

The Role and Work Practices of the Educational Leader in Long Day Care Centres

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Abstract

There is evidence in the research literature that outlines the role of the Educational Leader (EL) is an important but developing role in the delivery of high-quality early childhood education and care. The National Quality Standard (NQS) stipulates a national criterion against which the quality of early childhood education and care services in Australia is benchmarked.

This research used a two-phased mixed method approach to explore the role and work practices of the EL in long day early childhood care centres. In Phase 1 of the research an on-line survey investigated the role of the EL and the work practices used. In Phase 2, interviews with ELs explored further in-depth insights into the role of, and work practices used by ELs.

The results from this research have identified four main EL responsibilities, namely to facilitate:

- professional practice;
- administrative practice;
- compliance with the requirements of the NQS (Quality Area 7); and
- mentoring of centre educators.

Within the four responsibilities, it was found that the EL uses a range of specific work practices.

There are evident commonalities in the work practices used, but the extent of their use and the way in which the work practices are used varies from EL to EL.

The findings from this research can be used to strengthen the quality of conversations between ELs, other educators, centre Directors and management about professional practice in the early childhood setting.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The Educational Leader is a significant role in early childhood education (Rodd, 2013)

1.1 Introduction

Within the landscape of early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Australia there is a range of settings intended to cater for the needs of children and families seeking full-time or part-time ECEC (Waniganayake & Gibbs, 2015). The Australian Government has identified the significance of the early years and is endeavouring to establish a world-class system of early learning and care (The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority [ACECQA], 2017). A variety of settings such as long day childcare centres, pre-schools, community kindergartens and family day care providers provide ECEC. Each ECEC setting may be licenced to cater for different age groups between the age of birth through to school age. Current early years policy in Australia acknowledges and credits effective leadership and its influence on educator's abilities to improve young children's learning (Page & Tayler, 2016).

In the early childhood sector, the terms "educator" or "early childhood educator" indicates a person employed to provide educational expertise for young children and their families (Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations {DEEWR}, 2009). The term "leader" commonly refers to a person responsible for the administration and management of an early childhood service (Rodd, 2013). Thus, the introduction of the position of Educational Leader (EL) presumes leadership is progressively seen as a significant role and responsibility of early childhood educators (Rodd, 2013).

This dissertation explores the role of and the work practices used by the EL in early childhood long day care centres. The research also explores the ways in which the role and work practices

align with the National Quality Standards (NQS), Quality Area 7 (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority [ACECQA], 2011).

This chapter presents the background to this research. This chapter provides an overview of the National Quality Framework (NQF), the National Quality Standards (NQS) and discusses the EL role in relation to the NQS (Quality Area 7), Standard 7.1. The rationale for the research, the research aims, questions and objectives are outlined. The structure of the dissertation will then be described through a brief outline of the remaining chapters.

1.2 Recent Reform in Early Childhood Education and Care

In the past two decades, there have been a range of changes in the provision of ECEC services in Australia. In 2009, the Australian Government along with state and territory governments addressed the growing attention on the early years to guarantee the wellbeing of children and to increase the productivity for Australia (ACECQA, 2011). In July 2009, a national early childhood development strategy "Investing in the Early Years", was developed by the Council of Australian Governments [COAG], (2009) to provide an all-inclusive approach to create a successful early childhood education and care (ECEC) system with the foresight to 2020 that "all children get the best start in life to create a better future for themselves and for the nation" (Waniganayake & Gibbs, 2015, p. 27). This ECEC system was a response to a drive for change that was based on evidence that the early years of childhood are crucial for the "present and future health, development and wellbeing of children throughout their lives" (ACECQA, 2011, p. 3). The national early childhood development strategy was accomplished through policy agenda, including a national organised ECEC system that encompassed a rating and assessment system that was conjointly linked to the NQS and the Early Years Learning Framework [EYLF] (DEEWR, 2009; Waniganayake & Gibbs, 2015).

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) which represented all Australian governments, made a commitment in December 2009 to partner in the establishment of a National Quality Framework (NQF) (ACECQA, 2011). This framework was for the provision of children in most long day care, preschool/kindergarten, family day care and outside school hours care services in Australia. The NQF took effect on 1st January 2012, with key requirements being phased in from 2012-2020. This represents a period of change and reform in the ECEC sector.

1.3 Governance of Early Childhood Education and Care

Figure 1.1 presents an overview of the NQF. The fundamental purpose of the NQF is the “way in which high-quality education and care contributes to positive outcomes for children” (ACECQA, 2011, p. 8). The purpose of the NQF is to provide a consistent structure through which long day care centres could be evaluated and through which a consistent quality of ECEC services could be developed and maintained. As can be seen from Figure 1.1, the implementation of the NQF is governed by the ACECQA (2011) and informed by the National Law and National Regulations; National Quality Standard, (NQS); and National Quality Rating and Assessment Process. The remainder of this section elaborates upon the role and function of ACECQA and the documents referred to above.

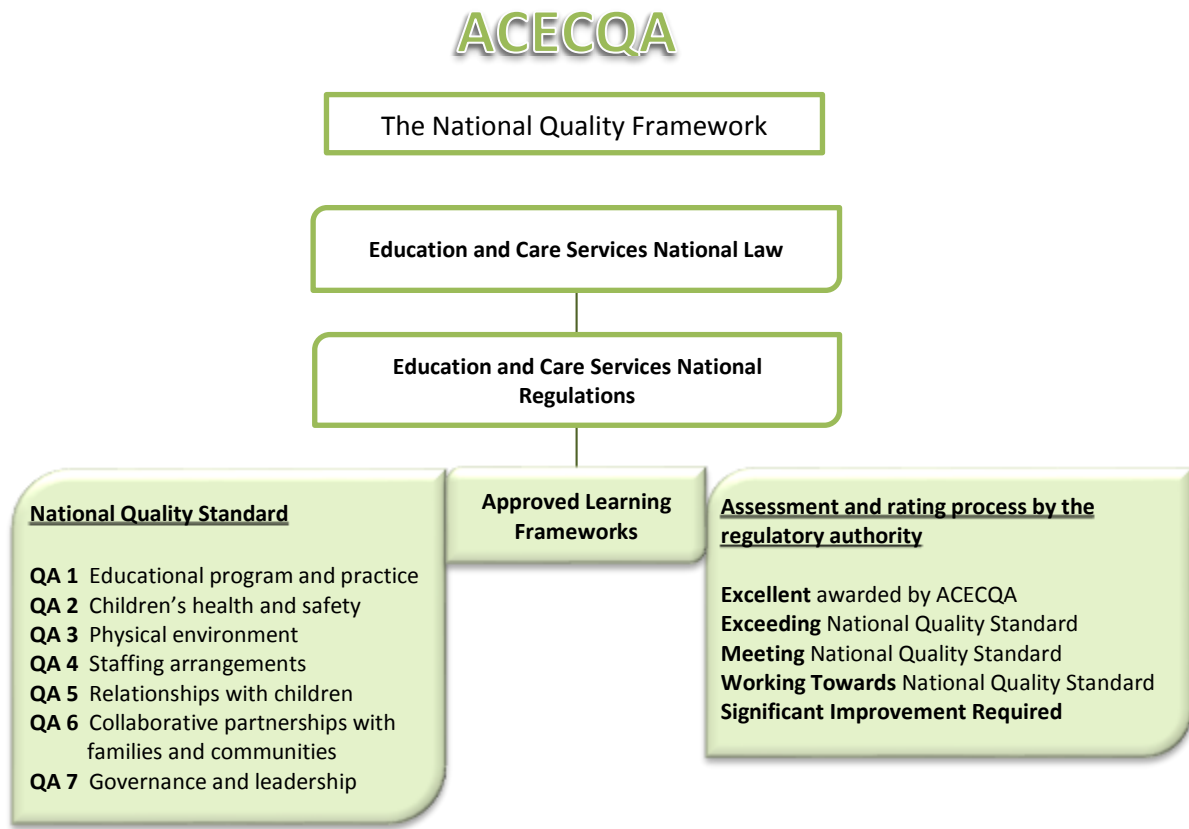


Figure 1.1 Overview of the National Quality Framework

(Adapted from ACECQA, 2011)

1.3.1 Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)

ACECQA is the governing body established to oversee the implementation the NQF a new national continuous improvement system for all ECEC services. ACECQA’s aim is to guide consistent practice within the ECEC sector. It is the first time in Australia that all states and territories have been governed by a national body. A consequence has been that all States’ and Territories’ licencing, and quality assurance procedures have been replaced with this new national system (ACECQA, 2011).

1.3.2 The National Law and National Regulations

As seen in Figure 1.1, the National Law and Regulations together with the NQS are the main legislative documents that underpin the NQF. The purpose of the National Law and Regulations were to establish a combined governed nationwide “approach to the regulation and quality assessment of education and care services” (ACECQA, 2011, p. 7). The operational and legal requirements are outlined in the National Regulations.

The Educational and Care Services National Regulations (2011) under the Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010) mandated that all early childhood centres must appoint, an appropriately qualified and experienced educator as “EL at the service to lead the development and implementation of educational programs in the service” (Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, 2011, p. 133). Concerning the EL in ECEC the National Law and the Education and Care Services Regulations (ACECQA, 2011) state that an EL will “be an educator, co-ordinator or other individual who is suitably qualified and experienced and must be appointed to lead the development and implementations” (p. 85) of the curriculum and ensure the formation of clear goals and possibilities for teaching and learning is achieved. The National Regulations require an EL to guide the evolution and implementation of educational agendas for an early childhood centre at each approved early childhood centre (ACECQA, 2011). As noted by Livingstone (2014) the EL has an important role in “inspiring, motivating, affirming and also challenging or extending the practice and pedagogy of educators” (p. 1).

1.3.3 The Approved Learning Framework

All ECEC services are required to provide a program founded on an approved learning framework such as the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) (DEEWR, 2009). The

approved learning frameworks reflect the “developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child and take into account the individual differences of each child” (ACECQA, 2011, p. 4).

1.3.4 The NQS Rating and Assessment process

The National Quality and Rating system is a method to assess all approved ECEC services using the NQS. Each State and Territory of Australia uses regulatory authorities called assessors who visit long day care centres and assess each centres quality in conjunction with the NQS.

1.3.5 The National Quality Standards (NQS)

The NQS are a fundamental part of the NQF, and are used to establish a national benchmark for ECEC in Australia (ACECQA, 2011). The NQS “allows each service to adopt approaches that are most appropriate to the children being educated and cared for at that service” (ACECQA, 2011, p. 9). Furthermore, the NQS provides a mechanism for continuous development to provide quality environments in children’s early educational and developmental years (ACECQA, 2011).

The NQS includes quality areas, standards and elements. Table 1.1 shows the seven quality areas in the NQS (ACECQA, 2011, p. 9).

Table 1.1 The Seven Quality Areas within the National Quality Standard

QA 1	Educational programme and practice
QA 2	Children’s health and safety
QA 3	Physical environment
QA 4	Staffing arrangements
QA 5	Relationships with children
QA 6	Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
QA 7	LEADERSHIP and SERVICE MANAGEMENT

The seven quality areas are broken down into 18 Standards as shown in Appendix A. There are two or three standards nominated within each of the seven quality areas. Encapsulated within each standard are elements that describe the standards in more detail (ACECQA, 2011).

1.3.6 Quality Area 7

As this thesis concerns Quality Area 7 (QA7) this section further explains this quality area, leadership and service management in conjunction with the EL position. The implementation of the NQS moved the ECEC sector away from only a regulatory approach and has now focused on quality environments, relationships, programming and children's learning, health and safety and leadership and management (ACECQA, 2011; Waniganayake & Gibbs, 2015). Every licenced early childhood centre in Australia is assessed to ensure that the quality standards are being implemented (ACECQA, 2011).

Leadership and management have been acknowledged in the NQS as a significant aspect of the newly constructed role of the EL (Page & Tayler, 2016). Although the role has been mandated since 2012, there is no clear delineation or description of the role by which ELs should be doing to carry out the position. ACECQA (2011) simply states "provision is made to ensure a suitably qualified and experienced educator or co-ordinator leads the development of the curriculum and ensures the establishment of clear goals and expectation for teaching and learning" (p. 178).

Educational leadership within the NQS centres on the importance of educational leadership for developing high-quality learning programs (Page & Tayler, 2016; Fonsén, 2013; Waniganayake, 2014) and guiding the practice of quality improvement (Sims, Forrest, Semann & Slattery, 2015; Gomez, Kagan & Fox, 2015). According to Nailon and Beswick (2014) it can be disputed that policy changes that led to establishment of the NQF has seen educators in long day care centres be increasingly asked to acquire educational leadership skills and practices. This emphasises the new shift and impact on ECEC policy in Australia and the development of educational

leadership for educators working in long day care centres. The foregoing indicates that the NQS and the regulatory standards influence the nature of the EL position and practices. The role and work practices of the EL was investigated in this dissertation.

As stated previously, this research explores QA7, Standard 7.1. The element that is explored is 7.1.4: “Provision is made to ensure a suitable qualified and experienced educator or co-ordinator leads the development of the curriculum and ensure the establishment of clear goals and expectation for teaching and learning” (ACECQA, 2011, p. 178). Waniganayake and Gibbs (2015) suggest that the wording in Element 7.1.4 is open to interpretation by those working in the EL role. Furthermore, according to Fleet, Soper, Semann and Madden (2015), *“anecdotal evidence from the Australian early childhood sector has identified anxiety and confusion relating to the role of the Educational Leader, the professional experience and technical knowledge required to be an Educational Leader and the intersections between educational leadership and educational change initiatives”* (p. 29). This situation consequently raises questions about the EL role and the work practices undertaken by the educator or co-ordinator to enact this particular element. Further investigation into the role and work practices of the EL is therefore warranted.

1.4 Rationale

The researcher is a passionate early childhood teacher and is employed in the role of EL. Since the EL became a mandated role in 2012, the researcher, along with colleagues, have agreed that the information provided by ACECQA and the actual documentation in the NQS are open to interpretation. The researcher through collaborative conversations with colleagues working at other long day care centres, established ways in which the EL role could be implemented whilst fulfilling the mandatory obligations documented in the NQS in Quality Area 7. It was obvious

to my colleagues working in the role of EL that more transparent guidelines and work practises were required, especially for those new to ECEC and new to the role of EL. It follows that research is required to establish the practices with which an EL engages and the ways in which those practices are implemented.

A preliminary review of the literature indicates there is limited research in Australia about early childhood leadership and pedagogy role and work practices (Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011; Waniganayake, Cheeseman, Fenech, Hadley & Shepherd, 2012). Siraj-Blatchford and Manni (2007) claim that “in the most effective settings better leadership was characterised by a clear vision, especially with regard to pedagogy and curriculum” (p. 13). In this respect and according to Heikka & Waniganayake, (2011) “the increasing interest in implementing pedagogical leadership in every day practice demands more clarity and analysis by all concerned (p. 502)”.

Based on the foregoing the researcher deemed that an investigation into the role and work practices of the EL was warranted in order to establish the specific responsibilities and work practices used. The study of investigation is informed by the NQS 2011 version, the only version published at the time of the study. The NQS was only updated in 2018. This thesis presents the study findings to the NQS 2011 version and connections to the updated 2018 version is presented in Chapter 8.

1.5 Research Aims, Questions and Objectives

1.5.1 Aims

The overarching research aim of this research is to explore the role and work practices of the EL within early childhood centres. The sub aims are as follows:

- examine the role of the EL;
- identify the work practices undertaken by the EL in a long day care centre; and

- establish the alignment between the NQS Quality Area 7 and the existing role of the EL.

1.5.2 Research questions

RQ 1 What are the key responsibilities encapsulated in the role of the Educational Leader in long day care centres?

RQ 2 What are the specific work practices used by the Educational Leader in fulfilling the requirements of the identified role?

RQ 3 How does the Educational Leader role and the work practices used align with the requirements of the National Quality Standards in Quality Area 7?

1.5.3 Research objectives

The following research objectives were used to address the Research Questions:

- review current literature to establish the context of the EL in early childhood centre settings (RQ1);
- survey ELs to explore the role and identify work practices used by EL (RQ1, RQ2);
- interview ELs employed in long day care centres to explore in depth the specific elements of EL role and practices (RQ1, RQ2); and
- based on surveys and interviews results determine the alignment between the EL role and work practices and the requirements of the National Quality Standard/Quality Area 7 (RQ3).

1.6 Definition of Terms used in the Dissertation

Throughout this dissertation several terms are used consistently. In order to provide the reader with clarity and to prevent ambiguity, the terms are presented in this section.

Approved Provider: A person who holds a provider approval (National Law). A provider authorises a person to apply for one or more service approvals and it valid in all jurisdictions (ACECQA, 2018 p. 618).

Certified Supervisor: If the Nominated Supervisor is absent they can nominate a certified supervisor who is put in charge of day to day operations of an education and care service (ACECQA, 2011 p. 85).

Educator: This is a person working in an early learning centre who has a qualification in early childhood education or is working towards a qualification in early childhood education.

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC): Relates to the early childhood sector that focuses on the development, wellbeing and learning from birth through to 8 years old.

Education and Care Service: Most long day care, family day care, preschool and outside hours care services are covered in the NQF (ACECQA, 2011 p. 11).

Learning Framework: This is “a guide which provides general goals or outcomes for children’s learning and how they might be attained. It also provides a scaffold to assist early childhood settings to develop their own detailed curriculum” (DEEWR, 2009, p. 46).

National Quality Framework (NQF): This includes a national legislative framework consisting of the National Law and Regulations; a national quality standard that address seven Quality Areas; a national quality rating and assessment; a regulatory in each state and territory; and a national body ACECQA to manage and guide the implementation consistently throughout Australia (ACECQA, 2017, p. 4).

National Quality Standard (NQS): Includes quality areas, standards and elements that are important outcomes for children and the aim of quality of education and care services throughout Australia. The NQS is a fundamental aspect of the NQF.

Nominated Supervisor: Is nominated by an approved provider and is a certified supervisor.

Long Day Care: centre based care that provides education and care to children. The licenced age of children varies in different centres but can be from 6 weeks until school age. Centres are normally open Monday to Friday for at least 10 hours a day, for a minimum of 48 weeks a year (ACECQA, 2011 p. 11).

Service Approval: Allows an Approved Provider to manage an education and care service (ACECQA, 2011 p. 15).

Service: Licenced early childhood setting such as long day care centres, pre-schools, community kindergartens, family day care providers and outside school hours care that operate under the NQF.

1.7 Chapter Outlines

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter has provided a background to, and rationale for the research topic. The research aims, objectives and research questions are presented. A definition of terms relevant to the research are describes. A summary of the chapters of the thesis is provided.

Chapter 2: Literature Informing the Research

This chapter presents a review of literature about the role and work practices of EL within the EC context in Australia and internationally.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Design

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology to be used in the research.

Chapter 4: Design, Development and Administration of Data Collection Instruments

This chapter details the design, development and administration of an online survey instrument and interview schedule used in the research.

Chapter 5: Online Survey Results

This chapter presents the results from the online survey data collection.

Chapter 6: Interview Results

This chapter presents the interview results based on three themes.

Chapter 7: Discussion of Results

The chapter considers the results using the three research questions.

Chapter 8: Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter provides recommendations conclusions and implications of the research.

Chapter 2

Early Childhood Education in Australia

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 provided an outline for the dissertation and established that this research explores the role and work practices undertaken by the Educational Leader (EL) in long day care centres with particular reference to the National Quality Standard (NQS), and Quality Area 7 (QA7). A preliminary review of the literature on educational leadership revealed that research in this area is growing as more emphasis is placed on guiding teaching practice for better outcomes for children.

The purpose of this chapter is to:

- review the literature about the EL role within the Early Childhood context in Australia;
- examine the scope of the EL role in its broad terms;
- articulate the types of practices that might be encapsulated within the role internationally; and
- review the role within the Australia context in terms of the National Quality Standard (NQS) Quality Area 7 (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), 2011).

An initial review of the literature revealed there was limited literature available about the role of EL in the Australian context. A range of research journals, seminal publications and informing documents in the EC field from Australian and international sources have been drawn upon and examples of sources used are overviewed in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Literature Drawn upon for the Review

Journals	<p>The Australasian Journal of Early Childhood</p> <p>Journal of Early Childhood Education Research</p> <p>Educational Management Administration and Leadership Journal</p>
Seminal Texts & Research Studies	<p>Waniganayake (2014). Being and Becoming Early Childhood Leaders: Reflections on leadership studies in early childhood education and the future leadership research agenda</p> <p>Nailon & Beswick (2014). Changes in Policy related to Early Childhood Education and Care in Australia: The journey towards Pedagogical Leadership</p> <p>Heikka (2014). Distributed Pedagogical Leadership in Early Childhood Education</p> <p>Siraj & Hallet (2014). Effective and Caring Leadership in the Early Years</p> <p>Siraj-Blatchford & Manni (2006). Effective Leadership in the Early Years Sector (ELEYS) Study</p> <p>Waniganayake, Cheeseman, Fenech, Hadley & Shepherd (2017). Leadership Contexts and Complexities in Early Childhood</p> <p>Rodd (2013). Leadership in Early Childhood: The pathway to professionalism</p> <p>Page & Tayler (2016). Learning and Teaching in the Early Years</p> <p>Waniganayake, Rodd & Gibbs (Eds) (2015). Thinking and Learning about Leadership</p>
Informing Documents	<p>Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) (2011) National Quality Framework Resource Kit</p> <p>Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). (2009). The early years learning framework. Barton, ACT: Australian Government Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments.</p>

2.2 Educational Leadership

2.2.1 Introduction

When examining the literature, it is evident that the EL literature incorporates a range of areas including education, leadership, administration and management and this depends upon the context of the education environment. This section considers educational leadership within the general context of education and then it specifically focusses on the early childhood context.

2.2.2 Educational leadership in broad terms

The position of educational leader has turned out to be progressively multifaceted and constrained (Fullan, 1998). It can be seen from the literature that leadership derives from the concept that is based on the attitude, ethics and beliefs that direct and guide policy, daily operation, methods and innovation (Rodd, 2013). In this respect Antonakis and Day (2018) state that “leadership is a formal or informal contextually rooted and goal-influencing process that occurs between a leader and a follower, groups of followers or institutions” (p. 5). Effective leadership is more commonly considered as fundamental to the energy of organisations and the “sustainability of change agendas in education” (Woodrow & Busch, 2008, p. 84). According to Caldwell (2006, p. 120), educational leadership refers “to a capacity to nurture a learning community, defined broadly to include a nation, state, school system” (p. 120). According to Ho (2011), the terms leadership and management within a school environment are often interchangeable as the work is performed by the same people often at the same time. The difference between these two concepts proposes that “leadership concerns vision, strategy, creating directions and transformation of the organisation, whereas management concerns effective implementation of the vision and operational matters, ensuring the organisation is run effectively and efficiently to achieve its goals” (Ho, 2011, p. 48). In education one of the most significant aspects that educational leaders perform is developing their staff (Hargreaves, 1998). An educational leader who is a successful staff developer aspires and knows how to produce the

conditions in which teachers are positively involved in their work (Hargreaves, 1998). According to Hargreaves (1998) the sentiments of teaching and teacher development are “absolutely central to maintaining and improving educational quality in our schools and to the work of educational leaders who are ultimately responsible for producing that quality (p. 315). Ebbeck and Waniganayake (2010) states that “leadership is an extension of management, concerned more with the long-term objectives including the articulation and development of the centre’s vision” (p. 11). Hargreaves (2015) discusses ‘uplifting leadership’ as requiring consistency between what you lead, why you lead and how you lead (p. 44). Uplifting leadership increases spirits, aspirations and performance of others in the workplace so they will uplift all those they work with. According to Hargreaves (2015) “inspiring words and actions of others, and our own deeds uplift others in turn” (p. 44). According to Fullan (1998) in chaotic times within schools “the key task of leadership is not to arrive at early consensus, but to create opportunities for learning from dissonance” (p. 8). Rallying people to confront tough problems is the key skill required “instead of looking for saviours we should be calling for leadership that will challenge us to face problems for which there are no simple painless solutions” (Fullan, 1998, p. 8) demanding a new way to learn. “The educational leader of the 21st century, paradoxically, will find greater peace of mind by looking for answers close at hand and by reaching out, knowing that there is no clear solution” (Fullan, 1998, p. 9). The leader that is emotional intelligent assists teachers, students, parents and others establish a supportive environment “in which people see problems not as weaknesses but as issues to be solved” (Fullan, 1998, p. 9). The foregoing considers the different ways of enacting educational leadership for the role of the Educational Leader.

2.2.3 Conceptualising educational leadership for the role of Educational Leader

Waniganayake et al., (2012) reports that to perform as an EL requires the communication of professional knowledge regarding programme planning and resources and involving the children

and families. Such a role suggests a need to draw upon staff that come from diverse backgrounds with varied experience, knowledge and qualifications. These authors suggest that:

- educational leadership may involve teaching, mentoring, introducing professional conversations and demonstrating ethical practice to strengthen the team of staff as curriculum decision makers; and
- the EL has a professional responsibility to guide all educators and encourage communication that is central to the best learning outcomes for the children who attend an EC centre.

There is some conjecture within the literature that the EL position, needs to be considered within the broad extent of leadership roles and obligations. This requires ELs to have a thorough and impartial knowledge of leadership theory. For example, Rodd, (2013) discusses that the prescribed leader of long day care centres were inclined to be qualified EC teachers with the title of director, coordinator or manager. Although these leaders are qualified teachers they come equipped with limited knowledge and experience leading adults. Regardless of the teacher qualifications and experience although they are significant and beneficial to the position, they “do not offer adequate preparation for the formal, complex leadership and administrative roles and responsibilities required for leading contemporary inclusive, integrated, multi-disciplinary, multi-agency early childhood services” (Rodd, 2013, p. 39). Heikka and Waniganayake (2011) debate that educational leadership needs to be reflected within the full extent of leadership roles and responsibilities currently required. For this to be achieved EC educators must have a broad and impartial interpretation of leadership theory and models (Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011). This would provide ELs with knowledge on leadership and ways to enact leadership within their own workplace. Research has shown that ELs with leadership knowledge and skills is a challenge for the EC sector, as there is a lack of EC professionals who are experienced in leadership and have the skills to put this into practice (Bricker as cited in, Campbell-Evans,

Stamopoulos & Maloney, 2014; Rodd, 2013). According to Waniganayake (2014) there is considerable research about early childhood teachers' disinclination to embrace leadership roles. The once defined role and responsibility of an early childhood teacher concentrating entirely on the education of young children has broaden in capacity with the increasing requirements from families, government and other professionals working with young children in ECEC (Waniganayake, 2014). In order to address this situation in 2017, Early Childhood Australia (ECA) developed the Early Childhood Leadership Program, this was exclusively designed for the early childhood education and care sector. This is a self-directed program designed to the National Quality Standard and the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers for educational leaders, directors, managers, and educators to develop and map their own professional development and skills (ECA, 2017). "The ECA Leadership Capability Framework defines a set of capabilities – values, attributes, skills, knowledge and dispositions, and practices that support effective leadership in early childhood settings" (ECA, 2017, p. 7). The rationale for developing this program acknowledges that successful leadership is fundamental to the success of education and care settings. Research and practice prove the unlikelihood of establishing and maintaining a high-quality learning environment without competent and dedicated leaders to influence the teaching and learning (ECA, 2017). Recognising a new concept of leadership that identifies leadership in not only a position of rank and associated with "being in charge is important" (Clark as cited in Campbell-Evans et al., 2014, p. 43).

It is evident from the above that educational leadership has been linked to conventional concepts that focus primarily on administration and management. However, leadership in EC centres is emerging to also include pedagogy, advocacy and community (Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011). In this respect educational leadership can be conceptualised as having two main components; practice and pedagogy; and operational management as shown in Figure 2.1.

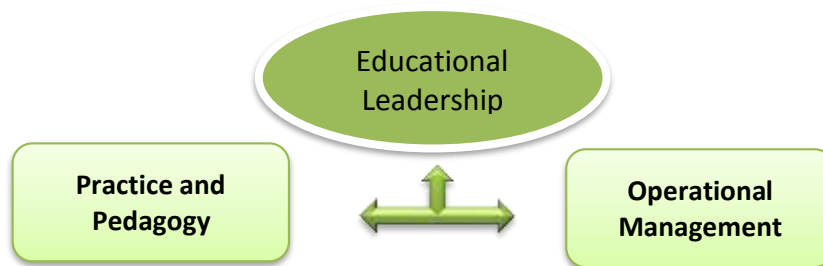


Figure 2.1 Aspects of Educational Leadership

Based on the foregoing, practice and pedagogy can be described as an educator who influences others' learning by using different methods to improve teaching practices and outcomes for children. Operational management refers to the administration, staffing and operational responsibilities required for an EC centre to function. Although ELs are not required under ACECQA (2011) to be responsible for operational management within the role of EL. With the introduction of the NQS, Quality Area 7 Governance and Leadership in 2012, inclusion of service management and leadership responsibilities was highlighted in early childcare (Waniganayake, 2014). However, research has suggested that operational management is becoming more entwined in EL aspects (Page & Tayler, 2016; Rodd, 2013; Waniganayake et.al, 2012).

2.2.4 Summary

ELs may have a sole focus on the pedagogy and practices within a ECEC centre to support children's learning. However, the above review of the literature review indicates that for the Early Childhood contexts, there are 2 main components encapsulated within educational leadership, practice and pedagogy, and operational management.

2.3 Educational Leadership in the Early Childhood Context

2.3.1 Introduction

The literature in educational leadership concerning the EC sector is a developing area with limited research (Davis, Krieg & Smith, 2014; Fleet, Soper, Semann & Madden, 2015; Heikka, 2014; Waniganayake et al., 2012). However, the history of EC leadership has been documented in a range of publications (Ebbeck & Waniganayake, Rodd, (2013); Siraj & Hallet, (2014); Waniganayake et.al, (2017). These publications indicate that there is no one way of defining leadership as a single definition that would be suitable. An acknowledged reason is due to the highly challenging and diversity of organisational settings where EC leaders originate (Rodd, 2013; Waniganayake et.al, 2017). As indicated, leadership is a socio-cultural concept that is reinforced by the “beliefs and values of a society, community and organisation” (Waniganayake et.al, 2017). According to Heikka (2014), “in the early childhood literature specifically, the lack of rigorous research on pedagogical leadership in this sector has inhibited the coherent development of the concept in a meaningful way” (p. 36). Due to evolving changes in leadership functions in modern EC settings more clarity is required in the expectation and responsibility of who performs administration, management and leadership (Waniganayake et.al, 2017). For example, in smaller long day centre centres the Director might perform the day to day operation of the centre (management) as well as development of future requirements (leadership) (Waniganayake et.al, 2017).

Research literature for some time has debated that leaders in EC education play a fundamental role within in long day care centres (Bloom & Sheerer, 1992; Ebbeck & Waniganayake, 2014; Nupponen, 2006b; Rodd, 1994; Waniganayake et.al, 2017). An increasing amount of evidence validates the importance of having effective leaders in long day care centres (Lower & Cassidy, 2007; OECD, 2015; Rodd, 2013; Sylva et al., 2004b; Waniganayake et.al, 2017). Together these studies identify that leadership constructively influences the quality of the long day care centre as a workplace, the quality of the care and education offered, and the developmental outcomes

attained by the children (Waniganayake et.al, 2017). Therefore, the research literature suggests that leadership greatly impacts many aspects of a long day care centre. This is supported in the NQS, QA7 (ACECQA, 2018) where the EL is included in the quality assessment and improvement plans.

The remainder of this section addresses the definitions of practice and pedagogy, and operational management as well as discussing these terms in the international and Australian contexts.

Practice and Pedagogy

According to Rockel (2009), pedagogy combines caring and learning, with regard for “theoretical, ethical and philosophical aspects of teaching” (p. 7). Pedagogy is both the technique and the science of knowing how to support intentional teaching and purposeful intervention to encourage the development of the learner (Siraj & Hallet, 2014). The term pedagogy is being used widely within school education and all other education sectors (Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011). Pedagogy defined by DEEWR (2009) is “early childhood educators’ professional practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships, curriculum decision-making, teaching and learning” (p. 9). The view of pedagogy in EC literature is “broad and includes interactions between children and parents and informal learning that takes place outside EC organisations” (Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011, p. 500). The literature indicates there is an alignment and a link between the terms educational leadership and pedagogical leadership (Heikka, 2014; Heikka, Waniganayake & Hujala, 2012; Rodd, 2013; Waniganayake et al., 2012). This alignment between educational leadership and pedagogical leader is applied in this dissertation.

Operational Management

The landscape of early childhood has noticeably changed in the last 20 years in terms of its operation and management structures. In this respect business philosophies more closely related with private enterprise and stock market listed companies have become a commonplace of the operations of EC settings (Waniganayake, Cheeseman, Fenech, Hadley & Shepherd, 2017). The EC sector has seen an intensification for EC settings to be answerable for public funds along with quality assurance criteria have increased the demands of EC settings to be accountable to government, societies, families and children. This requires leaders in ECEC to have skills and practices to be able to evaluate and plan whilst thinking and acting in strategic ways to meet all stakeholder's expectations at the same time ensuring the business is viable (Waniganayake et.al, 2017). This shift of the purpose and function of EC settings is now not only a place to educate and care for young children but also a competitive business marketplace concept for some ECEC centres. In some ECEC centres the Director is accountable for the operational management and the EL is a separate role carried out by another member of staff. However, some ECEC settings combine the role together.

2.3.2 Educational Leader in the international context

The literature indicates that educational leadership is a developing area in international research that acknowledges the importance of educational leaders in enabling quality programmes that lead to positive outcomes for children (Davis, Krieg & Smith, 2014).

The following section critiques the similarities and differences of the varied roles of the EL and discusses practice and pedagogy as well as operational management to describe educational leadership of the early childhood setting within EC internationally and within Australia.

Practice and Pedagogy

At the international level educators have used different terms such as Pedagogical Leader, Pedagogista, Early Years Leaders and Educational Leader to describe a person who guides curriculum development and implementation (Heikka, 2014; Rodd, 2013; Siraj & Hallet, 2014; Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011).

The term pedagogy is becoming more frequently used within different educational contexts in the United Kingdom and is often used in Europe. However, in Europe the term ‘pedagogy’ signifies a comprehensive range of services such as childcare, early years, youth work, parenting and family support services (Siraj & Hallet, 2014).

Table 2.2 overviews the role of the EL in Italy, Finland and England. The researcher had difficulty finding literature from other countries on the EL role, hence the focus on Italy, Finland and Italy. It can be seen from Table 2.2, that these countries combine educational leadership with children’s learning. The EL also develops knowledge and skills of EC professionals along with the ideals and beliefs about EC education held by the wider community.

Table 2.2 Roles of the Educational Leader Internationally

Country	Practice and Pedagogy	Operational Management
Italy	<p>The role of Pedagogista:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • typically the name of the person guiding the educational approach at Reggio Emilia. Reggio Emilia approach is implemented not only in Italy but throughout the world. • acts as a specialist, resource educator and coordinator to several schools and early learning centres • provides a high level of knowledge in EC theory and practice • guides and leads other educators with the curriculum. • collaborates with teachers to investigate and elucidate the rights and needs of each child and family and then incorporate this into the curriculum • facilitate discussion and reflection about specific and general educational issues. • collaborates with teachers to investigate and elucidate the rights and needs of each child and family and then incorporate this into the curriculum • liaises with teachers, children and families working to create relationships • to inspire and provoke teachers to explore different views, to reconsider situations, re-examine experiences and reflect • to work with teachers to identify new topics and experiences for continuous professional development • acts to promote to teaching staff “an attitude of learning to learn, an openness to change, and a willingness to discuss opposing points of view” (Filippini & Bonilauri, 1998, p. 130) <p>(adapted from :Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 1998; Filippini & Bonilauri, 1998; Phillips and Bredekamp, 1998; Rinaldi, 1998)</p>	<p>The role of operational management falls under a position different to the Pedagogista. A community-based management structure called an advisory council is formed every 2 years and is made up of parents, educators and townspeople. The main aim of the advisory council is concerned with administrative concerns such as enrolments, fees, makes decisions about opening new centres and addresses the needs of families and educators.</p> <p>(adapted from Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 1998)</p>

Table 2.2 Roles of the Educational Leader Internationally (Cont'd)

Country	Practice and Pedagogy	Operational Management
Finland	<p>The EL role is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leading care, upbringing, teaching and an expert of early childhood education (Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011, p. 501) • guidance on pedagogical practices, planning and assessing the pedagogical actions, and envisioning pedagogical practices (Eskelinen & Hujala, 2015, p. 92) • Discussion with leaders and teachers is seen as an essential tool for educational leadership • a predominant role of centre directors in EC centres • to provide high quality early learning and aims to improve the regulatory basics of childcare • to be a good role model and inspire educators on a daily basis to aim for high quality pedagogy <p>(adapted from: Eskelinen & Hujala, 2015,; Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011; Hujala and Eskelinen, 2013)</p>	<p>The EL role is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading service operation • regulations outline that leaders in EC must have a bachelor's degree in EC and acceptable management ability • there is absence of definitions and a separation of leadership and management in EC • leadership responsibilities such as educational leadership, service, human resources, financial and network management, leadership and daily management duties • human resource management • founded “on vision, tools and strategy and on the structure of educational leadership, the staff expertise and professionalism, a clear core task and the values that are articulated” (Eskelinen & Hujala, 2015, p. 97). <p>(adapted from Eskelinen & Hujala, 2015; Eskelinen, Halttunen, Heikka & Fonsen, 2014; Waniganayake & Gibbs, 2015)</p>

Table 2.2 Roles of the Educational Leader Internationally (Cont'd)

Country	Practice and Pedagogy	Operational Management
England	<p>The role is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EC leaders in the early years are “resilient, well-informed, creative and innovative leaders with the requisite skills, knowledge and experience to ensure the effective delivery of integrated provision for children ...and families (DCSF as cited Ang, 2011, p. 290). <p>The Effective Leadership in the Early Years Sector (ELEYS) study revealed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leaders in EC role as educators and child developers • there is the link between leadership and positive outcomes for children. • ‘in the most effective settings better leadership was characterised by a clear vision, especially with regard to pedagogy and curriculum’ (Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2007, p. 13). • successful early learning settings are almost always characterised by strong leadership where educators have the same foresight on the early learning practices particularly in respect to pedagogy and the curriculum <p>(adapted from: DCSF as cited Ang, 2011, p. 290; (Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2006).</p>	<p>The role is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leaders in EC have seen their role change now their position has a focus more on management <p>(adapted from: Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2006).</p>

It can be seen in Table 2.2 that the role of EL is similar in Italy, Finland and England. For example, these countries use this role: to guide curriculum; assisting educators with curriculum planning and assessing; to provide vision for pedagogical practices; and to provide educators with expert knowledge about children and EC education. The EL role in these countries has a strong focus to inspire and guide educators to support quality learning and better outcomes for children.

Operational Management

The above overview in Table 2.2 indicates that there are differences in the way educators delineate and explain the importance of EC leadership. Waniganayake et.al, (2017) suggest that how leadership is practiced and conveyed differs between different organisations even within the same country. Dissimilarities may result for example, from each long day cares' differing approaches and philosophies to EC education and leadership; the qualifications of educators; and the diversity of the children and families attending the centre (Waniganayake et.al, 2017).

According to Sims, Forrest, Semann and Slattery (2014) “around the world, quality improvement in EC education is being driven through a process of leadership” (p. 1). The ideas supporting this are that highly educated EC professionals can motivate, guide, demonstrate and instruct other staff to improve their practice (Sims et al., 2014). Some leaders would acknowledge that they will need to grow and develop, hence needing to modify their practice and react to the changing EC contexts and procedures (Campbell-Evans et al., 2014).

In different countries the constructs of administration, management and leadership are different in connection to the roles and responsibilities of the leader and culturally these concepts maybe more favoured over another (Waniganayake et.al, 2017). For example, the USA identifies administration work as highly valued yet in the UK this task is viewed as routine work.

Waniganayake et.al (2017) suggest that clear definitions for administration, management and leadership will endeavour to reduce repetition of responsibilities and provide ways to access and examine leadership work being carried out by different individuals within the same organisation. Furthermore, according to Siraj and Hallet (2014) leadership has not been recognised where care and education occurs such as in long day care and preschools, as many teachers and educators prefer to be recognised for their teaching ability instead for their leadership role.

Ebbeck and Waniganayake (2010) mention management in childcare requires different abilities other than teaching to operate a centre and administration is only one factor. Such skills include human resources, organising and planning, problem solving and communication, team building, working with educators from diverse backgrounds and documentation.

2.3.3 Educational Leader in the Australian context

Within the Australian EC context, a synthesis of literature shows that there is limited literature on the role of the EL (Fleet, Soper & Semann, 2015; Heikka, 2014; Krieg, Davis & Smith, 2014; Stamopoulos, 2012; and Waniganayake et al., 2012).

Practice and Pedagogy

In Australia, within the EC education and care services a prominence on policy is on the quality of teaching within long day care services for children aged from birth (Page & Tayler, 2016).

There have been a range of changes and reform in the provision of early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Australia as outlined in Chapter 1. From these changes and reform of EC, Australia has implemented a unified approach through the collaboration of policy, legal and practice-orientated frameworks that encompass the National Quality Framework (NQF) for ECEC (Page & Tayler, 2016).

One of the approved learning framework of the NQF, The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) (Department of Education, Employment and Work Place Relations [DEEWR], 2009) defines pedagogy as “early childhood educators’ professional practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships, curriculum decision-making, teaching and learning” (p. 46). The Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) states that the role of the EL in EC is to work with educators to offer curriculum guidance and to make sure children reach the outcomes of the approved learning framework (ACECQA, 2011). According to ACECQA the EL: needs to be an experienced educator with appropriate qualifications; in-depth knowledge of the Early Years Learning Framework; be able to lead other educators on their “planning and reflection and mentor colleagues in their implementation practices” (ACECQA, 2011, p. 85). However, the ways in which the ELs are to achieve the NQS requirements as outlined in the NQS, Quality Area 7 require more clarity and more detailed information of what the responsibilities are of the EL role.

The role of EL within the NQS Quality Area 7 is explained by Waniganayake & Gibbs (2015) as instrumental in “inspiring, motivating, affirming and for challenging the practice and pedagogy of educators through inquiry and reflection” (p. 27). Additionally, ELs must be able to listen to other educators on their team; foster and convey a shared vision; ensure ongoing learning by guiding and supporting educators; provide avenues for self-reflection to enable continuous improvement; and create a culture of honesty, trust and appreciation (Page & Tayler, 2016).

“Pedagogical leadership, like educational leadership, has at its core the study of the teaching and learning process” (Page & Tayler, 2016, p. 114). It is essential that ELs use their wisdom and expertise within the context of their own long day care centre and perform as a link between research and practice (Page & Tayler, 2016).

Operational Management

The NQS states that effective leadership with respect to operational management influences “quality environments for children’s learning and development, promotes a positive organisational culture and builds a professional learning community” (ACECQA, 2011, p. 169; Page & Tayler, 2016, 113).

2.3.4 Summary

The foregoing section has shown that:

- educational leadership in EC is an area that warrants further research;
- the context to the roles of EL within practice and pedagogy, and operational management in the international and Australian contexts can vary;
- leadership can constructively influence the quality of the long day care centre as a workplace, the quality of the care and education offered, and the developmental outcomes attained by the children (Waniganayake et.al, 2017); and
- successful early learning settings are almost always characterised by strong leadership where educators have the same foresight on the early learning practices particularly in respect to pedagogy and the curriculum (Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2006).

2.4 Work Practices of Educational Leaders in Australia Context

2.4.1 Introduction

This section examines work practices appropriate to the EL that align with the NQS.

2.4.2 ACECQA as an Informing Document

As shown in Chapter 1, within the NQS, Quality Area 7 (QA7) is Leadership and Service Management. Within Element 7.1.4 the mandated position of EL role is specified and this Element states “provision is made to ensure a suitably qualified and experienced educator or

co-ordinator leads the development of the curriculum and ensures the establishment of clear goals and expectation for teaching and learning” (ACECQA, 2011, p. 178). Table 2.3 lists practices stated in Element 7.1.4.

Table 2.3 Listed Work Practices in NQS: Element 7.1.4

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EL working with other educators observe, support and extend children’s learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities available for discussion and reflective practice • How the EL promotes children’s learning and development to families • What strategies and processes the EL uses to lead the development of the curriculum and set goals for teaching and learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing planning and evaluation that centres on children’s learning and development • Curriculum development • Professional discussion and interrogation of research and new ideas • Documented goals for teaching and learning that demonstrates a deep understanding of children’s’ development and learning (ACECQA, 2011, p. 178)

There is no manual to follow as to how an EL is to undertake the practices to address Element 7.1.4 (ACECQA, 2017) as shown in Table 2.3. This is open to interpretation by individual ELs regarding curriculum decisions that ensure the intended outcomes of children’s learning are achieved. This is further supported by Waniganayake and Gibb (2015) who note the lack of detailed recommendations, prerequisites and expectations of the role. According to Fleet, Soper, Semann and Madden (2015), having explanation of the roles and responsibilities would support the EL and other educators at the centre to have shared expectations. Although the EL position is seen as important within the NQS as it is a mandated position, it holds no industry position

with no standard rate of pay and there is no direction on the appropriate qualifications or experience for those selected for the role (Fleet, Soper, Semann & Madden, 2015; Waniganayake & Gibb, 2015). According to Waniganayake and Gibb (2015) there is uncertainty if the position of EL should concentrate exclusively on pedagogical aspects or be combined with a variety of teaching, management responsibilities that are usual functions of the Director role at long day care centres.

The NQS and the regulatory standards do not have mandatory requirements regarding the qualifications, experience, skills or role description for the person selected as EL. According to Livingston (2014) the explanation for this is “the flexibility of these provisions allows approved providers to choose the best person in the service to take on this role” (p. 1). Nor is it stipulated if this person should work directly with children (ACECQA, 2013). It is however suggested by ACECQA that the EL is to be selected by the approved provider who they deem are most capable in this role, may be the nominated supervisor, a manager, a qualified EC teacher or an educator with diploma qualifications (ACECQA, 2011).

2.4.3 Summary

This section has considered EL role and work practices within the Australian context and examined the informing document of the EL as outlined in the NQS QA7, Element 7.1.4. (ACECQA, 2011). It has been shown that:

- there is no manual to follow that explains to the appointed EL how to meet the elements in QA7, Element 7.1.4; and
- QA7 (Element 7.1.4) is an area open to interpretation by individual ELs regarding curriculum decisions that ensure the intended outcomes of children’s learning are achieved.

2.5 Summary and Conclusions

It can be concluded from the foregoing review:

- Educational leadership can be viewed as having two main components, namely: practice and pedagogy; and operational management;
- Educational leadership in the international and national EC contexts can be described as having a focus on pedagogy, advocacy and community, with some contexts including administration and management strategies;
- Educational leadership in the EC context can positively influence the quality of long day care centres as a work place for staff;
- Educational leadership in the EC context can positively influence high quality pedagogical and curriculum approaches to teaching and learning in long day care centres;
- There is an absence of clear guidelines in the NQS with respect to the qualifications and experience required for the position of Educational Leader in the long day care centre setting; and
- Educational Leader work practices such as listening to other educators, fostering and communicating a shared vision, ensuring ongoing learning by guiding and supporting educators and providing opportunities for reflection have been identified within the literature.

Three key themes that emerged from the literature review that warrant further investigation:

- the role of the EL;
- the work practices used by the EL; and
- the alignment of the EL role with the NQS.

As well, two contextual considerations emerged after reflection on the researcher's conversancy with the EC context and in particular with the long day care centre context. Further

investigation of the two contextual considerations, namely EL profile and centre profile, can source supplementary information about the role and work practices of the Educational Leader.

Finally, the foregoing review has provided a rationale for exploring the two main components, namely, practice and pedagogy, and operational management along with the two contextual considerations, namely EL profile and centre profile. The two main components and contextual considerations will examine the identified gaps that emerged through the literature review to provide additional information and provide clarity about role of the EL, work practices used by the EL and the alignment of the EL role with the NQS.

Chapter 3 details the methodological approach and research design used to explore the research questions that inform this research.

Chapter 3

Methodology and Research Design

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapters considered the background to this research. Chapter 2 described the gaps in the research and identified areas that warranted further investigation with respect to the role and work practices of the Educational Leader (EL) working in early childhood long day care centres.

This Chapter details the methodological approach and research design used to explore the research questions presented in Chapter 1. Firstly, the philosophical assumptions that underpin the research are considered. Next, this chapter outlines the use of quantitative and qualitative methodologies in order to justify the choice of a mixed methods approach used to address the research questions. The latter part of the chapter presents the research design, explaining the use of the survey and interview data collection instruments. The Chapter then presents the research sample details before concluding with the specifics of the ethics approval related to this research.

3.2 Research Methodology

3.2.1 Introduction

Approaches to research can differ and there are various choices that contemporary researchers can make about how they organise their research (Cresswell, 2003). In contemporary research, researchers find suitable methods appropriate for their research investigation and do not just depend on a single method. This section considers the ontological and epistemological assumptions that support the mixed methods research approach adopted in this research.

3.2.2 Ontology

Saunders (2009), states that ontology involves the real world and how it operates with people's perceptions. He contends that ontology has two perspectives; objectivism and subjectivism. Saunders purports that these perspectives are accepted by researchers as a way of creating valid knowledge. According to Mertens (2009) the positivists see that only one reality exists and that it is the researcher's responsibility to ascertain that reality. The post-positivists agree that a reality does exist but dispute that that can be known incorrectly because of the researcher's human limits (Mertens, 2009). Hence, the researchers can find reality within a particular realm of probability. Researchers cannot show a theory but can make a sturdier case by removing different explanations (Mertens, 2009).

In the context of this research the researcher has adopted the ontological position that is informed by Mertens (2009) and Krauss (2005) who consider that reality is socially formed. As explained by Krauss (2005), each of us encounters reality from our own viewpoint; therefore, we all encounter a different reality. In aiming to articulate the role of the EL (RQ1), this research aligns with the views of Hennik, Hutter and Bailey (2011) who maintain that participants' viewpoints of reality have been formed by their own individual personal experiences that include historical, cultural and social encounters. This research examines the perceptions, practices and interactions of individuals who work as ELs in long day care centres. It follows that an ontological position provides an individual's own experience with respect to the role and work practices of the EL as constructed by the EL.

The actual practices used in the role of EL were explored in the survey and then further investigated in the interviews. Therefore, as ontology focuses on the reality of a position, the research concentrates on the participants with regard to their viewpoints, opinions and experiences about the role and practices of the EL.

3.2.3 Epistemology

Epistemology is the “systematic consideration, in philosophy and elsewhere, of knowing: when knowledge is valid, what counts as truth” (Parker & Goicoechea, 2000 p. 227). According to Creswell (2007), epistemology signifies the interrelatedness connecting the researcher and the subject being investigated. Two types of research approaches have been adopted in this research – positivism and interpretivism. As stated by Mertens (2009), in the positivist epistemology, a study would position the researcher and participants as independent. In contrast the use of interpretivist epistemology requires the researcher to recognise differences among humans in their positions as social actors. This is consistent with Mertens’ (2009) views of interpretivism which advocate a collaborative connection between researcher and participants. In this respect this interpretivist epistemology is the position adopted in this particular research. The researcher obtained baseline data using a survey that examined the views, experiences and opinions of the participants. The researcher then used interviews to obtain further insights into the views, experiences and opinions of participants, thereby addressing the research questions in relation to the role of EL.

3.2.4 Approaches to research

This section briefly overviews quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approaches and considered in this section regarding their use in the research.

Quantitative Approach

Quantitative research is an analysis approach used to clarify trends and portray the relationship among variables obtained in the literature (Creswell, 2002). Quantitative research considers “distinguishing characteristics, elemental properties and empirical boundaries’ (Horna, 1994, p. 121). An objective of quantitative research is to distinguish “general trends in populations” (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p. 585). In particular a, “quantitative researcher treats social

phenomena as a set of interconnected variables, and every social phenomenon is the result of interactions between these variables” (Libarkin & Kurdziel, 2002, p. 78). Quantitative research is considered by researchers to include the gathering of explanatory statistics through the use of a data gathering tools such as a survey to gather data centred on perspectives and characteristics from a sample. This research used an online survey to collect data in order to obtain base-line descriptive statistics regarding the role and work practices of an EL. Analysis of the online survey identified categories (de Vaus, 2002), allowing the researcher to decode the data. Descriptive data was established about the opinions and experiences of ELs working in long day care centres.

Qualitative Approach

Qualitative research is described as a research approach that highlights a somewhat open-ended approach to the research method that often “produces surprises, changes of direction and new insights” (Bryman, 2006, p. 111). Qualitative research seeks to focus on questions that involve “developing an understanding of the meaning and experience dimensions of humans’ lives and social worlds” (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott & Davidson, 2002, p. 717). Qualitative research is an all-encompassing term for research methodology that describes the experiences, actions, interaction and social contexts without the use of statistical techniques (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott & Davidson, 2002). Descriptive statistics defines and examines quantitative data into a summary of key information (Mentor, Elliot, Hulme, Lewin & Lowden, 2011). In this research open-ended questions that facilitated participants to describe their individual opinions and experiences were used. The data that emerged from the data gathering instruments was then grouped in the structure of descriptive words as described by Neuman (2014).

Mixed Method Approaches

As indicated in the previous section this research used both qualitative and quantitative approaches to address the research questions. This approach is referred to as mixed method methodology. Mixed methods research is explained by Tashakkori and Creswell (2007, p. 4) whereby the researcher “collects and analyses data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study”. Creswell (2002) describes mixed method research as a beneficial design to use to develop the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative data. Creswell (2007) considers that a systematic approach is needed when designing research to make sure that the research questions are addressed. In this respect, according to Creswell (2002), a mixed method approach may assist to provide a comprehensive representation of a research problem.

3.2.5 Use of mixed method approach in this research

A mixed method approach is used as way to more fully examine the research questions (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989). In this research the rationale for the choice of a mixed methods approach is founded on the research questions, which sought answers from both quantitative and qualitative data sources. The researcher used a mixed method approach in this research because it facilitated a review of the complimentary nature of the survey and interview results as a means of enrichment and clarification of views of the ELs in this research. The mixed method approach enabled exploration of the:

- key responsibilities of the role of EL in a long day care centre (RQ1);
- work practices used by the EL to meet the requirements of the EL role (RQ2); and
- alignment between the role and work practices used by the EL with the National Quality Standards in Quality Area 7 (RQ3).

Table 3.1 overviews the objectives and RQs addressed by the on-line survey and interviews.

Table 3.1 Data Collection Instruments

Data Collection Instrument Used	Research Objective	Research Questions
Online Survey Open-ended questions Closed questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to explore the role and work practices of the EL in long day care centres to examine specific practices used by the EL and to investigate EL responses 	RQ1 What are the key responsibilities encapsulated in the role of the educational leader in long day care centres? RQ2 What are the specific work practices used by the EL in fulfilling the requirements of the identified role?
Interviews Semi structured interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to examine specific practices used by the EL and to investigate EL responses to explore the role and work practices of the EL within long day care centres to investigate the alignment between the EL role and work practices and the National Quality Standards in Quality Area 7 	RQ1 What are the key responsibilities encapsulated in the role of the educational leader in long day care centres? RQ2 What are the specific work practices used by the EL in fulfilling the requirements of the identified role? RQ3 How do the EL role and the work practices used align with the requirements of the National Quality Standards in Quality Area 7?

3.3 Research Design

The literature shows that research design can be considered as the binding of the research that holds the research project together (Cresswell, 2007). According to Creswell (1991, p. 1), research design "begins with the selection of a topic and a paradigm". A suitable research design ensures effective research outcomes (Delost & Nadder, 2014). Furthermore, research design needs to originate from the research questions to which the researcher is seeking answers, thereby reinforcing the purpose of the research (Cresswell, 2007; Freidman, 2000; Tashakkori &

Teddlie, 2010; Yin, 2003). This is shown in Figure 3.1 which presents the research design used to explore RQ1, RQ2 and RQ3.

It can be seen from the figure that the design has two phases. In Phase 1, the survey is used to obtain data from ELs concerning the role of the EL and the work practices used by ELs in this role. As shown in Figure 3.1, the survey results informed the development of the interview.

In Phase 2, participants who had self-nominated were involved in interviews. Interviews were used to gain more in-depth insights into the role and work practices used by ELs, and to determine ways in which the NQS requirements of the EL role were met at their respective long day care centres.

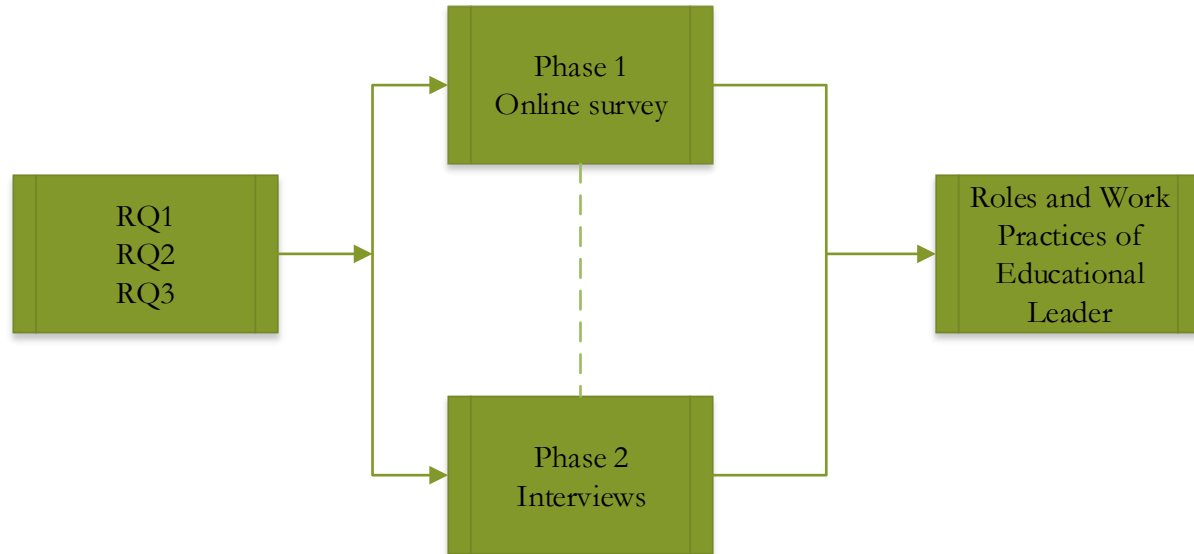


Figure 3.1 Research Design

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

This section provides a description of the data collection and analysis of the survey and interview data.

3.4.1 Survey data

Introduction

Surveys are a frequently used method of data collection in the social sciences for the intention of collecting data from individuals (Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Sarantakos, 2005). A survey enables the researcher to gain information from a significant number of participants within a limited timeframe. The survey can be in the form of an oral or written format containing as many questions as required (de Vaus, 2002; Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Surveys use both open-ended and closed questions. The use of a survey enables a researcher to collect a reasonable amount of data to make appropriate generalisations (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). Details concerning the design, development and administration of the online survey are presented in Chapter 4.

Research literature recommends the development testing of the survey prior to use, thereby allowing the researcher to adjust or modify the survey (Sarantakos, 2005; de Vaus, 2002).

Development testing the survey needs to be done to check the validity and reliability of the research instrument.

The Purpose and Use of an Online Survey in this Research

An online survey was used in this research to obtain base line data about the role and work practices of ELs in long day care centres. The researcher considered that the online survey, developed using Survey Monkey, was deemed as a cost effective way to collect data from EL participants, who could complete the survey at a time suitable to them. The use of the Survey Monkey was also an efficient method to collect and analyse the data.

Analysis of Survey Data

The data retrieved from the survey was examined using descriptive statistics for individual questions generated by using the Survey Monkey software. Survey Monkey provided a platform for results to be viewed and analysed at any time. Survey Monkey generated details of individual responses, graphs and tables results and categorised open-ended responses (SurveyMonkey, 2018).

3.4.2 Use of Interviews

Introduction

An interview is an interpersonal encounter for collecting data, where the interviewer poses questions to an interviewee (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Interviews are typically conducted face to face, in a private setting. According to Yin (2009), interviews are an important source of information, allowing the researcher to explore facts and opinions from participants. Leedy and Ormrod (2005), purport that interviews can generate constructive information about phenomena. Furthermore, interviews present the opportunity of creating a more holistic view of the phenomena under examination, and to generate a better in depth and comprehensive understanding of the issues under exploration (Creswell, 2014).

Purpose and Use of the Interview in this Research

Interviews were used in Phase 2 of the research design to obtain detailed information about the role and the specific work practices of the individual working in the role of the EL. The interviews also enabled the researcher to clarify, support and supplement data from the survey. The interviews assisted to provide an in-depth view of the identification of specific questions. In this respect a semi-structured interview format was used to help clarify participant responses about the EL role. As each participant was asked the same questions, the semi structured format

of the interview schedule enhanced the interpretation of data gathered using the survey (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The use of open-ended questions provided an opportunity for the researcher to obtain detailed insights about participants' individual experiences working in the role of EL (Yin, 2009). The interview responses offered the researcher the opportunity to further clarify and confirm data already retrieved from the survey and an opportunity to source new data. Chapter 4 provides further details about the design, development and administration of the interview schedule.

Generation of Transcripts and Analysis of Interview Data

The researcher with the participants' permission, used a digital recording to record each individual interview. The transcripts were de-naturalised and non-verbals were not noted in the transcripts. After each interview the audio recording was promptly transcribed. Five interview participants were chosen as this was seen as a manageable amount for this research. According to Scott and Usher (2001) selecting participants for their 'explanatory power' this is where participants exemplify their ideas and opinions independently and collectively. The researcher used manual coding to identify key statements or 'threads' that emerged and is detailed in Chapter 6. EL responses linked to each thread were coded and then were organised compared to the corresponding thread for each theme. The coding method was a search for configurations in the coding that offered an increased awareness of the phenomena being researched (Bazely, 2007). EL responses linked to each thread for each theme as described at the end of Chapter 2.

3.5 Research Sample

This section provides details of the samples used for the survey and interviews.

3.5.1 Survey sample

Research samples can be established several ways and can be categorised into random and non-random methods (de Vaus, 2002; Leddy & Ormond, 2005; Neuman, 2014). This research used purposeful sampling which is a method where the researcher intentionally chooses participants who are significant to the project (Sarantakos, 2005). In this research ELs who were working in long day care centres located within the Sunshine Coast and Brisbane greater areas (Queensland) were the focus.

The survey sample were participants employed as ELs who were working in long day care centres on the Sunshine Coast and Brisbane areas of Queensland. A total of 53 participants took part in the online survey. The purpose of the survey in Phase 1 of this research was to establish the ELs demographic of the long day care they were employed at; the amount of children that attended the centre daily; the number of staff employed; the ELs early childhood experience; and to determine what they did in the role at the centre as EL.

3.5.2 Interview sample

At the end of the survey, participants could self-nominate to participate in the interview. A total of 25 participants self-nominated for the interview. Of these, five were randomly chosen to obtain in-depth information about the role and their experiences working as an EL at their respective long day care centres.

3.6 Research Ethics Approval

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Human Ethics Committee at CQUniversity following approval of the submission of the NEAF application (H16/04-077) (See Appendix B). The

practices undertaken by the researcher during this research were consistent with the prerequisites of the approving body.

Participants in the research were advised that they could withdraw from the survey or interview at any time. All participants were informed in writing about the purpose and process involved in the research (Appendix C). Electronic data collected was password protected and the transcribed interview data was stored in a locked filing cabinet.

3.7 Summary

This chapter has presented the methodology and research design used in the research. Ethical clearance approval for the research was also noted.

The next Chapter details the processes used in the design, development and administration of the survey and interview schedule used in this research.

Chapter 4

Design, Development and Administration of Data Collection Instruments

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 presented details of the research methodology and the research design adopted for this research. This Chapter details the processes used in the design, development and administration of the data collection instruments used to address the Research Questions stated in Chapter 1.

4.2 Design, Development and Administration of the Online Survey

4.2.1 Introduction

This section presents details of the design, development and administration of the online survey used in Phase 1 of the data collection. The researcher designed and developed a survey to investigate the views and experiences of participants working in the role of Educational Leader (EL).

Figure 4.1 presents the stages and steps used to develop the online survey.

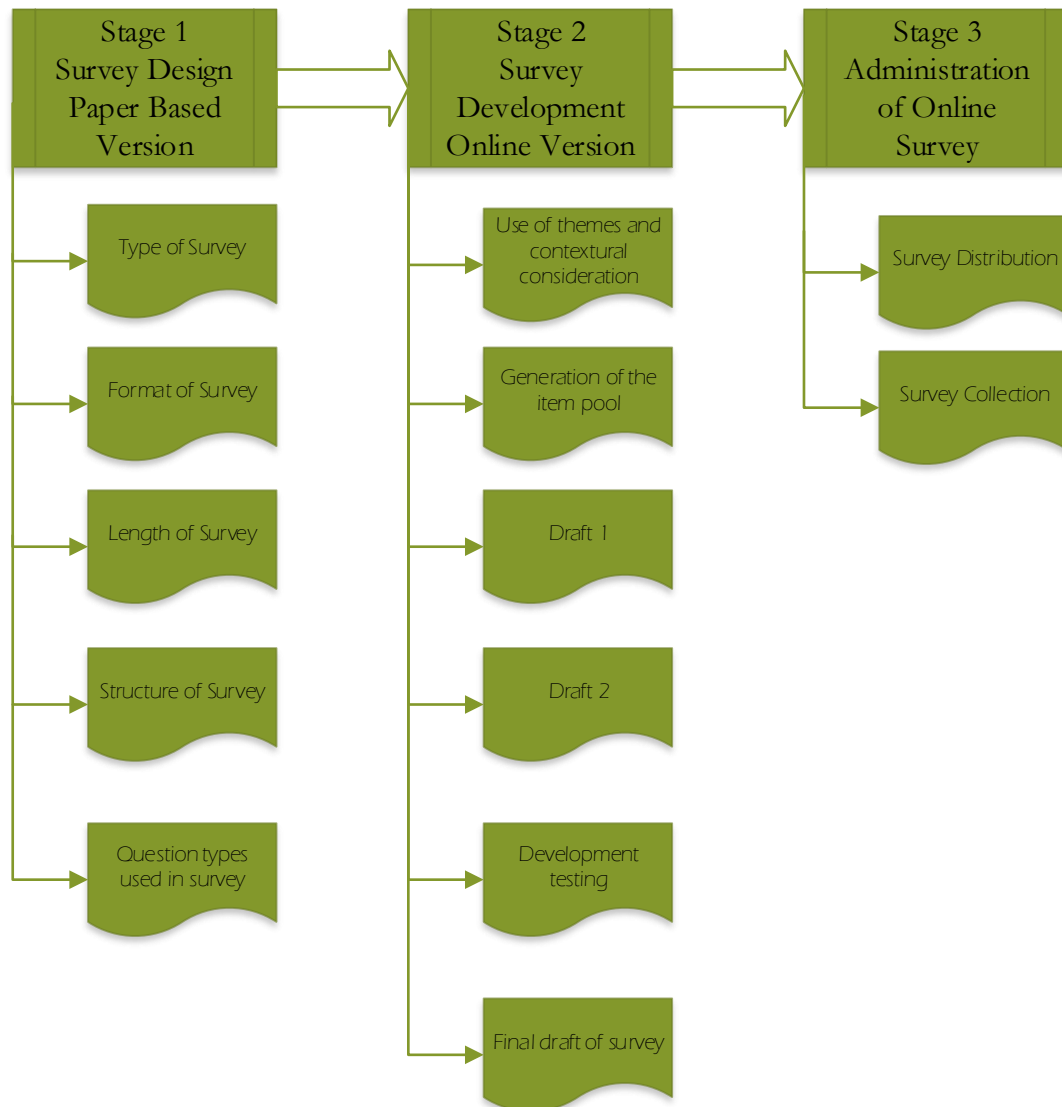


Figure 4.1 Steps in the Design, Development and Administration of the Online Survey Instrument

4.2.2 Design of the survey

Introduction

The design of the online survey considered a number of factors. Considerations relevant to the design of the online survey are presented in Figure 4.2 and are described in the following sections.

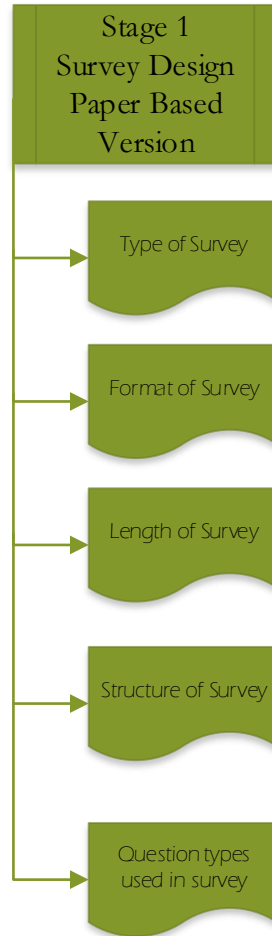


Figure 4.2 Design Considerations for Online Survey

Type of Survey

There are various types of surveys such as paper based, telephone surveys and online surveys.

The researcher selected to administer an online survey. Online surveys are relatively quick and inexpensive and allow a flexible design (Neumann, 2009). Furthermore, researchers can retrieve responses faster and more effectively than conventional paper-based ways (Neumann, 2009).

The use of Survey Monkey as a platform provided the researcher with the tools to construct the survey in accordance with researcher requirements.

Format of Survey

There is no set method format of a survey (de Vaus, 2002). According to Neumann (2014) the layout and format of the survey needs to consider the overall physical layout of the survey and the format of the questions and responses. It is suggested that the survey format should have the participant feel comfortable in completing the survey and not be intimidated in taking part (de Vaus, 2002; Neuman, 2009). With this in mind, the survey was designed using a clear layout and using questions that interrogated the EL role and the work practices used.

Length of Survey

According to de Vaus (2002) there is a link between a survey's response rate and survey length. There is no precise length to a survey, but the length should consider the participants' concentration span (Garson, 2008). The use of a short and broad instrument could restrict the research focus to fewer issues but could result in generalised responses. On the other hand, a longer more detailed instrument could explore in greater detail the role and work practices of the EL in detailed ways which was the focus of this research. Therefore, a more detailed survey instrument was deemed a more suitable option for this research. In reducing the burden on participants completing surveys, Garson (2008) discusses a trade-off between survey length and structure. In this research, it was deemed by the researcher that the length of the online survey was a crucial design consideration, as ELs are often time poor. Therefore, it was important that the survey structure was adequate to capture the detailed responses from the participants. The researcher was cognizant of the fact that the number of questions in the survey would determine the time for participants to complete the survey. Considering this, the researcher built in a timeframe of approximately ten to fifteen minutes into the design consideration to achieve an equitable response rate.

Structure of Survey

According to Neumann (2009) the suggested structure of a survey should allow the participant to engage in a process that is comfortable and straightforward. The structural elements of the survey foregrounded the three key themes that emerged through the literature as was described in Chapter 2, namely:

- Role of the EL;
- Work practices of the EL; and
- alignment of the NQS Quality Area 7 with those work practices.

Additionally, contextual considerations that emanated from the researcher's professional familiarity with the early childhood context were also used to structure the survey. The contextual considerations were the Educational Leader profile (characteristics of ELs) and Centre profile (characteristics of long day care centres).

Question Types used in Survey

The survey used two types of questions, open and closed questions to examine the role and work practices of the EL. Closed questions were the main type of questions using a Likert style questions. The Likert scale used for questions was to rate participants level of agreement or disagreement about a statement (de Vaus, 2002). It was decided to provide open-ended questions in the survey to provide participants an opportunity to answer questions using their own words (de Vaus, 2002). This allowed the researcher to obtain more detailed information about the role of the EL and work practices used.

4.2.3 Development of the online survey

Introduction

As described in Chapter 3, an online survey was deemed to be more appropriate choice as a data collection instrument. The paper-based survey version was used as a transitional platform to the online survey. This section describes the steps used in the development of the online survey. As outlined in the previous section, a paper-based version of the survey was developed as a precursor to the development of the online survey. Figure 4.3 shows the steps used in the development process of the online survey instrument.

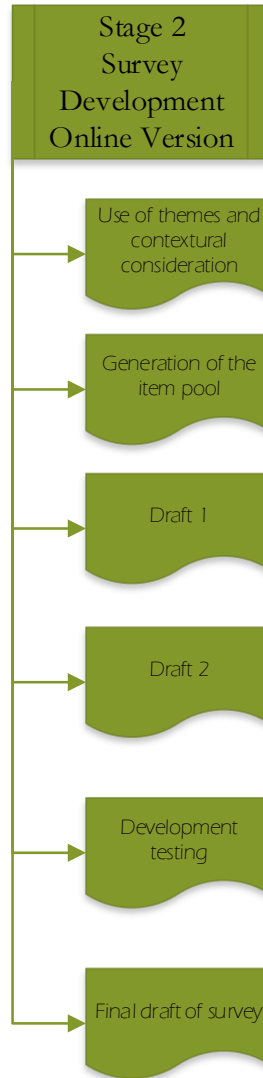


Figure 4.3 Development of the Online Survey Instrument

Use of Themes and Contextual Considerations

As previously stated the paper-based version had three main themes and two contextual considerations. Figure 4.4 presents an overview of the structural elements used in the process to develop the paper-based survey version and the subsequent development of the online survey. The structural elements were used as frames through which the questions for the surveys could be developed.

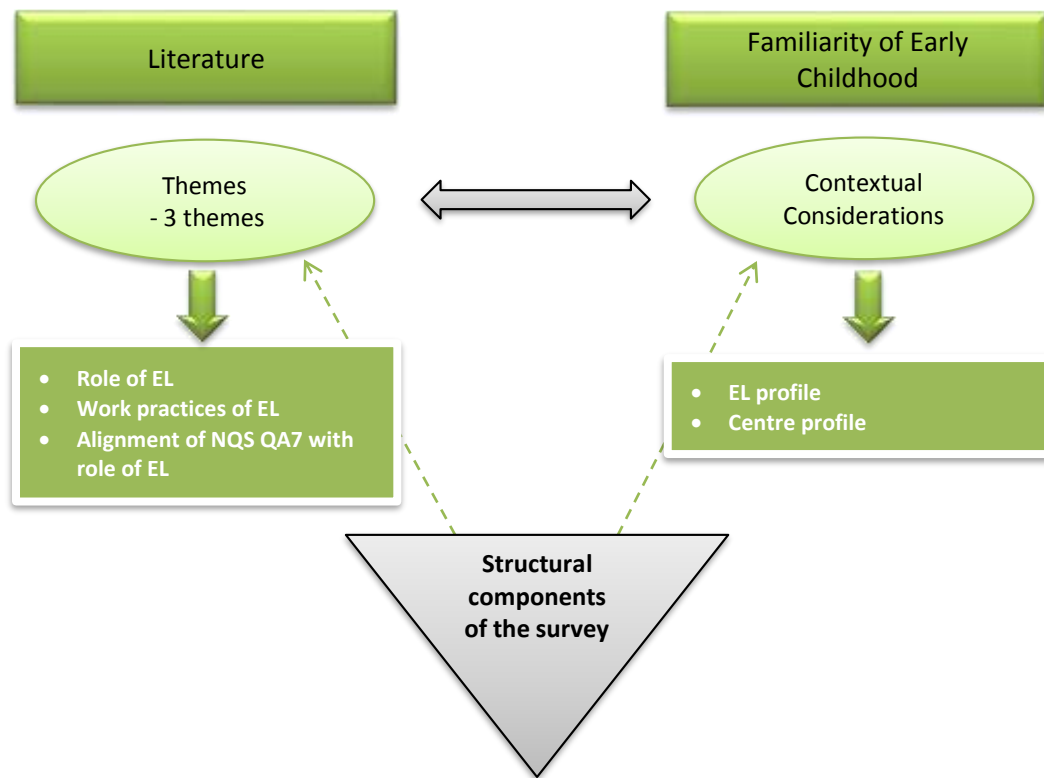


Figure 4.4 Overview of Themes and Contextual Considerations in Paper-based Survey

As shown in the figure, survey questions have been developed through the frame of:

- **Role of the Educational Leader:** to identify the scope of the work within the position of educational leader;
- **Work practices of the Educational Leader:** to identify the specific work practices that ELs use in the actual work they do in the role; and
- **Alignment of Educational Leader work practices to the NQS:** to examine the alignment of the EL role and work practices that aligns with the NQS expectations.

The figure also shows that two key contextual considerations were used, namely EL profile and centre Profile. EL profile concerned the ELs experience working in early childhood education, age, qualifications, and dedicated position at the long day care centre. Based on the researcher's

professional understandings about the nature of long day care centres, the centre profile concerned matters such as licenced number of children attending daily, age groups of children, and number of staff employed at the long day care centre.

The survey was organised into sections in order to encourage a sense of progress for the participant (Garson, 2008). This enabled the researcher to group questions about each structural element together (Neuman, 2009).

Generation of Item Pool

Three themes and two contextual considerations form the basis for generating survey items for the preliminary item pool. These three themes have been foregrounded in the survey development as key aspects of EL work that warrant further investigation. As well, the researcher's professional familiarity with the long day care context was intended to provide further insights into the work undertaken by the EL. These three themes along with key aspects were used by the researcher to generate an item pool. The structural elements of the survey together with examples of items are shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Generation of the Item Pool

Structural Elements of the Survey	Example of Items
Theme: Role and Work Practices of the Educational Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your work responsibilities? • To what extent is the work you do as ‘educational leader’ reflected in your job description?
Theme: Use of the NQS at the Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How regularly you engage with the NQS as EL • How regularly do you refer to the NQS as part of your work as educational leader? • How does the NQS inform your work practices?
Contextual Considerations: Educational Leader Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your dedicated position at the Centre? • What experience have you had working in early childhood education? • Detail the years of experience and roles during that time. • What qualifications have you completed/or are in progress? Select more than one if applicable • How well have your completed qualifications prepared you for your role as educational leader? • What is your dedicated position at your centre? Tick more than one if applicable • What is your age in years? • Specify the number of hours per week that your centre allocates within your workload to the role of educational leader? • How many hours do you actually spend doing the work of an educational leader? • What types of professional support (e.g. professional development) are offered to you to undertake the work of educational leader? • How often do you engage in professional development inside or outside of your centre which supports you in the role as educational leader? • How confident are you in your role as educational leader?
Contextual Considerations: Centre Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the licenced number of children at the Centre? • What age groups attend your Centre? • How many staff are employed at your Centre?

The table shows that the questions/items generated sought specific answers about aspects of the EL. For example, participants were asked to what extent is the work you do as EL reflected in your job description. This enabled participants an opportunity to answer questions using their own words. This allowed the researcher to explore further the role of the EL and to gain understandings about the work practices performed.

Draft 1

This draft was developed to structure the components of the survey and included a scripted introduction. The preamble welcomed participants, explained the purpose of the survey and described the way in which the survey was formatted. Suggested timeframes for completion are specifically articulated. The intended purpose of the preamble was to put the participants at ease with the process and the contribution that they can make to the research through their survey responses.

Draft 1 was created with a Part A, B and C format and followed themes first established in the literature educational leader role and practices, alignment with the NQS, centre characteristics and leadership. This draft had a total of 23 survey questions.

Draft 2

This draft undertook refinements of Draft 1 in readiness for development testing. In consultation with the supervisors the changes were made as shown in Table 4.3. This draft maintained the organisational structural elements first used in the paper version and in Draft 1. Draft 2 included nominal section headings to guide the participant through the survey in more effective ways.

Table 4.3 Summary to Draft 1 Changes for Refinement

Suggested Modifications	Researcher Response	Researcher Justification
Change structure of survey from parts to themes	Part A, B and C were removed and replaced with three themes and contextual considerations. The themes aligned with the aspects identified in the Research Questions and the literature review.	Providing a better allocation of questions for participants to follow in a logical format
Reduce the number of questions to achieve better time control	23 questions were reduced to 19. This was achieved by using refining questions and using some questions only in the interviews	In keeping with the timeframes to complete the survey there were too many questions
Develop open-ended questions to gain personal response	Open ended questions were added to encourage participants to answer in own words to provide more clarity	Questions needed to consider the intent of the research and generate a number of responses

Table 4.4 outlines the adopted structure of the survey and identifies the purpose to each of the components of the survey. The sections first used in Draft 1 are highlighted and then the themes and contextual considerations that replace the sections are now added.

Table 4.4 Adopted Structure of the Survey

Components	Purpose
Email to Participants	An email was sent to participants inviting them to participate in a research project with a link to the online survey. The target participants for the survey were EL's working in long day care centres.
Research Information	Preamble to provide participants with information about the research. Introduction to the researcher. Summary of research.
Consent Form	The information sheet provided a detailed description of the research, participation in the research and confidentiality. Consent for taking part in the research was given by participating in the survey. As participants moved onto the next page of the survey they were giving consent to participate in the survey.
Contact Details of the Participant	At the end of the survey participants had the opportunity to add their contact details to further be involved in the research and take part in an interview.
Section A: Role as Educational Leader Theme 1 and 2	This section concerned the EL role in the context of their own long day care centre. The section had three questions and within each question there were six roles where participants could choose a response from strongly agree to strongly disagree.
Section B: Use of the NQS (Quality Area 7) at the centre Theme 3	This section concerned how the EL engages and refers to the NQS as part of their work as EL. This section had 11 questions where participants could nominate if they did this work practice weekly, fortnightly, monthly, six monthly, yearly or never.
Section C: Centre Demographics Contextual Consideration Centre Profile	This section consisted of four questions was about the actual centre the EL worked at and included the licenced number of children, the age groups of children that attended, number of staff employed at the centre and if the centre operated a Kindergarten programme.
Section D: The Educational Leader at the centre Contextual Consideration EL Profile	This section consisted of 10 questions and was the ELs experiences; qualifications; dedicated position at the centre; their age; professional support offered; confidence in the role and hours dedicated to the role of EL
Section E: Invitation to Participate in Interviews	Participants could provide their contact details to participate in interviews Phase 2 of the research.

Development Testing

The purpose of development testing was to check the validity and reliability of the research instrument (Neuman, 2009). Development testing was conducted with 10 participants for peer review. The participants consisted of education academics and early childhood teachers who had prior involvement in surveys and experience or knowledge about the EL role. The development test of the online survey, the questions and structure was used in the development of the final online version.

In Figure 4.5, presents a summary of the feedback obtained on the development testing of the online survey. The participants were asked to provide information about the layout, straightforwardness of the questions, flow of the survey, length of time to complete the survey, the clarity of the questions and other issues that may have arisen. The feedback provided is summarised in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Feedback on Development Testing

Area	Feedback	Action
Logical Layout	The survey structure did not allow for multiple responses.	It was important to change this as some questions required more than one response.
Timeframe for Completion	The section of questions was too long.	Format required changing.
Straightforward Instructions	The format changed to ensure participants were not overwhelmed by the number of questions.	To ensure likelihood that participants would complete the survey.
Question Relevance/repetition	Suggestions to change the wording of some questions to simplify for participants.	Each suggestion was modified to ensure simplicity for participants to complete the survey.
Missing Ideas	Grammatical errors.	Each issue was addressed and any recommendations to improve the survey were gratefully received and considered.

Final Draft

In summary, a final version of the online survey was prepared that included the following amendments:

- used a scripted preamble dialogue that was used to introduce the key aspects and the discussion protocols (Stewart et al., 2014);
- made modifications to syntax errors;
- used sections to separate questions that were too long so not overwhelming for the participant; and
- used concise language in questions to ensure ease of survey completion.

4.2.4 Administration of the online survey

Introduction

The process used to administer the online survey is shown in Figure 4.5.

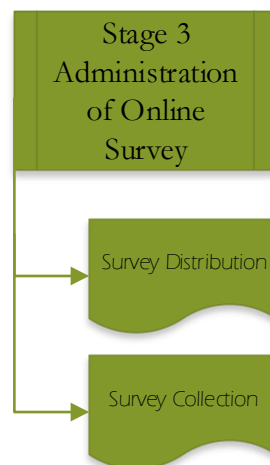


Figure 4.5 Administration of Online Survey

Survey Distribution

An email invitation was sent out to prospective survey participants. In the email invitation the researcher included a detailed information sheet outlining the research and a link to the survey instrument.

The first round of emails was sent by the Maroochydore Regional office, North Coast Region of the Department of Educational and Training to a total of 97 long day care centres. Within a two-week period, the Maroochydore Regional office, North Coast Region of the Department of Educational and Training sent a reminder out to the first round of emails.

Survey Collection

The researcher monitored the response rate throughout the time in which the survey was open. Due to the poor response rate, initially only receiving 30 survey responses, the researcher used early childhood contacts to email another 392 emails. This resulted in additional 23 participants taking part in the survey however still a lack of responses was received. Reminders were sent out by the researcher after 2 weeks. A total of 489 invitations were sent, the number of survey responses rate 53 participants.

4.3 Design, Development and Administration of the Interview Schedule

4.3.1 Introduction

Figure 4.6 shows the three stages and steps for each stage used in the design, development and administration of the interview schedule.

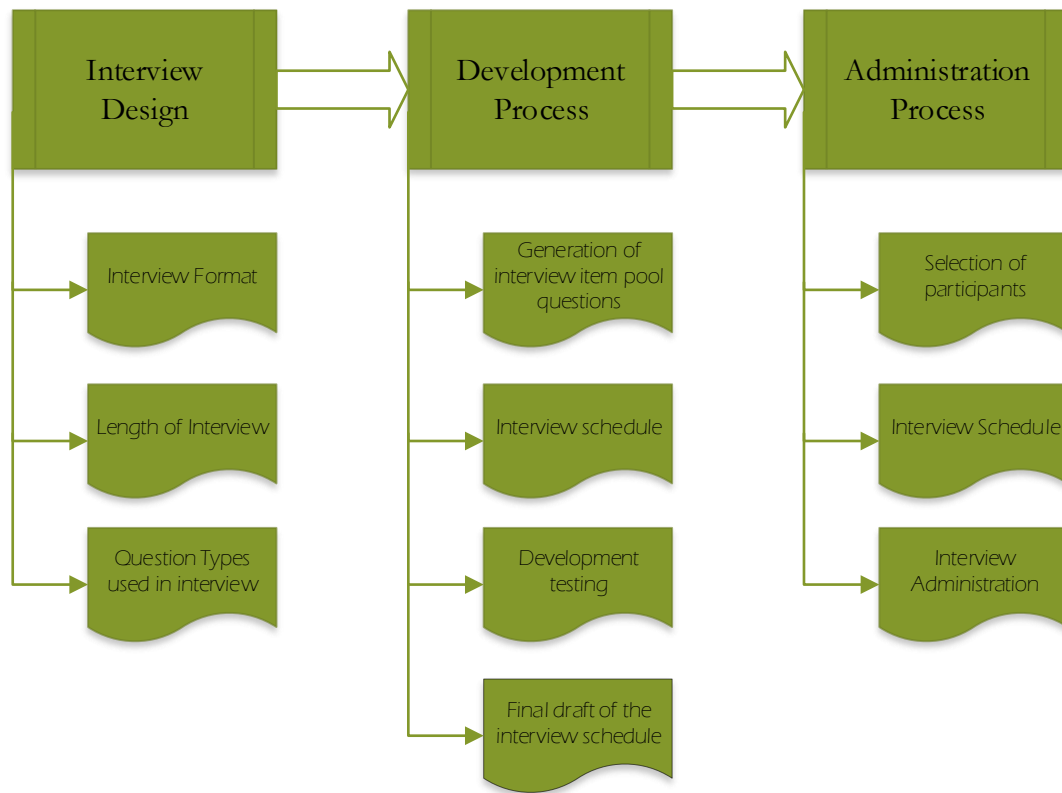


Figure 4.6 Stages in the Design, Development and Administration of the Interview Schedule

4.3.2 Design of the interview schedule

Introduction

The interview schedule for this research considered a variety of design factors. As indicated in Chapter 3, interviews are an important way of obtaining in depth information in which the researcher can discover facts and opinions between the researcher and the interviewee (Yin, 2009). The main considerations in the design of the interview schedule are shown in Figure 4.7 and are discussed in the following sections.

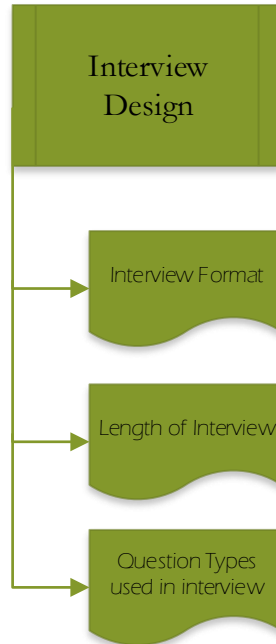


Figure 4.7 Design Considerations for the Interview Schedule

Interview Format

The researcher chose to emulate a conversation style interview using open-ended questions. The researcher used a semi-structured interview allowing the interviewees to express their ideas, experiences and views about the role of the EL. This strategy was a way the researcher explored the attitude, manner and opinion of the participant about the phenomenon under study. A preamble was given to each interview participant before the interview commenced. This outlined the research being conducted and the estimated time for the interview.

Length of Interview

The time frame of the interview considered providing adequate time for the researcher to establish a rapport with the interviewee and to address the interview themes. For example, the researcher introduced herself and then a warm up question was provided to the interviewee. It was considered that 30 minutes was sufficient time to address each main theme for approximately five minutes each.

Question Types used in Interview

Interview questions can be open-ended or closed like those in surveys. The researcher used open-ended questions to seek information from the interview participants. As de Vaus (2002) states, interviews that use open-ended questions encourage participants to respond in their own words. Each question originated from the survey results. Prompts and/or exploratory questions were used to investigate EL participant responses in more detail. For example, as seen in Table 4.6, a question is posed to participants asking them to describe the practices used to carry out the role of EL. Then prompts are asked to further clarify this question. The prompt allows the researcher to further explore the participant response, drawing out more information.

Table 4.6 Sample Interview Question and Prompts

Theme: Work Practices of the Educational Leader	
Questions 3(a) Can you describe the practices (actual work you do) used to carry out the role of EL? 3(b) What practices do you focus on as EL? Are practices only curriculum related or do you focus on other areas?	Prompts/sub-questions What are the specific practices on the job description you are required to do? What practices are curriculum related? What other areas do you focus on?

4.3.3 Development of the interview schedule

Introduction

Figure 4.8 presents the steps used in the development process of the interview schedule.

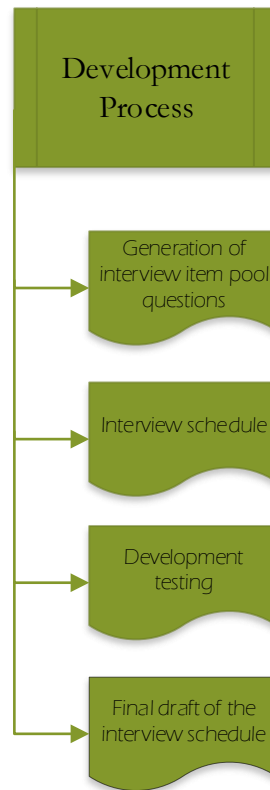


Figure 4.8 Steps in the Development of the Interview Schedule

Generation of Interview Item Pool Questions

The data collection through the survey instrument informed the development of the interview schedule. The same structural elements for the interview were used were for the survey. This provided the participant with a familiar approach to the research. The researcher was able to group questions about a theme or about a contextual consideration relevant to the role of the EL which was intended to assist the participants to focus their responses (Neuman, 2009). Table 4.7 presents the preliminary item pool questions used in the interview schedule. The researcher generated ten questions, as presented in Table 4.7 that addressed both the themes and contextual considerations.

Table 4.7 Generation of Item Pool Questions

Theme	1. Role of the Educational Leader <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me about the different roles that you take on as educational leader?
	2. Work practices of the EL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you describe the practices (actual work you do) to carry out the role of educational leader? • What practices do you focus on as educational leader? • Are practices only curriculum related, or do you focus on other areas? • What professional development have you attended to help you in this role?
	3. Alignment with the NQS Quality Area 7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What practices that you specifically use as an educational leader align with requirements of NQS? • How is the use of the NQS implemented at your centre? • How do you address the NQF requirements through your role as educational leader?
Contextual Considerations	Can you tell me about your Centre?

Interview Schedule

In the preparation of the interview schedule, the approach recommended by Mackey and Gass (2009) was adopted with researcher modifications appropriate to the research context. In keeping with that approach, a scripted introductory preamble explained the purpose, the format and the process to be used within the interview to be included as part of the research protocol. Interview questions and prompts were structured in ways that accommodated a semi-structured approach to the interview. The interview schedule was structured to allow for questions and prompts to be used in flexible ways in combination with each other.

Table 4.8 presents the draft interview schedule. It can be seen from the table that the interview schedule was structured to allow for questions and prompts to be used in flexible ways in combination with each other. An estimated time for each part of the schedule is also provided.

Table 4.8 Draft Interview Schedule

Organising Theme	Prompts/sub-questions	Time
Warm up		
1. Can you tell me about your Centre?		2 mins
Role of the Educational Leader		
2 (a) Tell me about the different roles that you take on as educational leader?	<p>Tell me about what you like doing as educational leader?</p> <p>How do you support the educators at your centre?</p> <p>How supportive is your centre staff in your role as educational leader?</p>	5 mins
Work Practices of the Educational Leader		
<p>3 (a) Can you describe the practices (actual work you do) to carry out the role of educational leader?</p> <p>3 (b) What practices do you focus on as educational leader? Are practices only curriculum related or do you focus on other areas?</p> <p>4. What professional development have you attended to help you in this role?</p>	<p>What are the specific practices on the job description you required to do?</p> <p>What practices are curriculum related?</p> <p>What other areas do you focus on?</p> <p>What did you get out of the professional development experiences?</p> <p>What areas would you like to do professional development to support your role as educational leader?</p>	8 mins
Alignment between NQS and your role as Educational Leader		
<p>5 (a) What practices that you specifically use as an educational leader align with requirements of NQS?</p> <p>5 (b) How is the use of the NQS implemented at your centre?</p> <p>6. How do you address the NQF requirements through your role as educational leader?</p>	<p>How do you know what NQF expects to do as educational leader?</p> <p>How familiar is the staff at your centre with the NQS?</p> <p>What specific things do you do?</p> <p>How did you go with rating and assessment in QA7?</p> <p>How did you go about addressing NQS requirements?</p>	5 mins

Table 4.8 Draft Interview Schedule (Cont'd)

Organising Theme	Prompts/sub-questions	Time
Implementing new practices of the educational leader role		
7 (a) What educational leader practices would you like to implement at your centre that are not happening now?	How do you go about implementing new practices? Do you use the information from ACECQA to implement practices?	5 mins
7 (b) What are the challenges being the educational leader?	What do you think are the challenges to new educational leaders in this role?	
Are there any aspects you like to cover that have not been addressed? Thank you for participating and your willingness to provide detailed information about your role as educational leader in this interview.		

Development Testing

Development testing was undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of the audio-recording method and the interview schedule. The development testing was undertaken with one EL participant. The interview took 30 minutes to complete and the participant was asked to provide feedback. The participant indicated that the questions were inclusive and that the interview schedule followed an easy format. The audio-recording of the interview proved to be reliable and the recording clear enough to be transcribed. The feedback from the EL participant, in combination with supervisor consultation, suggested that no further modifications to the interview deemed to be necessary.

Final Draft of the Interview Schedule

The final interview schedule was included as included in Appendix 1.

4.3.4 Administration of the interview schedule

The administration of the interview schedule followed three steps as shown in Figure 4.9.

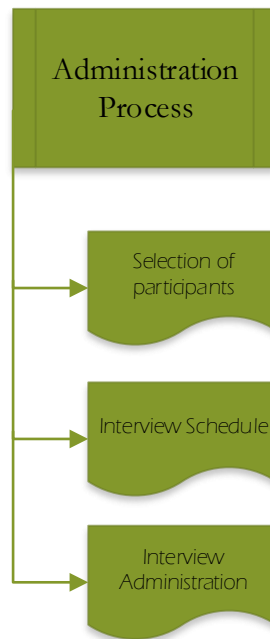


Figure 4.9 Administration Process for the Interview Schedule

Selection of the Participants

At the end of the survey, participants could self-nominate if they would like to participate in future interviews. Participants were asked to self-nominate if they were willing to participate in Phase 2 of the data collection process; interviews. The self-nominated provided their contact details. The researcher then randomly selected five interview participants.

Scheduling of the Interviews

After initial phone contact between the researcher and the interviewee, interviews were conducted in a setting that was mutually suitable for the EL and the researcher. Using a conversation style, the interview schedule was used to guide the interview.

Interview Administration

With the permission of each participant, each interview was digitally recorded. At the start of the interview the researcher gave the participant a copy of the preamble to read. Participants were reassured about confidentiality and their anonymity regarding the information they were providing.

4.4 Summary

This Chapter has presented in detail the processes used in the design, development and administration of the survey and interview schedule used in this research. Chapter 5 examines the results from the data collection of the online survey followed by the results for the interview data collection in Chapter 6.

Chapter 5

Survey Results

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented details concerning the design, development and administration of an online survey and interview schedule. This chapter presents the results from the data collection using an online survey.

Five structural elements were used to construct the online survey. Three elements, namely the role and work practices of the Educational Leader (EL) and the use of the National Quality Standards (NQS) Quality Area 7 in EL practice, were identified in the literature as themes warranting further investigation. Two other structural elements, namely participant profile and centre profile, were identified as contextual considerations fundamental to the researcher's professional understanding of the early childhood (EC) context. This chapter now presents the results for each of these structural elements.

5.2 Educational Leader Roles and Work Practices

5.2.1 Role and Practices

Table 5.1 lists the key roles and associated work practices that were identified through the survey findings. The table presents the roles and practices that featured in the survey as strong responses from EL participants. It can be seen from the table that over half, and at times three quarters, of the EL participants described the EL role as being concerned with assisting staff, facilitating programming, supporting children's learning and facilitating meetings.

Assisting Staff

As shown in Table 5.1, almost 80% of EL participants assist staff to implement the practices and principles of the EYLF, and the results indicate that a prominent associated EL practice is to assist educators to plan and implement programs. The results indicate a strong focus (over 50% of participants) for ELs to support staff to reflect on practice (56.6%) and to act in the capacity of resource support person.

Facilitating Programming

As presented in Table 5.1, a prominent EL practice (over 70%) was consultation with children, families and educators and reflecting this was evident in the centre programme. The results indicated a strong emphasis that ELs assist staff with and contribute to the centre programming (60%).

Supporting Children's Learning

Table 5.1 shows that supporting children's learning is a noticeable EL practice. The results indicate a strong focus (over 66%) for ELs to support successful learning for children whilst ensuring equity and access (60.3%). The results indicate that associated EL practices are using innovative approaches to support children's learning (62.2%). The results indicate a strong focus (over 58% of participants) for ELs make professional judgements about children's learning.

Facilitating Meetings

As shown in Table 5.1, results indicate that a noticeable EL practice is to meet with teachers (62.50%), lead educators (62.75%), and assistants (55%) to discuss curriculum implementation and evaluation. Results indicate that ELs meet with centre directors (59.1%) to provide an overall professional evaluation of the centre programme.

Table 5.1 Roles of the Educational Leader

		Strongly Agree (%)
Assisting Staff	Assist staff to implement the practices and principles of the EYLF	79.20
	Assist Educators to plan & implement programmes	67.30
	Act as a resource support person for centre staff	64.70
	Assist staff to embed the centre philosophy	64.10
	Facilitate reflection of current practices with staff	56.60
Facilitating Programming	Ensure programmes reflect evidence of consultation with children, families & other educators	71.70
	Contribute and assist staff in programmes for use at the centre	60.00
	Assist staff with the use of The Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline	55.10
Supporting Children's Learning	Support successful learning for all children	66.00
	Incorporate innovative strategies to support children's learning and development	62.20
	Support children's learning to ensure equity and access	60.30
	Make professional judgements about children's learning	58.40
	Research early childhood development when required	56.60
Facilitating Meetings	Meet with Lead Educators to discuss curriculum implementation and evaluation	62.75
	Meet with Teachers to discuss curriculum implementation and evaluation	62.50
	Meet with the director to provide professional evaluation of the centre programmes	59.10
	Meet with assistant educators to discuss curriculum implementation and evaluation	55.00

5.2.2 Educational Leader Job Description

The survey results indicate that the range of EL responses suggest broad and varying understandings about the actual job description of EL in long day care centres. EL participant commentary highlights these differences:

“We established a Role Description specifically for the EL role. It includes all aspects of educator mentoring, support and family communication about the learning that occurs in our service” (EL6)

“I don't think that a job description can truly explain the facets of the job, each day the role is different and requires me to be flexible and open to the needs of the staff” (EL1)

Twenty percent (20%) of EL participants commented that they have a clear job description outlining the role. For example, *“Everything I do as EL is reflected in my job description”* (EL25). Fifty percent (50%) of participants commented they did not have a job description, and one participant commented that: *“It (job description) doesn't match because no time is allocated for the EL”* (EL4). The results indicated that thirty percent (30%) of participants noted that the job description outlined in their respective centre policy documents, did not clearly articulate the many facets of the role. Participants commented for example, that *“The job description does not adequately reflect the amount of work involved in being an EL”* (EL22).

The survey results also showed that fifty percent (50%) of EL participants skipped this question about job description, offering no response at all.

5.2.3 Workload of an Educational Leader

Table 5.2 overviews the results with respect to the workload considerations of the EL. The table shows that EL participants responded to two questions; one about the allocated number of hours to the dedicated role of EL and the second about the actual hours worked in the EL role.

Table 5.2 The Educational Leader Allocated and Actual Work Hours (n= 45)

Hours	Allocated Hours (%)	Actual Hours (%)	N=actual numbers
0-4	63	40	18
5-10	12	13	6
11-15	2	8	4
16-20	8.5	4	2
20+	12	11	5
Varies		22	9

Allocated Hours to the EL Role

Participants were asked to specify the number of hours per week, allocated to the EL role. The results indicate a wide variance in workload allocation from one long day care centre to the next.

One EL participant commented that, *“I am allocated 8 hours per month to support the team members in the area of NQS 1”* (EL21).

Actual Hours Spent in the EL Role

As shown in Table 5.2, the results indicate that there is a difference between the workload allocation of hours and the actual hours dedicated to the roles and responsibilities of the EL. The table shows that 63% of EL participants were allocated 0-4 hours of dedicated hours within their workloads to undertaking the EL role. However, only 40% of EL participants indicated that they actually spent 0-4 hours in the EL role.

It is further noted that twenty-two percent (22%) of participants surveyed said the actual hours varied or could not nominate an allocated number of hours dedicated to the role of EL as seen from the individual respondent's comments below.

"I couldn't not tell you the hours I work as EL, I kind of do it here and there, its within my Directors role. I would really like to focus more on the EL role" (EL41)

"Being nominated supervisor I include my EL work within the other realms of my position, so it is hard to say exactly how many hours a week I spend on this role" (EL35)

5.2.5 Educational Leader Confidence for Capacities for the Role

The participants surveyed were to indicate their confidence in their capacities to meet the demands of the EL role. The results, as shown in Figure 5.1, indicate that almost all EL participants were confident to some extent, in the role. More specifically, seventy-six percent (76%) of ELs were confident to very confident in the role with nineteen percent (19%) of ELs somewhat confident. The results indicate that 2% of EL participants reported that they were not confident in their capacities to undertake the EL role.

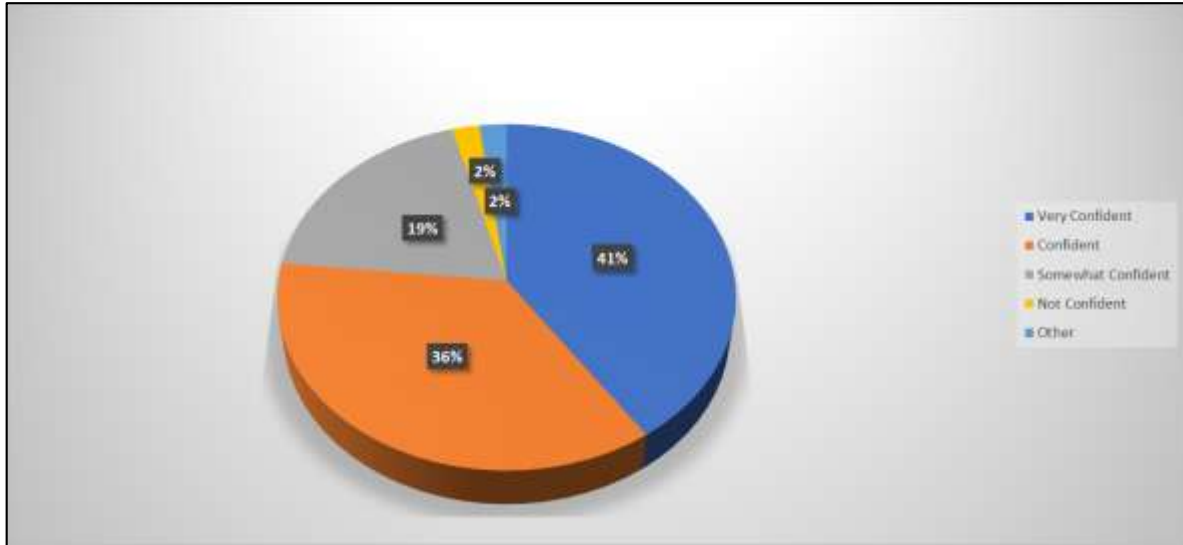


Figure 5.1 Confidence in the Role of Educational Leader

5.3 Alignment of the Educational Leader Role with the NQS (Quality Area 7)

Table 5.3 presents the results from the survey questions posed to EL participants about the use of work practices aligned with the NQS (QA 7), Element 7.1.4 as outlined in Chapter 2. It can be seen from the table that the results indicate that ELs use the types of EL practices described within Element 7.1.4 on a weekly and monthly basis.

Table 5.3 Use of Work Practices Aligned with NQS (QA 7) - Element 7.1.4

	Work Practice	Weekly (%)	Monthly (%)
1	Supporting children's learning	89.8	6.1
2	Extending children's learning	85.7	8.1
3	Observing children's learning	81.2	10.4
4	Facilitate opportunities with staff for reflective practice	53	30.6
5	Provide curriculum direction	51	38.7
6	Facilitate opportunities for staff discussions	46.9	36.7
7	Engage in professional discussion with staff about research and new ideas	44.9	40.8
8	Monitor ongoing evaluation aspects of children's learning and development	44.9	34.6
9	Initiate and monitor staff planning that centres on children's learning and development	35.4	39.5
10	Undertake professional activities with staff	18.3	61.2

Table 5.3 shows that the results indicate a targeted EL focus on children's learning. NQS documentation states that "the role of the educational leader is to work with educators to provide curriculum direction and to ensure children achieve the outcomes of the approved learning framework" (ACECQA, 2011, p. 178). It can be seen from the table that EL participants report that they support children's learning (90%), extend children's learning (86%) and observe children's learning (81%).

It can be seen from the table that results show that ELs engage staff in discussions and reflect on practice on a weekly basis. EL participants they facilitate opportunities with staff for reflective practice (53%), facilitate opportunities for staff discussions (47%) and engage staff in professional discussions about research and new ideas. According to the results, discussions

with staff are a prominent focus of the weekly practices of approximately half of the EL participants. This finding is reflected as well through the results that indicate that 61.2% of EL participants undertake professional activities with staff on a monthly basis.

Table 5.3 also shows the findings indicate that EL participants work with staff to have a focus on planning and formulating the curriculum to support children's learning and development.

According to ACECQA (2011, p. 178) there must be evidence of "ongoing planning and evaluation that centres on children's learning and development". The findings show 40% of EL participants reported that they initiate and monitor staff planning that centres on children's learning and development on a monthly basis. This is supported by the prominent finding that just over half (51%) of EL participants provide curriculum direction through planning, on a weekly basis.

5.4 Contextual Consideration: Educational Leader Profile

The survey asked EL participants to provide professional details about themselves as educators within the early childhood sector. EL participants were surveyed about their:

- experience working in long day care centres (including their age);
- qualifications and associated preparedness for the EL role;
- current dedicated role at the long day care centre; and
- engagement with professional development opportunities.

5.4.1 Experience working in early childhood education

As shown in Figure 5.2, the results indicate that the EL participants had differing levels of experience working in early childhood education, ranging from less than five years up to over 30 years' experience. It can be seen from the figure that just over half of the participants (57%) had extensive experience working in early childhood education; from between sixteen to over thirty

years' experience collectively. It is noted that the figure shows that only five percent (5%) of EL participants had worked in the early childhood sector for a limited time; from between one to five years.

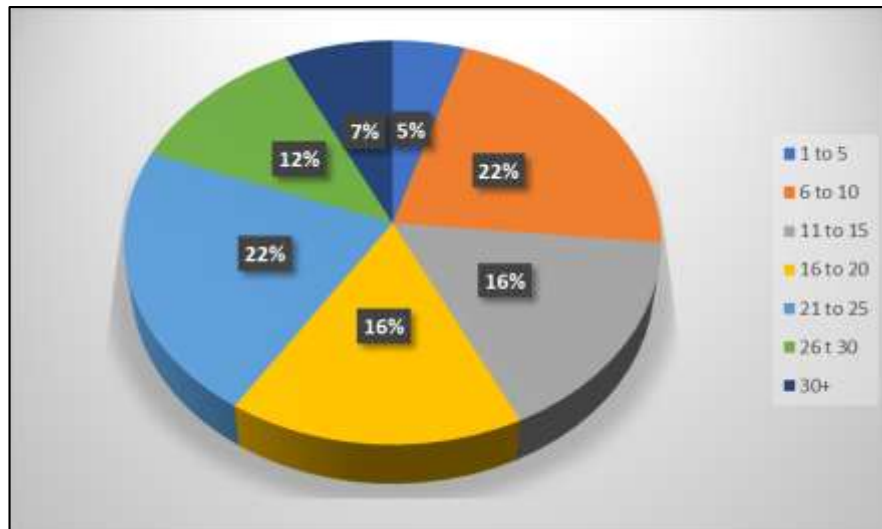


Figure 5.2 Educational Leaders' Years of Experience Working in Early Childhood Education

5.4.2 Age of participants

As reported in the findings that are presented in Figure 5.3, the survey participants were from a wide age range. However, the results indicate that the EL participants were predominantly aged over 40 years of age. It can be seen from the figure that just over thirty percent (30%) of the EL participants were aged between 41 and 45 years old and that a further twenty one percent (21%) of participants were aged over 50 years of age. The figure also shows that only eight percent (8%) of EL participants were aged between 20 and 25 years of age.

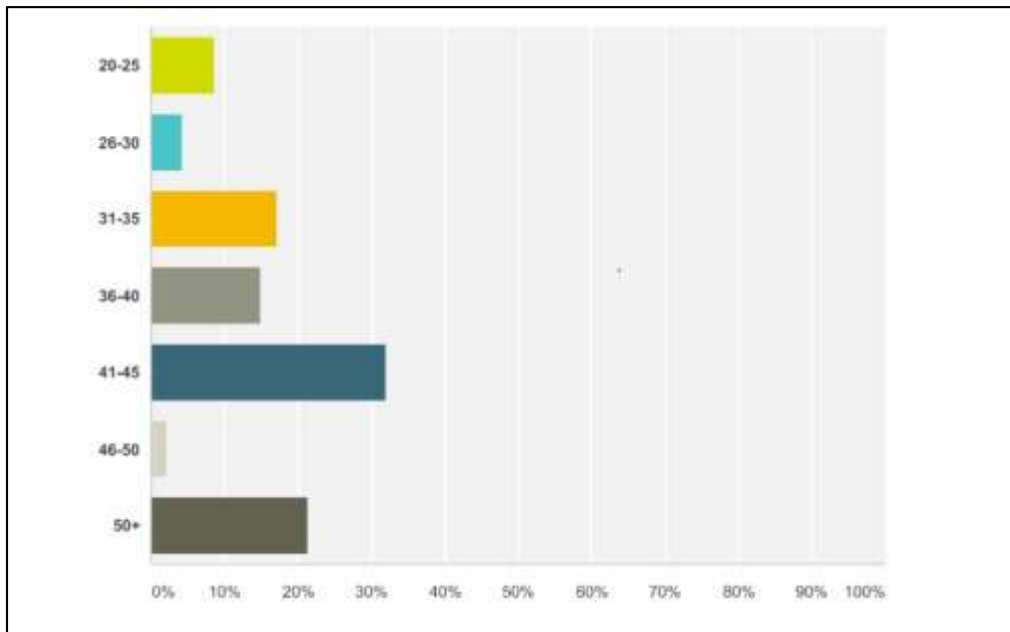


Figure 5.3 Educational Leaders Age in Years

5.4.3 Qualifications of Educational Leaders

The qualifications of EL participants are presented as results in Figure 5.4, participants could select more than one qualification. As can be seen in figure, the most prominent EL qualification completed is a Diploma qualification with thirty percent (30%) of EL participants qualified to a Diploma in Children's Services standard. The next most prominent result shows that twenty one percent (21%) of EL participants have a Certificate 3 in Children's Services. A further nineteen percent (19%) qualified with an Advanced Diploma in Children's Services.

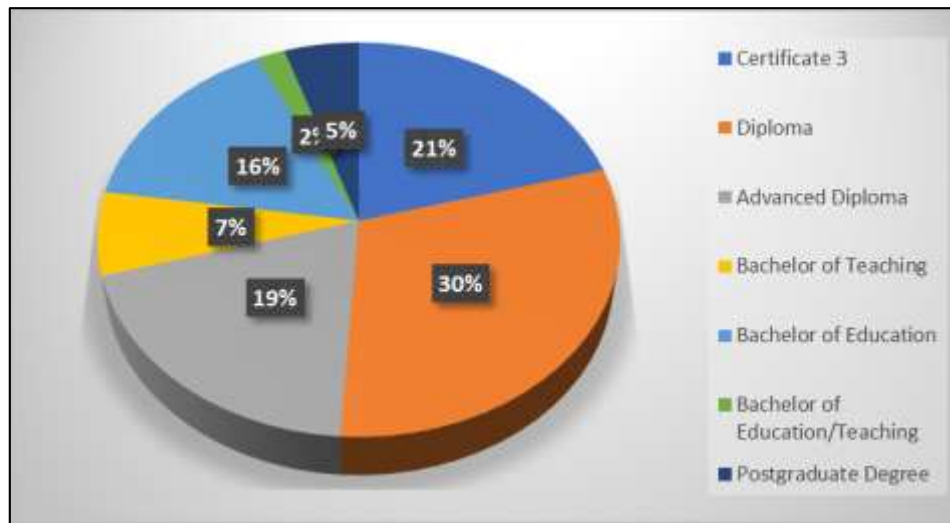


Figure 5.4 Education Leader Qualifications

Table 5.4 presents the results for the survey responses to questions that asked EL participants about the ways in which their qualifications prepared them for the role of Educational Leader. As shown in Table 5.4, the results overall indicate that the majority of EL participants (87.2%) reported that their early childhood qualifications had prepared them for the role of EL. However, it can be seen from the table that just over twelve percent (12.7%) of surveyed EL participants did not believe their qualification had prepared them for the EL role.

Table 5.4 Qualifications and Preparedness for the Role of Educational Leader

Qualification Prepared for Role of Educational Leader	Responses (%)
Extremely well	34.0
Very well	29.8
Somewhat well	23.4
Not so well	2.1
Not at all well	2.1
Other	8.5

5.4.4 Educational Leader Professional Development Experiences

Table 5.5 lists the types of professional development in which ELs participate, as reported in the survey findings. It can be seen from the table that a prominent result is that the majority of participants (88%) attend a variety of professional development sessions. It can be seen that professional development sessions include activities such as workshops/seminars (19%) and conferences (12%), external networking meetings (24%), online training opportunities (19%), company training (10%) and working with early learning consultants (4%). EL participant commentary suggested that most employers or organisations fully funded the professional development, but some participants commented that they had independently funded professional development themselves.

Table 5.5 shows that the results note that 11% of EL participants never engaged in professional development sessions.

Table 5.5 Educational Leaders' Experiences in Professional Development

Professional Development for Educational Leader	Response (%)
Attend professional development	88
Workshops, Seminars	19
Conferences	12
Educational Leader meetings external network	24
Online training	19
Early Learning Consultants	4
Company training/ learning portal research	10

EL survey participants were also asked to respond about the frequency with which they engaged in professional development activities. Table 5.6 shows the results that indicate that approximately one half of the EL participants engage in regular professional development activity.

Table 5.6 Engagement in Professional Development Activities

Professional Development Activity	Response (%)
Month	40.4
Quarterly	31.9
6 Monthly	2.1
Yearly	4.2
Never/other	4.2
Other	21.0

It can be seen that almost half of the EL participants (40.4%) engage monthly in professional development activities and that a third (31.9%) participate every three months in professional development activities. On the other hand, the table shows that the results indicate that 4.2% of EL participants never engage in professional activity.

5.4.5 Participants' dedicated position at a Centre

Table 5.7 presents details of the findings about the dedicated position held by EL. Results have been presented in terms of contact and non-contact positions in which educators work in a long day care centre. A contact position is one that refers to working primarily with children and being responsible for the teaching and learning of that group of children. A non-contact

position is one in which the EL does not directly work with the children for whom he/she is responsible for their teaching and learning. The results in the table indicate that almost half of the ELs (46.8%) have a contact position and just over a third (34%) have a non-contact position. The survey results indicate that the trend from the participants' responses in the survey is most ELs are employed in other positions and the EL role is added to the position they already do at the long day care centre.

Table 5.7 Dedicated Position at the Early Childcare Centre

		Response (%)
Types of Contact Positions	Educational Leader - Contact	46.8
	Director - Contact	14.8
	Kindergarten Teacher	14.8
	Lead Educator	29.7
	Assistant Director	2.1
Types of Non-contact Positions	Nominated Supervisor	38.3
	Educational Leader Non-Contact	34.0
	Director Non-Contact	23.4
	Assistant Director Non-Contact	8.5
	Licensee	8.5

5.5 Contextual Consideration: Centre Profile

The survey asked EL participants to provide details about the centre they work at. EL participants were surveyed about:

- the licenced number of children attending;
- if an approved Kindergarten programme was offered;
- the number of staff employed; and
- age groups of children attending the centre.

The results for each follow.

As seen in Figure 5.5, the research obtained data on the licenced number of children at a centre, approved Kindergarten programme, number of staff employed at the centre and the age groups of children attending the centre.

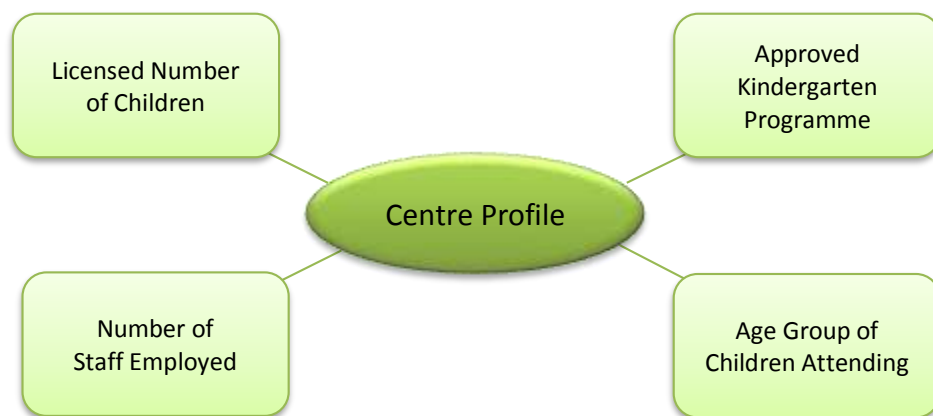


Figure 5.5 Centre Profile

5.5.1 Licenced number of children

The results show that almost half (45%) of the ELs surveyed worked in long day care centres that were licenced for 31-70 children. Forty two percent (42%) worked in larger centres licenced for 71-100 children. Twelve percent (12%) of the surveyed ELs work in centres licenced for over 100 children.

5.5.2 Approved kindergarten programme

According to the survey results, almost all (90%) of the EL participants' surveyed work in a centre that operates a Kindergarten programme approved by the Office of Early Childhood Education and Care.

5.5.3 Staff employed at the centre

Results that indicate that just over half (57%) of the EL participants work in centres that employ large numbers of staff. Ten percent (10%) of surveyed EL participants work in long day care centres that employ more than 31 staff.

5.5.4 Ages of children attending the centre

The ELs surveyed work in long day care centres that cater for children aged from birth to school aged. The results show that over ninety one percent (91%) of children were aged from birth to two years old. Almost ninety eight percent (98%) of children were aged two to three years. Results show that one hundred percent (100%) of all children were aged three to five years.

5.6 Summary of Results

This chapter has presented the results from the online survey. Table 5.8 presents a summary of results for each of the three themes and the two contextual considerations addressed in the survey.

Table 5.8 Summary of Survey Results

Themes 1 and 2 Role and Work Practices of the EL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist staff to implement the practices and principles of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). • Support educators to ensure programmes reflect evidence of consultation with children, families & other educators. • Meet with lead educators to discuss curriculum implementation and evaluation. • Support children's learning. • Written job descriptions for the EL do not necessarily match the actual requirements on the job. • Inconsistent hours are allocated to ELs to undertake the associated roles and responsibilities. • ELs describe that they are confident in the role of EL.
Theme 3 Alignment of NQS and the EL Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted EL focus on children's learning, supporting, extending and observing children's learning. • Most ELs refer to the NQS on a monthly basis at least. • ELs work with staff to focus on planning and developing the curriculum to support children's learning and development, as described in the NQS. • ELs engage staff in discussions and reflect on practice, as described in the NQS.
Contextual Considerations EL Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most ELs have had extensive experience working in early childhood education. • ELs have a variety of teaching qualifications; most have Diplomas and few have a Bachelor qualification. • Most ELs commented that their qualifications prepared them for the role of EL. • Most ELs engage with regular professional development activities. • Most ELs are employed in other positions at the long day care centre and the EL role is added to the position they already do. • The results showed that the average age of ELs was predominantly over 40 years.
Contextual Considerations Centre Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of ELs worked at long day care centres licenced for 31-70 children. • Almost all centres offered a Kindergarten programme. • Most ELs worked at a centre that employed 11-20 staff. • ELs surveyed worked in centres that cater for children from birth to 5 years old.

The survey results, along with the interview results from Chapter 6, have been used as the basis of a discussion in Chapter 7.

Chapter 6

Interview Results

6.1 Introduction

The previous Chapter presented the results from the data collection for the online survey. As outlined in Chapter 3, Phase 2 of the research involved interviews to obtain in-depth information about how the role and work practices of the Educational Leader (EL). This Chapter presents the interview results based on three themes, namely: role of the EL; work practices of the EL; and the alignment between National Quality Standards (NQS) Quality Area 7 and the role of EL.

6.2 Process used to Generate Interview Results

The 3-step process used and developed by the researcher to generate interview results is presented in Figure 6.1. The figure shows that participants' viewpoints were recorded and the data then transcribed. This section explains each of the three steps used in the process to generate the interview results.

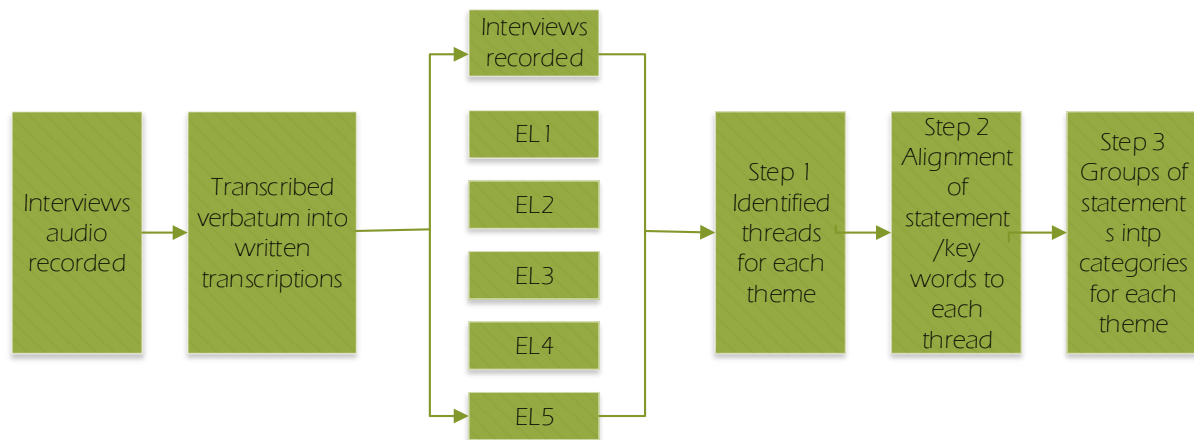


Figure 6.1 Process used to Generate Results for Interview Data

Prior to explaining the process of steps used to generate the interview results, key terms are explained. The term ‘theme’ has been used as a classifying structure for the data which is outlined in Chapter 3. A ‘thread’ is a cluster of similar participant responses within a theme for the data.

To navigate the reader through the steps the researcher used to generate the interview results, sample documentation is presented for Theme 1, ‘Role of the Educational Leader’ and for the thread *mentoring*.

Step 1: Identification of Threads for each Theme

The researcher examined theme data and key threads from each theme were identified. For example, the threads that emerged from the theme ‘Role of the Educational Leader’ included *mentoring, guiding curriculum, professional conversation, relationships/partnerships* and *time*. The researcher manually colour coded each thread as presented in Table 6.1. The colour coding in each data set assisted the researcher to simplify the identification of threads.

Table 6.1 An Example of the Identification of Developing Threads for Theme 1

Theme	Developing Threads Identified by Interview Participants
Role of the Educational Leader	Mentoring
	Guiding Curriculum
	Professional Conversation
	Relationships/partnerships
	Time allocation for role

Step 2: Alignment of Statements/key words to each Thread

The colour coding process was used to link participant viewpoints to related threads for each theme. For example, the interview participants' opinions about the role of the EL were colour coded to threads applicable to the responses. Table 6.2 below presents an example of the documentation related to Step 2 of the process. To safeguard anonymity, interview participants were labelled EL1 (educational leader, interview 1), EL2 (educational leader, interview 2) and so on.

Table 6.2 An Example of Participant Viewpoints to Related Threads

Interview Participant Response (EL4)
<i>my role is to mentor everybody it has to be a very supportive role. If any room is having issues with routines or children I'll spend time in the room today and that really helps them. And I give them feedback. Sometimes we might have a day when a staff member is away and I'll say I don't mind working that day so then I'll spend a whole day in a room which I really like as well because I think it's better than an hour. I'll have feedback with the whole team and I'll offer them suggestions and things that I could suggest would be an improvement to help.</i>
Interview Participant Response (EL3)
<i>So spontaneously people can just ask me questions or I can be aware of practise, and give encouragement for it or practise that I might think, that person could really benefit from some long term support</i>

Key:

Mentoring

Guiding Curriculum

Professional Conversation

Relationships/partnerships

Time allocation for role

Table 6.2 shows the viewpoints of interview participants EL3 and EL4. The viewpoints have been coded to the corresponding colours assigned to the identified thread. For example, a viewpoint that relates to *mentoring* thread is colour coded in purple; a viewpoint that relates to *guiding curriculum* thread is colour coded in green and so forth. As shown in Table 6.2, EL4 revealed viewpoints about the role of the EL as it relates to *mentoring*, *guiding curriculum*, *time allocation for role* and *professional conversation*.

Step 3 – Groupings of Statements into Categories for each Theme

Related participant viewpoints within the thread were categorised. For example, connected to the theme the ‘Role of the Educational Leader’, Table 6.3 presents an example of the participant commentary that articulates the ways in which participants *mentor* other educators.

Table 6.3 An Example of Participants’ Commentary to Related Threads

Thread: Mentoring
Sample Commentary describing <i>Mentoring</i>
<i>“be aware of practice...give encouragement for it” (EL3)</i>
<i>“to guide and develop...and inspire them (educators)” (EL5)</i>
<i>“addressing those areas in educators practice where they were really feeling like they need support, or they felt was a weakness in them” (EL1)</i>
<i>“support of the staff is just to listen to them (EL2)</i>
<i>“spend time in the room...and give feedback” (EL4)</i>
<i>“I might have an article that supports an individual’s person’s journey” (EL3)</i>

6.3 Emerging Common Threads for each Theme

The previous section outlined the process used to analyse interview data. This section presents the common threads in Table 6.4 that emerged from the analysis of each theme.

Table 6.4 Common Threads for each Theme

Educational Leader Themes	Common Threads
Role of the EL	<i>mentoring, guiding curriculum, professional conversations, relationships/partnerships, time allocation for role</i>
Work Practices of the EL	<i>mentoring, guiding curriculum, professional conversation, performance review, implementing new practices</i>
Alignment between NQS and the role of EL	<i>practices, NQS expectations/challenges, staff familiar with NQS, practices to implement</i>

Table 6.4 shows that for Theme 1, Role of the Educational Leader, five keys threads emerged, namely: *mentoring, guiding curriculum, professional conversations, relationships/partnerships and time allocation for role*. For Theme 2, Work Practices of the Educational Leader five keys threads emerged; *mentoring, guiding curriculum, professional conversation, performance review and implementing new practices*. For Theme 3, Alignment between NQS and the role of the EL, four key threads emerged; *practices, NQS expectations/challenges, staff familiar with NQS, practices to implement*.

6.3.1 Theme 1: Role of the Educational Leader

Table 6.5 presents the EL participant interview results for Theme 1. The table presents the practices associated with each identified thread as well as the frequency with which participants commented on each practice. Sample commentary, as presented in the table describes each

thread further. As shown in Table 6.5, five (5) key threads emerged from the data analysis for this theme, namely: *mentoring; guiding curriculum; professional conversations; relationships/partnerships* and *time allocation*. The remainder of this section describes each thread associated with the theme.

Similar tables have been generated for Themes 2 and 3.

Table 6.5 Results for Theme 1: Role of the Educational Leader (n=5)

Thread: <i>Mentoring</i>		Definition: Methods to support educators
Practices Supporting educator practice (5) Observation of educator practice (5) Feedback to educators (4) Use of literature to support practice (3)	Sample commentary describing <i>Mentoring</i> <i>"be aware of practice...give encouragement for it"</i> (EL3) <i>"spend time in the room...and give feedback"</i> (EL4) <i>"addressing those areas in educators practice where they were really feeling like they need support, or they felt was a weakness in them"</i> (EL1) <i>"I might have an article that supports an individual's person's journey"</i> (EL3)	
Thread: <i>Guiding Curriculum</i>		Definition: Programming responses to curriculum and documentation
Practices Vision for learning (5) Curriculum meetings (5) Curriculum development (4)	Sample commentary describing <i>Guiding Curriculum</i> <i>"a big part of my role at the moment....is initiating new ideas and trying out different concepts"</i> (EL5) <i>"planning meetings....that is a big part of my educational leadership, is that I'm there at every one of those meetings and I make it a priority"</i> (EL3) <i>"allow time for me to be on the floor...if any room is having issues with routines or children"</i> (EL4)	
Thread: <i>Professional Conversations</i>		Definition: Discussions with and for educators about professional practice
Practices Facilitating meetings (5) Professional development (3) Educator reflection on practice (3)	Sample commentary describing <i>Professional Conversations</i> <i>"we have our own little EL meetings with all lead educators...then doing it again with our assistants"</i> (EL1) <i>"I give them (educators) avenues to build upon what their existing skills are but also their ideas"</i> (EL2) <i>"we have reflection logs that are due into me once every 3 weeks...where educators will tell me what they're working on...they have to say, what's my goal, my professional development goal"</i> (EL3)	
Thread: <i>Relationships/Partnerships</i>		Definition: The connection between the educational leader and others
Practices With staff (4) With families (3) With children (1)	Sample commentary describing <i>Relationships/Partnerships</i> <i>"we have one on one discussions. There are times when we might pull together (as a team), if there is a sort of a common issue"</i> (EL1) <i>"A big part of my role...is just helping parents, supporting families....i think that they really appreciate there is someone available that will just have that chat with them"</i> (EL4) <i>"The planning meeting for the older group of children, the children get invited to parts of it...what are you doing at the moment and what do you think we should do next, say if a project is happening"</i> (EL3).	
Thread: <i>Time allocation for role</i>		Definition: The time given to the dedicated role of educational leader
Practices Overlapping responsibilities (3) Roster to support practice (2)	Sample commentary describing <i>Time allocation for role</i> <i>"I have a system in place where I block out time to differentiate between being the director of the centre and the EL"</i> (EL1) <i>The roster is actually written from the EL perspective...for the educational purposes of both the children and the educators"</i> (EL3)	

Mentoring

Results showed that all participants in this research mentor their educators, but results indicate that mentoring is provided in different ways. It is noted that participants observe their educators practice and offer support and guidance. For example, five participants provide specific feedback to educators. This is highlighted in participants' commentary: *"I spend time in the room...and give feedback"* (EL4). Another finding was participants support educators in their practice according to an individual's requirements. For example, five participants support their educators practice. This is highlighted in EL commentary: *"addressing those areas in educators' practice where they were really feeling like they need support, or they felt was a weakness in them"* (EL1).

Guiding Curriculum

Results showed that ELs guide curriculum at their centres using various methods. For instance, five (5) interview participants spoke about supporting staff through curriculum meetings. This is demonstrated in EL commentary: *"planning meetings...that is a big part of my educational leadership, is that I'm there at every one of those meetings and I make it a priority"* (EL3). Another finding was grounded in the EL participants' vision for children's learning, for example, five participants guiding curriculum by their vision for learning. This is reflected in EL commentary: *"a big part of my role at the moment...is initiating new ideas and trying out different concepts"* (EL5).

Professional Conversations

Results revealed that meetings were an avenue for participants to have professional conversations with their educators. As shown in Table 6.5 the EL commentary supports this. For example, *"we have our own little EL meetings with all lead educators...then doing it again with our assistants"* (EL1). The results indicated that three participants use reflection to facilitate professional conversations. This is evidenced in EL commentary, thus: *"we have reflection logs that*

are due into me once every 3 weeks...where educators will tell me what they're working on...they have to say, what's my goal, my professional development goal" (EL3).

Relationships/Partnerships

As indicated in Table 6.5, ELs describe relationship building with staff and families as a significant part of the EL role. Participants used a variety of methods to develop relationships and partnerships part of the EL role. The EL commentary supports this finding. For example, *"We have one on one discussions. There are times when we might pull together (as a team), if there is a sort of a common issue"* (EL1). Another ELs comments offered: *"A big part of my role...is just helping parents, supporting families...i think that they really appreciate there is someone available that will just have that chat with them"* (EL4). Results revealed that one interview participant develops relationships with the children by inviting them to join in curriculum planning meetings. This is demonstrated in EL commentary; thus: *"The planning meeting for the older group of children, the children get invited to parts of it...what are you doing at the moment and what do you think we should do next, say if a project is happening"* (EL3).

Time Allocation for Role

Results showed that ELs described a requirement for the role is for time to be allocated within workloads to assist the EL to fulfil the role requirements. Results indicate that time allocation is evident in different formats. For example, there is a need to distinguish between the different roles in which ELs take responsibility. This is evident in EL commentary: *"I have a system in place where I black out time to differentiate between being the director of the centre and the EL"* (EL1). Results show that two (2) interview participants draw up staff rosters that accommodate the use of more staff in order to support the specific learning and emotional needs of the children. This is demonstrated in EL commentary: *"The roster is actually written from the EL perspective...for the educational purposes of both the children and the educators"* (EL3).

6.3.2 Theme 2: Work practices of the Educational Leader

Table 6.6 presents the EL participant interview results for Theme 2, Work Practices of the EL.

Table 6.6 Results for Theme 2: Work Practices of the Educational Leader (n=5)

Thread: <i>Mentoring (for practice)</i>		Definition: Approaches to support educators
Practices Observation of educator practice (5) Feedback to educators (5) Modelling practice (3) Use of literature to support practice (2)	Sample commentary describing <i>Mentoring (for practice)</i> <i>"I spend time in the rooms doing observations and just role modelling"</i> (EL4) <i>"Spontaneously people (educators) can ask me questions or I can be aware of practice great practice and give encouragement"</i> (EL3) <i>"I'm in the room modelling practice that I would expect of the service"</i> (EL1) <i>"In supporting the girls....I'm providing them some literature to read"</i> (EL1) <i>"I love reading so I am very self-motivated...I read the National Quality Standards...the Areas and the Framework and the (QLD) Kindergarten Guideline"</i> (EL4)	
Thread: <i>Guiding Curriculum</i>		Definition: Supporting the teaching and learning of children and educators
Practices Evidence of children's learning (5) Programming (5)	Sample commentary describing <i>Guiding Curriculum</i> <i>"Programmes are well organised and really specific to the children's needs"</i> (EL2) <i>"Looking at individual goals for the children as well as the whole group"</i> (EL3)	
Thread: <i>Professional Conversations</i>		Definition: Conversations with educators with a professional approach to gain and share knowledge, reflective practice and ongoing learning
Practices Reflection on practice (5) Meetings (5) Networking (5)	Sample commentary describing <i>Professional Conversations</i> <i>"I make sure that we meet regularly so we have meetings once a week, have lots of reflective practice"</i> (EL2) <i>"can spend time out here with them as well to ask them, what's happening in their room, and then we can brainstorm ideas together of how we can work it out"</i> (EL4). <i>"I've been part of the Sunshine Coast ELs network meeting....for me that was the most beneficial (PD) "</i> (EL1) <i>"I attend the Sunshine Coast ELs network meeting...I occasionally attend the regional director's meetings with the department (office of early childhood)"</i> (EL2)	
Thread: <i>Performance Review</i>		Definition: Reviewing job performance of educators
Practices Professional development (5) Appraisals (4)	Sample commentary describing <i>Performance Review</i> <i>"educators will tell me what they're working on. So they have to say, what's my goal, my professional development goal, why have I chosen that goal and what are my strategies that I'm going to put into place?"</i> (EL3) <i>"I do their staff appraisals, I do their professional development plans"</i> (EL5)	

As shown in Table 6.6 four (4) threads emerged from the data, namely: *mentoring; guiding curriculum; professional conversation, and performance review*. Results for each thread are now presented.

Mentoring (for practice)

Results showed that all participants mentor their educators. Results suggest however, that mentoring is delivered in different ways. All participants observe educator practice. This is evidenced in EL commentary presented in Table 6.5. Commentary offered indicates *“I spend time in the rooms doing observations and just role modelling”* (EL4). A prominent finding, as shown in Table 6.6 was that all participants provide feedback to educators. This is evidenced in EL commentary; *“spontaneously people (educators) can ask me questions or I can be aware of practice great practice and give encouragement”* (EL3). Results indicate ELs use of literature to support practice. A finding was that ELs do their own research and reading to support them in the role as EL. For example, three (3) interview participants comment they use literature to support their role. This is evidenced in EL commentary: *“I love reading so I am very self-motivated...I read the National Quality Standards...the Areas and the Framework and the (QLD) Kindergarten Guideline”* (EL4).

Guiding Curriculum

Results presented in Table 6.6 show that all participants guide curriculum. The results reveal however, that participants use several approaches to achieve this. This is evidenced in EL commentary: *“looking at individual goals for the children as well as the whole group”* (EL3) and *“Programmes are well organised and really specific to the children’s needs”* (EL2). All interview participants are involved in programming for children, for example, all participants demonstrate evidence of children’s learning. This is supported in EL commentary in Table 6.6: *“Programmes are well organised and really specific to the children’s needs”* (EL2).

Professional Conversation

The results in Table 6.6 show that all participants use reflective practice via professional conversation with educators, in various ways. This is demonstrated in EL commentary such as, *“I make sure that we meet regularly so we have meetings once a week, have lots of reflective practice”* (EL2). A finding is all participants have meetings with educators as an avenue for professional conversations. This is supported in EL commentary: *“can spend time out here with them as well to ask them, what’s happening in their room, and then we can brainstorm ideas together of how we can work it out”* (EL4). A local network meeting specifically for ELs was a finding that emerged. All ELs commented that they attend this network meeting. This is supported in Table 6.6 in EL commentary: *“I’ve been part of the Sunshine Coast ELs network meeting....for me that was the most beneficial (PD)”* (EL1).

Performance Review

As evidenced in Table 6.6 performance review is undertaken by all participants with their staff. For example, four (4) participants carry out staff appraisals. This is evidenced in EL commentary: *“I do staff appraisals, I do professional development plans”* (EL5). Results indicate that all participants are involved in planning professional development with educators to support practice. This is evidenced in EL commentary: *“educators will tell me what they’re working on. So they have to say, what’s my goal, my professional development goal, why have I chosen that goal and what are my strategies that I’m going to put into place?”* (EL3).

6.3.3 Theme 3: Alignment between NQS and the role of Educational Leader

Table 6.7 presents the EL participant interview results for Theme 3, alignment between NQS Quality Area 7 and the role of the EL.

Table 6.7 Results for Theme 3: Alignment between NQS and the role of the Educational Leader (n=5)

Alignment between NQS and the role of the Educational Leader	Sample Commentary Describing the Alignment between NQS and the role of the Educational Leader
Components Expectations as EL (3) NQS standards/elements (5) Implementing (5)	Sample commentary describing NQS practices <i>"using the framework and looking at those standards and elements. I do use the guide....what an assessor might be looking for and...what is expected...in this area"(EL1)</i> <i>"I actually think every single part of it aligns...I read through the standards and the guide, to the national law...the whole framework"(EL3)</i> <i>"I would just read the guide and I know exactly what I need to do as an EL" (EL4)</i>
Components Requirements of NQS (5) Information available (5) EL information is broad, boring or not clear (3)	Sample commentary describing NQS expectations and challenges <i>"I don't think there's anything clear that is obvious or clarifying in terms of what the role is or what or what is the expectation is or what an approved provider is supposed to put in place in terms of having us in the role" (EL2)</i> <i>"I think it (NQF) is pretty explicit...about what your required to do...but people have to have time to read it" (EL3)</i> <i>"there's not a lot of information from the NQF that supports you in the role as EL" (EL4)</i> <i>"the fact that we know we have to adhere to standards and framework nationally...there is so much information in those particular documents that's it's difficult to access" (EL2)</i>
Components Staff not familiar with NQS (3) Staff are familiar with NQS (1) Documentation (1) Familiar with Practice (1)	Sample commentary describing staff familiarity with NQS <i>"I think all us here are comfortable with the fact that we know we have to adhere to standards and framework nationally but...so much information in those particular documents that it's difficult to access" (EL2)</i> <i>"Not the written document, no. But they do through their practice because we are constantly talking about high quality practice" (EL3)</i> <i>"I would say that they're not knowledgeable about it" (EL4)</i> <i>"most of mine were pretty up to date" (EL5)</i>
Components Observation of educators practice (1) Research (3)	Sample commentary describing implemented practices <i>"What I want is to look at other leadership models other than early childhood education. I feel that is where we need to draw from" (EL3)</i> <i>"I would love to be able to get into the rooms more.....more time to do my own research and my own learning myself, my own professional development" (EL5)</i>

As shown in Table 6.7, four key threads emerged from the data, namely: practices; rating; NQS expectations/challenges; staff familiar with NQS; practices to implement.

NQS Practices

As indicated in Table 6.7, a finding from the interview participants was that most EL participants knew the expectations of the EL roles as outlines in the NQS. For example, five participants mentioned using the standards and elements of the NQS. This is evidenced in EL commentary:

“using the framework and looking at those standards and elements. I do use the guide.....what an assessor might be looking for and...what is expected...in this area” (EL1); “I actually think every single part of it aligns...I read through the standards and the guide, to the national law...the whole framework”(EL3).

EL/NQS Expectations and Challenges

A finding was all ELs were aware of the NQS expectations. However, three participants noted that the NQS information is not clear, is boring and broad. This is supported in Table 6.7 in EL commentary: *“the fact that we know we have to adhere to standards and framework nationally...there is so much information in those particular documents that’s it’s difficult to access” (EL2).* One participant discusses the challenge of not knowing what the NQF expects of the educational role. This is supported in Table 6.7 in EL commentary thus: *“I don’t think there’s anything clear that is obvious or clarifying in terms of what the role is or what the expectation is or what an approved provider is supposed to put in place in terms of having us in the role” (EL2).*

Staff Familiarity with NQS

As indicated in Table 6.7, the findings reveal that from the interview participants three participants reported the staff were not familiar with NQS. This is demonstrated in EL commentary: *“Not the written document, no. But they do through their practice because we are constantly talking about high quality practice” (EL3); “I would say that they’re not knowledgeable about it” (EL4).*

Implemented Practices

Results show that ELs report that there are additional practices individual to the particular EL that they would like to implement but are yet to do so. Three participants for example mentioned that they would like to use research-based methods to develop skills sets that support them in the EL role. This is evidenced in EL commentary: *“I would love to be able to get into the rooms more...more time to do my own research and my own learning myself, my own professional development”* (EL5).

6.4 Summary of Results

Table 6.8 presents results for each of the 3 themes identified in the analysis of the interview data.

Table 6.8 Summary of Interview Results by Theme

Theme	Threads	Summary of Findings
Role of the EL	Mentoring	All ELs mentor their educators but do so in different ways. ELs mentor through observation and through the support of educator practice. ELs mentor through feedback to educators.
	Guiding curriculum	All ELs have a vision for learning and use this to guide the curriculum at their respective Centres. ELs support educators by facilitating curriculum meetings.
	Professional conversations	Meetings are an avenue for ELs to engage in professional conversations with their staff. ELs use professional conversations to reflect on practice with educators.
	Relationships/partnerships	ELs describe relationship building with staff, families and children as a significant part of the role.
	Time allocation for the role	ELs described a requirement for the role is for time to be allocated within workloads to assist the EL to fulfil the role requirements.
Work Practices of the EL	Mentoring for practice	ELs observe educator practice and provide feedback to educators to support their practice. Modelling good teaching practices by the EL supports educators.
	Guide curriculum	ELs are involved in programming and ensuring evidence of children's learning is evident.
	Professional conversations	ELs use professional conversations to reflect on practice network meetings. A local network meeting specifically for ELs was a valued opportunity to engage in professional conversations.
	Performance review	Staff appraisal and professional development plans are performed by ELs to support educator practice.
Alignment of NQS and the EL role	NQS practices	ELs understand the expectations of the EL role as outlined in the NQS.
	NQS Expectations and challenges	ELs noted that the NQS information is broad, boring and not clear. ELs state that the NQS documentation requires clarity in terms of the role and what an approved provider should put in place for the role.
	Staff familiarity with NQS	Educators other than ELs are not familiar with the NQS especially the written document.
	Implemented practices	ELs are yet to implement new practices that they have not have time to implement.

The results from Chapter 5 together with the results from this Chapter are used as a basis for the discussion of results in Chapter 7.

Chapter 7

Discussion of Results

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a synthesis of Chapters 5 and 6 that identifies the key responsibilities of the EL role and the work practices used by the Educational Leader (EL). This chapter firstly presents a discussion about the contextual considerations that influence both the role and work practices of the EL. Then the remainder of this chapter discusses the results using the three research questions namely:

Research Question 1: What are the key responsibilities encapsulated in the role of the Educational Leader in long day care centres?

Research Question 2: What are the specific work practices used by the Educational Leader in fulfilling the requirements of the identified role?

Research Question 3: How do the Educational Leader role and the work practices used align with the requirements of the National Quality Standards in Quality Area 7?

7.2 Consideration of the Contextual Considerations

This research obtained data on two contextual considerations namely, the centre profile and EL profile.

7.2.1 Centre profile

The survey participants in this research worked at long day care centres licenced for 31 to 100+ children. Most participants however worked in long day care centres licenced for 31- 70

children. The findings suggest consistencies; most ELs worked in centres licensed for 31-70, most centres offered an approved QLD Kindergarten programme and most centres employed 11-20 staff. There were nonetheless differences that can be directly attributed to the number of licensed children at the centre. For example, long day care centres licensed for 71-100 children characteristically have an EL working in a non-contact capacity for a proportion of the EL role. More time is allocated to the EL role for those ELs working with larger number of educators for example 21-31plus staff. In long day care centres, centres licensed for smaller numbers of children for example 2-10 staff the role is approached differently due to the lesser number of staff and children to fulfil the role.

The key difference that impacts on the role of the EL is that in the larger long day care centres the EL is managing larger teams of educators, guiding educational programs for many more children and working with larger number of families.

7.2.2 Educational Leader profile

As presented in Chapters 5 and 6, the majority of ELs are working with teams of 11-20 educators; educators with varying qualifications and work experience. The research findings highlighted that ELs who are working with teams of educators are required to have a diverse range of skills that include capacities to mentor, facilitate reflection on practice, manage conflict resolution, problem solve, communicate effectively, use research to inform practice and collaboratively manage and support team members. As well, ELs are required to be well versed in and have strong knowledge about child development and the ways in which children learn. This is commensurate with research findings presented by Waniganayake et al., (2012) and Rodd (2013), who acknowledge that ELs must recognise that staff have different proficiencies and competencies that are grounded in diverse social and cultural backgrounds, varied experience, knowledge and qualifications. The findings in this research indicate that ELs manage teams of

educators using various methods that are shaped by the individual EL's strengths and experience. The research findings reinforce Sims et al. (2014) proposition that educated and experienced early childhood professionals can motivate, guide, demonstrate and instruct other staff to improve their practice. Page and Tayler (2016) concur. They suggest that "leaders must know how to listen to colleagues, develop and communicate a shared vision, guide and support colleagues in a process of ongoing learning, self-reflection and continuous improvement, and build a culture of openness, trust and respect" (p. 113).

Chapter 2 noted that the ACECQA documentation states that the EL needs to be an experienced educator with appropriate qualifications (ACECQA, 2013). However, the documentation provides only limited details about the minimum qualification and/or amount of experience required by the EL. Most participants in this research had extensive experience working in early childhood education. The survey results showed that most ELs were Diploma qualified. However, the interview participants mostly had a Bachelor of Education qualification with some also having a Master of Education. These highly qualified EL participants have increased levels of knowledge and experience to mentor and guide teams of staff. The high levels of knowledge and experience appear to correlate consistently with the high Rating and Assessment approvals achieved by their long day care centres. Rodd (2013), purports that teaching qualifications and experience are important, but the appointment to leadership position within early childhood continues to be influenced by three factors; the personal merits that an individual brings to a position, excellent practice with children and families and longevity at the long day care centre. The findings in this research demonstrate that the level of experience of staff working in the early childhood setting influences the choice of the person most likely to be EL. Most ELs who participated in the research had between sixteen and over thirty years' experience working in early childhood. The findings indicate a positive correlation between the

qualification and experience of the EL, the EL's ability to interpret the requirements documented in the NQS and the awarded Rating and Assessment achievements.

Chapter 5 revealed there was a wide variance in workload allocation from one long day centre to the next. The majority of survey participants responded that they work four hours or less in the EL role. This indicates that these ELs are working in several roles within the long day care centre.

7.3 Consideration of Research Question 1

RQ1: What are the key responsibilities encapsulated in the role of the Educational Leader in long day care centres?

7.3.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 2 there is limited literature concerning the actual role of the EL in the context of early childhood. For the purpose of this dissertation, “role” is defined as the key aspects of what an EL does within the position. The discussion that follows considers the results from the survey and from the interview participants' perspectives on the role of EL. Figure 7.1 shows that four main EL responsibilities were identified through the synthesis of results tabled in Chapter 5 and 6 namely: facilitate professional practice; facilitate administrative practice; adhere to the requirements of NQS and mentoring educators. These responsibilities are discussed in the remainder of this section.

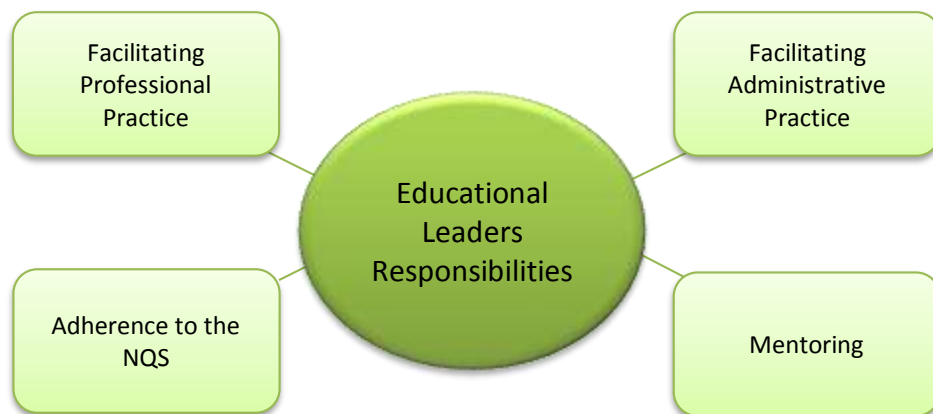


Figure 7.1 Responsibilities Encapsulated within role of Educational Leader

7.3.2 Facilitating professional practice

This research has found that the facilitation of professional practice is a key responsibility encapsulated within the scope of the EL's work. In facilitating professional practice, the EL, according to the research findings, uses four specific work practices:

- designing, developing and implementing curricula;
- initiating and conducting professional conversations;
- facilitating reflection; and
- using research literature to support and inform educator work.

The Guide to the NQS states that the EL “is to work with educators and to provide curriculum direction and to ensure children achieve the outcomes of the approved learning framework” (ACECQA, 2011, p. 178). The research evidenced a strong EL focus on supporting children's learning. This was demonstrated through a number of specific strategies used by ELs in long day care centres. These include:

- discussions about curriculum implementation and evaluation between educators that are led by the EL;

- support for educators to ensure educational programmes reflect evidence of consultation with children, families and other educators; and
- support for educators to use the practises and principles outlined in the EYLF.

7.3.3 Facilitating administrative practice

This research revealed that facilitating administrative practice is a key responsibility in the EL role. The research identified three specific practices characteristically used by ELs in meeting the demands of this responsibility:

- staff appraisals;
- organising and facilitating professional development for staff; and
- adherence to the many different requirements of regulatory documentation.

This finding is consistent with the regulatory paper work requirements as detailed in the NQF, in accordance with the Educational and Care Services National Regulations (2011) and the Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010). Research findings show that this EL responsibility may be independently undertaken by the EL, or alternatively, undertaken by educators who are supervised by the EL to maintain the paper work required with documenting children's learning.

The findings indicate that some ELs are involved with conducting staff appraisals. The results from Chapter 6 showed that the EL, after observing educator's practice and their written documentation on children's learning, can identify an educator's strengths and/or weaknesses. It would appear from the results that ELs use reflective methods to highlight and to improve educators' teaching and written requirements. Consequently, it seems that this facilitates the identification of both individual and whole team strengths and weaknesses.

7.3.4 Adherence to the NQS

The research findings indicate that adherence to, and compliance with, the requirements of the NQS is a key EL responsibility. Results indicate that within the Guide to the National Quality Standard (ACECQA, 2011) limited information is provided. It was found in the results that ELs commented that the NQS information is “broad, boring and not clear”. Research findings indicate a targeted EL focus was on children’s learning. Supporting, extending and observing children’s learning was conducted on a weekly basis by ELs. This links directly with what is stated in Quality Area 7, that during Assessment and Rating ‘assessors may observe the EL working with other educators and co-ordinators to observe, support and extend children’s learning’ (ACECQA, 2011, p. 178). Results from the research indicated that work practices that align with the adherence to the NQS link as well to the requirements of regulatory documentation.

7.3.5 Mentoring

Mentoring is a key EL responsibility evidenced in the research findings. Mentoring was described by EL participants as a part of professional learning through which the EL works collaboratively with teachers, lead educators and assistants in long day care centres to develop competencies to improve children’s learning. The ways in which ELs support and improve educators’ professional learning and practice include the use of professional conversations, reflection strategies to improve practice as well as the use of research-based approaches and information.

7.4 Consideration of Research Question 2

RQ2: What are the specific work practices used by the Educational Leader in fulfilling the requirements of the identified role?

7.4.1 Introduction

This research question explores the work practices used by the EL in fulfilling the requirements of the identified role. For the purpose of this dissertation, “practice” is defined as the actual method or work undertaken that align with one of the four key roles of the EL. Figure 7.2 details the specific work practices that were identified in the results. The work practices can be described as being the ways in which ELs enact the four key responsibilities discussed previously.

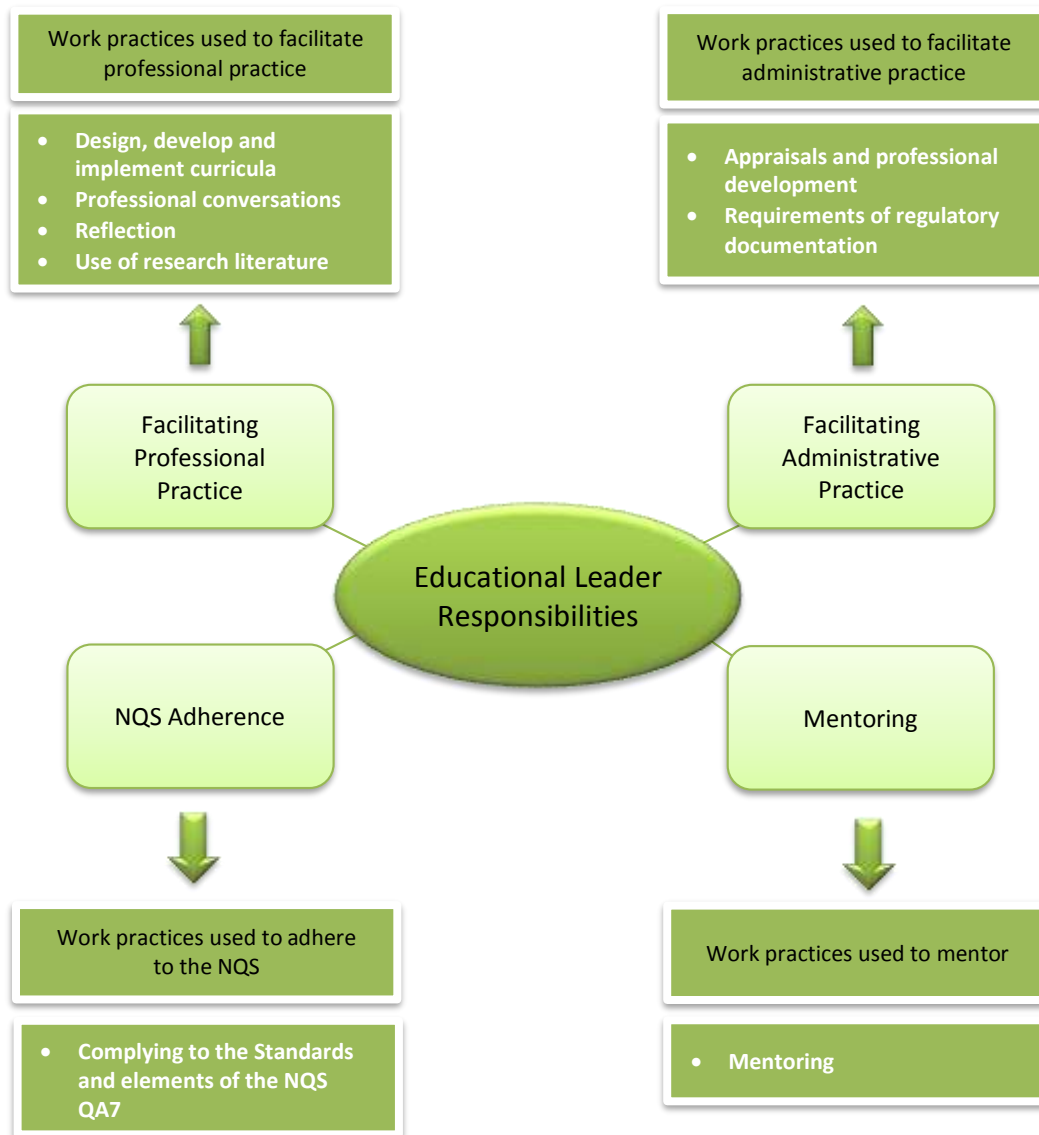


Figure 7.2 Overview of EL Role and Specific Work Practices Used

7.4.2 Work practices used to facilitate professional practice

Figure 7.2 overviews the work practices used to facilitate professional practice:

- designing, developing and implementing curricula;
- initiating and conducting professional conversations;
- facilitating reflection; and
- using research literature to support and inform educator work.

These work practices are considered in the remainder of this section.

Designing, Developing and Implementing Curricula

With respect to this work practice, the results indicate that guiding curriculum development was the second most important work practice. The EL participants use different work practices but target working closely with educators to set goals for the team, for the children and term goals for the age group in which they work. As well, some ELs write observations on children or read all documentation to ensure that the progress of children's learning is evidenced through appropriate recordkeeping. Some ELs offer feedback and guidance on the routines of the room. Results from the survey revealed that participants consistently acknowledged that guiding children's learning and incorporating innovative strategies to support children's development and learning was a key focus for EL work. There were recurring commonalities about meetings conducted by ELs with teachers, lead educators and assistants. These meetings were conduits to discussions about curriculum implementation and evaluation, and to conversations about assisting educators with implementing practices and principles of the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) and the use of the QLD Kindergarten Learning Guideline (Queensland Studies Authority (2010). This finding is consistent with that in the literature presented in Chapter 2 which describes that the EL is a person who guides the development and the performance of educational programmes within an early learning service (ACECQA, 2011). However, the survey results

indicated ELs undertake their responsibilities by drawing on common work practices, but they do so in different ways. For example, the additional job responsibilities attached to the EL role such as being a Kindy teacher, impacted on the EL's ability to the ability to guide the curriculum in other age groups.

It appears that the EL role is interpreted in different ways mainly because understandings about the parameters of the EL role remain unclear. Over half of the EL participants commented that they did not have a specific job description for their role as EL.

Initiating and Conducting Professional Conversations

The findings from Chapter 5 and 6 indicate that ELs involve educators regularly in professional conversations and use this collaborative approach to guide professional learning and to support the development of educator practice and knowledge. Other ways ELs use this collaborative approach is to reflect on practice with educators. The findings showed participants had similar viewpoints, describing that meetings were a valuable opportunity through which professional conversations could be initiated. This finding is consistent with the literature in Chapter 2 that highlights that the EL has a professional responsibility to guide all educators and to encourage communication that is central to the best learning outcomes for the children who attend an early childhood centre. As discussed in Chapter 6, the results revealed that all interview participants attend a regular network meeting solely for ELs. Participants commented how this presented as an opportunity for them as individuals to engage with other ELs in a supportive environment with like-minded professionals to engage in professional learning conversations. This finding is consistent with the views expounded by Page and Tayler (2016) who affirm professional learning such as the network meetings described, as an avenue for individuals to independently and collectively consider young children's learning as well as the influence of the educational programs and pedagogical practices. It can also be suggested that the EL network meetings are

an opportunity for ELs to gain support from professional colleagues also working in the role of EL.

Facilitating Reflection

The findings suggest that there were consistencies in the ways in which the participants facilitated reflective practice for, and with, other educators in their respective centres. The findings show that ELs are using reflective processes to challenge the current ways of working. Siraj and Hallet (2014) consider such reflection as a discussion between theory and practice; a discussion through which ELs can make links between practice and theory. Participants used different methods to engage educators in reflective practice. For example, professional conversations, curriculum meetings, observations of educator practice and the use of reflective journals followed by discussion were noted in the findings as strategies used to facilitate reflection on and for practice. The intention of ELs using all of these approaches was to modify current knowledge and understanding so that other educators in the centre could acquire and adopt new ideas.

Using Research Literature to Support and Inform Educator Work

Consistent ideas about the ways in which ELs use research to facilitate professional practice were noted in the findings. Most participants use research to inform their own practice. The findings noted that ELs also used their own discretion in supporting educators' individual practice by passing on research literature to support and extend educator knowledge. In this context the EL becomes a resource for sourcing information for educators to support their teaching practice and to support theoretical underpinnings. According to Rodd (2013), a research culture is a personal and professional approach in which academic and scientific curiosity exists and theoretical investigation should be supported within the early childhood profession.

7.4.3 Work practices used to facilitate administrative practice

Chapters 6 examined the work practices used by the EL in relation to administrative tasks.

Figure 7.2 presents the work practices that were identified. It can be seen that the work practices include appraisals and professional developments as well as the administration of the requirements of the regulatory documentation. These work practices are considered in the remainder of this section.

Appraisals and Professional Development

Results detailed in Chapter 6 revealed that EL participants were involved in performance reviews with their staff, with most ELs reporting that they are directly involved in staff appraisals.

Appraisals are used by ELs to review educator performance and to identify any gaps where educators require further training, support and guidance. Appraisals are also an avenue to highlight educator's strengths and areas of excellence in performance. The results indicated that ELs use professional development plans with educators to assist staff to focus on goals for their developmental learning. The research revealed that goal setting was also used to provide staff with clear objectives on what they needed to focus on to further improve their practice as an educator. Rodd (2013) concurs that supervision is considered a way of supporting, inspiring, guiding and developing the capability and the proficiency of others. By using goal setting to improve practice with educators, the EL therefore is offering professional assistance that inspires educators to listen to and to acknowledge constructive feedback and discover reflection to critically assess their own practice (Rodd, 2013).

Chapter 6 results revealed that organising professional development for staff was a prominent practice of ELs. Organising professional development appears to be a natural progression for the EL in considering the needs that educators describe as being critical to support their practice. The research findings determined that it is the EL who observes educator practice and then

conducts staff appraisals. As a consequence, the EL then determines the specific professional developmental needs of each educator. According to Colmer et al., (2015) and Rodd (2013), professional learning can confidently influence educator confidence, growth and enhance practice if it merges theory and research along with practice to foster greater knowledge. Furthermore, Rodd (2013) suggests that ELs who support and guide their educators from a supervisory responsibility, inspire educators to become lifelong learners who self-assess and reflect about their practice whilst assisting them to improve as confident and skilled educators. The findings from this research are consistent with that of the literature detailed in Chapter 2.

Requirements of Regulatory Documentation

The results presented in this research indicate that attending to documentation requirements is a prominent practice undertaken by the EL. ELs were predominantly required to oversee the professional and authentic use of relevant documents and the development of documented plans to support programming and children's learning. Examples of the types of regulatory documentation that was identified as needing to be managed by ELs include:

- evidence of children's learning and documented progress;
- formulating goals for children individually and as a whole group;
- supporting, extending and observing children's learning;
- providing curriculum direction to educators;
- initiate and monitor staff planning that centres on children's learning; and
- ensuring the centre's educational programme meets the NQS.

7.4.4 Work practices used to adhere to NQS

Introduction

The NQS and in particular Quality Area 7, Element 7.1.4, overarches the obligations of the EL. Figure 7.2 presents the work practices used by ELs to adhere to the NQS requirements. The work practices are discussed in the remainder of this section.

Standards and Elements of the NQS (QA7)

The results tabled in Chapter 5 identify that most EL participants engage with the NQS on a monthly basis. Four survey participants did not respond to or skipped this question. This is interesting to note because the NQS is a critical document that is used by EL participants to inform the work to be done in the capacity of EL. However, the interview findings revealed that all participants confidently use the NQS to inform their EL practice suggesting that the use of NQS practices are used more consistently than monthly. Results revealed that a targeted EL focus on children's learning was evident; supporting, extending and observing children's learning. Participants made mention that the use of the NQF was a mechanism to guide practice so that centres complied with NQF expectations when undergoing the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) assessment and rating process. This view was supported with more than half of the interview participants' centres receiving an 'exceeding' rating, with two of those centres receiving an 'excellence' rating; the highest rating to be achieved. However, findings indicate that although the ELs are able to align EL practices to the NQS, more than half of the participants commented that the NQS documentation was ambiguous and subject to broad interpretation. Furthermore, results reveal that most ELs believe that other educators at long day care centres were neither familiar nor conversant with the NQS requirements. It would appear that the EL role is responsible for informing and guiding educators towards educational practice that is expected by and compliant with ACECQA guidelines.

7.4.5 Work practices used to mentor

Mentoring

There are many definitions of mentoring and definitions differ depending upon the situation (Ambrosetti, 2012). Page and Tayler (2016, p. 129) define mentoring as “a component of professional learning in which an educational leader, or another knowledgeable leader and experienced professional colleague, works alongside individual teachers to develop their capacity to advance young children’s learning”. This definition of mentoring aligns with the findings in Chapters 5 and 6 which identified that mentoring is delivered in different ways. Mentoring is recognised by the participants as a key responsibility of the EL role. The work practices used by ELs to mentor educators in the long day care centre setting include:

- providing support, feedback and guidance after observing educator practice;
- modelling good teaching practice to educators to support practice;
- facilitating opportunities with educators to engage in reflective practice;
- initiating and monitoring educator planning for the curriculum; and
- using literature to support practice.

The work practices outlined above are similarly suggested by Rodd (2013) who purports that successful mentors are committed listeners, perceptive observers, reflective communicators, critical colleagues and are receptive to various learning styles. The research findings indicate that mentoring work practices develop as continuing, respectful collaborative conversations between educators. The findings in Chapters 5 and 6 are consistent with those reported by Marsick and Watkins (cited in Page & Tayler, 2016) who suggest that mentoring is building new knowledge and is developed when there is a professional learning ethos that endorses trust, the communication of knowledge, investigation and risk taking, and gives positive feedback.

7.5 Consideration of Research Question 3

RQ3: How do the Educational Leader role and the work practices used align with the requirements of the National Quality Standards in Quality Area 7?

7.5.1 Introduction

This research question explores how the EL role and work practices align with the requirements of the NQS in Quality Area 7. As discussed in Chapter 2, the role of the EL as documented in the NQS was examined. The discussion that follows considers the responsibilities of the EL role that have been established in this research and how the finding aligns with the requirements of the NQS in QA7. Figure 7.2 shows the four main EL responsibilities and the work practices identified in the results.

Facilitating Professional Practice

Chapter 5 results showed that ELs work with staff to focus on planning and developing the curriculum to support children's learning and development as prescribed in the NQS. It was established in Chapter 6 that participants knew the expectations of the EL role documented within the NQS. For example, practices such as reflective practice, providing curriculum direction, supporting educators practice through professional conversations and the use of research literature have all been identified as practices that are embedded into the EL role. This aligns with the requirements as outlined in the guide to the NQS, QA7 in Element 7.1.4 that specify the EL is to provide curriculum guidance and ensure children accomplish the outcomes of the approved learning framework (ACECQA, 2011).

Facilitating Administrative Practice

Chapter 6 findings identified three specific practices used by ELs in facilitating administrative practice as staff appraisals, organising and facilitating professional development for staff and

adherence to the many different requirements of regulatory documentation. The alignment with this role and associated work practices to the NQS ties with the adherence to regulatory documentation. Within the NQS, Element 7.1.4 it stipulates documented goals are required for teaching and learning that establishes children's learning and development (ACECQA, 2011). Staff appraisals and organising professional development were work practices identified in the research. However, at the time of writing there is not a clear alignment to the NQS with these two work practices. A broad alignment to the NQS could be linked to the opportunities accessible for discussion and reflective practice as outlined in the NQS (ACECQA, 2011).

NQS Adherence

Chapter 5 results showed that more than half of the EL participants do not have a job description for the EL role in which they are working. Without specific job descriptions to follow, it is reasonable to think that ELs might attend to the responsibilities in different ways, attend to different responsibilities and question the responsibilities of the role as suggested by NQS requirements. This absence of a job description caused a level of frustration among participants as evidenced in participant commentary, *"I don't think there's anything clear that is obvious or clarifying in terms of what the role is or what or what is the expectation is or what an approved provider is supposed to put in place in terms of having us in the role"* (EL2).

In Chapter 6 results indicated participants from three centres received 'Exceeding' and of those, two centres received 'Excellence' the highest rating for each of the 7 quality areas in the ACECQA Rating and Assessment process. These findings suggest that regardless of other educators' knowledge and understanding on the NQS, the role of the EL is crucial in leading the team of educators in the development and implementation of the curriculum. This is supported with participant commentary in Chapter 6, when asked about educators' understanding of the

NQS, the EL commented, *“Not the written document (NQS), no. But they (staff) do through their practice because we are constantly talking about high quality practice”* (EL3).

ACECQA states (cited in Page & Tayler, 2016, p. 113) that “the role of EL is enshrined in national law and regulations and leadership is a key aspect of Quality Area 7 of the National Quality Standard”. It is evident that to achieve this, ELs would need to know the requirements of the EL role and without a clear job description or sound knowledge of the NQF, it would be hard to interpret the actual role of the EL. The NQF has established a performance-based standard that can be achieved in various ways with a prominence on professional judgment and practice (Irvine & Price, 2014). As the NQF is less prescriptive this requires a certain level of ability, experience and knowledge from the EL to actually interpret and then undertake the role. Therefore, at the time of writing, without clear guidelines of the EL role outlined in the NQS it is difficult to determine the alignment of the NQS requirements.

Mentoring

Mentoring is a key EL responsibility and work practice that aligns with the NQS requirements in the following ways. The findings from the research indicate that ELs collaboratively work with educators to develop competencies to improve children’s learning. The EL works with educators to observe, support and increase children’s learning, guiding curriculum, along with opportunities for reflective practice and professional discussions as outlined in the NQS within Element 7.1.4 (ACECQA, 2011).

The foregoing indicates that Educational Leader role and the work practices used align with the requirements of the National Quality Standards in Quality Area 7:

- participants generally knew the expectations documented within the NQS;

- participants are able to align EL practices to the NQS despite the ambiguous nature of the document which is open to broad interpretation;
- participants work with staff to focus on planning and developing the curriculum to support children's learning and development as prescribed in the NQS; and
- regardless of the educators' knowledge and understanding on the NQS, the role of the EL is crucial in leading the team of educators in the development and implementation of the curriculum.

The research has indicated that the Educational Leader role and work practices that do not align with the requirements of the National Quality Standards in Quality Area 7:

- half of the participants do not have a job description for the EL role;
- staff appraisals, organising and facilitating professional development for staff;

Chapter 6 findings indicate that although the ELs commented that they feel competent in aligning their EL practices to the NQS, more than half of the interview participants commented that the NQS is ambiguous and can be broadly interpreted. This was highlighted in Chapter 6 where participants commented that the NQS information is not clear and commented for instance, *"there's not a lot of information from the NQF that supports you in the role as EL"* (EL4).

Furthermore, according to EL perspectives, the NQS documentation is vague and makes no mention of the specific early childhood qualifications that are considered to be pre-requisite for an EL position. The NQS states that the person should be qualified with appropriate qualifications and should be an experienced educator. There is no clear specification as to the level of "appropriate" qualification nor is there documentation about the level of "experience" that is required. Nonetheless, the EL is the person at the long day care centre who leads the development and implementation of educational programs based on the EYLF and sets goals for teaching and learning.

7.6 Summary

This chapter has discussed the results that were presented in Chapters 5 and 6, and has considered these with respect to the three research questions. Chapter 8 presents the conclusions from this research and provides concluding commentary.

Chapter 8

Conclusions, Recommendations and Areas for Further Research

8.1 Introduction

This thesis has concerned the Educational Leader role and work practices in conjunction with the context of the requirements of National Quality Standard (NQS), Quality Area 7 (QA7).

This Chapter begins by considering the scope and limitations of the research. This is followed by conclusions and implications of the research. The remainder of this chapter provides recommendations resulting from the research and areas for further research.

8.2 Scope and Limitations of the Research

The scope of this research has concerned the role and work practices of a sample of Educational Leaders working in the early childhood sector. The limitations of the study are as follows:

- As indicated in Chapter 3, the sample used in this research study was limited to early childhood (long day care) centres. Therefore, Educational Leaders experiences and viewpoints working in preschools, outside school hours care and family day care services have not been considered.
- The sample was restricted to commentary from Educational Leaders only. Therefore, the views are not necessarily indicative to those of other educators in long day care centres about the role and work practices of the Educational Leader role. Educators' responses may have been different.
- This research used a sample from a restricted regionalised area of the Sunshine Coast and Brisbane. Generalisations from findings need to be considered in the above context.

- The sample is too small to do a detailed statistical analysis. This prevented the undertaking of significance statistical analysis for the relationships between results for centre and Educational Leader profiles and other variables.

8.3 Conclusions

Five main conclusions can be drawn from this research:

1. **There are two distinct components associated with the role of Educational Leader: practice and pedagogy; and operational management.** These two components are underpinned by four key responsibilities that are encapsulated in the role of the Educational Leader namely: the facilitation of professional practice; the facilitation of administrative practice; an adherence to the requirements of the NQS and mentoring. These are common responsibilities that are fundamental to the Educational Leader role. At the time of writing, the Educational Leader role was not articulated clearly within the informing documentation and was consequently open to interpretation by practicing Educational Leaders. The research found that the time allocated within designated workloads to the Educational Leader position considerably varied. Early childhood education and care settings can acknowledge leadership in education and leadership in management. This combination of leadership in education and leadership in management is supported in the updated version of the NQS QA7 (ACECQA, 2017) and makes reference to the Educational Leader supporting educators to guide the curriculum and reflect on educator's own practices to identify areas of ongoing learning and professional development. Furthermore, there are links to the Educational Leader and the leadership and management structure to support educators (ACECQA, 2017) and the research findings support the Educational Leader aligned role to operational management. The research findings determined that it is the EL who observes educator practice,

conducts staff appraisals and then determines the specific professional developmental needs of each educator. Conducting staff appraisals and professional development is now supported in the updated version of the NQS QA 7 (ACECQA, 2017).

- 2. Educational Leaders use a range of work practices to varying extents.** The outcomes of this research suggest that Educational Leader practices can be deemed to be idiosyncratic, mainly because Educational Leaders have individual and varying knowledge and experiences in Early Childhood. This in turn may have influence on the ways in which the Educational Leader meets the demands of the role. Educational Leaders undertake their responsibilities by drawing on common work practices, but they do so in different ways. The common work practices evidenced in the research findings can be described collectively as practices that inform, develop and sustain educational work.
- 3. Governance of a centre may influence the role of the Educational Leader and the extent to which the NQS is enacted.** At the time of writing, there was limited information within Quality Area 7 provided on the Educational Leader role. This may have resulted in different interpretations of the documented requirements for the responsibility of the Educational Leader and the prioritising of the role within the management structures of centre governance. For example, if the role is not supported by management this may have resulted in limited time being given for the Educational Leader role.
- 4. The lack of detailed documentation from ACECQA about the specifics of the role and work practices of the Educational Leader resulted in differences in the role and work practices of the Educational Leader.** Given the broad

understandings about the scope of Educational Leader work, the research has highlighted the need for detailed and comprehensive guidelines that articulate the specifics about the Educational Leader role, the way in which the role can be administered, and the types of practices associated with the work undertaken by the Educational Leader. With the release of the updated NQS in February 2018, this has now provided clear information regarding the role of the Educational Leader. Detailed information on the updated NQS, Quality Area 7, Element 7.2.2 is presented under conclusion 5.

- 5. There is broad alignment to the requirements of the NQS and the Educational Leader and work practices.** As shown in Chapter 7 the role and work practices identified in this research indicates a broad alignment to the NQS. This result is not unexpected because the NQS requirements were open to interpretation.

Recently the new ACECQA documentation has been released (ACECQA, 2017). This documentation now makes mention of the Educational Leader within some other Quality Areas of the NQS. Quality Area 7, Element 7.2.2 provides more specific information regarding the role and work practices of the Educational Leader position. This element now outlines the following: Educational Leadership; selecting and supporting the Educational Leader; leading, developing and implementing the program; assessment and planning cycle; and an assessment guide for meeting the element 7.2.2 (ACECQA, 2017). The qualifications of the Educational Leader are now more clearly stated, “the Educational Leader may be the approved provider, a nominated supervisor or person with management or control who has suitable experience and qualifications, an early childhood teacher, or a diploma or certificate III qualified educator within the service” (ACECQA, 2017, p. 436).

The new ACECQA (2017) document now clearly articulates the responsibilities and work practices of the Educational Leader in leading, developing and implementing the program to include:

- “mentoring and supporting educators’ understanding of educational program and practice, such as:
 - how theory supports best practice in all parts of the program;
 - building relationships and interactions with children to assist their learning through play and leisure-based programs;
 - intentional teaching strategies and thoughtful, deliberate educator practices that support children’s wellbeing, learning and development;
 - routines and transitions;
 - providing for continuity of learning when children transition to, from or within the service; and
 - developing documentation that is meaningful, relevant and promotes reflection on educators’ pedagogy and practice.
- drawing on a range of understandings about learning theories and styles, as well as educators’ strengths, to develop educators’ professional skills and confidence.
- encouraging and empowering educators to draw on their creativity, intuition, knowledge of child development, as well as children’s knowledge, identity and culture in their teaching and planning for learning.
- liaising with other early childhood education and care professionals (such as therapists, maternal and child health nurses, and early childhood intervention specialists).

- assisting educators to make connections in the community, including with diverse cultures and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Elders or their representatives” (ACECQA, 2017, p. 304-305).

8.4 Implications from the Research

The research findings have demonstrated that the Educational Leader role and work practices need to be clearly articulated and that the Educational Leader requires support to execute the role if full alignment with NQS documentation is to occur.

In this respect the new ACECQA (2017) documentation highlights the types of Educational Leader support that are required to enable Educational Leaders to better address the responsibilities inherent in the role. For example, the documentation notes that “time, professional learning materials and opportunities, clearly defined role description, expectations, networking and collegial support opportunities” (ACECQA, 2017, p. 304) are critical to the work of the Educational Leader. Furthermore, the updated version of the NQS (ACECQA, 2017) released in February 2018 clearly articulates an assessment guide for meeting Element 7.2.2 clearly articulates Educational Leadership to include what assessors may discuss:

- how the service supports the educational leader to have opportunities for discussions with educators, provide mentoring, lead reflective practice, and realise the intent of their role
- how the educational leader assists educators to promote children’s learning and development and, when necessary, facilitate discussions with families
- what strategies and processes the educational leader uses to lead the development of effective programs within the service and to ensure that the planning cycle is implemented effectively

- how the educational leader supports and builds educators' understandings of how to assess, plan for and evaluate children's learning, including supporting the development of documentation that is meaningful and relevant
- the ways that leadership is tailored and targeted to reflect individuals' strengths and areas for growth
- how educators are mentored and supported through learning communities, positive organisational culture and professional conversations
- how the educational leader works with the service's leadership and management structure to support educators through periods of change (ACECQA, 2017, p. 306).

8.5 Recommendations

This section presents recommendations in relation to the role and work practices of the Educational Leader based on the findings from the research.

Recommendation 1: An articulated role statement for Educational Leaders based on the requirement of the NQS is needed.

Detailed information on role requirements would assist approved providers/nominated supervisors to identify the significance of the role as well as to clarify the Educational Leader role for all educators including the nominated Educational Leader of the centre.

Recommendation 2: Defined categories of work practices of the Educational Leader are needed.

The results in the research indicate that there are four main categories of Educational Leader work practices collectively identified as:

- Facilitation of professional practice;

- Facilitation of administrative practice;
- Adherence to the NQS; and
- Mentoring.

Recommendation 3: Targeted time dedicated to the role of Educational Leader is needed in order to fulfil the role.

The results in this research demonstrated considerable variations in the hours allocated to the role. The Educational Leader role requires dedicated quality time away from other roles and responsibilities of other positions within an early learning centre. Time allocated needs to be endorsed by the approved provider of the centres. Ideally the Educational Leader role would be a non-contact position that allows the role flexibility to observe practice and time dedicated to meet with educators to improve and support practice. This would be a mechanism through which the work practices of the Educational Leader are more clearly described so that it allows the Educational Leader to work with educators to further develop skills. For the Educational Leader position to be effective it is essential that approved providers and nominated supervisors are supportive of the role providing dedicated time to successfully enact the role. A clearly defined position description and an appropriate remuneration is required to fully reflect the importance of the Educational Leader role has promoting positive outcomes for children and families.

Recommendation 4: There is a need for Educational Leaders to have ongoing opportunities for professional development.

This research has shown that Educational Leaders are supporting educators at their long day care centre, but the Educational Leaders were lacking in professional development support to facilitate their role. Professional development for Educational Leader is also needed on a regular basis to enable Educational Leaders to have professional conversations with other Educational

Leaders, to be guided in practice, challenged and inspired. Such opportunities for professional development will continue to motivate Educational Leaders and in turn better support the educators at their own long day care centres. A greater recognition of the importance of Educational Leader networks is advocated.

8.6 Areas for Further Research

In terms of the results and the limitations to this research, this section has identified areas for further research.

- Replication of this research

This current research sample was too small to undertake detailed statistical analysis to generate results that address relationships between variables in this research. Using a larger sample would enable specific statistical analysis to be done. This could examine in greater detail relationships between the variables considered in this research.

- Further research the role and work practices as outlined in the new NQF document released in February 2018.

This research has shown that the role of the Educational Leader is diverse and multidimensional. As Educational Leader obtain and prepare new knowledge and skills and acquire a strategic approach to leading and supporting educators in designing, reflecting and carrying out practices, professional work can be enhanced (Rodd, 2013). In February 2018, the introduction of the new NQF has provided more explicit information. The new NQS specially has clearly outlined the role of the Educational Leader, the skills, knowledge and attributes an Educational Leader may possess and the key aspects of the role. Throughout the new NQS guide there is now reference to the Educational Leader in all Quality Areas and identifies ways the Educational Leader leads the development and implementation of educational programs. Quality Area 7 is retitled

Governance and Leadership and there is improved clarity about the roles and work practices along with philosophy and responsibilities to support an effective foundation for leadership. Research could examine the effectiveness of the Educational Leader role in conjunction with the new NQS and the practices used by the Educational Leader to achieve the expectations of the rating and assessment process.

- Extend research to include all staff positions in a long day care centre.

Further investigation on the influence of the Educational Leader role and work practices on other educators is warranted. The research indicated that other educators may not have a clear understanding about the NQS and therefore not fully understand the Educational Leader role and work practices. A more representational sample of staff in long day care centres could be used to ascertain the Educational Leader role and work practices used to support, mentor and guide curriculum at long day care centres within Australia. Research investigation could specifically survey and interview all staff at long day care centres to gather their opinions and viewpoints on the impact of the role of the Educational Leader. Such research has the potential to gather information more insight into the Educational Leader role, the influence it has on other educators and further clarify the role and alignment to the NQS requirements.

- The leadership component of the Educational Leader role

This research has examined leadership as a component of the Educational Leader role. The research identified aspects of Educational Leadership being practice and pedagogy and operational management. Further research is warranted that more specifically focuses on the leadership component of the role. A research investigation which specifically examines who are the leaders within long day care centres and the impact of leadership and how leadership relates to the role of the Educational Leader. A survey of all staff at centres could be used to gather

their opinions and viewpoints on leadership practices and how it influences educators practice and outcomes for children.

8.7 Concluding Remarks

This research has explored the role and work practices of the Educational Leader. Specifically, the research has drawn attention to the inadequacies regarding the Educational Leader role and practices within the NQS document released in 2012. Such shortfalls include a lack of information about the Educational Leader role encapsulated in leading the development of the curriculum and determining clear goals and expectations for teaching and learning (ACECQA, 2011). Requirements of the NQS are being met to varying degrees. There was an expectation that Educational Leader use the NQS to inform their practice in the role of Educational Leader. With limited information to guide them in the role, Educational Leaders indicated that the NQS documentation requires clarity in terms of the role and work practices required to guide educators and what an approved provider should put in place for the role. The release of a more detailed NQS (ACECQA, 2017), has addressed this.

It is hoped that this research is a catalyst for further research and discussion concerning the Educational Leader within early childhood education. Additional attention in this area supports the development of the Educational Leader role and future policy and practice guidance in the Early Childhood sector.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Summary of ACECQA Quality Areas, Standards and Elements (2011)

www.acerqa.gov.au	
Summary table of quality areas, standards and elements	
QA1	Educational program and practice
1.1	An approved learning framework informs the development of a curriculum that enhances each child's learning and development.
1.1.1	Curriculum decision making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
1.1.2	Each child's current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.
1.1.3	The program, including routines, is organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.
1.1.4	The documentation about each child's program and progress is available to families.
1.1.5	Every child is supported to participate in the program.
1.1.6	Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions and influence events and their world.
1.2	Educators and co-ordinators are focused, active and reflective in designing and delivering the program for each child.
1.2.1	Each child's learning and development is assessed as part of an ongoing cycle of planning, documenting and evaluation.
1.2.2	Educators respond to children's ideas and play and use intentional teaching to scaffold and extend each child's learning.
1.2.3	Critical reflection on children's learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, is regularly used to implement the program.
QA2	Children's health and safety
2.1	Each child's health is promoted.
2.1.1	Each child's health needs are supported.
2.1.2	Each child's comfort is provided for and there are appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.
2.1.3	Effective hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.1.4	Steps are taken to control the spread of infectious diseases and to manage injuries and illness, in accordance with recognised guidelines.
2.2	Healthy eating and physical activity are embedded in the program for children.
2.2.1	Healthy eating is promoted and food and drinks provided by the service are nutritious and appropriate for each child.
2.2.2	Physical activity is promoted through planned and spontaneous experiences and is appropriate for each child.
2.3	Each child is protected.
2.3.1	Children are adequately supervised at all times.
2.3.2	Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.
2.3.3	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.
2.3.4	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members are aware of their roles and responsibilities to respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.
QA3	Physical environment
3.1	The design and location of the premises is appropriate for the operation of a service.
3.1.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, furniture, equipment, facilities and resources are suitable for their purpose.
3.1.2	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.
3.1.3	Facilities are designed or adapted to ensure access and participation by every child in the service and to allow flexible use, and interaction between indoor and outdoor space.
3.2	The environment is inclusive, promotes competence, independent exploration and learning through play.
3.2.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces are designed and organised to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
3.2.2	Resources, materials and equipment are sufficient in number, organised in ways that ensure appropriate and effective implementation of the program and allow for multiple uses.
3.3	The service takes an active role in caring for its environment and contributes to a sustainable future.
3.3.1	Sustainable practices are embedded in service operations.
3.3.2	Children are supported to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment.
QA4	Staffing arrangements
4.1	Staffing arrangements enhance children's learning and development and ensure their safety and wellbeing.
4.1.1	Educator-to-child ratios and qualification requirements are maintained at all times.
4.2	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members are respectful and ethical.
4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
4.2.2	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members work collaboratively and affirm, challenge, support and learn from each other to further develop their skills, to improve practice and relationships.
4.2.3	Interactions convey mutual respect, equity and recognition of each other's strengths and skills.

Appendix A: Summary of ACECQA Quality Areas, Standards and Elements (2011) (Cont'd)

www.acecqa.gov.au	
QA5	Relationships with children
5.1	Respectful and equitable relationships are developed and maintained with each child.
5.1.1	Interactions with each child are warm, responsive and build trusting relationships.
5.1.2	Every child is able to engage with educators in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition of skills for life and learning.
5.1.3	Each child is supported to feel secure, confident and included.
5.2	Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships with other children and adults.
5.2.1	Each child is supported to work with, learn from and help others through collaborative learning opportunities.
5.2.2	Each child is supported to manage their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.
5.2.3	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained at all times.
QA6	Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
6.1	Respectful supportive relationships with families are developed and maintained.
6.1.1	There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families.
6.1.2	Families have opportunities to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.
6.1.3	Current information about the service is available to families.
6.2	Families are supported in their parenting role and their values and beliefs about child rearing are respected.
6.2.1	The expertise of families is recognised and they share in decision making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
6.2.2	Current information is available to families about community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.
6.3	The service collaborates with other organisations and service providers to enhance children's learning and wellbeing.
6.3.1	Links with relevant community and support agencies are established and maintained.
6.3.2	Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing relevant information and clarifying responsibilities.
6.3.3	Access to inclusion and support assistance is facilitated.
6.3.4	The service builds relationships and engages with their local community.
QA7	Leadership and service management
7.1	Effective leadership promotes a positive organisational culture and builds a professional learning community.
7.1.1	Appropriate governance arrangements are in place to manage the service.
7.1.2	The induction of educators, co-ordinators and staff members is comprehensive.
7.1.3	Every effort is made to promote continuity of educators and co-ordinators at the service.
7.1.4	Provision is made to ensure a suitably qualified and experienced educator or co-ordinator leads the development of the curriculum and ensures the establishment of clear goals and expectations for teaching and learning.
7.1.5	Adults working with children and those engaged in management of the service or residing on the premises are fit and proper.
7.2	There is a commitment to continuous improvement.
7.2.1	A statement of philosophy is developed and guides all aspects of the service's operations.
7.2.2	The performance of educators, co-ordinators and staff members is evaluated and individual development plans are in place to support performance improvement.
7.2.3	An effective self-assessment and quality improvement process is in place.
7.3	Administrative systems enable the effective management of a quality service.
7.3.1	Records and information are stored appropriately to ensure confidentiality, are available from the service and are maintained in accordance with legislative requirements.
7.3.2	Administrative systems are established and maintained to ensure the effective operation of the service.
7.3.3	The Regulatory Authority is notified of any relevant changes to the operation of the service, of serious incidents and any complaints which allege a breach of legislation.
7.3.4	Processes are in place to ensure that all grievances and complaints are addressed, investigated fairly and documented in a timely manner.
7.3.5	Service practices are based on effectively documented policies and procedures that are available at the service and reviewed regularly.

Appendix B: Research Ethics Approval



Secretary, Human Research Ethics Committee
Ph: 07 4923 2603
Fax: 07 4923 2600
Email: ethics@cqu.edu.au

Prof John Dekkers and
Ms Trudiann Marshall
School of Education and the Arts

27 June 2016

Dear Prof Dekkers and Ms Marshall

**HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE ETHICAL APPROVAL PROJECT: H16/04-077
THE ROLE OF THE 'EDUCATIONAL LEADER' IN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRES USING
THE NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS.**

The Human Research Ethics Committee is an approved institutional ethics committee constituted in accord with guidelines formulated by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and governed by policies and procedures consistent with principles as contained in publications such as the joint Universities Australia and NHMRC *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*. This is available at http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/_files/r39.pdf.

On 24 June 2016, the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee considered your application under the Low Risk Review Process. This letter confirms that your project has been granted approval under this process, pending ratification by the full committee at its July 2016 meeting.

The period of ethics approval will be from 24 June 2016 to 30 June 2017. The approval number is H16/04-077; please quote this number in all dealings with the Committee. HREC wishes you well with the undertaking of the project and looks forward to receiving the final report.

The standard conditions of approval for this research project are that:

- (a) you conduct the research project strictly in accordance with the proposal submitted and granted ethics approval, including any amendments required to be made to the proposal by the Human Research Ethics Committee;
- (b) you advise the Human Research Ethics Committee (email ethics@cqu.edu.au) immediately if any complaints are made, or expressions of concern are raised, or any other issue in relation to the project which may warrant review of ethics approval of the project. *(A written report detailing the adverse occurrence or unforeseen event must be submitted to the Committee Chair within one working day after the event.)*
- (c) you make submission to the Human Research Ethics Committee for approval of any proposed variations or modifications to the approved project before making any such changes;
- (d) you provide the Human Research Ethics Committee with a written "Annual Report" on each anniversary date of approval (for projects of greater than 12 months) and "Final Report" by no later than one (1) month after the approval expiry date; *(Forms may be downloaded from the Office of Research Moodle site - <http://moodle.cqu.edu.au/mod/book/view.php?id=334905&chapterid=17791>.)*

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Appendix B: Research Ethics Approval (Cont'd)

- (e) you accept that the Human Research Ethics Committee reserves the right to conduct scheduled or random inspections to confirm that the project is being conducted in accordance to its approval. Inspections may include asking questions of the research team, inspecting all consent documents and records and being guided through any physical experiments associated with the project
- (f) if the research project is discontinued, you advise the Committee in writing within five (5) working days of the discontinuation;
- (g) A copy of the Statement of Findings is provided to the Human Research Ethics Committee when it is forwarded to participants.

Please note that failure to comply with the conditions of approval and the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* may result in withdrawal of approval for the project.

You are required to advise the Secretary in writing within five (5) working days if this project does not proceed for any reason. In the event that you require an extension of ethics approval for this project, please make written application in advance of the end-date of this approval. The research cannot continue beyond the end date of approval unless the Committee has granted an extension of ethics approval. Extensions of approval cannot be granted retrospectively. Should you need an extension but not apply for this before the end-date of the approval then a full new application for approval must be submitted to the Secretary for the Committee to consider.

The Human Research Ethics Committee wishes to support researchers in achieving positive research outcomes. If you have issues where the Human Research Ethics Committee may be of assistance or have any queries in relation to this approval please do not hesitate to contact the Secretary, Sue Evans or myself.

Yours sincerely,


Signature Redacted

A/Prof Tania Signal
Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee

Cc: Dr Susan Richardson, Ms Kathy Murray (co-supervisors) Project file

Approved

Appendix C: Invitation to Participate in the Research and Information about the Research Project



Invitation to participate in a research project

Research Topic Title
The Role of the Educational Leader in early childhood centres

Dear Educational Leader,

Thank you for taking the time to consider participating in a research project that focuses on the role of the educational leader.

My name is Trudiann Marshall and I am doing research as part of my Master of Education degree. The research concerns determining the role of the educational leader within long day care centres.

To gather more information on the educational leader's role, I would like to invite all educational leaders working in a long day care centres to participate in this research by completing a survey. The attached information sheet provides more details about the research.



Firstly, as an educational leader employed at your service you will have the opportunity to participate voluntarily in this survey. Secondly, I invite educational leader's to participate in an interview with me discussing their role and how this role is implemented at your service. All information gathered will be strictly confidential and will not be shared. The names of those who are interviewed will be known only to me and will not be made available to anyone else. Your participation or non-participation in this research will not affect your employment. Participation is completely voluntary.

If you are interested in being a part of this research please read the attached information sheet and sign and date the consent form. You can then access the online survey document. If you would prefer a paper copy of the survey, one can be provided for you if you advise me of this requirement.

If you have any questions regarding the survey or interviews, please feel free to contact me on
Alternatively, you could contact my Masters Research Supervisor Professor John Dekkers on 07 5440 7000.


Kind regards,

Trudiann Marshall

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Appendix C: Invitation to Participate in the Research and Information about the Research Project (Cont'd)

Research participant's Information Sheet (Please keep for your records)



Research Topic Title The Role of the Educational Leader in early childhood centres

Description of the research:

This research project has been developed to explore the role of the educational leader in long day care centres in accordance with the Australian National Quality Framework for early childhood education and care.

The aim of this research project is to explore the role of the educational leader within long daycare centres. The research methods will identify characteristics, functions and experience of educators employed in this role. The approaches used by educational leaders to implement the National Quality Standards.

The expected outcomes from this research will provide a clear understanding for educators on the role of educational leader and how this role can further support educators working in long day care centres. It will provide a framework on the role and responsibilities of the educational leader in the early childhood sector. This study will provide a base for future research on the educational leader within the early childhood sector.

How does it work?

Participation in this research is voluntary and all information that you provide during the survey and interview stages will remain completely anonymous. Your name will not be recorded for this research. As a research participant you have the right to withdraw from the interview at any time. If there are questions that you do not wish to answer you have the right to refrain from answering those questions.


Consent for this research is given by participating in the survey. You acknowledge you have been provided an information sheet and you have read and understood this. The information provided in the survey and interviews will be used as part of the research for a Master of Education degree and the results may also be published in research articles and conference papers as findings from the research but your identity will be protected.

Confidentiality:

The information collected in the survey and interviews for this project is subject to the University's Code of Conduct (<http://www.cqu.edu.au/research/governance-and-policies>). All data relating to the research project will be retained for a period of five years and will be stored in a secure location in compliance with CQUniversity's policies relating to ethical research.

The information gathered in this research project is for use by the researcher from CQUniversity. The identity of all participants' will remain confidential and information will be stored in a locked filing cabinet or password protected electronic file. Participants will not be identifiable in any published material that stems from the research project.

Appendix C: Invitation to Participate in the Research and Information about the Research Project (Cont'd)



Information and concerns:

If you would like more information about this research project you can write, telephone or email



<i>The researcher,</i> Trudiann Marshall, Building A, CQUniversity, 90 Goodchap Street, Noosaville. 4566. Email: trudiann.marshall@cqu.edu.au Mobile:	<i>or my supervisors:</i> 1. Principal Supervisor Professor John Dekkers Faculty of Arts, Business, Informatics and Education Phone: 07 5440 7000 Email: j.dekkers@cqu.edu.au 2. Associate Supervisor Dr Susan Richardson Faculty of Education Phone: 07 5440 7000 Email: s.richardson@cqu.edu.au 3. Adjunct Supervisor Kathy Murray Email: murray.kathy@earlylife.com.au Mobile:
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Should there be any concerns about the project, please contact CQUniversity's Office of Graduate Research, Building 361, CQUniversity, Rockhampton, QLD, 4702.
Phone 07 4923 2607 or Email research-enquiries@cqu.edu.au

This research has been approved by CQU HREC, clearance number: H16/04-077


Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Trudiann Marshall



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