is] trying to do, as a teacher, in a natural, authentic way." Rob takes these "guiding principles" with him as he enters the world of teaching. Professionally, he is very much the product of his parents' godly examples, his own education, and his preparation at Avondale College for teaching in an Adventist school.

Early Career Shaping Influences

Rob stands at the entrance to his first school. This is it. He is it. Like his father, he is the principal, except he is also the only teacher. He looks at his students. Twenty-five pairs of eyes look back at him, some trusting, some anxious, some expectant. He hits the ground running. There is not much time left in the day when you prepare, teach and mark for seven grades, but he loves his work and he loves his students. His one regret is that the school, which shares the property with a Church and a car park, has no space for a garden. Four years pass in a blur, a passage of time where his perceptions of Adventist Education become grounded in reality. As a sole-charge teacher, he has no mentor to guide him, no colleague to turn to for advice, and no internet to give him survival tips. He does have the support of a wonderful wife, and the joy of a new addition to the family. Becoming a parent hones his ideas about Adventist Education, focusing him on responsibility.

After four years, Rob is transferred to another small school. This time there is space for a garden. Rob is excited and sets about creating a living classroom, based on "Project Blueprint". The garden thrives, the children thrive and Rob settles into a busy routine that, for him, defines Adventist Education. During his time at two country schools, Rob has a couple of principals' meetings and an annual visit from the Adventist Education inspector of schools. Although fulfilling, small school principalship does not give Rob any opportunities to develop professional relationships within Adventist Education. Three years later, he sits looking at the annual staffing update sheet. He takes his pen and where it asks, would you be prepared to move to another school? writes the words, "I think I need a new challenge." He gets it. The following year he finds himself principal of another Adventist school, but this time he is not the only staff member. It is a strange feeling after six years of sole-charge teaching. He now has to deal with other people's

perceptions of Adventist Education too. He works well with his staff. There is space for a garden. The school flourishes. He is close to family. He settles into a comfortable routine that lasts for over a decade.

Later Career Shaping Influences.

Rob picks up his pen, and once again writes the words "Need a new challenge" on his staffing update sheet. This new challenge takes him out of the classroom for a time. It takes him to another country. He is out of his comfort zone. It forces him to reflect on the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education. He settles into his administrative role in New Zealand at a time when a significant event for Adventist Education in this country begins to further shape his perceptions of Adventist Education. This event is the integration of Adventist schools with the New Zealand education system. Rob hears the words "Special Character" for the first time, and for the first time he is forced to "really think deeply about Adventist Education and special character and not be lazy in terms of defining and putting it into practice." With the Educational Review Office (ERO) observing closely, Rob works diligently with the Adventist schools to define what it means to be an Adventist school, and more importantly, the praxis of Adventist Education. He explores everything from signage and policies to curriculum documents. He is very aware that each school has a diverse board of trustees and a "government looking on." The official documents make broad statements such as, "will abide by …the distinctive beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church," but each school goes on its own journey to determine what that really means. Rob goes on the journey with them. It becomes obvious to him that "the tenets of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, [its] fundamental beliefs and distinctiveness [is] the essence of that special character [they] couldn't lose."

When Rob returns to Australia, it is with "much richer further experience" which, as he participates in the culture of Adventist Education, and reflects on the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education, influences his perceptions of what Adventist Education is all about. He is ready for the next event that will continue to shape and hone his perceptions. He is asked if he would consider being sponsored for further study. He feels honoured to have been asked, but also somewhat apprehensive. He accepts the offer, is accepted into the university of his

choice and having taught in small primary schools for nearly two decades, finds a "dearth of research in Australia on the issues, challenges and concerns of principals in small primary schools" and moves into that research gap.

Throughout this time of study, he reflects on Adventist Education system-wide as he juxtaposes it with two other school systems. He emerges proud of Adventist Education. He recognises that the Adventist structure is unique in teacher education and the ability "to train teachers in a certain philosophy and to build the system with the strong morale and purpose" that it has. He emerges concerned with the way Adventist Education "manages human resources." He reflects on leadership and comes away with a sense that "we [need] to prepare people better and support them better in their roles as leaders and we weren't doing that, anyway near as well as we could."

The study program over, Rob is asked to take the position of principal at a K-12 Adventist school. He arrives after a challenging time in the school's operation. There is low morale and the usual financial pressures. Rob is acutely aware that he does not "have runs on the board" as a secondary administrator and this "creates some interesting dynamics in the minds of some." He approaches this new position as he always has – by building a strong team around himself and not being an island. He is humble and "appoints a dean of studies and a dean of students to work with [him]." He adopts Dale Carnegie's epitaph as his motto: "Here lies a man who knew how to gather around him, people greater than himself." This approach works and he settles into his role.

His own children have just become independent before this transfer. Rob misses them. He loves them and he realises that being a parent has given him a deeper appreciation for the potential of young people. Before having children, Rob reflects that he had an almost clinical view of child development, but now he recognises all children as "precious and unique." He makes it his mission to build relationships with the students.

He stops by the common room and joins in playing table tennis. This gives him the opportunity to chat with students during a friendly, yet competitive game. It is a close community, so weekends find him playing games of tennis with his students or "going four-wheel driving up into the bush…and actually investing time

in these young people on a one-to-one basis." He perceives his school as a family, and works on helping the family to model the "fundamental skills of self-discipline, and just what good relationships look like." He focuses on the well-being of each child and enjoys the uniqueness of this new life experience. He values his staff and affirms them, and feels that he is making a difference.

One day he receives a phone call, asking if he would consider taking a system-wide administrative position. He accepts, but not without some sadness at leaving his current position. As he takes up his new role, he finds himself mentored by the same individual who encouraged him to do further study. It is a great relationship. He has so much to learn and someone of experience from whom to learn it. His responsibilities in this new role take him to a new level of reflection on the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education. Rob discovers that one facet of his new role is to run "an abbreviated one day…Adventist Distinctives Day." He wonders how he can present a "crash course" on Adventist Education in one day for teachers new to the system when it has taken him three decades to arrive at his understanding. He has to stop and take stock, and "to really think more deeply about what is Adventist Education, what is [its] special character." "He realises that all of a sudden [he has] to, not just mouth these terms; [he] actually [has] to get up and present, and be credible and authentic in…presenting to a range of people." This responsibility causes him "to refocus…to think deeply and even adjust and hone some of [his] thinking." Around the same time, he attends a course at Avondale that is designed to explore the Integration of Faith and Learning and how to present Christ in the classroom. Humberto Rasi is the key speaker and the participants are diverse, coming from roles in Adventist Education around the globe. Rob sits in these classes and joins in the discussions on worldviews. His mind is racing as he examines his newly written "Adventist Distinctives Professional Development" program. His perceptions are being challenged and in response, he adds a new PowerPoint session on worldviews to his "Adventist Distinctives" program.

Rob is discovering that each new responsibility he assumes forces him to reflect on Adventist Education. He chairs a committee that works on a Bible curriculum. This helps him to focus on what it is that Adventist Education needs in a biblical studies program. He chairs a working party that looks at the special character

of Adventist Education. Each of these responsibilities "[helps] to reinforce, to refresh, to deepen [his] understanding" of Adventist Education. He develops a belief that everyone involved in Adventist Education needs to be on a continual journey of refreshing their understanding or else it "doesn't become the driving motivation for who and what we are."

He attends regional professional development days where Adventist teachers listen to presentations on Adventist schools, but he feels it is not enough. Teacher and staff need opportunities to be challenged on a frequent basis. As he works with Adventist schools Australia wide, he sees many good things, but also some potential areas for growth.

Now, at the Time of the Second Interview.

As Rob reflects on the lived experiences that have shaped his perceptions of Adventist Education, he realises that you cannot pack a whole career of experiences into a teacher education program. He acknowledges some critical people on his journey and laments the lack of significant mentors or models during his early career years. He highlights the importance of experiences that encourage sensemaking reflection and identifies that he has had plenty of these experiences. Although his whole career has been in Adventist Education, he has had three study opportunities: two of them long term and one short term. He has taught in four schools, held down six different positions across two countries, and sat on and chaired numerous committees. He is very articulate in what he believes the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education to be. He concludes the interview by thanking me for the "chance to talk" and reflects that "even just talking, it clarifies your thinking and helps you to grow and reflect, it's very valuable".

Coda "Show your special character clearly and authentically."

Summary

For Rob, ongoing relationships have played an important role in shaping his perception of Adventist Education. Beginning with his parents, he was nurtured in a belief system that included God at the centre, and from here he developed his own faith connection with God. This was enhanced by professional relationships

developed over his career. The shape of his SIP (Figure 4.11) reflects his lived experiences. Beginning his career in a one-teacher rural school meant that there was no-one to model for him the praxis of Adventist Education, or to inform him about what was or was not acceptable practice. His induction into Adventist Education was not into a school community where his engagement shaped his perceptions. Rather, as sole-charge teacher, he functioned as a perception maker. Consequently, informing reflection and modelling relationships—which sit opposite each other on the SIP—are both minimal shaping influences as is translating reflection, which occurred in the shift from public high school to Avondale where as a teacher education student he heard about the philosophy of Adventist Education for the first time. As a sole-charge educator, then school principal, before moving into an administrative role, Rob engaged in inspiring and transforming reflection, valuing significant events and personal development days and putting into practice what he heard. He has relied more on virtual relationships to shape his perceptions of Adventist Education than some of his colleagues have. This may be explained by his lack of personal contact with professionals, his opportunities for further study in the area of Adventist Education, or his enjoyment of reading.

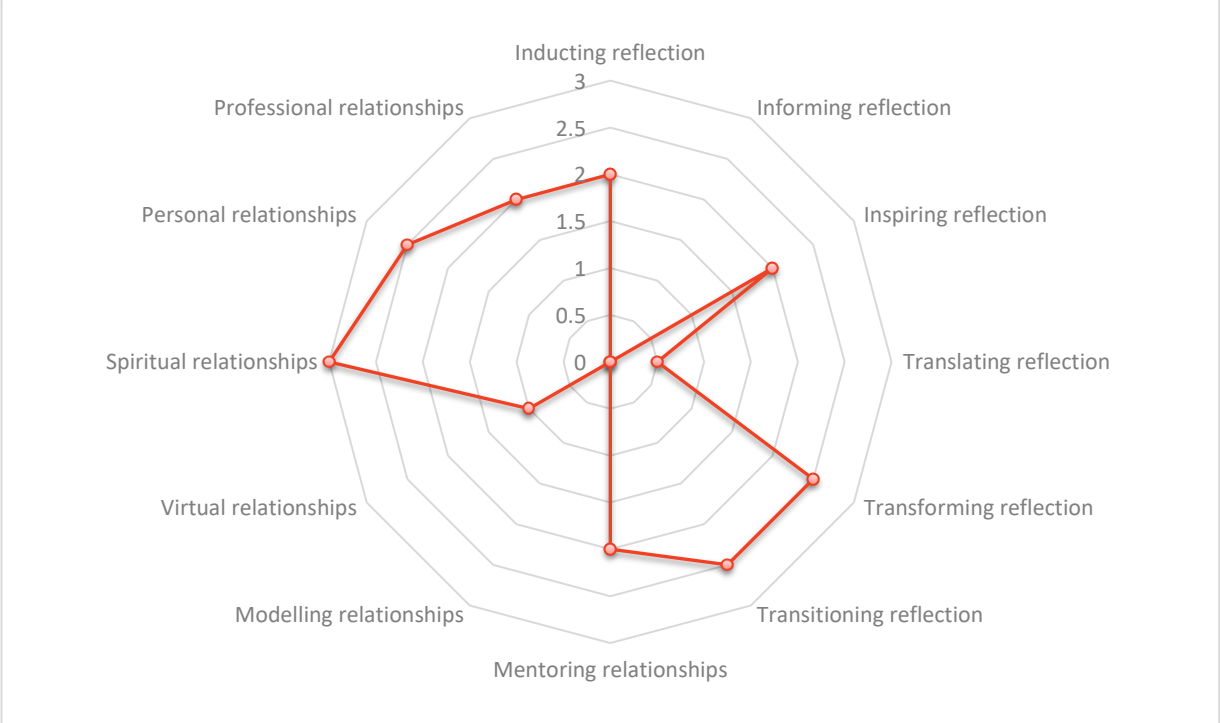


Figure 4.11

Rob's Shaping Influences Profile (SIP)

KEY

A score of less than 1 – This category was evident in the responses made by the participant but was peripheral and not central to the lived experiences they were relating.

A score between 1 and 2 – This category was central in the participant's responses to several areas they were articulating.

A score of 2 or above – This category is central, occurring frequently and with emphasis, verbally and physically, in the participant's responses

Spiritual, personal, and professional relationships appear to have been influential in shaping Rob's perceptions of Adventist Education. Rob's profile shows some engagement in virtual relationships, taking on ideas from authors and speakers to shape his views of Adventist Education. Spending years in two small sole-charge schools and then as a principal before becoming an administrator did not give Rob any opportunities to observe how others enacted Adventist Education through a teaching or leadership role. Although he was short of mentors in his early career phase, he has valued the mentoring received in his later career and the influence of that mentoring on his perceptions of Adventist Education.

Perceptions of the Philosophy, Purpose and Praxis of Adventist Education

When Rob was asked to visually represent his understanding of Adventist Education, including its philosophy, purpose and praxis, he produced Figure 4.12. He was able to articulate what the various elements of his diagram meant.

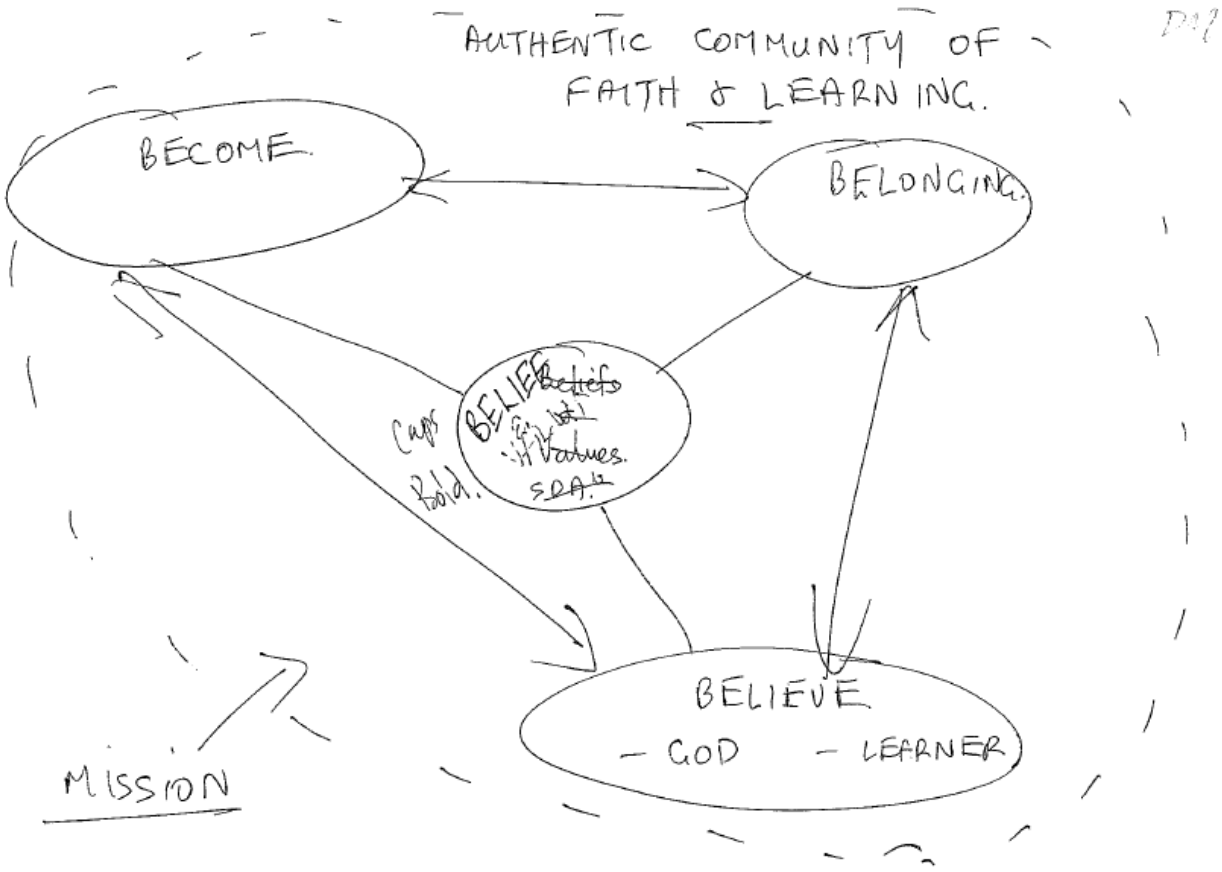


Figure 4.12

Rob's Diagram of Adventist Education

Diagrammatic Summary. This diagram is attempting to demonstrate the relationship between important components. The use of lower case for the central circle suggests lesser importance, but when clarification of this was sought at the second interview, Rob changed the lettering to upper case and indicated it should be bold. This change can be seen on Figure 4.12. The positioning of this circle and its connection by an unbroken line to the three equal circles suggests that it is very important and therefore given a central position. The two-way arrows running between the three equal circles suggest equality and dependency or a causal

relationship, as does the similarity in size and case of the labels. A broken line encircling the diagram suggest that this is not a closed community. There are two additional upper-case headings, one within the shape enclosed by the broken line, and one outside with an arrow pointing in. The broken line appears to suggest that this space can be penetrated by the mission of Adventism.

Conceptual Summary. This diagram demonstrates Rob's understanding that the beliefs and values of Seventh-day Adventism are central to Adventist Education and interact with every part of an Adventist school's operation. He has identified three equal and non-hierarchical components of Adventist Education. These are providing an environment where growth is fostered (BECOME), belief in God and themselves as learners is facilitated (BELIEVE), and an inclusive environment where each person is valued as a community member is practised (BELONGING). An overarching sense of MISSION appears to encompass the whole of the school's operation. Mission is what connects Adventist Education to the Adventist Church as indicated by the arrow and the broken line surrounding the circles. Rob explained several key points about his model of Adventist Education.

1. "The centre of the model has to be the beliefs and values of the SDA Church."
2. Adventist schools should be a bridge to the community. Speaking of the past, Rob said, "But it was an education system, primarily for Adventists and they [students not from Adventist homes] fitted in if they could. So, the whole concept of trying to, you know, create, you know, a strong sense of belonging became very apparent to me, that we needed to create communities, where there was a sense of belonging for Adventists and people from the broader community."
3. "We need to develop the sense of belief in themselves [students] as individuals, as children made in God's image, and belief in God as their Lord and Savior."
4. "We want them to become servants of the community, serving the common good, and become a child of God, who is giving and serving, you know, to the community."

He finishes with the statement, “It's about creating in my mind, an authentic community of faith and learning. So, we get a little bit of flak from some of the ministerial sector who are saying, “Schools can't be a community or faith; that's not biblical. I totally disagree with that.”

Relationship Between Lived Experiences and Perceptions of Adventist Education

Rob’s career path has resulted in a set of unique lived experiences that have influenced his perceptions of Adventist Education. In contrast to his schooling, which was exclusively in public schools, his career as an educator has been totally in Adventist Education. Therefore, his initial teaching degree at Avondale College offered the only opportunity for translating reflection. However, his numerous role changes have allowed ample opportunities for transitioning reflection. Rob’s self-confessed interest in reading about Adventist Education, and his three opportunities for post-graduate study, in addition to his committee work as an administrator have contributed to his clarity when talking about the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education.

James' Story

Blue Ribbon Adventist Education: Excellence is What we Owe God

James exudes an air of confidence as he sits across the desk from me in his office. With the exception of his first year of school as a five-year-old, he has been in Adventist Education all his life. His experiences are varied although his career has been spent mostly in just two Adventist schools. He has engaged in further education, resulting in two post graduate degrees and is a self-confessed philosopher. His pride in his school is apparent even before he speaks of it. An aura of conservative, measured success pervades every aspect of his office. This is his story.

Early Pre-Career Shaping Influences.

Baby James is blissfully unaware as he lies snuggled in his mother's arms that this day is going to set the course of his life. For his parents, this is a very special day. They have chosen to align their family with the Seventh-day Adventist Church—two parents and three children on a new journey. James's "Adventist family is conservative." They worship as a family, they attend Church as a family, they are encouraged to think about seeking a career that will allow them to work within the Adventist Church in "either ministry or nursing or teaching." It is a kind of "blue ribbon Adventism" with a very strong "cognitive approach to faith."

James is just past the excitement of his fifth birthday when his life changes forever. A tragic accident takes an immediate family member. James is still dealing with this new situation when he commences his education at the nearby public school. This is a tough time for James. After one year, he leaves the school that he is becoming familiar with and is sent with his older siblings to an Adventist school some distance away. James sits with his sister on the way to school, wondering what it will be like. This transition is difficult for one so young, but he soon settles in. A couple of years later James hears that his school is moving. A new primary school is being built in another suburb. When it is built, James attends, along with most of his classmates. He plays the pedal organ in the classroom, drinks warm milk at morning recess, and learns. For James, this is school, and his level of pleasure is determined largely by his teachers. There is the teacher who puts children over her lap and hits them on the upper side of their legs with a ruler. Then there is the teacher "who [has]

a nice warmth about her, a gentleness of spirit." James is learning that a school is a diverse place, with many kinds of people.

When James reaches high school age, he returns to his former Adventist school. Here he encounters many different types of teachers. There is the "awkward teacher", "the aberration", "the well-intentioned", the "oddball" … and there is Mr C. Mr C. challenges the status quo. He is an "organiser", an "administrator", and "[innovator]" and James idolises him. He organises sporting events. He is a leader with heart, a man "ahead of his times in terms of the rapport he [builds]". He makes James feel that he is a worthwhile human being. He challenges James by giving him responsibility. James responds with a new maturity that he brings to his study and school responsibilities. A new principal also brings out the best in James. With the mentoring of Mr C. and his principal, James matures, and feels he is ready to seek out a career in teaching when he completes his final year of school.

Influenced by his favourite teacher, James and others from his class enrol at Avondale College. James thoroughly enjoys his four years at Avondale. He enjoys the stimulation of one lecturer in particular and certain other lecturers, and benefits from rigorous class discussions with some "exceptionally clever people" who also desire to be teachers. He is fascinated by the science lecturers, although he does not take their classes. He sits in classes and is challenged in his thinking, particularly in one philosophy class, which is taught by his one-time primary school principal. As the class explores the concept of Adventist Education, James is challenged and inspired. His textbook for this class is *Education* by Ellen White, and as he reflects on its content, some of what is explored becomes part of his understanding of Adventist Education. He takes this understanding with him when he graduates.

Early Career Shaping Influences.

James stands in the school staffroom. It is not overly familiar, and it feels strange to be entering here. He retreats, steps into the corridor, and immediately feels at ease. His feet have trodden these halls many times before. He is intimate with each classroom, with each nook and cranny of the building, with every square metre of the playground. He has been here before, once as a student in primary school, once as a student in high school. The thought that he is now a teacher here is both exciting and

just a little daunting. Equipped with a knowledge of his own education, and his learning from his degree, he has adopted a sense of idealism. He knows what kind of teacher he wants to be and throws himself into both teaching and extra-curricular activities. He finds allies in like-minded teachers and they innovate together. He feels "a deep commitment to [his] job more than anything else, and to teaching". He approaches his work with a measure of tacit understanding about the role of an Adventist teacher in an Adventist school. There is simply no time for reflection and articulation on anything other than his work from day to day, so James takes his cues about Adventist Education from his teaching colleagues and settles into the role of an Adventist educator. He is beginning to find his identity within the organisation.

In his third year of teaching, all teachers attend a seminar run by a visiting overseas Adventist educator, George Akers. The topic is the "integration of faith and learning." It is the first time James has heard this term or explored this concept. It "[captures] his thinking", and now with a "few years under [his] belt" James reflects on this notion. There is some debate about what this means and whether it should be part of an Adventist school. As he makes sense of this idea, James starts to redefine Adventist Education in his mind. He wonders how he can integrate faith and learning without adopting a "tack-on approach." He remembers Mr C. and how he "built rapport" with students. He now acknowledges the relational aspects of Mr C's teaching and feels that this may be a conduit for an authentic spirituality to be transmitted. He looks forward to being a principal one day so he can try out his ideas.

Five years into his career, James applies for and is accepted to do further study. He becomes acquainted with another great mind in Adventist Education, George Knight. Knight's ideas push James to develop his own reference points for Adventist Education. He enjoys the philosophical debate, and somewhere, during all the discourse, begins to develop some perceptions that take on a logical and structured form. He adopts the stance that a "Christian worldview is a distinctive strength" of Adventist Education "that it is defined as a belief in a reality of God and the revelation of Christ and values systems." At the end of his six-month course with George Knight, James can articulate a philosophy and purpose for Adventist Education. He is still determining the praxis. James decides to take another course at the seminary. This time he learns with theologians, not educators. At the end of the

course, he feels he has “a reasonable depth of theological understanding in terms of being, hav[ing] an understanding of reality, and the nature and purposes of God.”

Later Career Shaping Influences. Armed with a deeper understanding of Adventist Education, James returns to be principal of a school that is “pretty much down for the count” and sets about “redefining it, repackaging it, re-presenting [it], articulating it” and staffing it. Being the one responsible for a school is a new experience and is a time of continual reflection and building on his further study insights. James discovers the importance of being able to articulate his vision for the school. He is brave enough to innovate where his vision requires it. He desires to provide a “blue ribbon Adventist Education” that a “professional family” would choose for their children. He believes in “collective ownership and collective pride” and works towards achieving these goals in his school community as part of his “tomorrow thinking” strategy. After several years, James takes a break from being principal and takes on a different administrative position in another part of Adventist Education. As with other role changes, the liminal experience of moving into a new role adds another dimension to his perceptions and confirms his existing ones. He returns to his prior position as principal after a short period and continues to promote strong academic performance and positive values in his school community. His school grows exponentially in enrolment. It has a good name in both the educational and surrounding community. He is satisfied with what he has accomplished.

Now, at the Time of the Final Interview.

James looks back over more than four decades in Adventist Education and reflects on his journey of understanding its philosophy, purpose, and praxis. “It is a step-by-step process”, he mulls. “I wasn’t at the point where I was 12 years later”. He acknowledges that his perception “is a product” of many of his lived experiences, including “those relationships in an academic environment.” He reflects that the significance of his school “lies in a sense of mission and purpose. Its mission is one of stimulating minds and thoughts with an Adventist worldview” and “its strength lies in its Christian philosophical underpinnings.” He states that “ultimately it is the desire of this community to enable young people to make quality decisions that create meaningful and purposeful lives while also enabling them to recognise that ultimate good in living a life that says something about us.”

Coda "Excellence for me is what we owe to God anyway. I believe that excellence should be part and parcel of what Adventist education is."

Summary

James is a product of Adventist Education. His pre-career shaping influences focus on his relationship with God through his family and one remembered teacher who mentored him in high school and had a profound impact on him. This is his only mention of a mentoring relationship and he is animated in elaborating on it. There was some modelling in his early career years and two virtual relationships where he engaged deeply with the writings of Adventist educators; however, James's shaping influences profile is much stronger in the sensemaking reflections domain except for translating reflection as he has had no work experience outside of Adventist Education (Figure 4.13). Inducting, informing, and inspiring reflection was more prevalent in his early career phase. Transforming reflection was most evident during his time of further study and transitioning reflection was evident each time he took on a new role within Adventist Education and when he became a post-graduate student.

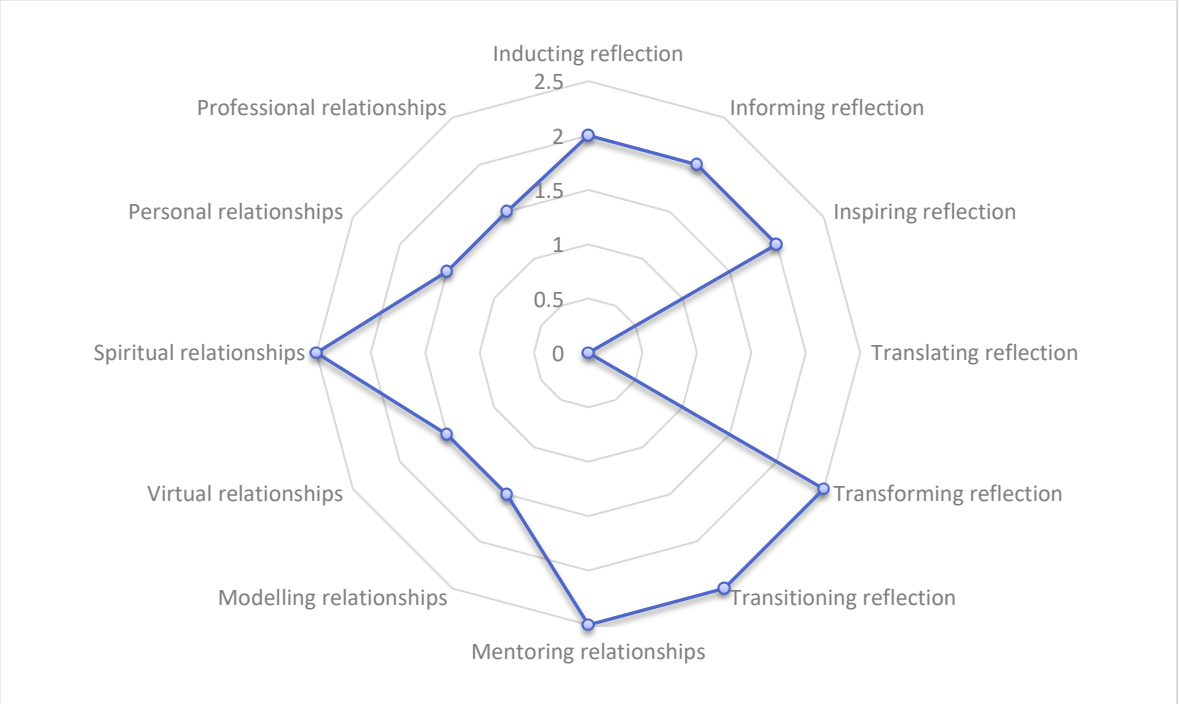


Figure 4.13

James's Shaping Influences Profile (SIP)

KEY

A score of less than 1 – This category was evident in the responses made by the participant but was peripheral and not central to the lived experiences they were relating.

A score between 1 and 2 – This category was central in the participant's responses to several areas they were articulating.

A score of 2 or above – This category is central, occurring frequently and with emphasis, verbally and physically, in the participant's responses

Perceptions of the Philosophy, Purpose, and Praxis of Adventist Education

When James was asked to visually represent his understanding of Adventist Education, including its philosophy, purpose, and praxis, he produced Figure 4.14. He was able to articulate what the various elements of his diagram meant.

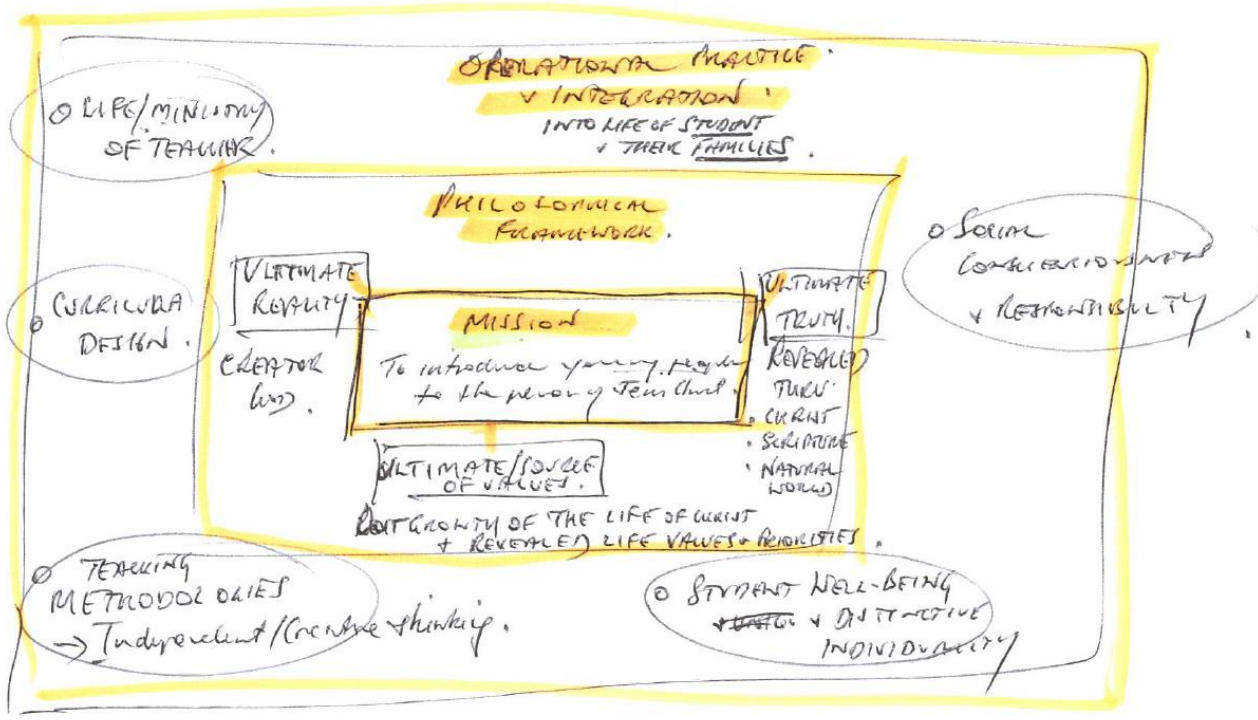


Figure 4.14

James' Diagram of Adventist Education

Design Summary. James's diagram consists of three rectangles nested inside each other. It appears to be a hierarchy, with the centre rectangle

providing the basis for the two outer rectangles. Only one label is written in lower case letters. It is also the only label that indicates action through use of verbs. It appears to be an explanation of the heading in the centre rectangle. Overall headings for each rectangle are highlighted with subheadings enclosed in either smaller rectangles or ovals.

Conceptual Summary. Starting from the inside rectangle and moving out, James has a logical and comprehensive perception or understanding of Adventist Education. He sees mission as central to Adventist Education and identifies the mission; "To introduce young people to the person of Jesus Christ." This is what James sees as the purpose of Adventist Education. After mission, James places a philosophical framework which includes three components:

1. Belief in the ultimate reality of a Creator God.
2. Belief in ultimate truth as revealed through Jesus Christ, the Scriptures, and the natural world.
3. Belief in the ultimate source of values, as an outgrowth of the life of Christ, and revealed through life values and priorities.

The outer rectangle is labelled Operational Practice and Integration into the lives of students and their families. The sub-sections of this rectangle include the following:

- Social consciousness and responsibility.
- Student well-being and distinctive individuality.
- Teaching methodologies including independent and creative thinking.
- Curricula design.
- The life/ministry of the teachers.

Relationship Between Lived Experiences and Perceptions of Adventist Education

The lived experiences of James's career in Adventist Education have shaped his perceptions of Adventist Education. After completing his teacher education course, James returned to the school in which he was educated and took up his first teaching appointment there. While the culture of a school may change in four years, enough of it would still be comfortable for someone who has been there before. At a professional development day, he identified one experience that acted as a catalyst for his developing perceptions of Adventist Education. Five years into his career,

James launched himself into further study. His study years appeared to be crucial to his perceptions of Adventist Education. It is during this time that James's ideas of the philosophical framework of Adventist Education were redefined and honed. After his study, he enacted his perceptions as a school principal.

Patricia's Story

Late Entry to Adventist Education: Understanding Through Immersion

Patricia enters the interview room. She is a woman with many years of teaching experience. Most of it has been within the public education system. Her roots are not in Adventism. She was not a student in Adventist schools in her youth, although her Christian upbringing and commitment to Adventist Christianity are evident as she speaks. She is now an Adventist school council chairperson. Patricia's understanding of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education have been influenced primarily by her perceptions of public education, overlaid with her Adventist faith and late career experiences with Adventist Education. Here is her story.

Early Pre-Career Shaping Influences

It is Sunday morning. Patricia and her family are getting ready for Church. This is a tradition in Patricia's family, one that no-one questions because her "parents had helped start the Church." Patricia is influenced by her family's beliefs, but even more, by their values. She feels secure in her family and this sense of security extends to her Church.

Patricia sits in Sunday school and listens to the teacher tell Bible stories. For as long as she can remember, she has been doing this on Sunday mornings. She doesn't question what she does. Her father is "very strong at Church," so Patricia sits very still and quiet with her four younger siblings every Sunday morning. Mid-week she attends Girl's Brigade. Life adopts a weekly pattern until she is 12. She is forced to face the stark reality that her family will never be the same "when [her] dad [dies]." It is a time of questioning for Patricia. There is a knock at the door. The church minister enters to offer his condolences. Patricia asks, "Where is my dad now? … What happens after you die?" She asks this question "over and over." Her mum, sitting nearby, tries to catch her eye and shakes her head. She is embarrassed. "You go to heaven and you're very happy," replies the minister. Patricia is not satisfied, and her words and actions show it. "She [is] confused." How can her father be so happy when he can see she is so sad? Her mother thanks the minister for coming and ushers him to the front door.

Patricia struggles to make sense of this tragedy. Gradually routine returns but a seed of rebellion is germinating and one day she confronts her mum, “We don’t want to go to Sunday School anymore. We’re not going to go to Girls’ Brigade.” Her mum continues to worship God in Church each week while Patricia tests out her newfound freedom. She never completely breaks her links with her Church friends, however, whose company and conversation she enjoys from time to time. She often “run[s] into them at school and in the town.” When Patricia is “about 18”, she returns to the Church. She enters the youth room, uncertainly. Smiles and welcomes greet her. She stays and becomes a regular attender, more for the friendships than for the involvement in worship, but her Church connections help shape her developing worldview as she matures. Her Church involvement wanes as she completes her teacher education and begins her career. Patricia feels that she is entering a new chapter of her life.

Early Career Shaping Influences.

Patricia is newly graduated from a government teacher’s college. She stands in the classroom, breathing in the smell of chalk dust and cleaning materials. This will soon be replaced by the smell of sweaty little bodies, hot from playing in the February sun. The bell rings and school officially starts for the year. Her beliefs take a secondary role, hovering in the background behind classes and concert rehearsals, story times and sport. School becomes her life, and she thrives in the public-school education system.

One day Patricia locks eyes with a young male teacher and a spark flies between them. They find plenty in common, lots to talk about. The relationship deepens, as do the conversations. One of these conversations reveals something that makes Patricia stop in her tracks. “I’m a Seventh-day Adventist,” says Ray. Patricia goes silent. She ponders this piece of information, not because she knows nothing of Adventists, but, conversely, because she does. An aunt of hers who lives up the coast is an Adventist, and Patricia “thinks… she [is] a bit strange”, but she does not think Ray is strange. She knows that she will have to make a decision, to pursue the relationship or walk away. Love wins out, but not irrationally. Patricia decides to be pro-active. She sees a sign advertising a mission (evangelical preaching) program run by a Seventh-day Adventist evangelist. She turns up to the first meeting. She is

looking for answers. She wants to find out what Seventh-day Adventists believe, and she wants answers to the questions she had asked as a child after her father died. She needs to know what happens at death.

Patricia listens carefully. She gets her answers. They are satisfying. Patricia is convicted; Ray is delighted The journey is not always easy. The Sabbath doctrine becomes an issue. Patricia prays and studies her Bible. What she decides, she will follow with her whole heart. She joins Ray in his faith and makes it her own. She makes parallel commitments: one to Ray, one to God. Her relationships with God and with Ray help shape her worldview and influence how she lives her life.

Very early in her career, Patricia discovers that the Adventist Church operates an education system. Patricia is mildly curious, but not overly interested. She is happy teaching for the state, and she teaches Scripture lessons to her class twice a week, supplemented by Bible story books sourced from the school library.

She visits the Adventist school on one occasion. It is dark and dreary, a pokey little place squashed onto a city block. Patricia compares it to the state school where she teaches and is not impressed. She decides that neither she nor her children will have anything to do with that school. This conviction is strengthened by her interactions with staff members at Church. One senior teacher, in particular, is a "wonderful person", but she does not think he is a wonderful teacher. She develops the perception that "You could throw a red herring and get him off track any day of the week, and she [doesn't] want to get involved in Adventist Education at all, didn't impress [her]." She also hears things about the school that she does not like. She "[has] cousins there," and conversations with them leave her feeling unsettled.

One evening Patricia receives a phone call. The caller identifies himself as an administrator for the Adventist Church. He asks Patricia if she would consider leaving her job with the state education department to teach at the local Adventist school. Her strong commitment to the Adventist faith does not extend to the Adventist school so she replies, "Excuse me! I don't want to be a part of that." As far as Patricia is concerned this is the "end of story!"

Patricia continues to perceive Adventist Education as sub-standard in both resourcing and teaching over the next few years. Patricia and Ray relocate to a new

suburb further out of the city and find a closer Church to attend. This Church is in the process of building a school. Patricia and Ray's children are school age. Patricia is attracted by the enthusiasm and the facilities and decides that Adventist Education deserves an opportunity to prove itself. Patricia and Ray enrol their children, but the timing of buses is problematic and so it is back to the public system. Patricia and her children continue to thrive in the state system until her oldest child commences high school.

The "local state high" has a good reputation. Patricia's first child commences there, full of enthusiasm for a new learning experience. It is not long before Patricia notices a difference in him. He becomes withdrawn and unhappy. Bullies attack him by day and haunt his dreams at night. After two years of trying to address the problem with the school, Patricia once again considers Adventist Education. The dingy old school has been sold. A new K-12 school has been built in an outer suburb. One bus connects from where the family lives to the new school. People they know speak well of the school. Patricia makes inquiries. The principal takes times to visit and answer questions. Patricia is impressed, both by the visit and by the quality of the answers.

The children flourish in the new atmosphere, both academically and socially. Patricia listens to them each evening as they chat about the events of the day. Through her children, she is gaining a new perception of Adventist Education, one that blends comfortably with her ideals.

Patricia's story of teaching in the state system while parenting children in an Adventist school ends well. She feels positive about the one Adventist school she has recent experience with. She sees Adventist Education as offering a balanced educational program built on Christian values and Adventist beliefs. The next chapter of her lived experiences with Adventist Education offers a bumpy and somewhat challenging transition into Adventist Education as she becomes a teacher and administrator in the system.

Late Career Shaping Influences.

With her children pursuing study at university, Patricia and Ray dip their toes into Adventist Education. Patricia retires early. She sets off one morning to the

regional Adventist Education office with her Curriculum Vitae. She feels she still has plenty to offer and would like to contribute to the education system that her Church operates. She is greeted warmly; the director reads her CV. All is going well. “I’d love to have you,” he says, … but “I can’t, you’re not Avondale trained.” Patricia is somewhat offended. She feels as if her faith is being called into question and is bemused when her husband responds to a need for a fill-in principal at a regional Adventist school and is accepted. It seems that the requirement of an Avondale diploma is on a sliding scale in relation to the urgency of the need. Putting feelings aside, together they relocate for a term and team teach. It is Patricia’s first experience of Adventist Education from the inside. Patricia enjoys the experience of teaching in an Adventist school, especially the opportunity to speak openly about her faith. After this experience, Patricia wonders if another opportunity will ever come her way.

It does. She receives a phone call from the head of school where her children had attended. “I can’t find anyone else. Will you come in and do a day for me?” Patricia decides that being up front is the best course of action. “Well, I’m not Avondale trained.” The response is swift, ‘“I don’t care where you’re trained. You’re qualified. Come in and do a day for me.” Patricia decides she has nothing to lose. She fronts up to the school. She is professional and competent, not to impress, but because that is how she does teaching. The head of school drifts in and out across the course of the day. Patricia is not concerned. She used to do the same. She enjoys the class. At the end of the day, the head of school asks if she will do a two-week block for a teacher on sick leave. Patricia agrees.

This is a totally new experience for her. She remembers her early days of teaching for the state when she “had to teach two half-hour lessons [of] scripture a week.” Later the “teacher’s federation took that out.” It had been a loss for Patricia, but she had adjusted. Now she is adjusting again, this time to starting the day with prayer and worship. She realises what a wonderful bonding time this is to start the day and decides her attempts with “circle time” or “exercise together” in the state system are an inferior attempt to create this sense of belonging that flows throughout the whole day. Although Patricia prides herself on running a well-managed classroom, she observes that the classroom culture “was a calmer thing, you know, quieter. These kids got on with their work. I didn’t spend 25 minutes saying “Come

and sit down next to me". Another difference she notices is what is in their lunchboxes. "As the food came out, it wasn't sixteen packets of biscuits and chips and you know all those little packs you buy. That's the difference I noticed at the start." Even the relationship of staff members to parents is so different for Patricia. One day she rings a parent and says, "I need to talk to you." The parent answers, "When?" Patricia notices that all parents have this attitude. She remembers her days teaching for the state where caring parents were interspersed with those who would ask when requesting an interview: "Why? It's yours at school. You look after it." As Patricia is inducted through participation in the school program, she becomes comfortable with the routines. She is constantly comparing and contrasting her vast experience in public education with her limited experience in Adventist Education and translating her prior experience into the new language of Adventist Education. As she reflects, she is reshaping her perceptions of Adventist Education.

As each day passes, Patricia becomes more comfortable with the culture of this Adventist school, and soon her two weeks is up. Immediately, she is asked to teach for an additional two-week block. For Patricia, the door to Adventist Education is swinging open and as it does her perception of the shape of Adventist Education is changing. One day she is back at her old school, doing some casual work when she receives a phone call that shocks her. It shocks her because she is asked to take a one-year leadership position in the Adventist school where she has done her casual teaching blocks. The hurt of her first attempt to become a casual teacher in this system and the rejection she received still stings a little. She feels somewhat vindicated by this job offer. She accepts. She ends up staying in that position for three years.

Patricia enjoys her time in school administration. She finds the staff "so pleasant and obliging." They "start with worship, every morning." Sometimes [it] is combined with the high school staff, other times in their own "prayer groups" or with the junior school, but it is "every day, which [is] such a big difference." She loves the freedom of being able "to pray, to get that guidance as to which way…" what direction to take. Not that Patricia had not prayed for students before; she had done it often, but the opportunity to pray as a staff is a new and empowering experience that she never takes for granted.

As an administrator, Patricia is in a unique position where she can observe the staff members, the school program and the culture and ethos. As she transitions into this new role, a new kind of sensemaking reflection occurs. She has moved from classroom teacher to administrator and this liminal phase is accompanied by new ways of looking at things. Each time she reflects on a new piece of information that she observes or hears, her perceptions of Adventist Education are further refined. Her first social function with the staff is an eye-opener. She really enjoys herself. She does not have to "dodge cigarette smoke or avoid the indiscreet comments of staff" who have imbibed a little too much alcohol. She feels that the school culture is more aligned with what state schools were like when she first began teaching. "The principals she had in [her] early days were usually church-going people," and "most of the kids went to Sunday School".

As she observes the teachers, she notices that their common belief system and faith commitment is a strength of the school. One day she faces an interesting situation. A lovely Christian lady in the school office, not being entirely familiar with distinctive Adventist beliefs, wants to put a statement that is contrary to Adventist beliefs in the newsletter one week. Patricia has some explaining to do. She also realises that it is the people who make a school Adventist or not, not just the name or the values. Patricia's administrative position allows her to be informed through her daily observations of school ethos and culture. Because of her wide experience in state schools, Patricia is well positioned to see where important differences lie between the two systems she has taught in and been an administrator in. She sees how easy it would be for the two systems to meld together. She is becoming very sensitive to what it means for a school to be Adventist. Her faith and belief system are very strong, so when she sees something that may threaten or weaken the Adventist identity of the school, she addresses it promptly. This is why she finds herself speechless when she receives a phone call requesting that she travel to do mandatory training in the ethos of Adventist Education. She feels as though her integrity as an Adventist is being called into question, and she simply feels she does not have the time. She receives CDs and DVDs to listen to instead. As she reflects on a continuous stream of events, Patricia continues to reflect on each new situation in relationship to her perceptions of Adventist Education.

This becomes evident when she interviews the parents of prospective students. Because the school's name is not overtly Adventist, she finds herself explaining the Adventist Christian ethos of the school. One day she has an appointment with a Muslim gentleman, a doctor. She explains what happens in this school: the morning worships, the prayers, the chapels, the Bible classes. She can see in his eyes that this was not what he was expecting. At the end he says, "Uh, no, she can't come here, because you said she has to go to chapel, she has to be in Bible classes, she has to listen to it." Patricia affirms that this is right. He reluctantly but emphatically shakes his head. "No, I can't do that." Patricia thanks him for his honesty and ushers him out of her office. "One month later [she] get[s] a phone call asking, "Are there any vacancies?" She is not prepared to compromise. She invites him in. She explains again. Carefully she outlines the expectations. He responds, "Yes, yes, we will do it all." Six months later, this gentleman comes to see his daughter lead out with prayer in chapel. He is happy with the school. He tells his friends. Five Muslim families make inquiries. Patricia is pleased she did not "pussyfoot around", fearing that it might "turn people away." Her commitment to upholding the philosophy and praxis of Adventist Education filters through all she does.

This becomes very apparent when she retires for the second time and then is invited to be the chair of the school council. More transitioning reflection occurs with this change in role. One day she finds herself deep in conversation with the principal over a distinctive lifestyle stance that is clashing with a PTA (Parents & Teachers Association) fundraiser. The issue goes to the school council. The PTA wins. Patricia feels as though the Adventist Identity is being lost. She feels that if "you start breaking down one thing, do we next start having a function on Sabbath afternoon?"

Now, at the Point of the Second Interview.

Listening to Patricia, one senses that she is grateful she had the opportunity to contribute to two great education systems. She looks back on her early career and rather negative perception of Adventist Education and acknowledges that one school tainted her view of Adventist Education for years. She is glad circumstances shifted

her perceptions. She feels blessed to have been a part of the Adventist school system, contributing to three schools in a variety of ways.

She sums up her experience by saying, “I had my … I guess, I had my curriculum and policies and everything sorted out. I then had to work out where the Adventist thing fitted.”

Coda “Not only the holistic development of each child but we’re also educating for eternity. Clearly, if we are giving everything to God’s glory, then how we teach is part of that.”

Summary

Patricia’s experience is unique. Because most of her teaching career was spent outside of Adventist schools, authentic relationships do not feature as strongly in the shaping of her perceptions of Adventist Education as they do with the previous educators (Figure 4.15). However, enduring relationships are not absent, for they do help shape her faith. Her Christian upbringing by her family, her Adventist boyfriend and eventually husband both impacted her personal identity, and combined with her relationship with God, play a part in her faith development. Her relationship with her children is what began to shift those early career perceptions of Adventist Education as they share their experiences as students in an Adventist school. Transient relationships, like ones developed with mentors or role models, do not feature in Patricia’s story. Much stronger in shaping her perceptions of Adventist Education are the opportunities for sensemaking reflection. As an experienced educator moving into Adventist Education for the first time, she continually had to translate what was happening as she related it back to her experience in another system. Although she has been in Adventist Education for a relatively short time, she has transitioned to two different roles, and the reflection that accompanied these transitions resulted in further insights that shaped her perceptions of Adventist Education.

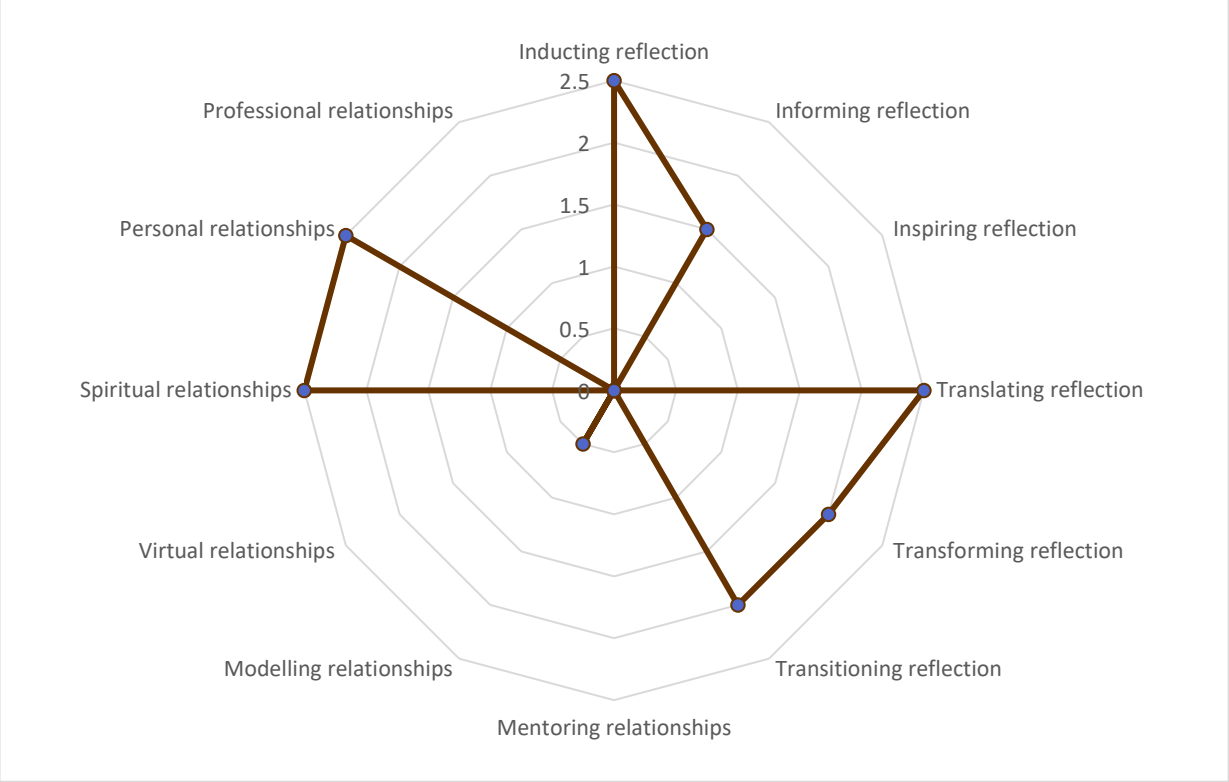


Figure 4.15

Patricia's Shaping Influences Profile (SIP)

KEY

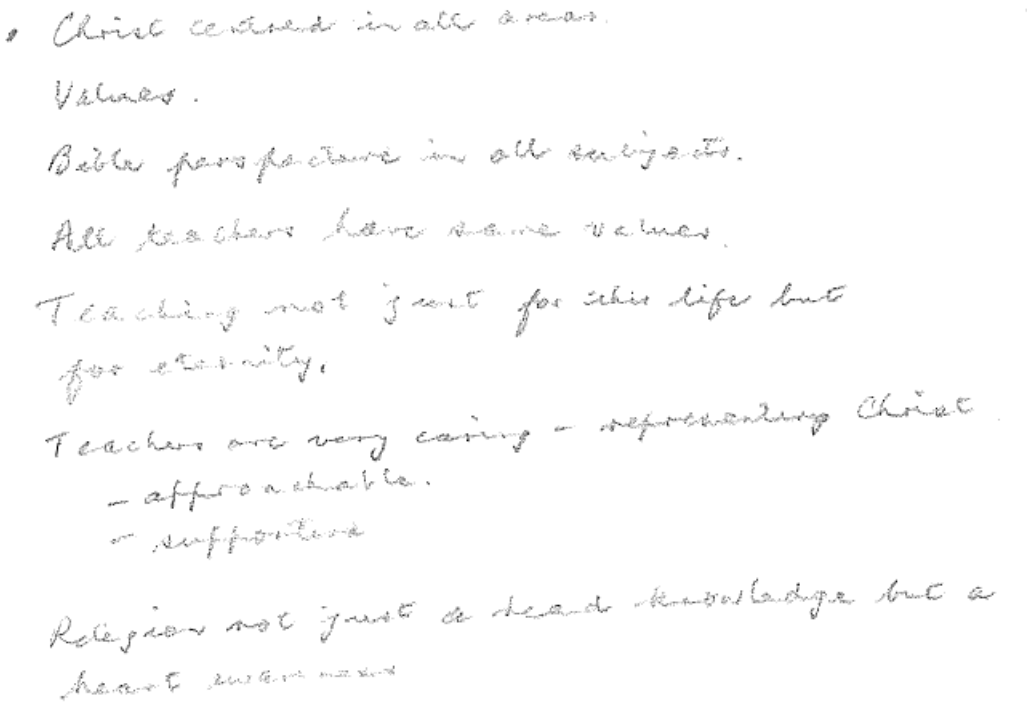
A score of less than 1 – This category was evident in the responses made by the participant but was peripheral and not central to the lived experiences they were relating.

A score between 1 and 2 – This category was central in the participant's responses to several areas they were articulating.

A score of 2 or above – This category is central, occurring frequently and with emphasis, verbally and physically, in the participant's responses

Perceptions of the Philosophy, Purpose and Praxis of Adventist Education

When Patricia was asked to visually represent her understanding of Adventist Education, including its philosophy, purpose and praxis, she produced a list (Figure 4.16). She was able to articulate what the various elements of her list meant.



Christ centred in all areas

Values

Bible perspective in all subjects

All teachers have same values

Teaching not just for this life but for eternity

Teachers are very caring – representing Christ

1. approachable
2. supportive

Religion not just a head knowledge but a heart awareness

Figure 4.16

Patricia's Understanding of Adventist Education

Diagrammatic Summary. This educator chose to write a well-articulated list that describes her perception of the essential elements of Adventist Education. It began with three adjectival phrases and one word, all of which were descriptive elements and then moved to three sentences, which although still descriptive, also contain an element of action. Three out of the seven points related to the nature and role of teachers.

Conceptual Summary. Patricia believes that Adventist Education should be Christ-centred, with values and a biblical perspective on offer in all subjects. She views teachers as crucial to Adventist Education [teachers are crucial in any system] and has definite views on the nature and role of teachers, believing that they should adhere to common values, be conscious of their role in teaching for eternity, and represent Christ by being approachable, supportive and caring. She emphasises heart awareness in addition to head knowledge when it comes to religion.

Relationship Between Lived Experiences and Perceptions of Adventist Education.

Patricia's lived experiences are unique in that she spent most of her career working in the public education system. Her perceptions of Adventist Education were not positive and were based on a single visit to one Adventist school and interactions at Church with one teacher from that school. Based on these two pieces of evidence, Patricia decided she wanted nothing to do with Adventist Education, which she perceived as unprofessional and under-resourced. She held these perceptions until her eldest child encountered bullying issues at the local public high school. This prompted her to give Adventist Education a second chance.

After enrolling her children in an Adventist school, Patricia's perceptions of Adventist Education began to change over time as she vicariously experienced Adventist schooling through her children. However, she still had no firsthand experience with Adventist Education and when, on early retirement from the public education system, she applied for casual work in Adventist schools, she was rebuffed shifting her perceptions again. An opportunity for her husband to fill a temporary vacancy at an Adventist School in another conference gave her a segue into Adventist Education and she began reconceptualise Adventist Education using her previous career experiences as a comparison point. From casual and contract teacher

in two Adventist schools, she transitioned to school administrator for three years, and then on retirement accepted the role of school council chairperson.

Patricia's lived experiences impacted her perceptions of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education. Her views focus on education that is Christ-centred in all the school does, with the roles of teachers paramount to implementing this, so the religion stems from the heart.

Comparison of Educators' Perceptions of Adventist Education

Figure 4.17 shows the SIPs of the eight educators superimposed over each other on a circumplex graph for the purpose of identifying common shaping influences and satisfying Aim 2.

Aim 2. *To identify any shaping influences that eight educators with diverse lived experiences may share about Adventist Education.*

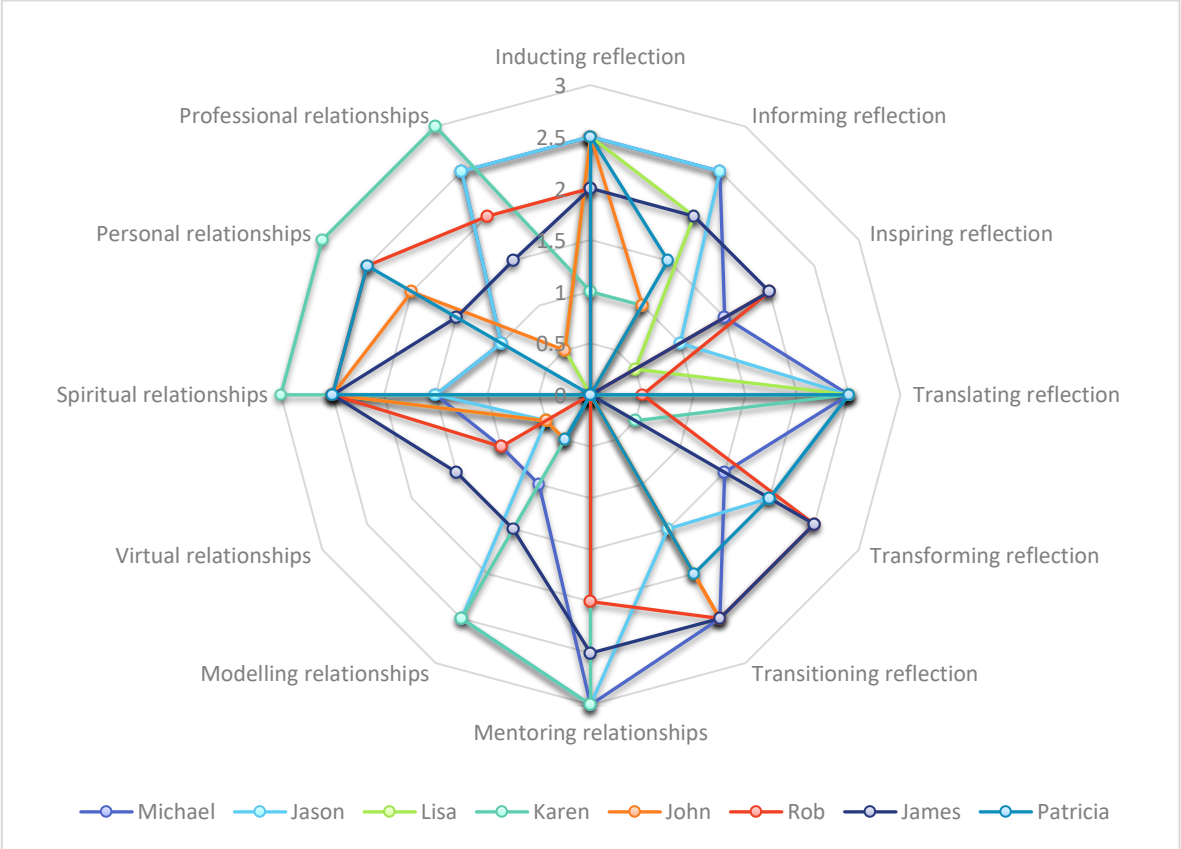


Figure 4.17

Combined SIPS of the Eight Educators

KEY

A score of less than 1 – This category was evident in the responses made by the participant but was peripheral and not central to the lived experiences they were relating.

A score between 1 and 2 – This category was central in the participant's responses to several areas they were articulating.

A score of 2 or above – This category is central, occurring frequently and with emphasis, verbally and physically, in the participant's responses

Taken as a whole, the SIPs indicate that the eight educators who participated in this study shared some similarities in lived experiences, leading to common shaping influences. Not all their perceptions were shaped to the same extent, as the impact of their lived experiences varied according to their "memory depositifs" (Basu, 2010) and the emotion attached to them. In order to discover shared shaping

influences, I have chosen to present the findings for this section by shaping influences, rather than educator by educator.

Authentic Relationships. Professional relationships are enduring relationships between two individuals that exists in a professional rather than personal capacity. Every SIP except Patricia's indicated that professional relationships acted as a shaping influence on their perceptions of Adventist Education. As Patricia had spent few years in Adventist Education and much of that in a small school with only her husband as a colleague, she had limited opportunities to develop professional relationships within the Adventist Education system. For Jason, Michael, Karen, and Rob, professional relationships were central to their narratives, with frequent references to the role of colleagues, often with an emphasis.

Personal Relationships. These enduring relationships exist between the educator and another individual who is connected in some way other than through their work.

Each educator indicated that personal relationships helped shape their perceptions. For Michael, Jason, and Lisa, personal relationships were peripheral to their lived experiences in Adventist Education, while for John, Patricia, and Rob, it was central in several areas of their lived experiences. For Karen, personal relationships were mentioned frequently and with emphasis.

Spiritual Relationships. These relationships exist between an individual and God, with the belief that God can and does interact in people's lives. Spiritual relationships was a shared shaping influence, with Lisa, Karen, John, Rob, James, and Patricia indicating by repetition and emphasis, the importance of this shaping influence to their perception of Adventist Education.

Virtual Relationships. These exist when a relationship with ideas develops through interaction with a significant person's ideas or concepts pertaining to Adventist Education. This shaping influence was evident but peripheral in all the interviews, except for Patricia where it was not evident; Rob, where it was central in several areas; and James where it was central and occurred frequently. In her whole career, Patricia would not have had the opportunity or motivation to attend presentations by esteemed Adventist educators or read their books while teaching in

state-run schools. James and Rob, on the other hand, had both done post-graduate study in the field of Adventist Education. Therefore, they had been exposed to a wide range of ideas and concepts relating to the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education.

Modelling Relationships. These relationships involve observation, where one educator looks to another in the same environment, generally a school, for clues on how to operate within a particular work culture without seeking direct advice or input. This shaping influence was evident in a peripheral way in the responses of Lisa, John, Rob. The early parts of these educators' careers were spent in one- or two-teacher primary schools, or small regional high schools. This factor limited the number of models they had to observe. The two educators who responded affirmatively that they looked to others to model appropriate behaviour were Jason and Karen. Jason spent time in another education system before entering Adventist Education, while Karen was able to observe for a week before taking on the classroom as her own. James, Patricia and Michael shared several areas in which they looked to others to model the culture in their school.

Mentoring Relationships. These exist where one individual intentionally mentors another in certain ways of thinking and doing that are compatible with Adventist Education. The educators all identified that their mentors were self-appointed, except in one instance in her early career when Karen was mentored by a teacher for three weeks before she stepped into her role. In contrast, Rob did not include mentoring relationships in his response. This could be because he has always held positions of leadership, commencing as a sole-charge teacher in a country school, as principal in three other schools, and in two different administrative roles. Patricia may have been mentored as a graduate teacher but did not mention mentoring as one of her lived experiences in her short career in Adventist Education.

Sensemaking Reflection. Six different types of sensemaking reflection were collectively evident in the responses given by the educators, although these varied, and sometimes were not evident in the individual SIPs. Three types of sensemaking reflection were ongoing and resulted in continual, incremental changes in perceptions over an extended period of time. Three types of sensemaking were

trigger experiences that sped up the reflection on an important aspect of Adventist Education.

Inducting Reflection. This reflection was ongoing and was initiated by participating in a particular school culture, especially when one was inducted into the system from elsewhere. This does not refer to a formal induction, but induction by engagement in the school culture. Michael, Jason, Lisa, John and Patricia all indicated that this was a shaping influence for them. As four of these educators had worked outside of Adventist schools, they had opportunity to engage in the culture of more than one school system. This juxtaposition of engagement in school culture could contribute to changing perceptions. Inducting reflection was also a noteworthy factor in John's interview, despite his career being totally in Adventist schools. However, he did move schools through his career, enabling him to engage in a variety of schools cultures. Neither Rob nor James indicated through their interviews the same impact that engaging in the school's culture had on their perceptions of Adventist Education. As both had become administrators quite early in their careers and had spent some years out of school environments, they may not have had the same opportunities to be inducted into a new school culture at the ground level.

Informing Reflection. Informing reflection was related to modelling relationships as it involved reflection on how people operated in the school environment. It helped establish expectations for teaching staff and enabled them to observe school routines and structures that were built into the ongoing program of the school.

Inspiring Reflection. This involved reflection that grew out of a particular spiritual event or experience that was a regular component of the school's program. Included in this category were staff worships and roll call groups at the commencement of the school day.

Translating Reflection. This type of reflection occurred when an educator found themselves moving to a school operated by another organisation. Five of the educators shared this lived experience and all five indicated that this gave them an opportunity to juxtapose Adventist Education against another education system. They also indicated that this change acted as a catalyst for reflection. Initially, these educators entered a liminal state which was eased as they 'translated' the culture and

ethos of their current school. This was an important step to "fitting into" the culture and it also prompted reflection which helped shape their perceptions of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of both education systems, but in particular Adventist Education. This was strong for Karen and Lisa, who both began their teaching careers in Adventist Education, left for family reasons and sought casual or part-time work in another system, and later returned to work for Adventist Education again.

Transforming Reflection. This reflection was triggered by a single event that impacted the educator and accelerated their reflection on the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education. Examples of single events were the Week of Spiritual Emphasis and a mission trip. One participant, Jason, after observing these events, noted that he had never seen anything like it before in previous schools he had been in, so for him, these events represented Adventist Education more than what happened in the classroom.

Transitioning Reflection. The final type of reflection was triggered by a change of roles. This was a strong shaping influence for those educators who had multiple roles throughout their career as was indicated by John, Rob, and James who had all been teachers, school principals and system administrators during their careers in Adventist Education.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has outlined the findings of the analysis of the data. It has used tables, narratives, shaping influence profiles and participant drawn diagrams to present the data in a way that portrays the findings for each educator as a cohesive whole. The lived experiences of the eight educators who participated in this study both varied and had elements in common, therefore the shaping of their perceptions about Adventist Education also varied accordingly. James and John did all their schooling in Adventist schools and spent their whole careers in Adventist Education. Both did further study, but James did his in Christian education, and this accounted for marked differences in their perceptions. Rob, on the other hand, who did his schooling in public schools, but had a post-graduate degree in the field of Christian Education, shared similar perceptions to James. Table 4.4 summarises the educators' career experiences in terms of years spent in Adventist Education, other school

systems they have worked in, and the roles they have carried throughout their careers. This diversity is reflected in the findings.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Preface: My Voice

I have analysed the data, working with it carefully until I am sure that nothing of importance to my topic eludes me. I have presented the narratives of eight people in a way that explores the relationships between those people and their perceptions of Adventist Education, the organisation to which they belong. The multiple perspectives presented have yielded a diverse set of shaping influences. Some influences are ongoing; others are transient, fleeting events that left an impression. My task is to fashion my findings into a shaping influences model and report on how those shaping influences impact the educators' perceptions of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education.

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is threefold. First, I summarise the key findings of Chapter 4 that relate to the research question. I discuss the aims in the light of the historical narrative that defines the development of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education, and in the context of sensemaking. Second, I report how the research aims were met, and consequently, explain the development of the grounded theory model that provides an answer to the research question. Thirdly, the chapter concludes by suggesting directions for future research.

RQ. *How have the lived experiences of eight educators shaped their perceptions of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist education?*

Perceptions of Adventist Education and Links to the Lived Experience of the Educators

This section relates to Research Aims 1 and 2:

Aim 1. *To identify the perceptions that eight educators hold of the philosophy, purpose,* and *praxis of Adventist Education.*

Aim 2. *To identify any specific links between the nature of the educators' lived experiences and their perceptions of Adventist Education*

Perceptions of the Philosophy Underpinning Adventist Education

The educators' perceptions of the philosophy underpinning Adventist Education ranged from simple to complex. All had something to say. Although it was apparent that some found this a challenging topic to articulate clearly, others were very comfortable in this space. A majority found it easier to explain their philosophy verbally rather than represent it as a diagram. Collecting both visual and verbal data ameliorated the educators' responses by accommodating their drawing capacity, or skill in ideating concepts, and therefore their confidence in expressing ideas.

Philosophy relates to the beliefs underpinning an organisation's way of operating. The common philosophical theme for these educators was the grace of God, evident in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, although this was expressed uniquely for each educator. This belief in Adventist Education being redemptive has been a theme of Adventist Education since Ellen White first began writing about education in 1872, a theme that was fully developed in later writings where she wrote of the importance of teachers presenting "correct views of God and our Saviour" (White, 1894, p. 26). Michael, Lisa and Patricia all expressed salvation as a foundational belief of Adventist Education. Karen's expression of philosophy was similar although expressed more in terms of a relationship to God. Jason, who was not of the Adventist faith, was the only educator to include the Bible and Ellen White in his diagram. It was evident that Jason had read about Ellen White and her beliefs on Christian Education, however, he did not articulate these beliefs to the same extent as some who had completed their teacher education at Avondale. Avondale graduates, except for Karen, tended to use Ellen White's terminology in explaining their perceptions of the philosophy of Adventist Education, even though they did not always identify her as the source of their beliefs.

John, while not including Ellen White's name on his diagram, made strong reference to her statements about education, basing his perceptions of philosophy on the idea of achieving balance. Ellen White wrote extensively on this topic, although her reference is to "the harmonious development of the physical, mental, and the spiritual powers" (White, 1903, p. 13). This phrase appears in 20 of her publications (Ellen G. White Estate, n.d.), with some minor variation, emphasising the importance she placed on this concept. It should be noted that while Ellen White did not include

the social domain in her statements, she did refer to social skills and activities in her writings where she speaks of learning in cooperation with others and avoiding intense competition (White, 1977). As John had spent his whole career in Adventist Education, this perspective is consistent with his lived experiences, even though he disclosed that it was not until his late career years that he developed this philosophy of Adventist Education.

James and Rob both had strong perceptions of what they believed the philosophy of Adventist Education to be, especially James, who based his perception on three clear statements that he was able to write without hesitation during the interview. These were belief in:

- ❖ the ultimate reality of a Creator God
- ❖ ultimate truth as revealed through Jesus Christ, the scriptures and the natural world
- ❖ the ultimate source of values, as an outgrowth of the life of Christ, and revealed through life values and priorities

These fundamental presuppositions suggest not only a clear understanding of the philosophy underpinning Adventist Education but also reflect James's extended post-graduate study, in particular with George Knight, whose books and articles express very similar sentiments. The three belief statements above apply to metaphysical beliefs, axiological beliefs, and epistemological beliefs. These three beliefs also reflect White's position that creation is the result of supernatural causes (White, 1890, p. 113) attributable to God alone (White, 1979, p. 22). She also reiterates the third belief, "The Son of God was appointed to come to this earth to take humanity and by His own example to be a great educating power among men" (White, 1913, p. 33). For James, Adventist Education has foundational beliefs about the Creator God, Jesus Christ, the Bible and the natural world—all of which are evident in living a life motivated by values. Ellen White also linked these ideas in one statement: "The Author of nature is the Author of the Bible. Creation and Christianity have one God. God is revealed in nature, and God is revealed in His word" (White, 1913, p. 395).

While Rob's diagram put "core beliefs and values of the Seventh-day Adventist Church" as central to his perceived philosophy, he did not elaborate what

these might be on his diagram. However, when asked to speak to his diagram he stated:

> If they [the students] don't believe in God, then you can't get off the first base with world view. If you don't believe God is the Creator, then you are not going anywhere, so we need to develop the sense of belief in themselves as individuals, as children made in God's image and belief in God as their Lord and Saviour.

Later he adds: "We want them to become servants of the community, serving the common good." From these words we can extrapolate three key points:

1. Humanity is made in God's image.
2. Education is redemptive, through the sacrifice of Jesus.
3. Living lives of service is foundational.

When these three presuppositions are compared to James', there is a close correlation. However, Rob's three belief statements tend to more closely echo written statements from the writing of Ellen White, who makes a total of 884 references to humans being made in the image of God, 14 references that explicitly state that education should be redemptive and another 646 that link salvation with education, and 1,316 references to service in the context of Christian Education (Ellen G. White Estate, n.d.).

Some participants' perceptions of the philosophy of Adventist education appeared, in part, to be shaped by their *virtual relationship* with the written works of Ellen White, George Knight, and to a lesser extent Don Roy (2013). Two of the educators, who had completed post-graduate study in the field of Adventist Education, appeared to shape their philosophical perceptions through *transitioning reflection.* It seems that their change of role to post-graduate students in the area of Christian Education impacted their understanding of the philosophical underpinnings on which Adventist Education is built. These two educators also shared a common lived experience as school and system administrators.

George Knight (2017) posits that "a consciously thought-out philosophy of education is not only an educator's most practical acquisition, but also his or her

most important one" (p. 4). Two out of the eight educators had a working philosophy that was consciously thought out, while others had partial philosophies and a greater focus on purpose and praxis than philosophy. Based on the shared and diverse lived experiences of the educators, it can be concluded that lived experiences help shape not only the educators' perceptions of the philosophy of Adventist Education, but also the depth of their understanding and their ability to articulate it clearly. However, the findings also leave scope for strategies to encourage educators to develop a sound philosophical foundation on which to base the purpose and their praxis of Adventist Education.

Perceptions of the Purpose of Adventist Education

Although the educators' perceptions of the purpose of Adventist Education varied, their perceptions aligned with each other's. Several identified just one purpose of Adventist Education, while two offered at least three aims.

For some educators in this study, the purpose of Adventist Education was perceived as singular. Lisa, in her response, implied that it was to reveal Jesus to the students. This was evident in the cross labelled grace that took centre place in her diagram, and resonates with the statement of the South Pacific Division Adventist Ethos Working Party (2021), which posits that administrators and school leaders have the "privilege to reveal Jesus to our teachers and school staff through journeying in faith together" (Adventist Ethos Working Party, 2021). Karen's perception of purpose was very similar: "Be diligent in leading students into a rich and rewarding relationship with Jesus Christ." James articulated the purpose as, "to introduce young people to the person of Jesus Christ." Patricia also indicated a single purpose for Adventist Education: "to educate, not just for this life but for eternity," a purpose statement that implies the redemptive actions of Jesus Christ in a student's life. It also resonates strongly with George Knight's (2017) book, *Educating for Eternity.* For these educators, revealing Jesus was the primary purpose of Adventist education, an aim that aligns with the primary aim of redemption promoted by Ellen White and George Knight.

Jason indicated that his perception of the purpose of Adventist Education was linked to the core mission; however, he did not indicate what that core mission was.

As Jason's own schooling was not in an Adventist school, and his only experience of an Adventist school was the one he was currently employed in, this could account for his ambivalence about the purpose of Adventist Education. He may have found it easier to articulate the purpose of the school of which he was a part. Alternatively, he could have referred to core mission presuming that it was tacit knowledge to the interviewer. This could have been explored more intentionally during the interview.

John's perception of the purpose of Adventist Education varied little from his perceived philosophy of Adventist Education, which was based on his drawing of a juggler and the caption, "All balls have to be in the air to ensure the school is fulfilling its philosophy." As previously mentioned, John's caption links to White's statement, "Education is the harmonious development of the physical, mental, and the spiritual powers" (White, 1903, p. 13). John has taken one thought from Ellen White that he relates to and built his philosophy and purpose around it. The purpose, he maintained, was to achieve balance and integration of the spiritual, physical, intellectual and social domains in the life of each student.

Michael and Rob both perceived that Adventist Education had multiple purposes. Michael was able to articulate his perception of the purpose of Adventist Education in three clear goals, the first of which resonated with the single purpose perceived by Lisa, Karen, James, and Patricia:

1. To give all students the opportunity to accept Jesus Christ as Redeemer.
2. To make authentic connection between the Adventist faith and the wider community.
3. To see the creativity and character of God reflected in students.

Michael's second purpose seeks to offer Adventist Education as a bridge to the wider community, a perspective that resonates with more recent thought in Adventist Education. Many schools are eschewing their castle mentality of protect and defend (Shields, 2007), instead promoting a bridge mentality of extend and connect with the wider community. This attitudinal change is a reflection of the changing clientele base and subsequent changes to demographics within the student populations of many Adventist schools. It may also indicate a willingness for schools to be directly involved in the mission of the Adventist Church rather than secondary involvement as a place to train young people to support the mission of the Church.

As Michael's lived experiences with Adventist Education began with his schooling, and his family was not Adventist, this could help explain why Michael adopted this stance. Michael's final purpose statement has links to White (1903), who maintained the position throughout her life that the purpose of Christian Education was

> "to restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in his creation might be realized – this was to be the work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life." (p. 10)

Roy (2003) and Knight (2017) both support White's belief that this is the ultimate aim of Adventist education.

For Rob, the purpose of Adventist Education was clearly related to the idea of each Adventist school "being an authentic community of faith and learning." His perceived purpose of Adventist Education can be summarised as four goals:

1. To lead students to Jesus "as their Lord and Saviour."
2. To offer "a really good academic product" integrated with biblical concepts.
3. To foster students to become "servants of the community" now, "and in the world to come."
4. "To make disciples, and to prepare people for his [Jesus's] return."

Rob's first goal relates to redemption, the primary purpose of Adventist Education identified by the participating educators, and held by White (1903), Knight (2016) and Roy (2003). His second goal relates to the integration of faith and learning, tied to the concept of excellence in the academic program. While not a major theme of Ellen White's writing, excellence is implied. Rob's third aim is about service, an enduring goal from the legacy left by Ellen White. Rob's final goal reflects the mission of the Adventist Church. Rob sees Adventist Education as redeeming students, but further, as making disciples in preparation for the second coming of Jesus. No other educators mentioned this missional goal as part of their perceived purpose of Adventist Education.

In summary, all educators except John and Jason intentionally put redemption as first place in exploring the purpose of Adventist Education. John was steeped in

Adventism, and Jason encountered Adventism through one Adventist school. John took a single idea and built his understanding on one concept. Jason observed his school culture and interpreted Adventist Education through one Adventist school. Despite the diverse lived experiences of the remaining six educators, all put the redemption of students as the primary purpose of Adventist Education.

Perceptions of the Praxis of Adventist Education

The educators were confident in identifying the praxis of Adventist Education, with all educators except Karen listing multiple areas in which they perceived the distinctiveness of the organisation. Karen's description of praxis was "Revealing Jesus in the classroom." This was consistent with her lived experiences, which had been primarily as a classroom teacher and only recently included a stage coordinator role. Karen, therefore perceived praxis through the lens of a classroom teacher. Karen's lived experiences of teaching in state-operated schools gave her a point of comparison, and therefore may have influenced her praxis and concentrated it into one single point of influence – the teacher.

Michael, having spent most of his career to date as a classroom teacher, had a broader view of praxis. A self-confessed thinker, Michael acknowledged in his interview that he likes to view an idea critically before embracing it. In keeping with his lived experiences of engaging in the culture of wherever he was, his reflection on, and engagement in, school culture combined with vibrant relationships, including his relationship with God, helped to shape his perceptions of praxis into two areas. The first and foremost area of praxis he indicated, was the "Christian ethos of the school" that he believed flowed out of "an individual's relationship to God". Therefore, Michael is less concerned with a school being distinctly Adventist than he is with it being overtly Christian.

Ellen White also implied the importance of school culture, or ethos, in her counsel to teachers: "If the teacher is connected to God, if he has Christ abiding in his heart, the spirit that is cherished by him is felt by the children" (White, 1913, p. 144). She also acknowledged the impact of the school location on its ethos, stating, "No pains should be spared to select places for our schools where the moral atmosphere will be as healthful as possible; for the influences that prevail will leave

a deep impress on young and forming characters" (White, 1897, p. 43). Michael also mentioned the integration of faith and learning in terms of the "hidden curriculum." Although the integration of faith and learning did not become a catchphrase in Adventist Education until later in the 20th century, White spoke of "teaching the sciences and at the same time leading the students to the Saviour, whence all true knowledge flows" (White, 1879, p. 9). This was a unique perspective of science teaching for her time, as were her views of reading materials: "The literature placed in our schools, written by infidels and so-called wise men, does not contain the education that students should have" (White, 1897, p. 6). These statements, and others, demonstrate her understanding of the principles on which the integration of faith and learning movement was based.

Jason entered Adventist Education from another school system and indicated that learning and teaching happen in all schools, so he did not see that as a point of difference in terms of praxis. Despite this view, he was intentional in embedding Christian values in his geography classes as his story illustrates. However, Jason mainly perceived praxis in the areas of what he termed school initiatives such as WOSE (Week of Spiritual Emphasis) and STORMCo trips (Service to Others Really Matters Company trips to outback communities). Having not come across these events previously in his own schooling or previous schools where he taught, these events stand out in his mind as how Adventist Education functions. The second area of praxis Jason indicated was relationships where he perceived strong leadership, flexibility and connection with the community as hallmarks of Adventist Education. Given Jason's initial confusion with some aspects of the school's culture and his later acceptance and engagement in the culture, it is a credit to school leadership that he perceived them as strong and flexible and connected to the community.

Lisa came from a background in Adventism. Although her schooling was in public schools, her tertiary experience was at Avondale College where she completed her teacher education. Therefore, she approached her teaching through a lens of Adventism and perceived Adventist Education as a student enabler "to see the cross through the content," what is commonly known as IFL in Adventist Education. Lisa's graduation and early teaching years coincided with the IFL movement, so her

perspective was not surprising. Lisa's response indicated that she viewed praxis as going further than IFL.

Having no faith-based education, she included a variety of school events that are part of the daily, weekly, or annual program of the school. Examples she offered included chapel programs, Bible studies, staff worships, service opportunities, and prayer. She also included events that connected to the community such as the Spring Fair and Pathfinders and included what she called "add-on programs like chaplaincy". She then added sport and music to her diagram, indicating that she perceived praxis will differ in these areas from what may happen elsewhere. Lisa also took praxis into the school organisation, suggesting that even policies will reflect the philosophy and purpose of the school. Her final comment on praxis relates to teachers who, she presumed, will model Christian values. This idea aligns with what Ellen White had to say about the role of teachers (White, 1903). It was clear that Lisa perceived praxis as extending to all areas of the school's program.

John had spent all his education and his whole career in Adventist schools, so he did not have insider knowledge of what happened in other faith-based systems. His perception of praxis was to make sure the spiritual, physical, intellectual and social aspects of teaching and learning and the school program were operating smoothly and in an integrated manner. However, he did not elaborate on what that may look like in a practical context. As previously stated, this concept is derived directly from one statement Ellen White repeatedly used (for example, 1903, 1913, 1923, 1954), where she refers to Christian Education as the "the harmonious development of the physical, mental, and the spiritual powers" (White, 1903, p. 13).

In contrast to John, Rob perceived the praxis of Adventist Education to be process based and captured by three words — belonging, believing, and becoming (Figure 4.3) — each one revealing the central beliefs and values of Adventist Education. All aspects of a school's operation, he maintained, were embedded in these processes. These processes linked to Rob's purpose statements.

James had clearly thought through what he perceived as praxis. His diagram covered the life and ministry of the Christian teacher, the curricula design, teaching methodologies, student wellbeing, social consciousness — including responsibility — and operational practice. As James was viewing Adventist Education from the

perspective of an experienced school administrator, his understanding of praxis was more encompassing than the educators who saw teaching as their primary role.

Patricia came to Adventist Education with a long career of teaching in public schools. Using this as a point of comparison, she identified praxis as "Christ-centred in all areas," with particular emphasis on the role of the teacher. She included the importance of teachers sharing the same values, something she had not seen in public schools. She indicated that teachers should be "approachable," and "supportive" in representing Christ. In regard to how teachers taught, she expressed the importance of integrating the Bible into every subject and teaching "for eternity." She perceived the above would happen not just with "head knowledge" but with "heart experience."

Each of the educators approached the concept of praxis in response to their lived experiences, although common areas were noted in the role and responsibility of the classroom teacher, the overall school ethos, and the integration of faith and learning. School initiatives like service trips were perceived as praxis for those less familiar with Adventist Education as a system, and several areas of praxis were only perceived by one or two educators.

While each educator had a unique SIP, all had common elements with others. The difference lay in the exclusive way that each SIP was put together and the disparity of the shaping influences, resulting in a set of eight unique perspectives on the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education.

Lived Experience, Sensemaking, and Shaping Influences

The findings from this investigation help explain how the participating educators' lived experiences facilitated individual sensemaking that ultimately shaped and informed their perceptions of Adventist Education. Within the organisational context of Adventist Education, the sensemaking properties of identity, retrospective thinking, enactment, social context, ongoing events (continuity), cues, and plausibility identified by Weick (1995), and organisational context, offered by Weber and Glynn (2006), worked together to provide an underpinning framework. However, there was an additional perspective in the findings that has merit for inclusion as a property of sensemaking for organisations.

Closely aligned to institutional context in this study, but significantly different to consider it a separate property of sensemaking, is spirituality, the notion of acting out of a personal belief system. This property is not found in any of the sensemaking literature, although Benefiel, Fry, and Geigle (2014) make the salient point that spirituality and religion in the workplace positively influence "organizational commitment, job satisfaction, performance, and productivity at both the individual and unit levels" (p. 184). Therefore, there is a strong rationale for its inclusion, especially when investigating how individuals or organisations with religious foundations make sense of their work environment. Potter (2020), has identified this property of spirituality in a sensemaking investigation within the context of an education training program at a faith-based institution. She put forward the idea that "spirituality as a socio-cultural contextual factor" has been disregarded in published sensemaking studies, and demonstrated how spirituality impacted sensemaking during a period of change (Potter, 2020, p. 227). This investigation supports Potter's findings by adding a further example of the interaction of spirituality and sensemaking. It also confirms that "the presence of spirituality in an organisation does not necessarily guarantee immunity from the negative effects of other contextual factors that impact sensemaking" (Potter, 2020, p. 228).

In this investigation the educators' relationship with God was a personal perspective that helped them make sense of changes brought about by their lived experiences. This study indicates that the educators, who each had strong belief systems as an outcome of their relationship with God and the influence of others, tended to interpret and understand their environment through their worldview and relationship with God.

Faith alignment may be personal and private, or corporate and shared. When it is corporate, it most closely resembles Weber and Glynn's (2006) property of institutional context; but when it is personal, it acts as a stand-alone property, which ameliorates the original properties identified by Weick (1995) and Weber and Glynn (2006). This, I would argue, deserves consideration as a sensemaking property that is particularly pertinent to faith-based organisations, including the one that is the focus of this study. It may also be of importance to organisations that are not faith-based,

as all individuals hold a worldview that acts like a lens through which they view the world.

Grounded Theory Model and Shaping Influences

In Chapter 3, I introduced how the overarching themes, the secondary themes and the shaping influences (derived from categories) emerged from the data. Chapter 5 presents a full description of the grounded theory model within the context of the literature about sensemaking. It builds a case to demonstrate how sensemaking properties are perceived within an educational setting and demonstrates the nature of the events that prompt or accelerate sensemaking. Figure 5.1 shows the complete shaping influences model.

The shaping influences model is circular This indicates a dynamic culture which embraces not only the school, but extends to individuals outside of the school. Three concentric circles represent the overarching themes, the secondary themes, and the categories from the analysis. The categories have been renamed shaping influences.

The Concentric Rings. The outer ring represents two overarching themes into which every shaping influence identified in the study fits. These themes are authentic relationships and sensemaking reflection. The shaping influences that emerged from the data in each of the eight narratives all fell under these two overarching themes. Although these themes varied in importance for each respondent, both were evident in each narrative. The theme of authentic relationships was embedded in each narrative and included any connection to other persons who had a shaping influence on the respondent's perceptions of Adventist Education, whether positive or negative. In sensemaking, the property of social milieu is prominent, indicating that sensemaking requires a social setting (Weick, 1988). Schools provide a social setting where relationships are built and ongoing dialogue and feedback are common, attributes that Maitlis (2005) considers crucial to providing the ideal environment for sensemaking.

Maitlis (2005) refers to both conversations with others and conversation with self when elaborating on sensemaking as a framework. Conversation with self is another term for reflection. Sensemaking reflection was the second overarching

theme to emerge from the data. This is consistent with the literature, which clearly demonstrates that reflection, including retrospective reflection, is crucial to sensemaking (Conway, 2001; Haque & Hasking, 2010; Lau, 2020; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Schultz, 1967; Weick, 1988).

In this case, the reflection was specifically directed towards developing an understanding of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education, and it was personal reflection except when given from the perception of a committee or other such group of people. These two primary themes, authentic relationships and sensemaking reflection, are further developed in the model by the middle concentric ring.

The middle concentric ring represents two secondary themes that occur within both the overarching themes of authentic relationships and sensemaking reflection. These secondary themes have been labelled ongoing praxis and trigger experiences. The first secondary theme, represented by the label ongoing praxis and extending across the upper semicircle, indicates shaping influences that are a part of the lived experiences of everyday life and occur over an extended period of time. These influences tend to be incremental and are not marked by any single event, but rather by an accumulation of small events that occur on a daily or weekly basis throughout a person's life or teaching career. This finding concurs with the ongoing nature of sensemaking. There is evidence of continuity in sensemaking that makes it difficult to determine a clear beginning or end (Weick, 1995). This research indicated a sense of continuity that had a subtle, yet shaping, impact on the perceptions of the participating educators.

Like ongoing relationships, ongoing reflection is generally understated and builds perceptions over time, although there may be certain periods or events in an individual's teaching career when this process accelerates. These events or relationships that speed up reflection make up the other secondary theme under the label *trigger experiences.*



Figure 5.1

Shaping Influences Model

The secondary theme of trigger experiences extends across the lower semicircle, and fits under both the overarching themes of authentic relationships and sensemaking. Unlike ongoing relationships and ongoing reflection, trigger experiences are activated by specific and often single events in the lived experience. Trigger experiences tend to be transient in nature and have greater impact in a shorter time frame than ongoing experiences. This study found evidence of the following trigger experiences identified in sensemaking literature: confusing and ambiguous

situations, and those that initiated a sense of shock (Helms et al., 2010; Maitlis & Christianson 2014).

Authentic relationships that are positioned within the bottom left quadrant of the model are relationships that generally exist for a time and purpose, after which the relationship alters or ceases to exist. These are called *transient relationships.* Transient relationships that are triggered by single, time-limited events have greater short-term power to shape perceptions than enduring relationships, but their influence may decline faster. Examples of transient relationships include *modelling, mentoring* and *virtual relationships,* which will be explored further in the next section.

Sensemaking reflection that is initiated by trigger experiences is found in the bottom right-hand quadrant of the model. It is so named because a trigger experience speeds up the reflection process, resulting in a short, concentrated period of reflection that may shape and change a person's perceptions in a relatively short time, extending from one day to several months. There are three types of trigger reflection: *translating, transforming,* and *transitioning reflection.* These will be explained in the next section.

The inner ring of the model demonstrates the breakdown of themes and processes into single identifiable influences that shaped the participants' perceptions of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education. Blue and yellow arrows divide the inner circle into four quadrants. Each quadrant contains a cluster of related shaping influences under the overarching themes of authentic relationships, and sensemaking reflection, and the secondary themes of ongoing praxis and trigger experiences. The shaping influences will be dealt with by quadrant in the following section.

Inner Circle: The Shaping Influences

Top Left Quadrant. Falling under the overarching theme of authentic relationships and the secondary theme of ongoing practice are three shaping influences: *spiritual relationships, personal relationships,* and *professional relationships*. In this study, *spiritual relationships* were those that existed between an individual and a personal God with the belief that God can and does interact in people's lives. This spiritual or

heart relationship influenced and inspired participants in various ways. Lisa turned to God when facing challenging situations, and Karen clung to her faith in God when she felt let down by circumstances. Michael spoke of his relationship with God and its impact on how he taught. All the participants viewed Adventist Education as a spiritual undertaking and tended to view themselves as partners with God in living lives of worship. This underlying relationship with God impacted their perceptions of Adventist Education, why it existed, and how it operated in their role.

The second shaping influence in this quadrant is *personal relationships*. This study defined a *personal relationship* as an enduring relationship between two individuals connected in some way other than through their work. The educators included parents, siblings, spouses, children, close friends, and Church friends in these relationships. Generally, these personal relationships functioned as encouragement and affirmation in the role of Christian teaching. However, they also served as the conduit to enhance an understanding of Adventist Education. This was the case with Patricia's children, whose perceptions of the Adventist school they attended moderated her previously strong views that she wanted nothing to do with Adventist Education. Lisa and Michael had spouses who taught in Adventist Schools, and other participants had spouses who supported their partner's role in Adventist Education.

The third type of relationship identified in the upper left quadrant is *professional relationships:* those relationships between two individuals that exist in a professional rather than personal capacity. The research identified *professional relationships* as those existing between the educators and colleague teachers or administrative colleagues. This also included relationships between teacher education students and their lecturers in this shaping influence. These relationships shaped perceptions through dialogue (sensemaking). They tended to be symbiotic and encouraged rigorous discussion about Adventist Education. Of the six educators who completed their initial teacher education course at Avondale, four gave examples of specific classes and lecturers who began to build a picture in their minds of what Adventist Education was all about. Michael found his mind and view of the world were expanded in English classes, and three of the educators indicated that the “Philosophy of Christian Education” subject, although taught by different lecturers

over the period covered by the educators in this study, encouraged them to think about the philosophy and purpose of Adventist Education. It also helped them to start identifying a framework and compile examples of praxis that were validated once they began their teaching career.

Bottom Left Quadrant. Still under the primary theme of authentic relationships, the transient relationships are prompted by trigger experiences formed through a single or shared event or experience. The first of these was *mentoring relationships*. *Mentoring relationships* were identified as relationships where one individual deliberately mentors another in ways of thinking or doing. Two kinds of mentoring emerged: the first was a formal mentoring process established by a school or other entity, and the second was an informal mentoring arrangement where the mentor perceived a need and voluntarily stepped in to meet the need. The latter type was the most evident in this investigation. Within mentoring relationships, the mentor was likely to be another teacher or principal, who supported the participant through informal discussion and sharing of ideas.

The second of the relationships to emerge from the trigger experiences was *modelling relationships.* Distinct from mentoring relationships this was not a "true" relationship but rather a connection that developed when one individual looked to another within the school environment for clues on how to operate within a particular culture without seeking his or her direct advice or input. Depending on the behaviour being observed, the models in this study were any significant people in a school setting, including department heads, other teachers at the school, and principals. In this investigation, modelling relationships functioned as teachers learned how to fit into the school culture vicariously by observing others and then as they enacted their roles.

The third type of relationship that became evident as part of a trigger experience was called *virtual relationships*. This term was coined to describe a relationship that is not face-to-face but is developed through interaction with a significant person's ideas. As it is a relationship with concepts, it may be triggered by reading a book or article, attending a professional development course or engaging with the philosophies of specific individuals in lectures or during a course of study. It results in an affinity with authors or presenters that the participants may never meet

face-to-face but who exert an influence over their beliefs and change their perceptions. A *virtual relationship* existed for three of the educators in the study.

An example given was the seminal book *Education*, a compilation of material written by Ellen White (1903). This book, which outlined White's views on Christian Education, was the textbook for The Philosophy of Christian Education class during the time some of the educators were at Avondale and mentioned by two of them as shaping their perceptions of Adventist Education. Rob took with him into his teaching the concepts of being made in God's image, redemptive discipline, a balanced curriculum, the importance of manual labour, nature as a revelation of God, and the integration of spiritual ideas into every aspect of teaching. Not every educator resonated with Ellen White's writing when they entered Adventist Education, although John, retrospectively, acknowledged that he began to reflect on her writings some time into his career.

Top Right Quadrant. On the right-hand side of the model, six different types of shaping influences helped determine the participants' perceptions of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education. The first three— *inducting reflection, informing reflection,* and *inspiring reflection*— are clustered under the secondary theme of ongoing praxis and indicate a reflection process that results in continuous, incremental change over an extended time.

The first shaping influence in this quadrant is *inducting reflection.* As the term indicates, it relates to induction or introduction to school culture, in which the respondents reflect on the school's culture as they simultaneously engage in the school's culture. In this study, *inducting reflection* occurred through the educators' participation in worships, chapels, service projects, teachers' retreats and Church services conducted by students. This engagement in the school's culture led towards a developing awareness of how things are done, that is, the praxis of Adventist Education. Although often initiated at the point of entering a school, the reflection was ongoing.

The second type of sensemaking reflection to emerge was *informing reflection* that is based on knowledge and observation of how a particular culture operates. The information that is disseminated and what people do with the disseminated information are observed, and an understanding of the organisation's

praxis develops along with the expectations of the various roles involved. What distinguishes *informing reflection* from *inducting reflection* is that the shaping of perceptions depends not on engagement in the culture but on observing people and processes.

The third shaping influence in this quadrant is *inspiring reflection.* As the name suggests, this is the reflection that grows specifically out of spiritual events and experiences that are part of the everyday program of the school and relate to the school's mission. In this study, it included staff worships, prayer, and chapels. *Inspiring reflection* is a category on its own due to the intentionality of the distinctively spiritual components, as separate from everyday school culture, which can also shape perceptions.

Bottom right quadrant. The final cluster of shaping influences result from trigger experiences that catalyse an individual's thinking and result in accelerated reflection for a limited time.

The first shaping influence in this category is *translating reflection*. This study defines it as a reflection for which the trigger experience is moving from one school culture to another. It is a particular type of reflection and occurs only when a person shifts employment from one education system into another. It offers a point of comparison and contrast between systems or organisations. It acts as a catalyst for shifting perceptions as the individual seeks to translate and understand the new school culture in which they find themselves. It includes socially “fitting in.”

Transforming reflection is defined for this study as accelerated reflection on a single or short-term event that develops new ideas about a school culture. The short-term event needs to be significant enough to have a lasting impact on the participant's perspective. Examples in this study included professional development activities or conferences attended. These events had the potential to speed up reflection for a contained period. During this time, perceptions changed quickly, and a new mindset was developed.

Transitioning reflection results from a change of role within the school culture. This occurs, for example, if a teacher transitions into a role as deputy or principal, from principal to conference administrative role, from pre-service teacher

to graduate teacher or from teacher to post-graduate student. Participants in the study found that a role change signalled a time of reflection as they viewed their school or educational organisation from a new perspective. A change of perspective often led to a change of perception regarding Adventist Education.

The twelve shaping influences represent the significant finding of this study. They offer new ways of understanding how individuals' perceptions of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education may evolve throughout their careers.

Additional Elements of the Model

The model shows a double helix that intertwines authentic relationships and sensemaking reflection, indicating that the two are inextricably linked. An example is a modelling relationship that develops when a teacher takes a position in a new school. Although the modelling relationship is positioned on the left-hand side of the model, it is also tied to the inducting or translating reflection on the right-hand side of the model. This indicates that every element of the model, whether it connects to authentic relationships or sensemaking reflection, has a social component.

The double helix is also symbolic in indicating that authentic relationships and sensemaking reflection form the building blocks of school culture and, therefore, are the primary influences that shape both individual and corporate perceptions about the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education.

The colours used in the model are also meaningful. The left half of the model uses the warmth of yellow to represent relationships, and the right side uses the cool of blue to represent sensemaking reflection. Where the two colours combine in the double helix is the growth area, represented by green. The blending of colours indicates the symbiotic relationship between authentic relationships and sensemaking reflection. Both the overarching themes will result in less positive outcomes on their own, while together, they create synergy.

Relationship of Sensemaking Properties to Shaping Influences

In this study, the eight properties of sensemaking functioned as a framework to explore the literature, and a process to guide the data analysis. Spirituality has

been proposed as an additional property that has been largely ignored in sensemaking literature. Figures 5.2 and 5.3 present visual representations of the association between the existing and additional proposed sensemaking properties and the shaping influences that emerged from the data analysis.

The property of identity in Figure 5.2 links to all the relationships identified in the study as shaping influences. Identity is central to sensemaking as the perception of self as one part of an organisation can influence and shape the views and behaviours of those in the organisation (Thurlow & Mills, 2009; Watson, 2009). The study identified two kinds of identity. The first was a notion of personal identity that was impacted by a relationship with God and others. The second was a professional identity that enabled an educator to know who they were in relationship to the organisation in which they worked. This closely aligned with their role, and the shaping influences impacting professional identity are indicated by the broken orange lines that connect professional identity with professional relationships, mentoring relationships, modelling relationships and virtual relationships. Professional and mentoring relationships rely on conversations that help to develop the concept of "us," progressing towards a sense of corporate identity (Weick, 1995). Figure 2.3 demonstrates how the shaping influences identified in this study as sensemaking reflection are an extension of sensemaking properties. For example, the property of identity, established by Weick (1995) and further developed by Thurlow and Mills (2009,) and Watson (2009), was evident in six different types of reflection, each one helping to position the educators within their organisation.

The property of retrospective reflection (Conway, 2001; Haque & Hasking, 2010; Lau, 2020; Weick, 1995) occurred naturally in this study as the educators reflected on the individuals with whom they had built relationships throughout their careers. A relationship with God directed their sensemaking, and long-term professional relationships helped to shape their perceptions of Adventist Education. Even the transient relationships, or lack of them, as in the case of mentors, shaped their perceptions of the praxis of Adventist Education and to a lesser extent, their perceptions of the philosophy and purpose. Retrospective reflection, as seen in Figure 5.3, was broken down by the educators into six different types of sensemaking reflection and tied closely to those events that resulted in a major re-thinking of the

environment, such as when an individual moved to another school system, or changed roles within a school. It should be noted, however, that reflection also occurred in the moment and was not always retrospective.

The sensemaking property of enactment in Figure 2.5 demonstrates two areas in which individuals react to their environment and create it. The two types of relationships where this was most evident were in mentoring, where engagement with another educator opened up possibilities to create new praxis while simultaneously responding to and observing the outcomes of their actions, as indicated by Maitlis and Christianson (2014). Even virtual relationships, when a new concept is encountered through media, serve as a catalyst for action and evaluation. Sensemaking reflection also offered opportunities for the educators to react, enact and evaluate. When inducting reflection, translating reflection, or transitioning reflection were identified by the educators in this study, observation was soon followed by enactment and evaluation. This enactment was also observed in informing, inspiring, and transforming reflection. Although reflection is often perceived as a solitary activity, this investigation found that reflection also occurred in group settings and therefore supports the findings of McArdle and Coutts (2010), who tout the benefits of group reflection in the sensemaking process.

Figure 5.2 deals with relationships and directly links to the property of social milieu in sensemaking literature. While sensemaking theory recognises the crucial role of the social environment (Weick, 1988), it relies more on the concept of clear communication between individuals (Foreman-Wernet, 2003; McGrath, 2001) than on the transient or enduring relationships that people form in the workplace. Current sensemaking literature has identified communal collegiality, ongoing discussion and feedback (Maitlis, 2005). However, this has been set more in formal settings such as staff meetings, as a study by McArdle and Coutts (2010) discovered. This study found that the role of relationships that are built on effective communication and affinity between individual educators is embedded within the property of social milieu. This aspect of relationships, distinct from communication per se, offers opportunities for further exploration in sensemaking literature.

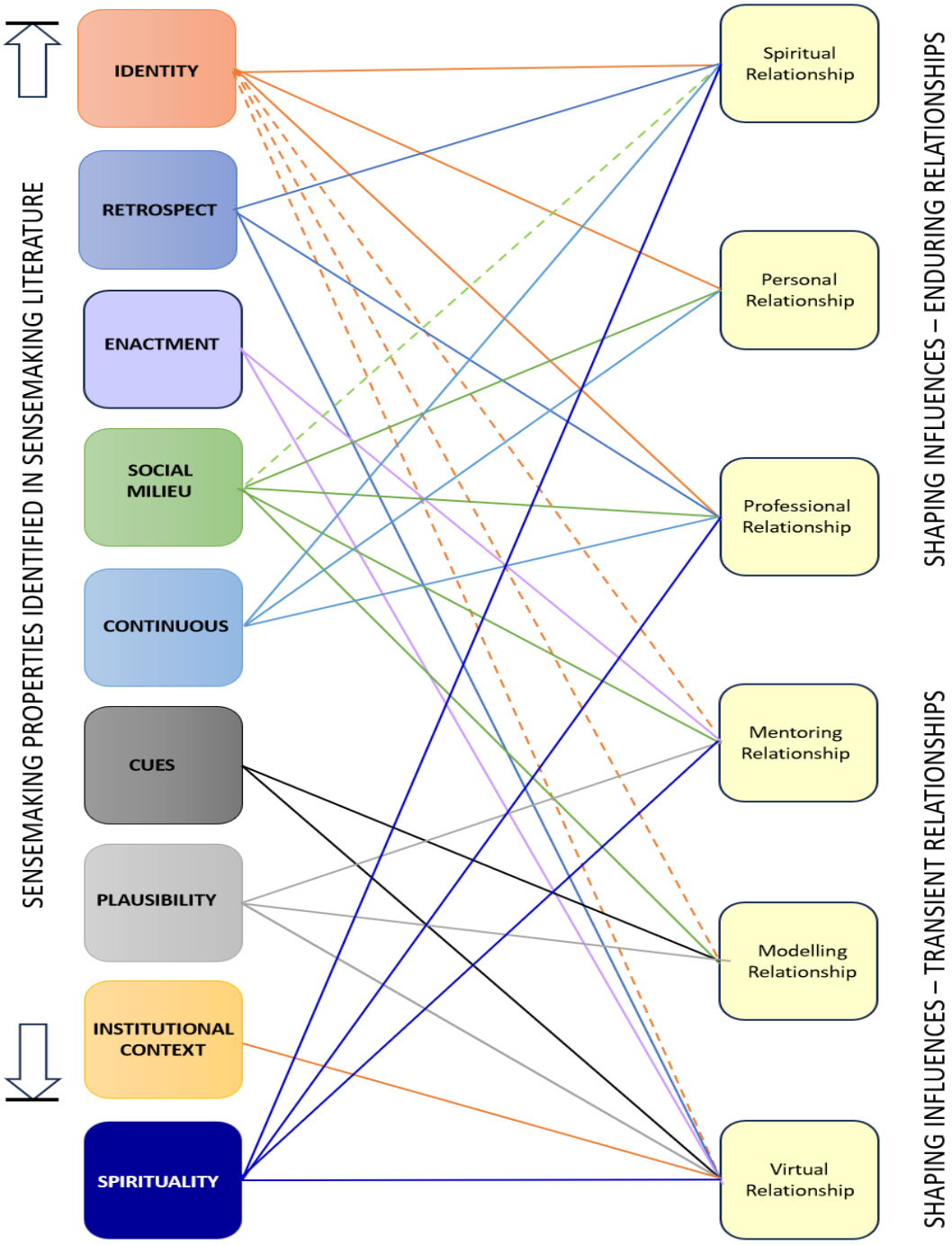


Figure 5.2

Relationships Between Sensemaking Properties and Shaping Influences

Sensemaking theory also identifies a sense of continuity as one of its properties. The sensemaking property of continuity (Weick, 1995) was supported by

this study, both in the area of enduring relationships (Figure 5.2), and ongoing sensemaking reflection (Figure 5.3). It was noted, however, that within this continuous process, some relationships, mentoring relationship, modelling relationships, and virtual relationships were not enduring but functional for a determined length of time. This supports the concept of fluidity that Weick (1995) identified. He noticed that individuals in organisations are always interacting with something or someone who impacts their sensemaking. This study concurs with this notion and extends current research by offering the idea that single short-term events may trigger sensemaking and disrupt the equilibrium of the sensemaking process temporarily until a new pathway of sensemaking occurs. As already identified, sensemaking reflection is prompted by events within a social milieu, offering opportunities for individual and collaborative sensemaking reflection. As noted with relationships, some sensemaking reflection is short-term and triggered by specific events. However, this study supports the notion that sensemaking is a continuous process that varies in intensity. Not only is the process continuous, but the ongoing nature of sensemaking, combined with the social context, provides opportunities for events that offer cues and prompt sensemaking. This is what shapes perceptions and ultimately, praxis.

This study also revealed that relationships may play a role in how people decipher cues, another property of sensemaking. For example, suppose a cue for praxis is attendance and involvement in weekly chapel programs. In that case, an educator may deduce that chapels are an integral and valued part of the school's culture. However, suppose a self-appointed or school-appointed mentor does not attend chapels regularly, and is rarely involved. In that case, the mentee may perceive this cued behaviour as optional rather than required. Cues that prompt sensemaking and sensemaking behaviour also come from ongoing or trigger experiences that inherently provoke reflection. The six shaping influences identified in Figure 5.3 all provide either ongoing or short-term cues that impact the sensemaking process and help shape perceptions.

Connected to how people decipher cues is the property of sensemaking that enables it to be driven by plausibility over accuracy. As Abolafia (2010) and Brown (2005) claim, it is plausibility that drives sensemaking as plausibility fits well with

action. Therefore, this study suggests that individuals will take from a relationship th

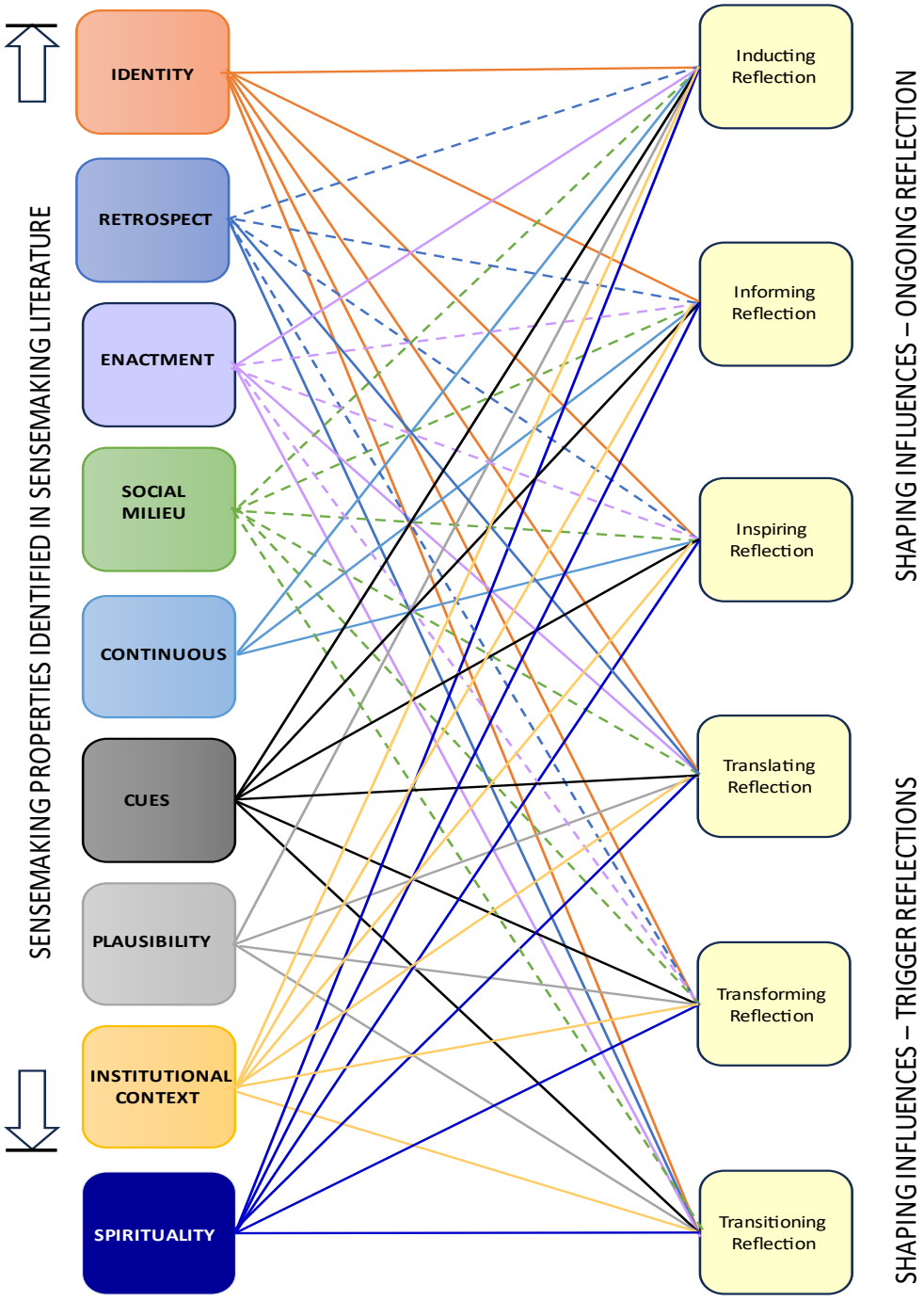


Figure 5.3

Relationships Between Sensemaking Properties and Shaping Influences (Sensemaking Reflection)

This could occur particularly in mentoring and modelling relationships and even virtual relationships, as seen in Figure 5.2. The same approach to plausibility is evident in Figure 5.3, where the educators may take a pragmatic approach to changing or existing circumstances rather than striving for the ideal.

Institutional context, an additional sensemaking property offered by Weber and Glynn (2006), is less evident in the shaping influences pertaining to relationships. However, virtual relationships where ideas can be filtered through an organisational lens, demonstrate how this property may work. However, when we look at the shaping influences on Figure 5.3, it becomes apparent that in Adventist Education, the institutional context played a central role in the educators' reflections, although their perceptions of the institution varied somewhat.

The final sensemaking property is spirituality. In the faith-based context of this study, spirituality flowed seamlessly through relationships shared by the educators in their narratives (Figure 5.2). Each educator brought their own spiritual perspective to the faith-based organisation that employed them, and this potentially moderated their reflection on long- and short-term experiences, consequently impacting their perceptions and actions (Figure 5.3).

As seen in Figures 5.2 and 5.3, the shaping influences are put into perspective with a sensemaking framework and this confirms their important role in shaping the educators' perceptions of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education.

Relevance of This Study to Leaders and Teacher Educators

Aim 4 of the study was “To identify what leaders and teacher educators in Adventist Education can learn from the lived experiences of eight educators.”

This study has highlighted the unique perception that each stakeholder in Adventist Education brings to their organisation as a result of their lived experiences. As leaders and teacher educators have no control over an individual’s lived experiences prior to the point where they take on a teaching role or other role in education, this presents challenges regarding perceptions of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education.

Perceptions may be already fixed and this may present obstacles to a school organisation's efficacy in fulfilling its mission. However, there are also opportunities, for as the sensemaking literature indicates, sensemaking is a continuous process with neither a clear beginning nor a determined end (Weick, 1995). Allard-Poesi (2005) emphasises that sensemaking is accelerated when triggered by the novel, confusing, or the unexpected. This means that every teacher education student, every teacher in a school, every school leader, and every administrator is always adapting, refining, or redefining their perceptions of Adventist Education.

The two major themes under which the shaping influences emerged offer opportunities for leaders and teacher educators to offer experiences that may have a positive impact on educator's perceptions of Adventist Education. The first theme is authentic relationships and the second is sensemaking reflection.

Authentic relationships emerged strongly as an overall shaping influence. As organisations are micro-societies and societies are made up of people, it follows that people and how they relate to each other will impact the perceptions held about the organisation. Therefore, school organisations should consider how they can encourage authentic and positive relationships within the organisation. One way to achieve this is to ensure clear and open communication, as communication is a sign of a healthy relationship. Foreman-Wernet (2003) makes the salient point that how communication occurs is crucial to sensemaking; therefore, providing opportunities for open, reflective dialogue is desirable. This study takes the concept of communication one step further, however, into the realm of relationships.

Relationships not only require open communication, but are built on trust and affinity. School leaders can champion the building and maintenance of relationships in their schools. Recognition and affirmation of spiritual and personal relationships, although beyond the school's jurisdiction, can raise awareness that Adventist Education is about the whole person and their relationship with God.

School leadership can play a crucial role in building professional relationships. McArdle and Coutts (2010) developed communities of practice in a school using the key characteristics of dialogue, questioning and feedback. Maitlis (2005) contributes further, adding that highly engaging, well planned and organised

meetings such as staff meetings elicit a sense of animation that drives both sensemaking and—from this study's perspective—relationship building. Schools may also engage in relationship building through the implementation of formal or informal mentoring programs. Done well, mentoring builds relationships, although the converse is also true. One interesting point to note from this study is that the mentoring relationship may extend beyond procedures and curriculum to the ethos of the school and poses the question, "How might mentor teachers contribute to a deeper understanding of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education?"

The second overarching theme that shaped perceptions was sensemaking reflection. School leadership can play an active role in this space by providing opportunities for shared or personal reflection. This supports Maitlis and Christianson (2014), who found that shared reflection accelerates sensemaking and action. Furthermore, this study builds an awareness of the ongoing nature of sensemaking reflection that may be prompted by engaging in the culture daily, or triggered by a school event, a change in role, or increased responsibility.

Those who prepare the educators of tomorrow can learn from this study that their students will not enter the workplace with a complete understanding of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education, although they may encourage them to think about their role as teachers within the context of Christian Education and Adventist Education in particular. The capstone unit in Christian teacher education courses should be designed to set graduating students up for a career of sensemaking reflection that involves a Christian worldview and their perceptions of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education, recognising that this is a journey.

Opportunities for Further Research

This investigation has identified areas for further study. Although many research opportunities exist, two claim a position of significance. First, further study into the role that spirituality plays in an organisation is deemed imperative to validate spirituality as a sensemaking property in the literature. Case studies of organisations, both religious and secular, in education and the corporate world, and in not-for-profit

organisations, would provide a research base from which to legitimise spirituality as a sensemaking property.

Secondly, the shaping influences identified in this study could be used as a basis for a survey of educators in a quantitative study that would extend this study's findings from how perceptions are shaped to which shaping influences are most prevalent over a wider population.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has discussed the findings and their relevance to the research question and aims within the context of sensemaking and a historical account of the development of Adventist Education in Australia. It has explored the different perceptions of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education that exist and identified the lived experiences that may account for commonality and differences in the perceptions of the participants. The chapter has also presented a case for the inclusion of spirituality as a sensemaking property, based on the self-identified role that spirituality played in the perceptions of the educators participating in this study, and on the initial research by Potter (2020). This chapter has also presented a grounded theory model which identifies the shaping influences and an explanation of how they impact the participants' perceptions of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education. The shaping influences are also presented in the context of sensemaking, showing a definite association between the two, and how the shaping influences identified in this study take sensemaking properties to an additional level.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Preface: My Voice

My journey is almost over, but one thing still waits. I need to justify my journey by offering the treasures I gathered along the way. My journey has been long and has taken me places I did not expect. I did not have the benefit of a map or signposts. Now it is time to offer fellow travellers guidance, should they wish to travel this road. I hope that my wanderings through the lived experiences of others will resonate with those who are passionate about Adventist Education.

Introduction

The value of this narrative thesis is derived from the perspectives of eight educators in different roles in Adventist Education over time, meaning the duration of their career in Adventist Education, and in time, meaning at specific points in their lives. Viewing each educator's individual lived experiences has revealed the influences that have shaped their perceptions of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education. These shaping influences appear in the shaping influences model. This chapter draws together the people, the organisation, and the people's perceptions of the organisation in ways that answer the research question, highlight the implications, and offer recommendations for the future of Adventist Education.

This investigation has implications for research in methodology and knowledge generation. It integrates and extends the current research in the field of sensemaking by proposing spirituality as a property, extending Potter's (2020) research in which she identified spirituality as factor which can influence sensemaking. Furthermore, it delves into the existing properties of sensemaking theory and offers an additional layer of understanding through the shaping influences identified from the data gathered. It has explored the conflicts, tensions, and minor or major changes that initiate sensemaking within Adventist education.

As knowledge generation, this research responds to the call of Knight (2017) for educators to examine the philosophy that undergirds Adventist Education, consider its implications, and extend the philosophy to their praxis. The eight lived experience narratives have offered insights into eight educators' perceptions of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education, the influences that shaped their journey towards these perceptions, and how this may assist in strengthening a unified view of what it means to be an educator in Adventist Education.

Accompanying each educator on their retrospective life journey with Adventist Education was a privilege. It opened a window to the multi-faceted factors that influence both individual and corporate sensemaking within organisations and ultimately shaped the perceptions of the participating educators. I trust this study will give educators an understanding that extends beyond the official stance of an organisation into the interplay of lived experience as articulated in the narratives.

This research raises some issues in Adventist Education around the gap between the official stance on the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education and the stance held by educators within the organisation. It also offers some new ways of looking at issues. While each of the educators' narratives may be read individually, the collective knowledge of their stories has the potential to support educators at all stages of their careers in Adventist Education.

Findings and Recommended Actions

Finding 1

That an individual's spirituality, as evidenced in the value they place on their relationship with God and the worldview they adopt, helps shape their perceptions of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education.

Implication. A school with teaching and support staff with diverse worldviews and levels of spiritual commitment may face challenges implementing praxis consistent with the philosophy and purpose of Adventist Education. The role of spirituality in sensemaking could be researched in other types of organisations, including secular ones.

Recommendation 1. That consideration be given to including spirituality as a sensemaking property in the literature on this topic.

Finding 2

That the shaping influences emerging from this research represent an additional level of factors that have the potential to impact sensemaking properties when used as a framework.

Implication. Extending current research on the properties of sensemaking may offer school administrators and leaders opportunities to encourage individual and shared sensemaking that leads to positive action and outcomes.

Recommendation 2. That school leaders in Adventist schools become familiar with the Shaping Influences Model and use it to both understand how sensemaking may occur in their school and how they may prompt sensemaking about the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education.

Finding 3

It cannot be assumed that everyone has a developed understanding of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education when they enter the Adventist Education system. This finding holds true for each educator, including those from an Adventist Education background and those who gained their teacher education credentials from Avondale.

Implication. Within any school or associated education organisation, educators will have a variety of perceptions about Adventist Education ranging from rudimentary to coherent.

Recommendation 3. Teachers entering Adventist education, whether as graduate teachers or transferring teachers, should be given a mentor to assist them, not only with curriculum and procedures but with the Adventist identity of school culture and ethos, with the outcome of grounding their content and teaching praxis in a Christian worldview.

Recommendation 4. Consideration should be given to conducting professional development in a reflective, collegial manner that focuses on the key concepts and goals of Adventist education, including what this looks like in praxis.

This professional development would ideally be built into the yearly cycle for educators and be a natural part of Adventist Education that is school-based rather than external.

Finding 4

It cannot be assumed that all educators have a shared understanding of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education, either at their early or late career stages.

Implication. People in a school organisation will have different perceptions of Adventist Education regardless of their years of experience in the organisation. This may result in conflicting views and impact the capacity of a school to fulfil its mission, or it could be celebrated as offering refreshing diversity and create opportunities for critical thinking.

Recommendation 5*.* That school leaders, in recognition that an individual's understanding of the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education develops at different rates and is an ongoing process, seek opportunities for regular, inclusive discourse and reflection on this topic as part of the school program.

Finding 5

Professional and mentoring relationships have the greatest power of all relationships to shape perceptions of Adventist Education.

Implication. The quality of mentoring and professional relationships may impact a school's culture and its ability to fulfil its mission.

Recommendation 6. To prioritise building authentic relationships in a culture of trust within schools and other educational organisations.

Recommendation 7. That mentoring programs be broadened to include more than curriculum, content, and structure of learning and teaching, but also include discussions on why, what, and how content is taught in an Adventist school. This would include approaches to dealing with the tensions that sometimes arise between the Australian National Curriculum content and a Christian worldview.

Recommendation 8. That mentoring be offered for graduate teachers, teachers transferring from another school system, teachers changing roles within the same school or to an administrative role, and—to a lesser extent, but still desirable — teachers transferring from another Adventist school.

Recommendation 9. To encourage professional relationships by developing communities of practice within schools that align with the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education and allow for discourse on the topic.

Concluding Remarks

System administrators, school leaders, and teachers may use the finding that sensemaking reflection of lived experiences within Adventist Education strongly influences how key stakeholders perceive the philosophy, purpose, and praxis of Adventist Education to strengthen their own teaching or work practice. This study supports an organisation-wide culture of reflective practice that targets every aspect of Adventist Education. It also supports the concept of relationship building as an avenue to understanding and implementing the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education. This research culminates in a Shaping Influences Model, which could be a suitable framework for future research in Adventist and other faith-based education.

In adopting a narrative approach, my intent was to construct a virtual relationship with the reader, who may have shared experiences with the eight educators who honestly and willingly shared their lived experiences with me. I have endeavoured to create a reflexive text that invites the reader to become a co-participant in the quest for a more thorough understanding of how their perceptions of the philosophy, purpose and praxis of Adventist Education have developed.

I acknowledge that this research only begins to understand this topic. It recognises that what we sometimes take for granted as tacit knowledge exists in educators' minds in numerous prototypes. It accepts the premise that each educator's life is a series of twists and turns, tensions and reactions, choices and contradictions that shape their perceptions.

When I was asked why this research topic was necessary in a session with one of my supervisors, I replied, "An organisation that is not aware of how it works

at its best will probably work at its worst." This is my attempt to contribute to the knowledge about how Adventist Education may work at its best as it seeks to fulfil its mission to the world.

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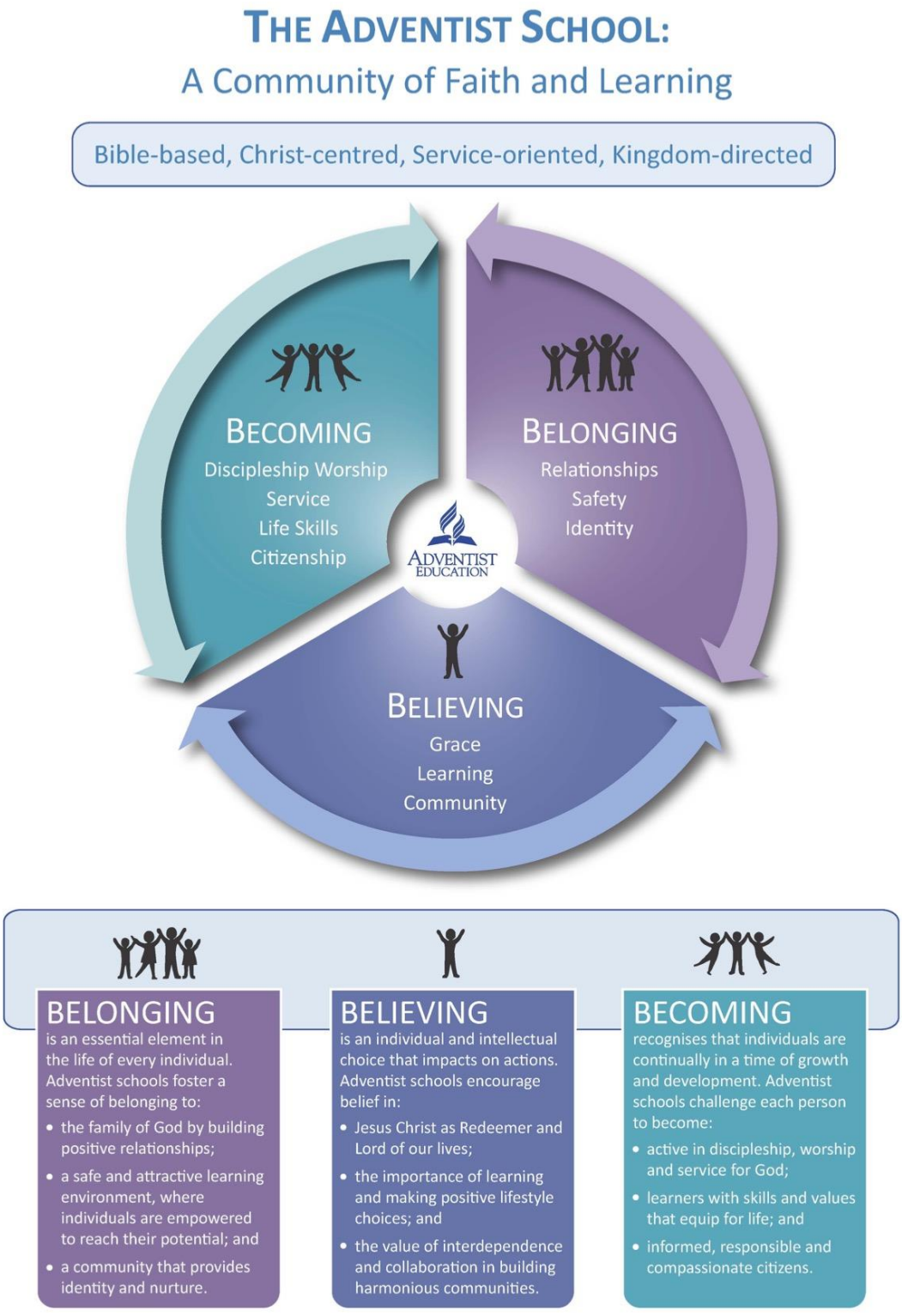
APPENDICES

Appendix A

The Adventist School: A Community of Faith and Learning Model



Adventist Identity Teaching Standards

Supplement to the AITSL National Professional Standards for Teachers

Know Students and How they Learn				
Focus Area	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
1.7 Understand how students learn about God	1.7.1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how students learn and develop their understanding about God and the implications for teaching.	1.7.2 Design and implement teaching programs to promote and support students' learning about God.	1.7.3 Collaborate with and support colleagues in developing teaching programs which enhance students' learning about God, informed by research and using a flexible range of strategies.	1.7.4 Advocate for and lead in developing and reviewing strategies that build the school's knowledge and capacity for supporting students in learning about God.

Know The Content and How to Teach It				
Focus Area	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
2.7 Knowledge of the content of the Bible and its teachings	2.7.1 Demonstrate an understanding of the Bible as a metanarrative, including key Bible stories, passages and teachings.	2.7.2 Use effective teaching strategies to integrate Bible stories and themes into specific content in appropriate and meaningful ways.	2.7.3 Exhibit innovative practice in modelling, sharing with and assisting colleagues to improve strategies for linking Biblical concepts and narratives in their professional practice.	2.7.4 Conduct and lead in regular reviews and initiatives which establish mature policies and processes to improve both teacher and student knowledge and application of the Bible.
2.8 Reflect an Adventist Worldview	2.8.1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how an Adventist Christian Worldview is integrated into learning and teaching.	2.8.2 Understand and differentiate the various worldviews to integrate a genuine Adventist Christian Worldview into classroom and school activities.	2.8.3 Model high-level integration of a genuine Adventist Christian worldview into practice and work with colleagues to develop and evaluate strategies and resources to improve integration.	2.8.4 Lead and develop Adventist Christian worldview 'champions' within the school to ensure teachers and students continue to develop an understanding of an Adventist Christian Worldview.

Plan for and Implement Effective Teaching and Learning				
Focus Area	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
3.8 Integrate Faith and Learning	3.8.1 Demonstrate an understanding of how integrating Faith and Learning assists students in making their faith relevant.	3.8.2 Plan and implement effective strategies for the integration of Faith and Learning to engage students in their learning about God.	3.8.3 Develop a culture of high expectations surrounding student faith development in the context of a healthy, appropriate non-separation of the sacred and secular.	3.8.4 Model and promote faith and learning integration and lead colleagues in developing, implementing and reviewing professional practice in the integration of faith and learning in the school curriculum.

Create and Maintain Supportive and Safe Learning Environments				
Focus Area	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
4.6 Promote (and/or Support) Students Belonging to a Community of Faith and Learning	4.6.1 Understand, support and accept the journey of faith and development of each student in an inclusive environment.	4.6.2 Incorporate inclusive strategies that foster acceptance and understanding of the students' journey of faith and development.	4.6.3 Collaborate with and provide advice to colleagues about the ongoing development and support of a community of faith and learning which is welcoming, safe and based on Biblical principles.	4.6.4 Evaluate, review and further develop the school's practice in the context of "The Adventist School – A Community of Faith and Learning" model.

Assess, Provide Feedback and Report on Student Learning				
Focus Area	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead

Engage in Professional Learning				
Focus Area	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
6.5 Christian professional learning and ethics	6.5.1 Demonstrate an understanding of the rationale of Adventist Education and a commitment to ongoing learning in the context of an Adventist school.	6.5.2 Participate in and contribute to ethical and professional discussion and practice within the context of a Christian professional learning community.	6.5.3 Articulate, implement and promote quality professional learning and communication in the context of a Christian professional learning community.	6.5.4 Advocates and lead professional learning in the Christian context through the strategies supported in the Quality Adventist Schools improvement framework.

Engage Professionally with Colleagues, Parents/care givers and the Community				
Focus Area	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
7.5 Mission and ethos of an Adventist school	7.5.1 Understand and apply the mission and ethos of an Adventist school by developing a service focus, and participating in service and worship activities at the school and community level.	7.5.2 Demonstrate service-focused relationships with students, colleagues and parents/care givers, and contribute to service and worship activities at the school and community level.	7.5.3 Build and promote service-focused relationships at every level, and initiate and engage in innovative service-focused activities in the school and community in accordance with the mission and ethos of an Adventist school.	7.5.4 Mentor staff and students in building service-focused relationships, and lead in planning and implementing relevant and meaningful service activities in the school and community in accordance with the mission and ethos of an Adventist school.

Appendix C

Ethics Approval



2014 01 Bev Christian final approval 140521.pdf

Appendix D

Research Information Letter

Dear XXXXXXXXX,

This is an invitation for you to participate in a research project. Please read the information which explains the research and the role you are being asked to take in this investigation.

TOPIC: THE SPECIAL CHARACTER OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION: A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION INTO PERCEPTIONS OF PHILOSOPHY, PURPOSE, AND PRACTICE

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

This investigation takes a cross-section of key stakeholders in one Conference of the Adventist Church in Australia and explores their perceptions of the Special Character of Adventist Education: its philosophy, purpose, and practice. It will explore these perceptions and how they developed through the shared life and work experiences of the participants in a series of three interviews.

INVITATION

You are being invited to participate in this research project which is being conducted by Beverly Christian. Beverly is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Education at Avondale College of Higher Education and this research project is part of her PhD studies.

PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THIS RESEARCH

The purpose of this study is to investigate key stakeholders' perceptions of the Special Character of Adventist Education; its philosophy, purpose, and practice. This is important as society and educational practice in the 21st Century are rapidly undergoing changes which present a challenge in terms of maintaining the core cultural values and identity of Adventist Education (Iselin, 2009). Other key issues facing Adventist Education include curriculum conformity, changing perceptions of parents, and student demographics. Each of these areas has the potential to impact the Special Character of Adventist Education. This research will give a voice to individuals who are responsible for implementing and sustaining Special Character in Adventist Schools. Hearing the various voices is important as a coherent and united approach to Special Character is essential to the mission of Adventist Education in Australia.

WHO IS BEING INVITED OR SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE?

This case study will target a vertical slice of Seventh-day Adventist Church and Education administrators at the Australian Conference Union and Conference level, along with a principal, school council chairperson, local Church pastor, and teachers from one school within the conference.

WHAT DOES PARTICIPATION INVOLVE?

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to attend three interviews, the final one of which will be for the purpose of checking transcripts and initial findings for accuracy. In one interview, you will be asked to draw a simple mind map, flow chart, or diagram. After each interview, you will receive a copy of your interview transcript before it is analysed for dissemination.

HOW MUCH TIME WILL IT TAKE?

It is anticipated that the first and second interviews will take approximately one hour. The third interview should take about 30 minutes to complete.

POSSIBLE RISKS OR INCONVENIENCES

None perceived.

BENEFITS

I cannot and do not guarantee or promise you any individual benefits from participating in this research. I do however, hope this research will encourage reflection on perspectives of Adventist Education that may be useful to you in your current role.

CONFIDENTIALITY, ANONYMITY AND DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

All names will be removed from the data and you will be allocated a numerical code which will be used for all interview and written data.

The audio data will be transcribed and transferred to CD and/or computer files. The data will be stored for five years in a locked cabinet in my office or on a password secure computer. At the end of the five year period after the conclusion of the research, audio files will be wiped, CDs physically destroyed and physical data shredded in a secure shredding process.

All aspects of the study including the findings will be stored securely and only accessed by the researchers unless you consent otherwise.

USE OF INFORMATION COLLECTED

The information collected will be analysed and reported in a thesis, scientific papers and professional conferences. Confidentiality of individual participants and organisations will be assured. In any publication, you will be given a pseudonym and information will be provided in such a way that you cannot be identified. Participants will be sent a summary of the final findings.

FREEDOM OF CONSENT

Participation in this research is voluntary. It is completely up to you whether or not to participate. Only people who give their informed consent will be included in the study. Even if you agree to participate you may withdraw at anytime without giving a reason. If you decide not to participate, or wish to withdraw from the project at any point, you will not be disadvantaged in any way. If you chose to withdraw and if it is possible to retrieve, your data will be returned to you

Please read this information statement and be sure you understand its contents before you consent to participate. After you have read this information, Beverly Christian will contact you by phone to answer questions, or if there is anything you do not understand, you can contact her on 4980 2187.

If you would like to participate please return the signed consent form to bev.christian@avondale.edu.au

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like further information please contact [bev.christian@avondale.edu.au].

This research project has been approved by the Avondale College of Higher Education Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). Avondale requires that all participants are informed that if they have any complaint concerning the manner in which a research project is conducted it may be given to the researcher, or if an independent person is preferred, to Avondale's HREC Secretary, Avondale College of Higher Education, PO Box 19, Cooranbong NSW 2265, or phone (02) 4980 2121 or fax (02) 4980 2117 or email: research.ethics@avondale.edu.au

Thank you for considering this invitation

Beverly J. Christian

Appendix E

Participant Consent Form

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

The Special Character of Adventist Education: A qualitative investigation into perceptions of philosophy, purpose and practice

Beverly J. Christian bev.christian@avondale.edu.au

In regard to the above research I:

- agree to participate in the research project and I give my consent freely.
- have read and understand the information provided in the Information Statement.
- understand that the project will be conducted as described in the Information Statement, a copy of which I have been given to keep.
- understand I can withdraw from the project at any time and do not have to give any reason for withdrawing; nor will I be disadvantaged in any way by withdrawing.

The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me and I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction.

I consent to participate in three interviews that will be audio-tape recorded, and complete a simple conceptual drawing task as part on one interview.

I also understand that my personal information will remain confidential.

Print name

Signature_ Date

Contact details:

Preferred email address:

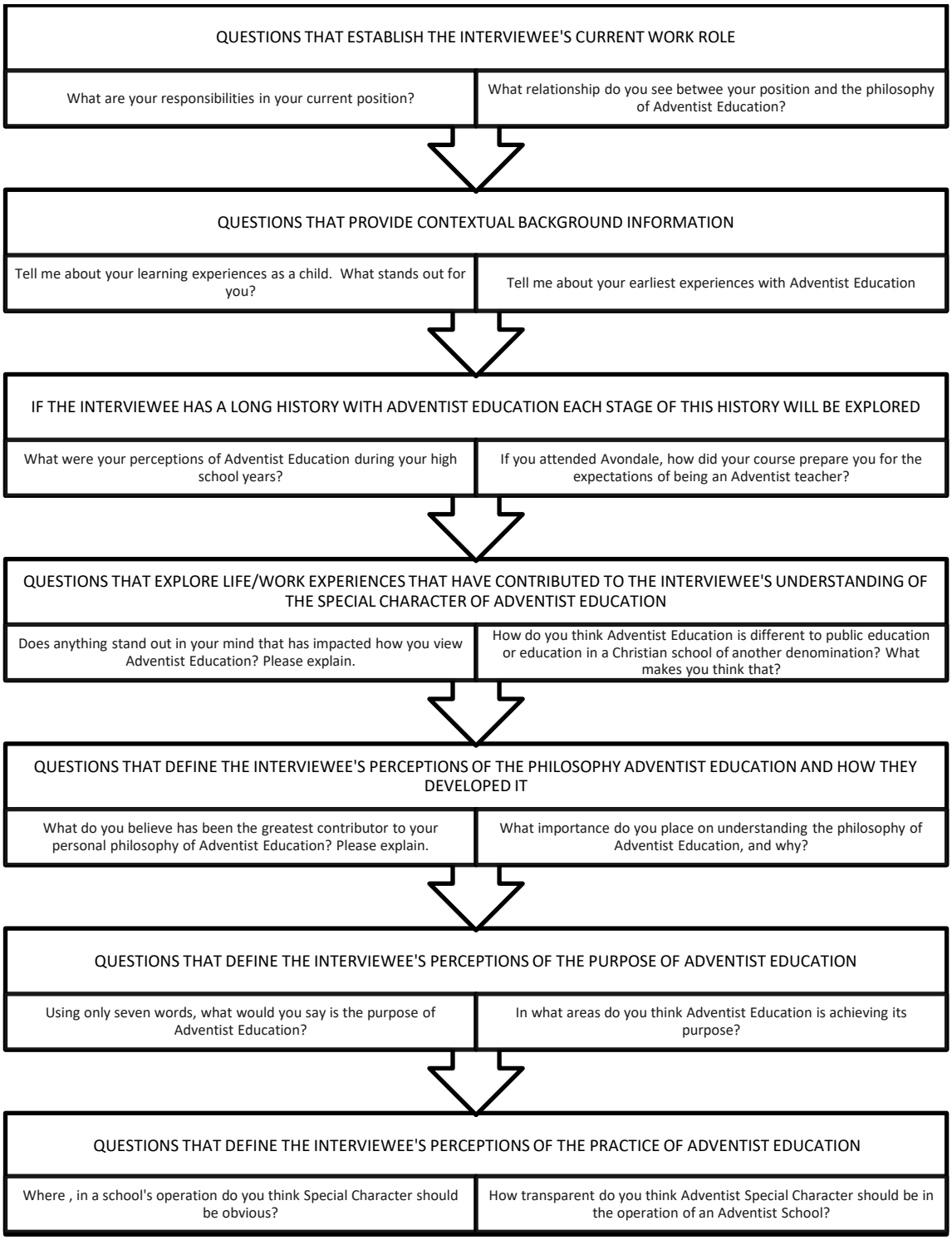
Preferred telephone number:

Appendix F

Sample Interview Structure/Questions

SAMPLE INTERVIEW STRUCTURE/QUESTIONS

The questions listed below are sample questions only. Questions were guided by interviewee responses, and the role the participant holds in the Adventist Church system.


QUESTIONS THAT ESTABLISH THE INTERVIEWEE'S CURRENT WORK ROLE
What are your responsibilities in your current position?
What relationship do you see betwee your position and the philosophy of Adventist Education?
QUESTIONS THAT PROVIDE CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION
Tell me about your learning experiences as a child. What stands out for you?
Tell me about your earliest experiences with Adventist Education
IF THE INTERVIEWEE HAS A LONG HISTORY WITH ADVENTIST EDUCATION EACH STAGE OF THIS HISTORY WILL BE EXPLORED
What were your perceptions of Adventist Education during your high school years?
If you attended Avondale, how did your course prepare you for the expectations of being an Adventist teacher?
QUESTIONS THAT EXPLORE LIFE/WORK EXPERIENCES THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE INTERVIEWEE'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE SPECIAL CHARACTER OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION
Does anything stand out in your mind that has impacted how you view Adventist Education? Please explain.
How do you think Adventist Education is different to public education or education in a Christian school of another denomination? What makes you think that?
QUESTIONS THAT DEFINE THE INTERVIEWEE'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE PHILOSOPHY ADVENTIST EDUCATION AND HOW THEY DEVELOPED IT
What do you believe has been the greatest contributor to your personal philosophy of Adventist Education? Please explain.
What importance do you place on understanding the philosophy of Adventist Education, and why?
QUESTIONS THAT DEFINE THE INTERVIEWEE'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE PURPOSE OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION
Using only seven words, what would you say is the purpose of Adventist Education?
In what areas do you think Adventist Education is achieving its purpose?
QUESTIONS THAT DEFINE THE INTERVIEWEE'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE PRACTICE OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION
Where , in a school's operation do you think Special Character should be obvious?
How transparent do you think Adventist Special Character should be in the operation of an Adventist School?

Appendix G

Sample Interview Transcripts From Participant 3 (Jason)

Interview with Participant 3

First Interview

Interviewer: okay, so here's just so that I'm aware a little bit about graphical information, so you know your growing up here, Newcastle, family...

Interviewee: Yeah, so I grew up in Toronto and I was brought home from the hospital into the same house that my parents are still in now, so -- which is a hundred meters from the Church that my grandfather and dad built with their own hands. So [0:00:29Inaudible] so, yeah, my upbringing is in a very strong Baptist home at Toronto Baptist. My dad didn't come from a strong Baptist home but my mum, my grandfather -- my mum did and my dad's grandparents. And so that's… my… I guess background. I've probably been in Toronto all my life, went to Toronto high, went to Toronto Baptist Church, played sport for Toronto. In a sum, I'm a local boy. I went to Sydney for five years and taught at a big private school called [Name of school], big independent Catholic school. Wonderful school, wonderful place, and then was lucky enough when [previous geography teacher] left here to go overseas to [name of country], I applied for the job, the teaching job and was interviewed and was very lucky and thankful to get that. So that's, I guess, a little background of how I ended up here. So next year will be my 15th year here (cross talk)

Interviewer: I've just always, you know, associated your name with the geography department.

Interviewee: yeah, so am head of department now for HSIE. Have been for about eight years. Eight years, maybe nine. Yeah, so that's -- so I'm a local boy around the lake as a lot of people are So that's, I guess, a little bit of background from where I come -- when I, when I was attending [Name of city] Uni, I used to drive past the campus here, it was being built. I was very curious about what was going on

Interviewer: okay

Interviewee: and then after the five years at [Name of previous school], I saw the job advertised in the paper and, yeah, I got it.

Interviewer: Excellent

Interviewee: Yeah

Interviewer: Very good Okay, so, excellent, you know, background there, so on applying and being successful, you settled into here. Time to find out all that curiosity, time to find out about here.

Interviewee: Well I had no idea about Adventists at all. None of my friends were Adventists, none of them, of course not playing against you know sport were Adventists, even though [Name of town where there was another Adventist school] was 20 minutes' drive from [Town where he lived]. I had no experience of Adventist

education or Adventists in general. Which is quite shocking really when I reflected on it years later and I got to know [Another teacher who taught at the current school] and then he said… yeah, we were a very close community and we didn't move outside of that circle, so I said well yeah… I said I'd find it, you know, just -- I'm usually ahead of, you know what I mean, that's...

Interviewer: Yes?

Interviewee: and so I had no idea if the school… there were some shocks when I first arrived. My dad was a Baptist minister for, up until a year after I was born. So I spoke to dad a lot about the job before I applied and he actually saw the job advertised before I did. He corrected me quickly and you know, most of the… there's so much about Adventism and Baptist beliefs that are the same. It's very true on the side you know, there's a few niche things which are unique to both organizations, and day of worship, but really, from that (cross talk)

Interviewer: but if you hadn't had friends or (cross talk) you really don't know that, do you?

Interviewee: No, and you don't, it wasn't a straight learning curve for me and, yeah, for quite a while, and I guess none of that was -- I was very new to -- and the school really hadn't employed many non-Adventists at that point. And am so thankful to [Name of principal at that time] who employed me here and saw the vision of getting people in who weren't necessarily Adventists and -- because he told me openly and I really do respect [Name of principal mentioned above] for that. [Name] was the education director at the time. What a wonderful guy he was. He was really such a wonderful, gentle guy who has spent time talking with when I first started. He really you know -- and colleagues here as well. You know it's quiet colleagues like [Teacher at the school] who filled me in and I shared an office with [Name] when I first arrived and she lessened the shock when I first arrived…not that it was really a shock if you know what I mean.

Interviewee: Absolutely. So I had certain in essence some very good mentors in that respect and in that was probably a little bit of a settling here for me. There are -- I really didn't think that changed a great deal for quite a while and many new teachers coming in really struggled around those things.

Interviewer: So what were some of the things that sort of were culturally strange or…

Interviewee: Oh no, nothing was strange, (pause)

Interviewer: because if you come from a place (cross talk)

Interviewee: Yes, it's not really strange, little adjustments—(pause) I think within Adventist schools, and I sort of still had my own Church so there was, you know, was very unusual –(Pause) not usual at this point that the difference between a school and local Church and how they to some extent interfered or influenced each other's decisions was very different and I hadn't worked in a place where often you know things that were going on in school were obviously being criticized or critiqued from...(long pause)

Interviewer: A Church?

Interviewee: Yeah, a Church and... so that was unusual. The school really wasn't standing on its own and then -- and there seemed to be this body above. I don't think anymore, but I think in times there has been people being very fearful of conference, and I didn't come from a system that had that. There was a kind of this overbearing fear that (pause) I found it fascinating, because I've never worried about my lifestyle or anything like that but some people would worry that their lifestyle would get found out by the conference and -- So those are some of the really odd structural things that I did not understand and not that it concerned me but yeah, that was some (pause) that was not just the principal of the school that there was a director and people above them that...(long pause)

Interviewer: The, people felt accountable to the Church ? …

Interviewee: Well yeah, all that might have you know, a stamp [of approval] or something. Those are a bit more unusual I guess essence around that, but again that didn't worry me because I didn't—(pause) it's not a part of me, you know, it's (pause) I've got my Church and I guess that was unusual when at first people would talk around those hushed tones of (pause) that affected what went on here and often you'd hear comments from people on high within the school about you know the decisions being made at the school but not upsetting the local ministry or something like that was, you know. I don't think that really exists anymore but certainly in a lot of those times did. That was probably the biggest one for me. I understood Friday nights so I've never had an issue with that. So I think it's actually a wonderful way to start and close the Sabbath and when I would take the kids away to [Name of country]. It's a lovely time to start the Friday night with opening Sabbath and then Sabbath afternoon closing Sabbath. Really I respect that tradition. I think it's wonderful. I guess from an Adventist education point of view, that was one of the big events .

Interviewer: The organization, since it's sort of not just a school organization but this whole Church thing?

Interviewee: all filters and aspects constantly interfering. I guess interfering is not the correct word but influencing unduly at times, yeah that was one. I guess that one (cross talk).

Interviewer: yeah, I mean, you know coming with the faith that you had you probably felt quite comfortable coming. Where you would be working in the first place (pause) so you would have settled quite comfortably into... (long pause)

Interviewee: With some people? Yeah with some people. When I worked with (Name of previous school) they were incredibly engaging about me being from a different faith, although independently catholic, Baptist. Where I will sign now, not so much, I think (Current principal) and (Previous teacher he replaced) have done a wonderful job at smoothing out those things and as people who might feel that way in the past have moved on because it's not a priority to school culture here, but certainly when I started here, there were, I don't know how to frame this, (Pause) there were some staff here who made it very clear that you weren't Adventists and you mostly weren't welcome and we're just waiting for a time to replace you. We are looking for an Adventist teacher to get rid of you. And I certainly had that experience from a couple of people, conference as well.

Interviewer: So you felt that there are some people that worked as a temporary fill in?

Interviewee: I was an unneeded temporary fix. I'm serious, and (Principal at the time), to his credit never ever made me feel that way. (Name) was a great guy, I really owe a great debt to (Name) you know, because there were times when, and he saw it going on and he heard whispers and he would pull me aside and say, "That's not how we feel; there's those in every organization."

Interviewer: I think we all know that when there's any group of people who come together as an organization …

Interviewee: but it's still your workplace, and to have some of those representations made in your workplace was a little unsettling particularly when you found out from those people who were ultra-conservative, you know how well they were connected within the system and they played those connections as a teacher. And that's not education, that's a cultural thing which again sharing an office (Name of Teacher) was excellent because she was able to fill me in, that's not how, it really works in (Abbreviation of School name). There's, (Pause) so had I had not those people, I don't think I would have stayed in [name of school]

Interviewer: okay

Interviewee: Yeah, I love this school passionately, I really do. I really do love it passionately. I love it here, my kids both go here, I do love this school deep to my core, but I think after about the second year had I not had those good people around me who tempered those attitudes… (pause) I was being offered jobs around the place, I got one from grammar, I got constantly re-offered my job in Sydney, I think had I not had those people around me, I would be gone. Which would have been sad because I would have missed out on all the great things that have happened since. And yeah, and I would have been giving in to those people. But there were some unusual times, and again those people aren't in , are not in the system anymore. But they certainly had the influence...

Interviewer: People have an enormous capacity to either make or break an experience

Interviewee: But again those people who were important to me and important quite day to day, didn't make me feel that way.

Interviewer: That's good

Interviewee: Yeah, it was – and that's I guess the settling time into the culture of the school. And again my day-to-day interaction with the kids has always been wonderful. I love, I do genuinely love this school. And the time with the kids is never ever anything but wonderful. I guess it's the structural organization of things that, yeah. And there's been a lot of teachers here who you know couldn't be more welcoming and supportive of non-Adventist teachers in the system. They see all the gifts that we bring and a different perspective from ways that are done differently elsewhere and often...

Interviewer: Cross-fertilization is always good

Interviewee: but we'll see things that have just been done that way for a long time, ask the question why, and often those questions don't get asked when you're asking.

Interviewer: That's true. So if we move seven years down the track and you move into an administrative position that is quite comfortable and then people accepted that you are part of this school and...

Interviewee: Yes I was, when I became a coordinator, (Current school principal) and (Teacher he replaced) were here and (Name) was education director, and she's wonderful, I love her and (Principal who appointed him to school) of course, is also in the conference as well in that role. And look, one of the things at appointment that wasn't made clear to me when I… (Pause) to be honest with you, when I started in Adventist education 15 years ago, and I know (Pause) this sort of needed to be, it was never made clear that you are never going to be higher than really a classroom teacher here at the department, and where I was, my previous school, I was tracking way up, right up the ladder. You know the dean of the house at that school, which was bigger than this school when I arrived. And that was a little bit of re-adjustment that I had to make, but certainly it wasn't made clear at any point that as a non-Adventist you wouldn't hold [a position]. It was never, never… (Long pause)

Interviewer: Articulated ?

Interviewee: articulated that those positions were out of reach, so as a head of department I love my position, I really do, I genuinely love the role that I have, knowing that really that's where my, you know, admin qualities will top out is fine with me now. But when I first arrived here having those scenes of after a while basically bluntly put you to you, well hang on a minute, I was – (hesitates) it's sort of – (pause) and once I had a family, my -- once I had my first son Jerard, my... (long pause)

Interviewer: aspirations?

Interviewee: aspirations and tracking adjusted very quickly because, you know I probably became comfortable with that and that's – (pause) I know where things are at and certainly, I've got no intention to leave the college [reference to current school] at all in the near future.

Interviewer: A lot of people who would be glad about that...

Interviewee: Yeah, because I love, and I do, I genuinely do love this school to my core, I really do. Yeah, but that's as a head of department that's a role in it's – (pause) even there are – (pause) people sometimes fail to forget. What they fail to remember is, I should say is, is that there are so many teachers out there; they would give their left arm just for a teaching position at this school, let alone an admin position in this school, so I always temper those things with, you know, that I am in a great college and a great school, surrounded by, you know, good people and that's what I was called to do. I genuinely feel I was called to do that. So whether I'm in, you know, head of department or teaching, whatever it is, I'm very happy here.

Interviewer: That's good, that's great.

Interviewee: Not that I want to give those things up, but I think we sometimes forget the gift of being in God's place.

Interviewer: it's good, that's excellent. So just coming into this sort of school, I'm just interested in your perceptions. I want to give you a blank piece of paper that you can use because I'd like you to sort of either draw or mind map it or something

around here. To you, what is Adventist Education? So what do you think it's based on? Why do you think it exists? And what does or should it look like in practice?

Interviewee: Yeah, and again, I didn't grow up in an Adventist home, so I don't know the depths of all the Ellen White teachings

Interviewer: That's fine, there's no right or wrong in this. We're just looking for what do you...

Interviewee: So, I mean it doesn't, (pause) and again I might be making incorrect beliefs and assumptions.

Interviewer: No, they can't be incorrect because they are yours.

Interviewee: Yeah, true, but in essence of that. (pause) Well you know, often when I started here, and less so now than ever – (pause) often you know the teachings of Ellen white would become very clear and those views of Adventist Education and the importance of education, what look should look like, really have framed what schools will look like and run like. I think there is still very core to the mission of the school and the Church. I also think that the school here does quite an important job in not just – (pause) in any more educating Adventist kids which I think historically, it really just did.

Interviewer: Most faith schools started that way. A lot have shifted, not all have.

Interviewee: No, for example, the independent catholic school I was in Sydney is still just catholic kids, so that was so big they didn't have to shift that idea, but the idea now that, I mean I love [name of school] and the philosophy is just not about it, not just educating Adventist kids, giving of course Adventist kids a school to go to, it's a wonderful mission to the community in exposing the community to Adventist Christian beliefs which I think now is a core belief at the schools and I don't know whether from the top, up they're comfortable with that idea. And I know sometimes there's rumblings about them losing their character. I believe it's such an important place and if it wasn't for [name of school}, I don't think the general community would know a great deal about the Adventist Church in this area, that it hasn't lost its core mission around the beliefs of the Adventist Church. Now if there's still core around what we do, and again being Baptist, I flip in and out of that very easily because it's core of what we do as well. So, and I think those core beliefs still they're here in the teachings of the Church and the writings. I don't think they've been filtered down or changed. How they're enforced, will depend on, I guess who's there trying to enforce them. I see some young ministers, chaplains come unstuck very badly when they're trying to really force a dogma that was probably seventies and try to force kids to do things in certain ways and I think the majority of people have moved on from there but as far as beliefs and assumptions, I think they're held strong. I think, I mean it's strong to the writings of the bible but I think there is an essence of education that ties back to Ellen White, beliefs around the classroom, and how school should be run. I don't think those have been forgotten, I mean we usually write mission statements around those things but I think we're doing a pretty good job here. We're re-enforcing and re-stating them about the importance of them. Why we exist I think I've sort of touched on that already. (Name of principal) what was it (Name of Principal) talked about earlier in the year about being a light on the hill and taking very biblical sense of the light in the hill and geographically we're...

Interviewer: We are on a hill

Interviewee: But I think for me personally that's a very strong vision in my head about what the role of the school has. So just not an outreach to the community in its Christian beliefs because people want their kids to be educated that way and I think we do meet that in a number of different ways, whatever classes and the activities we do with the kids being involved in the StormCos or the chaplaincy program. I think they are able to take as much from them as they want without us forcing it on them because I think it's a very false economy anyway, and that's why Adventist education exists now. And I think, I mean Avondale College has a lot of non-Adventist students there and I think it's wonderful they have that outreach and the ability of people to go through that system and learn something different. It has a lot to offer, it's an excellent system. Again, I went through Newcastle Uni, there are good graduates, in a small setting that I think as a whole I think it's a very good model. The people want to come to this school and that school has an amazing reputation in the community. It really does. And that's just not down to good pedagogy that's down to the core ethos and vision at the school often just subtly just going about our job, and it's not to say that good Christian teachers in other schools, in public schools for example, aren't doing it. But I think when you've got – (pause) this morning we had our worship and you know when you're starting your day that way when you are framing your day in that way, that's something that's unique, but for example, the previous schools I was in, we had three meetings a week. Monday was always very factual about what's happening in the week, and the Friday was a lovely morning where someone would do something along those lines, but it's starting the day that way. It was different when I first started here but no different to many others – (Pause) I did HSC marking with some Jewish colleagues during the week they didn't come along on Saturdays and it wasn't unusual for them, so some of those things which I think Adventist schools [think are] unique to them isn't just in their own way. So what does -- should it look like? I think Adventist Education should still hold on to its strong, you know, Friday night to Saturday, so I think that's very important to the practice of this school. I can't imagine that ever changing. I think it should look like a system which has as its basis that it really does care for the students and cares for the spiritual as well as educational, physical needs. I think it's one that should, as we, okay, a school like [name of school] has a lot of kids here which firstly look, so many of them don't come from any faith background whatsoever. It's striking actually, they have no concept and it seemed fascinating that their parents want them to come here, need them to come here in many instances. It should, you know, not bash kids around Adventist education but lead them down a Christian path with the Adventist way. Teenagers, even -- so many kids who grew up in strong Adventist homes who reject the Church. It's in the Baptist Church as well, you know, there's almost a haemorrhage of kids there, the teenagers to adult, they live in -- (long pause) so I think it should always be this wonderful subtle message. They can be fed about the advantages and the wonderful nature of growing closer in your faith and understanding – I think as a system you should lead by example

Interviewer: And provide opportunities

Interviewee: Yap, and provide opportunities for them. I think it should be… not embarrassed to state its Adventism and its core beliefs because I think...

Interviewer: that not being embarrassed (cross talk) of people who chose not to be

Interviewee: No, because I think sometimes, you know, they give this message, and all of a sudden they turn the middle in the end, well no. it's an Adventist school and I think we need to be upfront with parents coming in that it's Adventist school and it's called the beliefs of the Church and – (pause) because there are parents just trying every now and then and just believe it's just a Christian, a private school with a Christian ethos And, you know, to an Adventist school, I think at times that's a misread from them. I think this school looks good. I think if this school continues to do the things it does well, in the future I think that will be a wonderful picture of Adventist education. I think you need to make sure you always bring the right people in, so not necessarily employing a person for their Adventism, but we need as a school, an education system that has the best people of Christian background and I certainly understand employing Adventist people, but, goodness, I've had some prac teachers you know, who are Adventists who wouldn't get a job in any other system to be, you know, (pause) I am not trying... (pause and hesitation) you're laughing but I know you know where I'm coming from.

Interviewer: I know.

Interviewee: and I think that is [a] real disservice to Adventist schools because that dilutes the educational experience and the standards that the school has.

Interviewer: and the influence of the school is part of the **ethos**

Interviewee: Absolutely

Interviewer: the whole purpose of giving glory to God

Interviewee: Absolutely, yeah, I think those elements are very important and I love that [name of school] has this wonderful mix of people that, for many they're parents, so I was just talking to a parent on the weekend and through their kids coming to the school, have recently been baptized into the local Church. They chose to send their kids here to get good education but it's them through the stories of the kids emerge(cross talk)

Interviewer: ...experience, spiritual journey

Interviewee: if that's what Adventist education looks like, it couldn't be a better picture. So that whole family is being changed and look for me whether the kid is growing with the Christian experience and they end up attending the local Anglican Church or just...

Interviewer: It's connected them with God

Interviewee: it's connected them and I think if schools like [name of school] can continue with that excellent education that also have that aspect of, I mean we are not the only school who does the pastoral care stuff to... (pause)

Interviewer: oh no

Interviewee: some people like to think that we do, but we don't. We do it very very well, we can do it often better at times but I think that caring nature at the school and the meetings, for us the meeting of mornings and focusing ourselves on the, what is the really core mission, I mean I wouldn't have stayed in this system for as long if I didn't love the school firstly but really deeply respect the ethos I wouldn't have. We couldn't.

Interviewer: No you couldn't. That's right, you couldn't and maintain your own integrity you know

Interviewee: I think in the future putting good people in upper positions in the schools is going to be very important. Right now it's going to be a very difficult job for them to do...

Interviewer: already is

Interviewee: already is. But putting good people in those jobs who understand, for example, school like [name of school] the importance of that mission but also creating the education excellence but tempering the fact that the kids need a Christian I guess, education but not trying to make them all Adventist. I think it's a very difficult balance. I think Bruce does it very, very well. I think (Name of teacher) does an **amazing** job in the religion department and (name of other teacher in religion program) and (Name of third teacher in religion department), I think they just did the most **phenomenal** job. For me also I think that the weeks of spiritual emphasis are really important to sort of hit that reset button for a week once a year. Getting good speakers also is good. We've had speakers over the years and it's taken us almost a year or so to get -- reprogrammed back to where we needed to be, the damage was done and I think a very poor image of Adventism was put to the kids. Kids have got a strong filter, they know where they've been, you know, teenage kids, they know when they're being sold something that they don't believe in and it's not strong to what they've learnt. I think of those years, over the years, that have been very poor. Twelve, thirteen of them [Week of Spiritual Emphasis] have been wonderful. Some of them have just triggered those conversations that you've been waiting to happen and we've been praying for them and we've just been wanting those conversations in the morning worships with the kids in roll call one. And those ones often trigger that. So I think that's certainly very special. I don't know many other systems that do always. And it's certainly something that – (pause) it's a big draw down on the school week and as far as time and energy but when done well. It's just wonderful, they really are. You know, my previous school we had masses and these types of things and they were very much structured, events rather than you know great stories and outreach, and when they've done well they're incredible.

THIS POINT MARKS WHERE JASON BEGINS TO DRAW HIS DIAGRAM OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION

Interviewer: they could be (cross talk)…

Interviewee: Good speakers in chapel as well to continually reframe that important conversation

Interviewer: Yeah, can we put that down (cross talk)

Interviewee: I'll put that down (cross talk)

Interviewer: You've been very happy here (cross talk)

Interviewee: I can't ever put that on a piece of paper, I'm a better talker than writer. You want me to try?

Interviewer: Yeah

Interviewee: I don't know if I can. You might want to talk back to me when I just said it. So what I said was flexibility, (pause)

Interviewer: connection with community

Interviewee: Yeah (cross talk)

Interviewer: That thing that you talked about

Interviewee: I think opportunity for service

Interviewer: and this is?

Interviewee: That's just the middle. That's something to take the lines out from out from. So you want this for why should we exist or just for all of them

Interviewer: Oh, whatever. What you are doing is good.

Interviewee: Yeah, I mean for me the strong leader, this one is so important to me [Speaking of the label, strong leaders]

Interviewer: It is

Interviewee: look at (principal at another school), inspections at schools, and you can't replicate people but he just got it right -- he for me got it right and I guess am his work. Work does what should it look like. You know one of the things for Adventist education for its future and importance, one of the things that, I mean I've been in this school for 15 years. One thing that was happening at [previous school] before I left is that they were targeting young men not to be sexist, young men generally, because it wasn't all boys school essentially, and they would look at all their schools around Australia, and they would target five people, you know big style (cross talk)

Interviewer: Succession planning

Interviewee: Succession planning was a prioity, five from each school and they'd send us off somewhere for a week. And I did it twice and I felt really bad when I left because I knew where I was tracking there, not for me but I was still sorry for the school because I (cross talk) yeah, and I think that is something this system has to start. And I've talked to [conference education director] about it. I've talked to [conference education director in another position] about it.

Interviewer: Yeah they have -- there aren't many young leaders, I think they started doing that, I don't think it's, there hasn't quite kicked in yet. I've actually got a colleague who's looking at succession planning in Adventist education and for research. Just starting, to actually get in and have a look what's happening what's not, because it's really important.

Interviewee: You see someone like that, it's bringing in what they consider to be the top notch principles and the top notch leaders and they would come and speak during the day then have dinner with us at night and talk about what they felt they did well. And sometimes these things are hard to articulate but you've got to sense not only of what the future of that system looked like, which is very strong, what other schools were doing which exposes you to different ideas and different ways of doing things but just gave you a strength of the future of the organization you're working in, and its costly am sure, but the long term benefits to that group of those people was just -- and the connection I made. Because I have a colleague over at [name of school], he's been there for almost 20 years, and he's, you know high up there but the connections that he and I made during those times. but especially he made during those times and

I think it caused a lot of people travel up the system, and the strengths you call on to do things differently whereas others just go, they've been doing something before that's started a new program and so it really does build, not just a strong individual school, but an incredibly talented system. And it's also about looking at those things which you know you look at some people who have natural gifts in leadership and trying to tap into what they have in sharing I guess that vision and that personality and that skill set for others to model themselves on which is something I think we could look like. It requires someone somewhere to put a lot of deliberate work into it. It also requires that person to understand I guess the needs of the system rather than their own personal beliefs about what something should look like, and that's very tough because sometimes necessarily the view of one person, who has all the power, is not what is needed. I don't envy the person who's going to do that but someone I guess like Dean, now he's starting a new role and for him to even come out and work with... I don't know, and look, I'm an outsider because I'm not going to be doing it but I look at a lot of young guys in our system that with the right mentoring and the right time spent will make good leaders but often if it's not like they're kind of brought into these positions then they ….

Interviewer: They just suddenly arrive(cross talk)

Interviewee: Yeah, they drown a bit and they just try and copy what's always been done rather than coming with this framework of ideas, and I guess that's I guess within the system, I think, would make an incredibly strong system for the future. It would remove a little bit is the guesswork around schools, around you know what does leadership look like, who are the people who are going to lead us and I think in the long -- there's some short-term work for some great long-term gain.

Interviewer: Now that's it for today, thank you so much (name), I really appreciate your time. I'm going to leave something with you and I'll email it through again because I'll come back next year sometime in the first half of the year so you can read the entire transcript (cross talk) and more (cross talk)

Interviewee: as my rambling...

Interviewer: No your rambling's been great. Have you ever seen that?

Interviewee: Never

Interviewer: That's fine, that's good. This is a model that Adventist schools Australia a couple of years ago sort of put together as I guess a means to being able to have a conversations about Adventist education. So it's a little booklet and I'll leave you that and next time what we'll do is bring this back to your transcript and then we'll have a look and we'll see how this here fits into that there which you may understand.

Interviewee: I got homework?

Interviewer: Not huge amount of homework hopefully. Thank you so much for your time today and just before... *Recording stopped at this point so we could have prayer together.*

Interview with Participant 3

Second Interview

Interviewer: Alright, so last time I took the transcript of the interview and went through it and I used a process of analysis on everyone's and looked specifically for influences that shaped your perceptions about Adventist education. And I really enjoyed yours because it was quite different to some of the others.

Interviewee: Most of the others from Adventist background were they a range or…

Interviewer: Most of the others are, but then there's a range of positions and roles that people have. So what I'm getting is eight very unique stories that tell what shapes people's perceptions. So, what I've got here to show you today is a model that I've made up based on what I did with your transcript. And the purpose of today is first to sort of talk through that briefly and for you to tell me if I've got it right, I'm completely off the being or you want to tweak something and we'll do the same with the diagram that you did because I've got all that set as well. So, that's for today. Here you can see around that ring are some labels, I think may have influenced your perceptions about Adventist education, so this awareness of whatever this education is from that moment when you really didn't know and you said to your dad, "What is this place, should I go there?"

Interviewee: Absolutely.

Interviewer: I'm through.

Interviewee: Well not so much the place (school name) because then I didn't know anything about (school name) but being a former Baptist minister, we'll go half there to stop being Baptist minister, but what was…

Interviewer: An Adventist yeah, who are they, what I'm I walking into? So, I've got here, you can see that they're sized as well and that's just based on the emphasis that I felt you put in the interview, not just the number of times it came up but passion with which you spoke about it and the emphasis you put on the time. So, starting there we've got enduring relationships which we first the building of long term authentic and safe relationships. And so, you highlighted quite a few positive relationships,

immediate and extended family, teaching colleagues, administration and two system administrators.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: And then on the other side of the picture there are some people that you sort of didn't make that connection with and that also impacts on your perceptions as well. So, we've got both the sides in that people category.

Interviewee: Absolutely.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay. Then we've got engagement with the school culture which was also one that you spent quite a bit of time in the interview talking about in different ways. So this is when you come into the school, that's Adventist and you've been in a Catholic school, you've got a Christian background. You start engaging in the culture that happens here and that starts to build your picture, well this is what Adventist education is about. So the things that you talked about in there were things like prayer, daily staff worship, the week of spiritual emphasis, the service activities, something could that comes later… Yeah, you were being in it by… okay so as you engage with school culture you started to pick up a picture obviously whatever and this education is about. Then we've got reflecting on school and system practice.

This was an interesting one because this was a way you reflected on how things are done. And initially coming into the system there was this in terms of the Church and the school nexus and how they were inter-related. And so that gave you a particular picture of what Adventist education is and where it fits in relationship to the Church. So there was that then there's observing change and you mentioned this in your interview and it wasn't something that came out really strong but I thought it was significant enough to put there because you've been here for 17 years.

Interviewee: 15 years.

Interviewer: 15 years.

Interviewee: 15 years yeah.

Interviewer: For 15 years so you're actually in a position to observe change where some people were in a school for four or five years and move on, they don't see that change. And so observing change in the system I thought was building up your picture too.

Interviewee: Yes

Interviewer: Both?

Aaron Williams: Okay, both.

Interviewer: Yeah, where it was system as well was in relationship too, I think you said that when you came here you were the first person who wasn't a Seventh-day Adventist.

Interviewee: One of the early ones.

Interviewer: One of the earlier ones.

Interviewee: Yeah, I think there was one or two, I think [name of teacher] was here before me and [name of teacher] and I think I was the next along in that line.

Interviewer: So over your 15 years have observed a different attitude towards that sort of thing.

Interviewee: Among some. Yeah, amongst a lot, yeah, there's still… there's an element of say that… it's a difficult one but it becomes clear and sometimes what they don't say as to…

Interviewer: What they do.

Interviewee: Yeah, where others will… not that they don't care, but you're part of the school, you've been here for a long time where others I think they're still engrained in how idea that you're only here until we find somewhere else kind of new, which

you do strike at times. And even our course at the conference the other week, at [Location] the leadership conference and just got chatting away to a teacher, she was quite shocked that I was a non-Adventist teaching in [Name of school]. And I was like, "Okay, righty oh, I wouldn't have thought that was shocking for a school leader from another,… (pause)" I thought, "Oh okay righty oh, that's interesting."

Interviewer: That's so still some of that there.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: So that was the observing change. And then the last one I've called living in the divide for want of a better term, but this just refers to and perhaps not connection… you could stand with a foot in two different camps and say you've got a point of comparison. And when you have a point of comparison it helps to find what something is or isn't because you have something to compare it with which some people that I've interviewed don't have because they graduated, came into this system and they've never done anything outside of that.

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: So they don't have a point of comparison that makes them think about what makes this what it is whereas you have had that and you've got it on two different fronts, one coming from Catholic education into here that's one front and the other one is that you're a committed Christian but your faith belief is slightly different to the one that's operating in the school and so you've got that too.

Interviewee: Baptist and SDA's are…

Interviewer: They are close, yes they're extremely close. Yes, so that sort of living in the divide. And so I put there that you did at sometimes feel a disconnect with some aspects of the school culture in the early days.

Interviewee: A little bit, I wouldn't say it was a divide and certainly it's the…

Interviewer: No, that's not really a good term, I'm looking for another one. I think trans-setting, I think I'm going for, so across settings.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: I think is the term that I'm leaning towards at the moment.

Interviewee: Yeah, okay.

Interviewer: Which probably explains better than what that is. Okay, so there the influences that I feel have probably shaped your understanding of what Adventist education is. Is there anything you think…?

Interviewee: I'm struggling to remember what we talked in the last interview. Can I say there's a… yeah perceptions of Adventist education. I've been in the system 15 years so it's no longer a perception; it's the day to day understanding of that, so it's an understanding of Adventist education rather than perception I guess in ways more than anything, yeah. No, I think it's an unreasonable… and it has been interesting over time seeing the difference between the system and the school because sometimes you'll hear things from a system point of view but the school operational side will be a little different and see that within different schools, the operations will have a different interpretation of what that Adventist education is. And so, yeah, that's…

Interviewer: Observation, yes.

Interviewee: You sort of see that and go okay, we were told we're doing this way that that's another way and that's individual schools or principals and leaders having or wanting to do that. You sort of say go, "Okay, so there's that rule but then there's an interpretation and it's…" yeah the core things of course there and [name of principal] is very strong on even at the meeting the other day he was very strong looking at the future in [QAS] and reviewing the school on the aims of Adventist education and what we serve to do. But yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. Just for your information's sake across the participants these are the various shaping influences that came up.

Interviewee: What's the observing people one all about?

Interviewer: The observing people?

Interviewee: Is that you observe what others are doing in that form as your perception or…?

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: Okay

Interviewer: Yes, so you watch what other people do and you go, "This is the way that it should be done; this is what it looks like, an Adventist school this is what should have happened."

Interviewee: Changing roles, what does that mean? They're gone from a classroom teacher to admin type leadership earlier on?

Interviewer: It could be that they enter an administration role into a school. The people that I'm interviewing sort of across the board some are in system administration, so the change from being a principal or in a school to that. It also can refer to people who have been teaching and then they've become a student again.

Interviewee: Oh okay right.

Interviewer: We call it on purpose study or it could be that they've actually had a role in one school they've moved to a different school so yeah, that's often the time of reflection for people and a time to process the sort of thing that you were talking about. We've moved from one school to another school and in this school we've done this, this way but in this school we've done it this way. But it's within the one system, yeah.

Interviewee: Okay, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: So, a lot of it seems about change.

Interviewer: And it's really interesting that such diverse people which is really quite delightful to see.

Interviewee: Or very boring.

Interviewer: It's actually not boring. It's actually not boring because although your experiences differ, the initiation behind what is happening is often quite the same. So, more than actually starting to end up with just that because of the individual that's sort of like this with a double helix down the middle and we've got authentic relationships which is a people component around one side because that's been very strong, and around the other side we've got what I'm calling sense making [376 times you have written this as a solid word, sensemaking] reflection. So, this is reflection that tries to make sense of this environment and this culture. And then on an inside ring that goes this way and crosses over this double helix we've got ongoing relationships and reflections that just happen as being part of everyday of the school and down here we've got what I'm calling catalytic events.

So, this is a one-off thing where you meet somebody and you have a discussion with them and it really impacts on you because they give you something to think about but it's not a relationship that goes on and on and on or a book that you read or something like that. And so yeah, a person that you meet, a book you read, a conference you go to something like that, so that's sort of the way it's heading at the moment and then within each of those areas there are sort of initiators. So, in relationships with an upward relationship with God, an inward relationship, the inter-personal and then, and output relationship with people. For example, yeah so within each of them there's initiator so that's sort of the way it's going which is quite interesting looking at that. Alright, so let's come to your diagram.

Interviewee: Okay, my scribbly rows.

Interviewer: This refers to the copied one. Looks like it.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: In case you want to make any changes to it.

Interviewee: It's okay.

Interviewer: So, I did analysis on this. I looked at labels…

Interviewee: What was the question, was it all my perception of Adventist education, what was the question when I filled this out, I can't remember what it was?

Interviewer: It was yeah… among Adventist education, okay?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: So, I ended up with a diagrammatic summary and then conception summary. So, I'll read them both to you and then you can tell me if my conception summary is what you think that was about.

Interviewee: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: So, I've got this diagram appears to be a list in visual form. So I've got a series of solid arrows radiate from a central circle that it's a label. If it was label, that may suggest relationships. It does show however a common point of contact and then the conceptual summary, this participant has identified characteristics of Adventist education that radiate out of a central unnamed hand. These characteristics may be clustered as philosophical or mental, and that's your service [0:16:02] things with the remaining three characteristics relating to people within the system and how they operate, strong aspects that are doing connection with community. The learning program of the school and how it fits with the rest of the characteristics don't quite seem clear there and that's fine because we will be particular here. I guess what makes Adventist education, just think, I'm just presuming that this is a school and so they will be learning and teaching.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: So, my question to you first of all is in your interview transcript you don't actually say what's in the middle.

Interviewee: Okay.

Interviewer: Do you know what's in the middle?

Interviewee: No, I think you probably just … I've responded to what question it was and I just started with that sort of my mind map…

Interviewer: I wasn't sure whether you wanted to put something in the middle or whether you just wanted the middle to just be… well this is Adventist education and later on components of it?

Interviewee: I think that was from looking at it and trying to remember where I was going with it but I remember…

Interviewer: Should have asked you at the time.

Interviewee: Should have asked me at the time.

Interviewer: That's fine, well I don't feel so bad about not if you don't know.

Interviewee: Blank space is design space.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's fine. Okay, so we'll leave it blank and just presume that's Adventist education, or you can write it in there if you want to. Yeah, the other bit, I just put that on May because it was interesting that a number of people didn't put anything about the learning and teaching or the content or the curriculum and anything and their models either. And I was just wondering was that just you didn't think of it or you just thought well it's a school that's…

Interviewee: I'd say at one of those two things, probably I just assumed yeah, made the assumption it's a school and it's a part of what

we do in our every day or I may not have understood what you're asking here, it could have been one of two things. I might have thought it was more about the actual organization and that level of the school rather than the…

Interviewer: At the Adventist part rather than the education…

Interviewee: Well, it's Adventist education.

Interviewer: Yeah, I know.

Interviewee: So, and look there are parts of what I do which do have the Adventist way, but there's other parts of with what I do that's have Christians like that. So, for example, looking at an international disaster and relief teams these last few weeks with a heavy focus on government aid and NGOs and the work that they do. So, there's an incredibly heavy influence on Adventist belief and what they say…

Interviewer: Cultural understanding.

Interviewee: Cultural understanding, it's an idea, driving it with that. A little bit of World Vision. So, I guess there's in that respect there's quite an inherent drive to Adventist in there. In other parts just without coming into… and this is Adventist or Christianity, this is on this ideal what would be a Christian world view or a point on that.

Interviewer: And geography is the most wonderful subject to do that.

Interviewee: With recent topics looking at estranged populations or the refugees and a whole bunch of things and say, "Okay, we're a so called Christian democratic country but are the current policies, would …why are some Churches happy with this and unhappy?" And literally what should Christians be doing here and why is it that some countries which profess to have a Christian faith are acting in a way that is not caring and loving for your fellow man? So, in that way without a thing I feel any Adventist Church has made sure to accept refugees this way, from housing to the kids. Well well from your understanding of your time here in Christianity or what would be a

solution… forget government policies and money, what would be the Christian thing to do?

Interviewer: And that's really the best way to do it isn't it?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: All these questions and…

Interviewee: And it's interesting what they come back with, it's quite curious in that from a whole range of reasons about… well stop and think of it, "Okay, yeah well, you hear the government saying this but really what is the ethical, moral and Christian way to treat this issue regardless of how you vote and who's in power? If it was us and we were vulnerable; and I even pushed that one further and I said, "Let's think, can you think of any other people who through our history were homeless, didn't have a home, persecuted?" And they start this ritual that the ultimate sort of group was the Christians being shoved around over the place and it starts trying to push in that way rather than being sort of an Adventist way. But I tried the ADRA one which is quite important to do, because we often had, it was interesting we often have ADRA people come and talk with us, chat with us in one class but one of the kids couldn't tell me what ADRA was or what it stood for. That class had Adventist kids in it which fascinated me.

Interviewer: That's interesting.

Interviewee: Yeah, that's a side point.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay happy with the diagram as it is?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: That's fine. Happy with my summary of it?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, that's good, everything's good. Alright so just a couple more questions. One relating to… and you've already been talking about a bit of that about where do you see yourself in the whole big picture?

Interviewee: Well, I'm a head of department through the school which in itself has an important role in Adventist education and even a few weeks ago with the AIS and other heads of departments or heads of school were talking about that. From that view that's where I see myself being on that level. And certainly within I have a role to heavily leave an influence with my department and also within the school. But I'm also very aware that that's where my influence will talk about and/or service stand and that although I'll be at meetings and things, ultimately even though I'd love to, would have loved to, probably not anymore, loved to have gone on further but that's I guess my… well I'm very happy that that's where that influence sort of ends I guess in that stage. But I feel that I have enough influence in this school.

Interviewer: So, you feel that you're doing your role?

Interviewee: Oh absolutely.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's good.

Interviewee: Yeah, absolutely. I don't feel under that view within my role at the school I still I'm a part of those meetings which… and it's not a lot of staff to sit and push and focus on the future of the school, but as far as my role as within Adventist education it's important to run the school. I love this school and I hope that everything I do is in the best interests of the school and I guess… and I do generally about this place but what I do is in the best interests of]School name] College. I guess I think in-depth at times about it being in the best interests of Adventist education but they're both the same. My interests and love for this school and to do what's best for it, the goal is the same. On that level I don't think probably too deeply a lot of the time about the best interests of Adventist education, but because [School name] is at the heart of that if you're kind of… does that make sense?

Interviewer: That makes perfect sense. The people who tend to think and put things in to the whole system system-wide are the system

administrators. Everybody else in their school and their school for them is their little microcosm of Adventist education. So, that's where they invest their energy.

Interviewee: I would love dearly to see the schools mixed more. I don't think we do it well and I don't think we do it often enough and it was something I thought would… 15 years ago when I arrived here, I thought it would happen more and it doesn't.

Interviewer: And it doesn't.

A Interviewee: Yeah. And there are different reasons for that, but I think the whole system could be made so much stronger by even an inter-school only type environment. I know we have our HRIS but that's independent schools, I think there's an element there that could be… and we did have the CAPE/CASE and I ran a conference here earlier on this term for HSIE teachers for our system, but I think there's real scope to probably do more as the system that would build more of a belonging to an Adventist system rather than just driving what's best for [Name of school] College.

Interviewer: [Teacher's name] was talking about this the other day, she was talking about networking, that when you network it actually is a value to everyone when it works. And she was talking about teachers actually swapping schools for a day.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: I take your geography classes you take mine for a day. The school's sort of close, and we've learnt from it, we talk about it and we go away richer. But even just getting together clustered groups.

Interviewee: Well, this was a great speaker that I thankfully agreed to bring about who talked about this. We go into a national curriculum in a year and a half's time and [Name of presenter] [is] a leader, a global leader in this thing so we got him into the block but it benefitted everybody. It was a shame that more couldn't have come. But out of the day you got a sense of everybody being lifted…

Interviewer: That's what you want.

Interviewee: Rather than being just a… so I guess in that sense I still see myself as having an influence on the system in a way but still the prime driver for me was to get my guys in my department and at my school skilled up and experts in this stuff and the rest of it was just a huge bonus.

Interviewer: And everybody can use the skills that God's given them to lead from within. And which is what you were doing in that instance.

Interviewee: Tried to do, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, well I think that that's probably all we needed to do ['Jason'] because if there's no big challenges or anything what I'll do is I will send the next transcript through to you too. You just have to excuse the punctuation. It's not always correct.

Interviewee: Okay.

Interviewer: Spoken language when you put it in written language it's really strange and I just didn't want to fit it with all the apostrophe's and everything.

Interviewee: It's almost I get in a program when you're talking to… you can flick it either to a document and then print it up everything gets saved almost like our hands are tied.

Interviewer: You can do that, there are programs that do that and EnVivo is one that does that. And you don't have that space in between of listening again and hearing the emotion or what not that goes along with it so that's why I do it this way. Okay, we'll probably…

Interviewee: Where do you go to with the rest of this, do you…?

Interviewer: With the rest of this?

Aaron Williams: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay.

Aaron Williams: What's your timeline on it?

Interviewee: What I do now is I've been through a quite extensive process just getting down to this sort of stage and then looking again a bit further at what a whole picture might be and so I've tentatively mapped up what a whole picture might be. Coming back here today I'm needed to confirm that I wasn't reading into things, things that really weren't there or that I wasn't missing things that were important. I'll go back and I'll do the whole process again with this next layer of interviews and then I'll compare the two and then I will create a model that shows how people develop.

Their understandings of Adventist education is and hopefully coming out of that will come something practically that says in the first five or 10 years that somebody's in an Adventist school they should be given these opportunities. They need mentoring these ways, that sort of thing just to support people whether they're coming from Adventist College and have been Adventist all their life or whether like you they're coming from somewhere else and haven't been so that everybody comes in and they develop this understanding and become part of what it is yeah.

Interviewee Williams: It's interesting when I was here, I was here for about two, three years and out of the blue came these… there was a change in education director or something like that at the time of course not being there, just going back to Church, you don't have use of your time. It doesn't… anyway that was decided and all of a sudden we were told for four or five afternoons, I don't know where our term was, we were going to be upstairs and it was an hour and a half for five and six weeks and we're getting these what is Adventist education, what's the most or anything ever? And there was a few of us and we were like… and by that time it was about three or four, about three years in there was a couple more and you had teachers who had been here a few years before me and I was there thinking what is the sub-text here, it was really put across in an incredibly boring way. It wasn't exciting and it was not… he was not a great person.

Interviewer: He didn't paint a positive picture and a dynamic system?

Interviewee: No, no, no and it wasn't and I think that's the danger in getting the right people to portray that image or mental people or just be a… even though they're mental but they touch based they can actually ask a question without feeling like they're been… because in my time here there's been times where I've asked people a question and been made to feel like an idiot or an outsider or asking it and you learn very quickly not to talk.

Interviewer: Yeah, not to…

Interviewee: Whereas I was like I shared an office with [name of teacher] and she was one who listened and had been here a long time and she was great though. She sort of at times, "Is that all they've got, well don't worry guys this is nonsense, they're just, it shows that they're ticking boxes, it doesn't really mean we're…" and it wasn't really, not stupid working it out myself, but I think as long as there's the right person because you could in a school get a person who is not outer right wing, but very, very adamant about the whole thing. I know there's been teachers who've come here in their early times felt quite anxious until they've really gotten a feel for it because they first can't ask what people do really make them feel significant while they're an outsider and it's not the feeling that majority staff were given them any way. So, those touch points that were different. That was like teaching staff versus principals; they were fantastic.

Interviewer: I actually think that some of the philosophical things are better done from within the school culture than as an import who doesn't necessarily understand that particular school culture.

Interviewee: I know that they had a conference; they ran a one or two day thing that called teachers in…

Interviewer: Adventist Distinctive I think is what it's called.

Interviewee: I don't think I've even really spoken to anyone who's been an attendee so I don't know whether that gives people a better understanding.

Interviewer: I don't either because I haven't been on one either..

Interviewee: Yeah, I'm just asking, because that's where you act a little bit there. I'd like to know whether people are honest with you whether somebody who's just been employed into a school and goes to one of those school's at the survey honestly…

Interviewer: If you just got employment you're not going to shoot yourself in the foot if you think it was an absolute waste of time.

Interviewee: Yeah, so I guess those surveys are up to the teachers who fill them in and don't really give you… but there's been out there one other thing.

Interviewer: And I'll tell you what I've been thinking about and not so much in relationship to this, but I have been thinking about what you said last time about succession planning.

Interviewee: It's…

Interviewer: I've given a lot of thought about it.

Interviewee: And the systems have good people going forward and it's not me, it's good people going forward and I dare if I tell them that the future of this system, it's about and my kids come here too. My kids whether I'm here or not they need a school that's got great leaders who are forward looking and have the future… it's about the longevity, it's not self-serving in any way. It's not going to involve me…

Interviewer: Yeah, I've really done a lot of thinking about that and asking some questions around about, it's not really related to what I'm doing here but, it really made me think and then this year round it says been vacancies come up for principals and they're better schools across Australia and New Zealand and I have one school council chair person said to me, "We just cannot find a decent principal. What are you doing at Avondale. And I said, "Well, we're not actually producing principals because it's undergraduate program."

Interviewee: The wrong end and that's not the right in. You got to go into a school and work as a teacher, you don't get your head around the teaching thing… anyone who went to university not to train as a teacher but to train as a principal, he's the wrong person to go into teaching. They obviously don't understand what they're going to Uni for. But yeah, I just look at it from that point of view I sort of go well, my question then as a school board is will actually be asking the bigger question, what's the whole system doing and… of course it can't be just a problem here. You don't want to end up in a situation where you're… I guess there's two elements to it. Why is it that perhaps some teachers aren't seeing principal jobs as something they want? There's an issue there and whether that's a generational or cultural thing who knows, and whether they see the amount of work that goes into that as being… I think they get paid pretty well now.

Interviewer: Much, much better.

Interviewee: Thank God for the pay raise, those principals got nothing. But if you're not bringing people along, why? There is still a little bit in this system and it doesn't affect me, but there is still a little bit of a job for the 'boys' type element where they will bring people along who they know or they like rather than actually identifying good talent.

Interviewer: Yeah, the people who really have what it takes to do the job well. Yeah so…

Interviewee: That worries me when I hear that, it generally does because what do you end up with, do you end up with a school that does not actually use the word stuck but has a principal there who [???] [0:36:17] or then do you end up with a school that runs without a principal until they find someone and from a parent's point of view if you had a school, you do relatively, you do look to a school for that direction and future building. And as a parent your confidence in your school toward, we say "Well, why can't they attract good people, where are the good people?" And there's a bit of confidence on a number of levels there that… there's a special skill set and not all principals can do all things well and identifying the skill set, but I just think, whether it's something that I might want to think about. I have raised it with [Name of regional education director].

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: I was away at [inaudible] and I said to [Name], “It’s something that I think that I’ve worked in other systems are doing so well,” and then make it very clear that it’s a path where they’d like to…

Interviewer: You certainly make me think about it, definitely and I’ve been talking to a few people about it asking what’s happening in that space and yeah, maybe not getting really good answers but hopefully just sending on the prompts for people to think about it.

Interviewee: But ultimately in this system, whose responsibility is that? Is it the education directors in each system or is it somewhere above them again?

Interviewer: I would actually sit at the national director; I would actually sit it at that point and say they’re the ones who have the picture across all the system. They’re the ones who really need to make sure whether it’s happening at a local level or whether it’s happening nationwide. I would sit at their level and certainly to make sure that there are people coming through who are being skilled, who are being supported, who are being given a vision that this who will be capable because that happens sometimes. Two people take a job on but it’s really beyond what they can manage whether that’s because they haven’t had sufficient training or whatever. Yeah, so thank you for that.

Interviewee: Hasn’t this caused trouble for you?

Interviewer: No, it hasn’t caused trouble.

Interviewee: No, but anyway…

Interviewer: But I think what it’s done is I’ve been very willing to start conversations with people about this, whereas before It wouldn’t have been on my radar.

Interviewee: Yeah, I don’t know, look first been here for a long time but I think if [Name of principal at another school] who a simple of course fantastic guy who did an amazing job, and you got to

have good people to come in behind guys like him because the success of the school will come after that. And you don't want to be in situation where a school like [Name of another Adventist school in the same region]it is always going to have an Adventist principal because parents here are very demanding and if they don't have a good person, they'll go and it's not just a selfish thing for [Name of previous school School], it's an essential,] mean [Principal of previous school] been there a long time now.

Interviewer: Yeah, and he's very close to retirement.

Interviewee: And I don't mean promoting people up within the school, because sometimes that's the worst thing you can do. But who's been identified and looked at for that skill set and it's not about just managing now…

Interviewer: It's the future. It's caring for the future so that the children of the children who are here now can be assured that they will be a good…

Interviewee: I don't kind of not answer any way there but also I don't know within the Adventist system because I know where I came from in the dealer-cell system, it's very strong. When there is new principal who do they go to for mentoring?

Interviewer: How are they mentored?

Interviewee: How are they mentored? And when they're coughing a bit of a bad time are there other… because at that leadership sometimes asking for our principles help can be sought as a weakness we're not doing anything. And if you want the good people to remain strong and collected in that job or is there a support system and whether it's day now in his current role or who do they go to for advice? I've got this particular HR problem…

Interviewer: What do I do about it?

Interviewee: What do you think everybody wants?

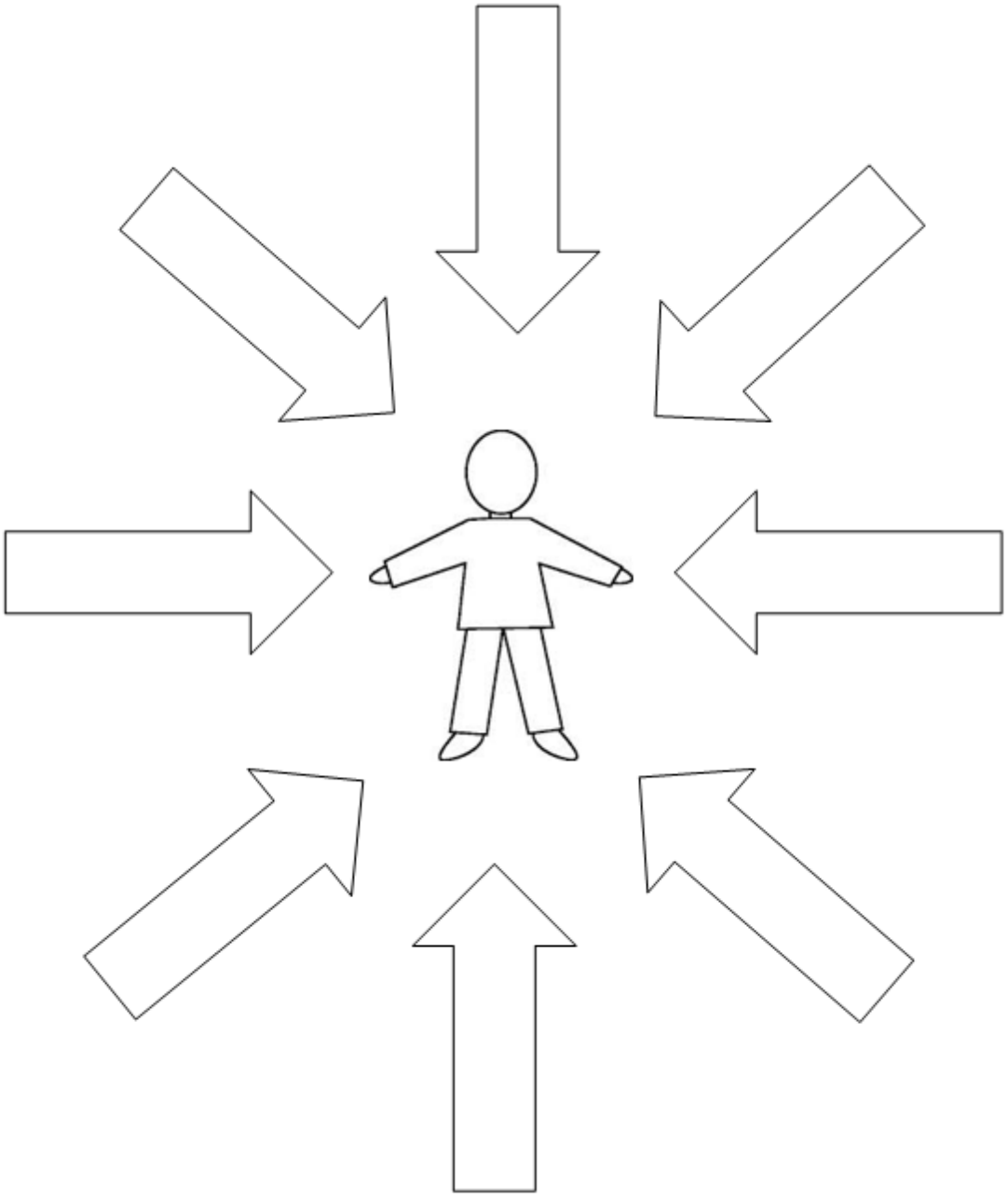
Interviewer: Or I've got resistance to change in this pocket in my school, how do I handle it, how do we find a way forward? And if people go into those roles they don't have that support and they haven't come through experiences that have allowed them to deal with things like that in the least scale. It could be that daunting I would imagine.

Interviewee: And that's probably concerning…

Interview closes with prayer.

Appendix H

Stimulus Diagram for Interview One

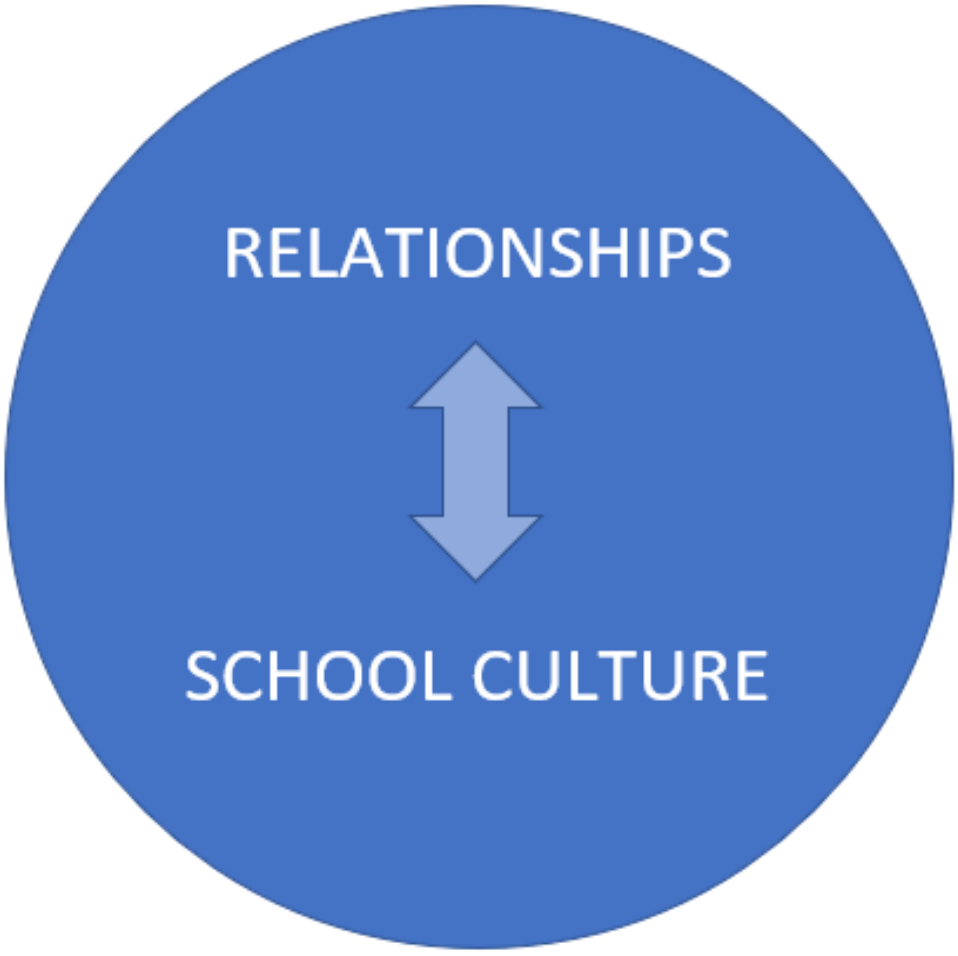


Appendix I

Diagrams Showing the Evolution of the Shaping Influences Grounded Theory Model

SHAPING INFLUENCES MODEL #1

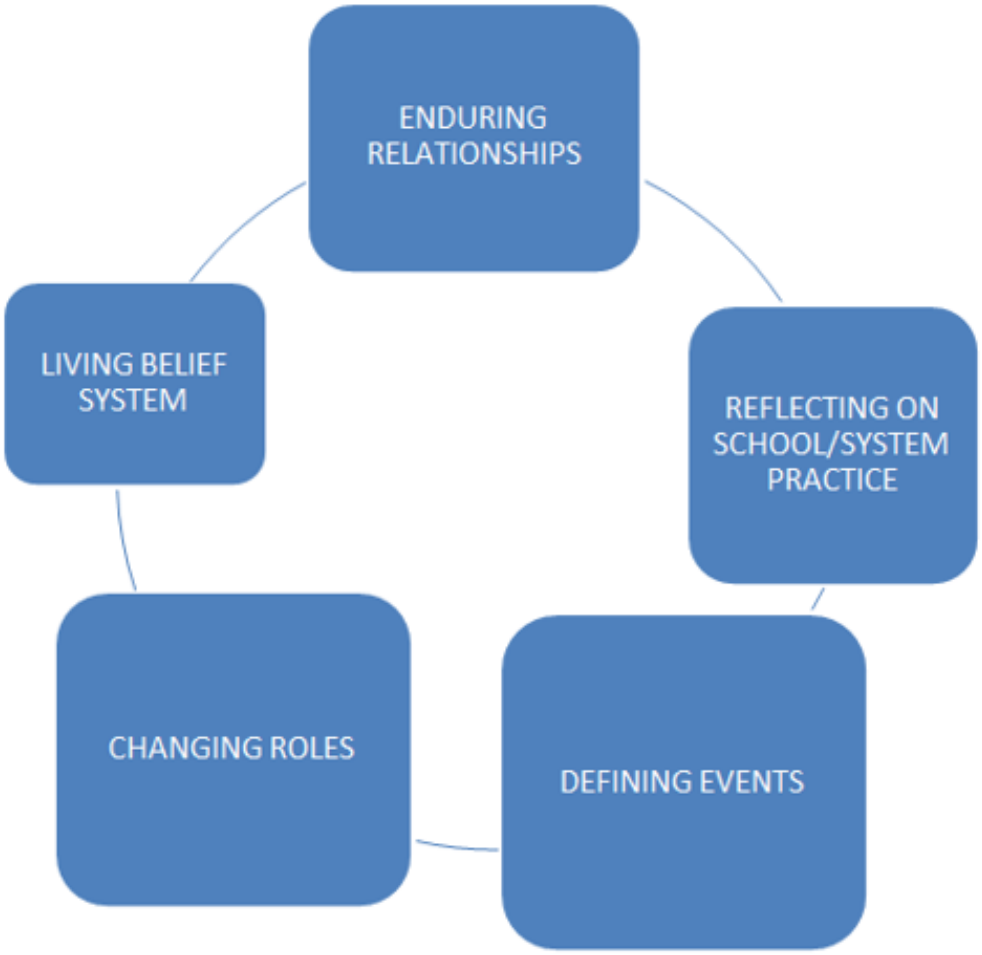
Note that after an initial read of the Interview One transcripts and writing memos, two concepts emerged that I labelled *Relationships* and *School culture*.



SHAPING INFLUENCES MODEL #2

After Level 1 coding

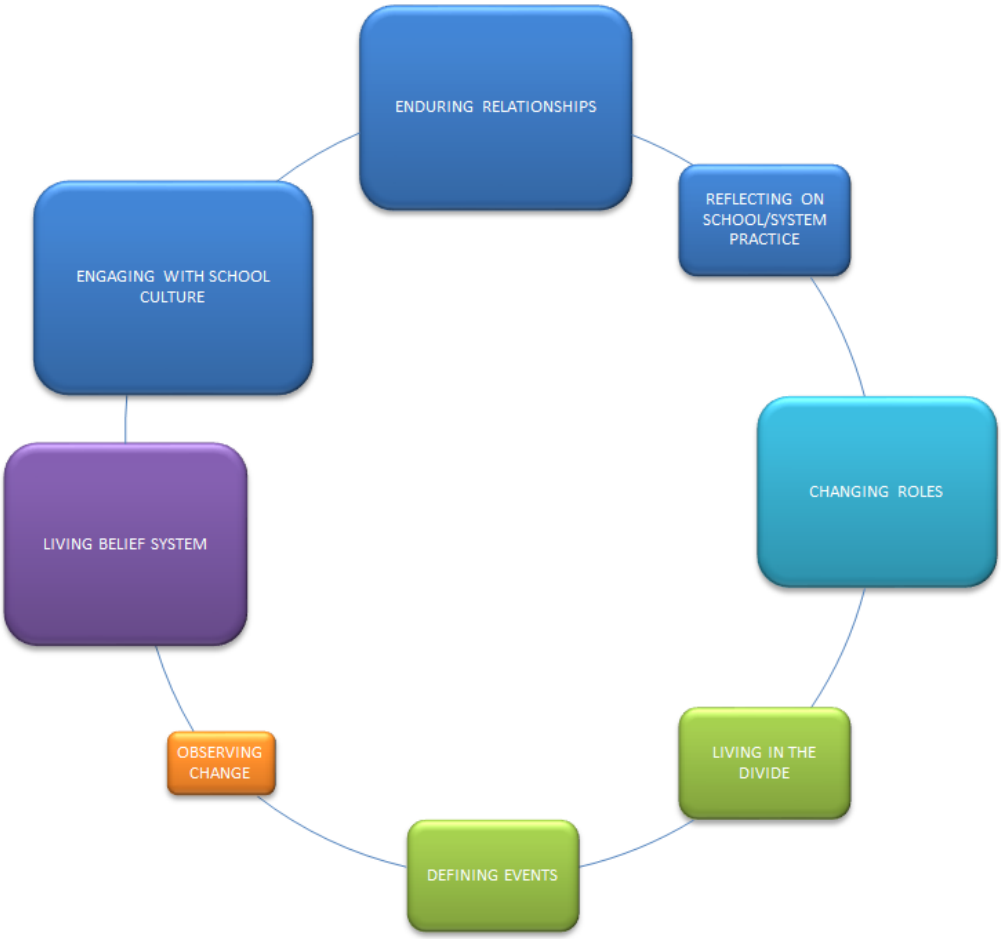
Note that my initial intuitive call on *Relationships* is still viable. *School Culture* has become tighter and is emerging as *Reflecting on School/System practice*. Also emerging is a spiritual component called *Living Belief System*. *Changing Roles* and *Defining Events* are emerging from the transcripts as themes. I initially had 29 codes. This is my first attempt at collapsing them into themes.



SHAPING INFLUENCES MODEL #3

After further Level 1 coding

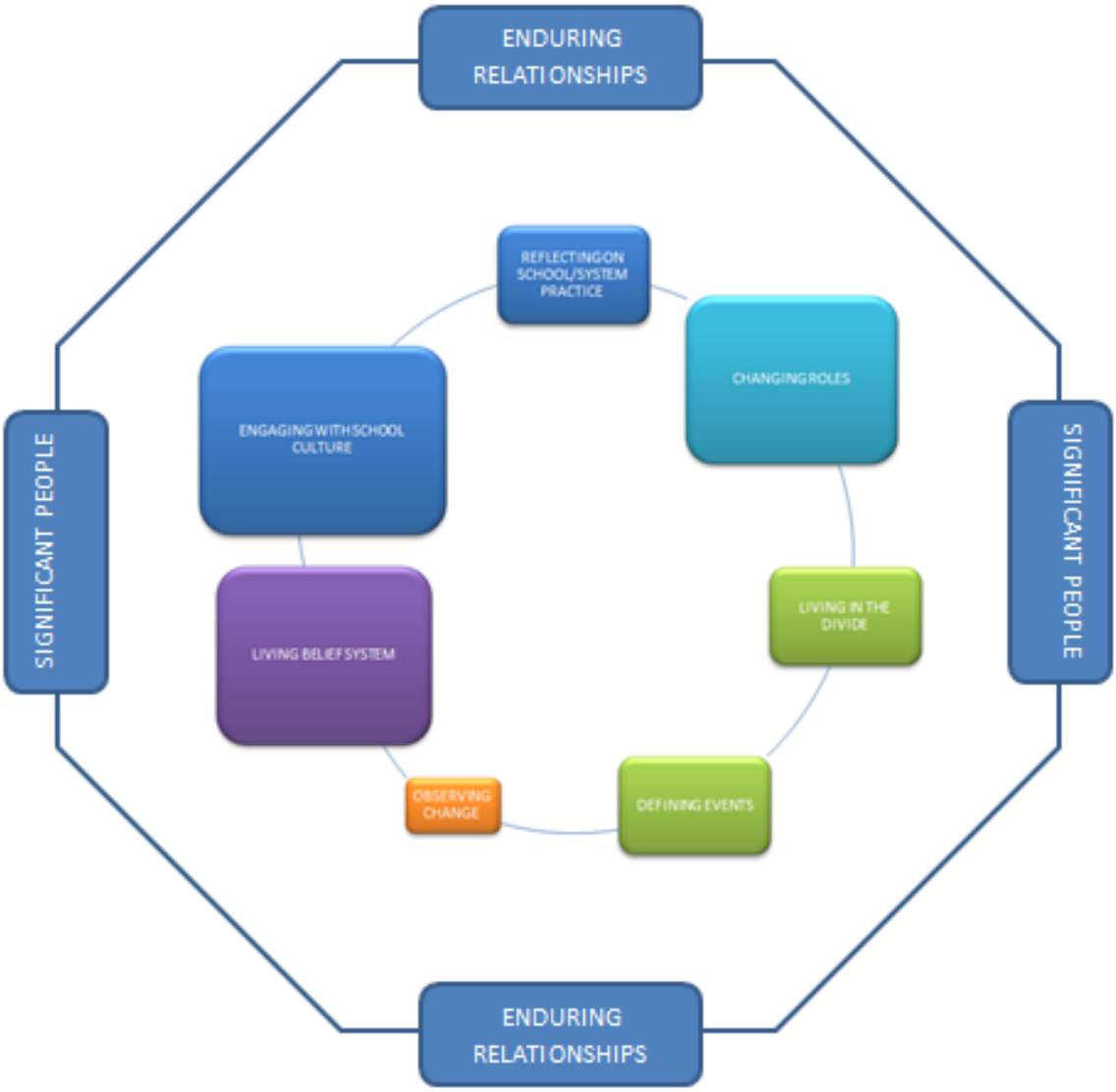
Note that this model is rough, with the size of the categories being approximate, rather than accurate measures of each category. This shows eight themes from a total of 25 categories after this coding session.



SHAPING INFLUENCES MODEL #4

After focused Level 2 coding

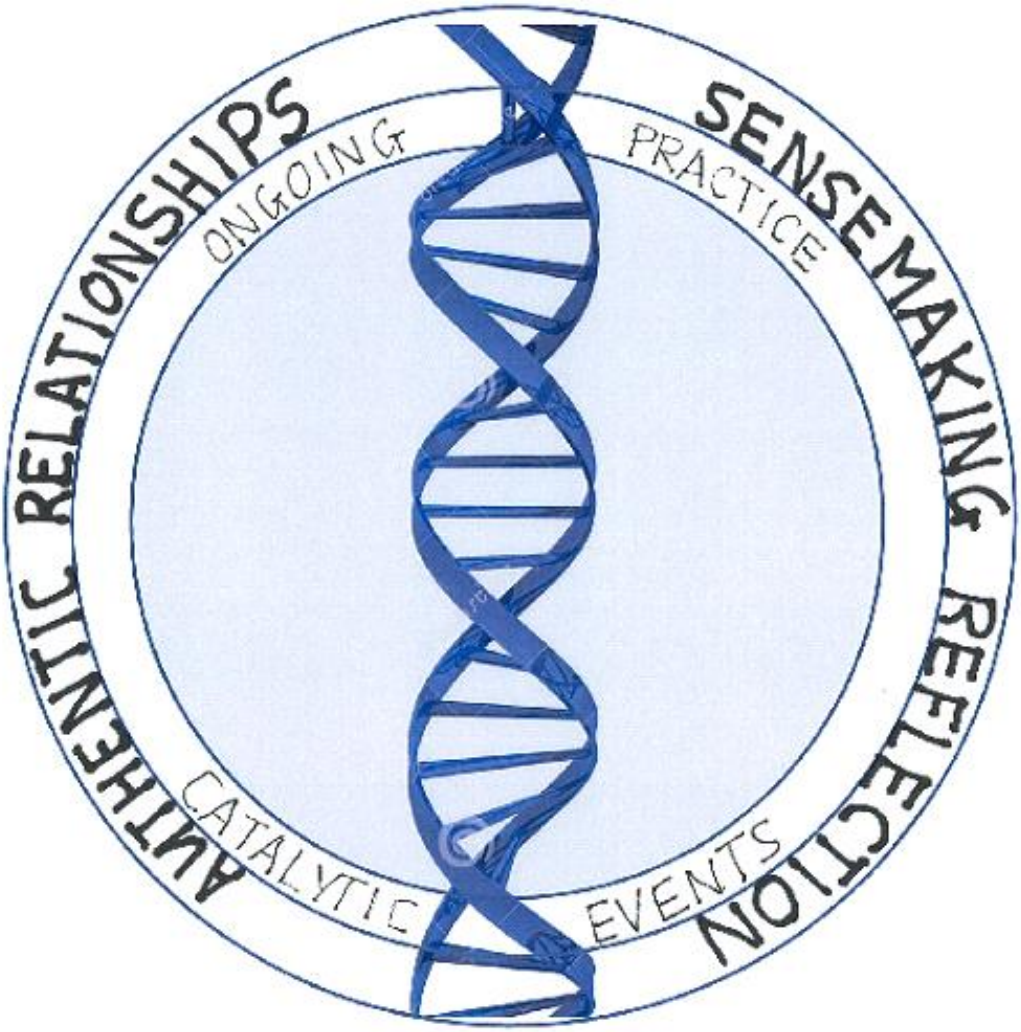
Note that the number of themes has gone from eight to seven. I have removed *Relationships* and made it an overarching theme. At this point it has two names; *Enduring relationships* and *Significant people*. There is some overlap here.



SHAPING INFLUENCES MODEL #5

During conceptual coding level 3

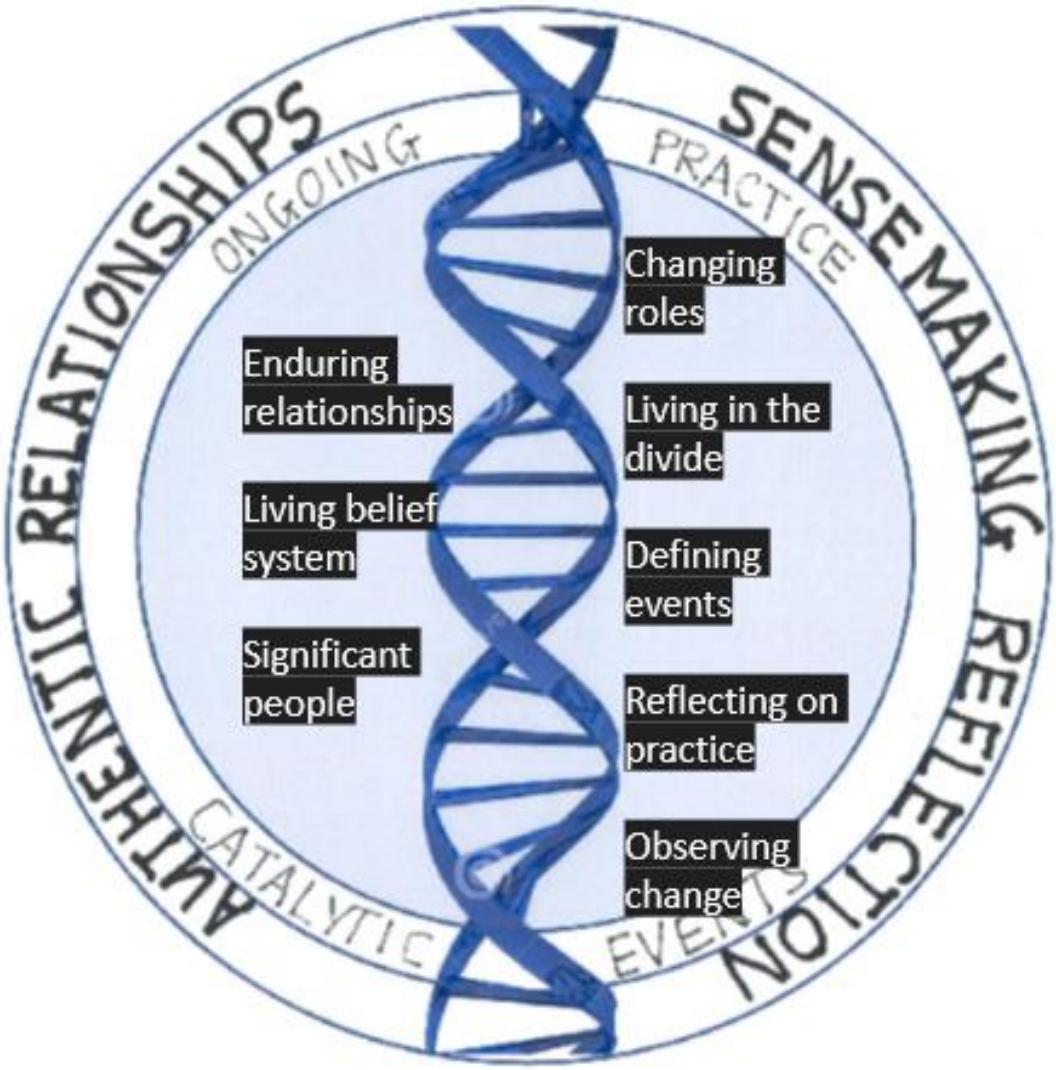
Note the basic outline of emerging themes. The model now has two overarching themes labelled *Authentic Relationships* and *Sensemaking Reflection*. The double helix indicates that the themes, although separate, rely on each other. On closer examination, I have also recognised at this point that there is a time factor in the categories, so I have created secondary themes which I have labelled Ongoing Practice and Catalytic Events as they are events that speed up reflection and sensemaking. This has not changed the categories that I am still in the process of refining. This has also solved the dilemma of two labels for relationships as the word enduring indicates relationships that occur over a period of time and some relationships indicated lasted for a fixed amount of time. I have created a basic circle model on which I will write until I am happy that there is nothing more to extract from the data.


AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS
SENSEMAKING
REFLECTION
ONGOING
PRACTICE
CATALYTIC
EVENTS

SHAPING INFLUENCES MODEL #6

During conceptual coding level 3

Note that I have placed the existing collapsed categories under the overarching themes, but not yet put them fully under either Ongoing Practice or Catalytic Events. I am not happy with the label Living in the Divide. In fact, I need better labels all around to represent the categories emerging still emerging from the data.



SHAPING INFLUENCES MODEL #7

During conceptual 3rd level coding after the second round of interviews

Note that after the second round of interviews and going through the interview transcripts several more times, keeping in mind the two overarching themes and the two secondary themes, I began to see how the emerging categories fitted into my model. This has finally resulted in twelve categories. At this point in time, the terminology for the *Sensemaking Reflection* side of the model is coming together more easily than the *Authentic Relatio*nships side. I am still not happy with all the labels at this point. I need to do further work before they accurately represent the data.



SHAPING INFLUENCES MODEL #8

After conceptual 3rd level coding using both interview transcripts

Note that I have gone back to the data again, I have refined the categories, eliminating *Relationships with family* and making a category called *Personal Relationships* that includes both friends and family. I also split significant others in the school system into *Modelling Relationships* and *Mentoring Relationships* to differentiate between observation (modelling) and mentoring (engagement with another educator). I have relabelled Significant Others, including Authors as *Virtual Relationships*. I have changed Enlightening Reflection to *Inspiring Reflection* as it is closer in meaning to the examples given. I have also added arrows that divide the model into four quadrants and changed the label Catalytic Events to *Trigger Experiences*, a term that is more representative of the theme and is compatible with sensemaking terminology.


AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS
ONGOING PRACTICE
SENSE-MAKING REFLECTION
EXPERIENCES
TRIGGER
Personal • Professional • Spiritual • Virtual
Relationships
Inducting • Informing • Inspiring
Reflection
Translating
Mentoring • Modelling
Relationships
Transforming • Transforming • Transforming
Reflection

SHAPING INFLUENCES MODEL #9

After conceptual 3rd level coding

The model is almost complete. I have added colour: cool blue for *Sensemaking Reflection*, and warm yellow for Authentic Relationships. The middle section of the double helix where *Authentic Relationships* and *Sensemaking Reflection* meet is green, which stands for growth. The intertwining indicates that *Authentic Relationships* and *Sensemaking Reflection* have a symbiotic relationship with mutual benefits. This represents the synergy that occurs when relationships and reflection intersect.



SHAPING INFLUENCES MODEL #10

After conceptual 3rd level coding

Note that the changes are cosmetic. The word practice has been changed to praxis and I have removed the hyphen from the word sensemaking. This is the final model.

