A Conceptual Framework for Catholic Education System Leadership

A paper submitted for EDSL604: Educational System Development Project

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This paper seeks to establish a conceptual framework though a reflective synthesis of my current understanding of the nature and direction of Catholic education system leadership. This framework has developed through my participation in the two core Education System Leadership units EDSL600 (Leadership in Education Systems) and EDSL 601 (Educational Systems Futures), and the elective unit EDSL602 (System Leadership in an Ecclesial Context) which has provided the opportunity to reflect with others on my 20 years of professional experience in dialogue with the educational literature. There are three sections to the paper. The first develops my understanding of Catholic education system leadership through an incremental analysis of the component concepts: leadership; Catholic education system; Catholic education system leadership. The second section addresses the nature of the professional practice which arises from the moral purpose of Catholic education, and refines the definitions of the concepts of Catholic pedagogy and Catholic curriculum as they were initially developed through the EDSL 601 research assignment: Catholic pedagogy: a pedagogy of hope. The third section identifies and briefly addresses the problem of determining a Catholic philosophy of education (Carmody, 2011; D'Souza, 2003; Elias, 1999) as a critical issue for ensuring the future flourishing of Catholic education systems, and a fundamental concern for Catholic education system leaders. This was initially identified as a critical issue for Catholic education system leaders in the EDSL601 Assignment 1: Critical issues facing Catholic education system futures (Rangiira, 2012a) and EDSL601 Assignment 2: Catholic pedagogy: a pedagogy of hope (Askew, Muir, & Rangiira, 2013)). My subsequent research has further developed my understanding of this issue and its critical importance.

The paper, as such, is a personal clarification of my understanding and synthesis of the major professional issues which have become important to me as a result of my experience in leading system-level teaching and learning initiatives. This agenda, and the limited scope of the paper, creates certain weaknesses. The first is the absence of any detailed discussion of these concepts in concrete situations. No doubt the value of any conceptual framework lies in the support which it provides for people to think about complex situations: that it helps people to make sense of these situations and to determine strategies to improve them. Conceptual frameworks arise from reflection upon experience, and provide a heuristic scaffold for insight. Although I do use the specific models which I have documented here, I have been unable to provide an effective discussion of this actual use in this paper. The
second weakness is the lack of an extensive literature review against which to critique these ideas. Therefore, the paper should not be read as making a truth claim, and there is no assertion that the definitions proposed here are true as such. Rather, it is hoped that the definitions are constructed to be internally consistent, and to work together to reveal something of the nature and structure of the complex reality that is Catholic education system leadership, as a platform for my further inquiry and professional learning.

Finally, my original intention for this paper was to substantially address the philosophical foundations of Catholic education, which I believe underpin the entire enterprise of Catholic schooling. Within such a foundation, Catholic education takes form around the clarified notion of *human flourishing*. From this notion of human flourishing we may then derive the notion of Catholic pedagogy which is my central interest: how teaching and learning should occur so as to promote human flourishing as understood within the Catholic tradition. Unfortunately, I found it too difficult to draw the threads together within this paper in such a way so as to make explicit the specific implications of such a philosophical foundation for Catholic education, and Catholic education system leadership: philosophical foundations underpin all enterprises, educational and otherwise. To complicate things further, such philosophical foundations must be grounded in the biblical tradition of relationship with God, self and others. The focus of the paper therefore shifted to consider the conceptual framework for Catholic education system leadership, within which such a philosophy takes form. This is to attempt to settle the question of relevance for educational practice. Although the paper is not the culminating statement I had hoped it might have been, it has nevertheless settled for me certain nagging questions and provided some conceptual clarity, enough at least to support my ongoing learning.

**Section 1: Catholic education system leadership**

This section develops a conceptual framework for Catholic education system leadership. The initial synthesis of these ideas occurred within my EDSL602 assignment 3 paper *The Kingdom of God: the heart of the matter for Catholic education system leaders* (Rangiira, 2012b).

To begin with, a brief explanation of the nature of *concept*, as it is understood here within this conceptual framework, is provided. All knowledge begins with human inquiry into the
thoughts developed from one’s experience\textsuperscript{1}. Such inquiry is the origin of human intelligence and arises from the unrestricted pure desire to know (Lonergan, Crowe, & Doran, 1993). From inquiry emerges insight, and from insights arise concepts which are the articulated and communicated insights. We arrive at human knowledge when, through critical reflection and judgment, we determine that a concept is true, that is, when it satisfy all possible relevant questions which arise from the experience which gave rise to the initial insight. My intention here is to produce a system of concepts, i.e. a conceptual framework, which will support my ongoing professional development and practice. It is also hoped that this conceptual framework may support further critical reflection and judgment arising within my professional context; that it may lead me to professional knowledge for Catholic education system leadership; and that ultimately, it may produce better outcomes for students, teachers and principals in Catholic schools. Such a conceptual framework becomes professional knowledge over time, to the extent that it addresses questions which arise from the experience of leadership within Catholic education systems. As such, it is a starting point for my future professional journey.

\subsection*{1.1 The nature of leadership}

The notion of leadership is complex, and as a result, sustained inquiry into the nature of leadership over many years has produced a vast body of literature. One finds in this labyrinth of leadership literature many different definitions of leadership. Rost (1993) for example, has identified 241 different definitions of leadership in the literature. Clearly any attempt to arrive at a single definition is ambitious. It is, however, also necessary if a useful conceptual framework for understanding Catholic education system leadership is to be established.

The proposed definition of leadership is as follows:

\begin{quote}
Leadership is the practice of helping people work together to clarify and achieve goals in the pursuit of a vision.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{1} According to Lonergan, this is \textit{immanently generated knowledge} (Lonergan, 1957). Human knowledge, however, largely consists of \textit{belief}, which is the appropriation of another’s immanently generated knowledge. Belief arises from a value judgment into the truth of another’s knowledge claim.
This definition is drawn from the definition of leadership proposed by the Globe Project (84 social scientists from 56 countries meeting in 1994 in Canada) (House, Hanges, & Dickson, 2004): **leadership is the ability to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute to the effectiveness and success of the organisations of which they are members.** There are two differences between these definitions (the first difference is between the underlined text in the definitions in Table 1, and the second is between the bold text). Firstly, definition 1 (the proposed definition) reads the ‘practice of helping people work together’ instead of the ‘ability to influence, motivate, and enable others’ within definition 2 (the Globe Project definition). The concept of *practice* as understood in definition 1 is **the application of attributes through processes.** The attributes are internal qualities within a person such as knowledge, habits or attitudes, i.e., *abilities.* Definition 1 emphasises that the concept of leadership includes not only latent attributes or qualities but also the application of these through processes. Also, ‘helping people work together’ involves ‘influencing, motivating and enabling others’, but it is broad enough to include other aspects of support. Second, although helping people to ‘clarify and achieve goals in the pursuit of a vision’ is ‘contributing to the success of the organisations of which they are members’, the explicit reference to goals in the pursuit of a vision provides explicit focus on these essential aspects of organisational capacity and effectiveness.

Table 1: Comparison of leadership definitions

| Definition 1: Leadership is the **practice of helping people work together** to clarify and achieve goals in the pursuit of a vision. |
| Definition 2: Leadership is the **ability to influence, motivate, and enable others** to contribute to the effectiveness and success of the organisations of which they are members. |

The definition for **leadership attributes** and **leadership processes** is as follows:
• Leadership\textsuperscript{2} attributes are attributes which enable a person to help others work together to clarify and achieve goals in the pursuit of a vision;

• Leadership processes are operations through which a person helps others work together to clarify and achieve goals in the pursuit of a vision.

Finally, a brief elaboration on leadership processes. To explain leadership processes some constituent definitions within this conceptual framework are required:

• **Leadership theory** is a system of leadership principles.

• **Leadership principles** are true statements (knowledge) about how best to help others work together to clarify and achieve goals in the pursuit of a vision. A leadership principle may be highly contextual, i.e. may only apply to a very specific situation or context, e.g., how to help a particular group of people work together may involve particular knowledge into the personal and professional history of that group.

Definitions are not principles: principles belong to *theory* and as such are true insights (knowledge) arising from inquiry into experience. Any particular model of leadership processes is *leadership theory*. Although this paper develops a conceptual framework and not a leadership theory, there is a model of leadership processes (an aspect of leadership theory) which I have appropriated (referred to as the *leadership model* in this discussion, although it is only one of many possible leadership models). The leadership model which is based on the work of John Adair (1984) and his action-centred leadership model is now briefly outlined.

1.2 Leadership processes

There are five leadership processes in this particular leadership model: *leadership learning*; *structuring* (the organisation); *building* (the team); *nurturing* (the individuals); *achieving* (the goals).

• **Leadership learning** is the process of a person acquiring leadership attributes through which that person helps others work together to clarify and achieve goals in the pursuit of a vision. This includes all formal learning such as the learning from

\textsuperscript{2} The adjective ‘leadership’, as determined from the definition of leadership offered here, is ‘that pertaining to the practice of helping others work together to clarify and achieve goals in the pursuit of a vision’.
professional development courses, and informal learning such as the learning that occurs through one’s inquiry into the experience one has into helping others work together to clarify and achieve goals in the pursuit of a vision. Leadership learning therefore results from one’s inquiry into one’s experience generated through the other leadership processes.

- **Structuring the organisation is the process of creating organisational structures which enable people to work together to clarify and achieve goals in the pursuit of a vision.** Structuring involves:
  
  o **Clarifying** the *situation*\(^3\) for change (the environment for which goals are clarified and achieved) and the vision which defines the rationale for change and which inspires and directs strategic action. Clarifying incorporates visioning and missioning.
  
  o **Designing** the organisational structures to optimise situational change to produce an organisational proposal.
  
  o **Implementing** the organisational structures by endorsing the organisational proposal and creating it within the organisation. The organisational structures define role statements and team structures. (Note: a team is a sub-group of people within the organisation (see footnote below)).

- **Building the team is the process of creating and sustaining organizational teams.** Building involves:
  
  o **Appointing** people to roles within the team. Appointing is a leadership action (people do not self-appoint) and is a formal delegation of organizational responsibility for an aspect of strategy.
  
  o **Forming** the team culture through establishing team structures and team culture (including team processes).
  
  o **Celebrating** the achievements of the team.

- **Nurturing the individuals within the team.** Nurturing involves:

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\(^3\) There are situations requiring change (e.g. an education system) and organisations which lead that change. It is the group of people in the organisation who work together to clarify and achieve goals in the pursuit of a vision for situational change. Note: an organisation is a group of people who work together to clarify and achieve goals in the pursuit of a vision. A team is a sub-group of people within an organisation. Leadership, therefore, may also be defined as helping the people within an organisation to work together.
• **Mentoring** through scheduled conversations between the individuals and others with more expertise in the field of practise.

• **Coaching** through supported learning-in-action processes.

• **Supervising** individuals through performance monitoring and managing processes.

• **Achieving the goals.** Achieving involves:
  
  o **Strategizing** which determines the plans for goals and tasks (steps to achieving the goals) and the scheduling of people and resources to achieve these goals. This links closely with the visioning and missioning processes in the clarifying aspect of the structuring process.

  o **Managing** which involves monitoring progress and adjusting strategy as required, in collaboration with the team.

  o **Reviewing** which involves the collaborative evaluation of strategies, acknowledging problems and achievements. Reviewing is an important learning process. This links closely with the process of building the team.

A schematic diagram of the leadership processes is given in figure 1. The processes and sub-processes are dynamic. There is a balance of focus across these, as required. Different situations will require a different emphasis at different times.
1.3 The nature of a Catholic education system

The definition of an education system for this conceptual framework is as follows:

An education system is a network of schools and agencies which work together to educate students.

There are three comments on this definition. First, schools and agencies are themselves systems of component sub-systems. Within schools for example there are classrooms, and each classroom is itself a system of teachers and learners. Second, because education systems
are human cultural and political systems at all levels – classroom, school, and system level – they are complex adaptive systems. Third, the vision empowering an education system is derived from its moral purpose. The moral purpose of Catholic education as understood here is to promote human flourishing as understood within the Catholic faith tradition by optimizing the learning of each student. It is the Catholic understanding of human flourishing which accounts for the distinct nature of Catholic education.

This brings us to the definition of a Catholic education system:

A Catholic education system is a network of Catholic schools and agencies which work together to educate students, and through doing so, promote human flourishing as understood within the Catholic faith tradition by optimizing the learning of each student.

1.4 The nature of Catholic education system leadership

Catholic education system leadership is leadership exercised in the context of a Catholic education system. It may therefore be defined by drawing together the definitions of both leadership and of a Catholic education system in the following way:

Catholic education system leadership is the practice of helping people work together to clarify and achieve goals within a network of Catholic schools and agencies, which in turn work together to educate students, and through doing so, promote human flourishing as understood within the Catholic faith tradition by optimizing the learning of each student.

The concept of Catholic education system leadership is implicitly defined with respect to the notion of human flourishing as understood within the Catholic faith tradition. Most of this definition may equally apply to any education system by dropping the word Catholic and the term ‘as understood within the Catholic faith tradition’. It is the particular understanding and practice of human flourishing as understood within the Catholic faith tradition which lies at the heart of Catholic education. And here lies a major challenge for all involved in Catholic education, particularly Catholic education system leadership. A coherent Catholic understanding of human flourishing within the Catholic faith tradition in the postmodern Western world of today requires a relevant and well-developed Catholic philosophy of
education. As a number of authors in recent years have observed (Carmody, 2011; Elias, 1999) no adequate philosophy of Catholic education currently exists, or if it does exist, has not been widely appropriated. This will be addressed in section 3 of this paper.

Section 2: Catholic pedagogy and Catholic curriculum

This section develops a conceptual framework for Catholic pedagogy and Catholic curriculum. The concepts of pedagogy, Catholic pedagogy, curriculum and Catholic curriculum were initially worked out in the EDSL 601 research assignment: Catholic pedagogy: a pedagogy of hope (Askew et al., 2013). Since the submission of that paper4, I have further refined these concepts, and include these new definitions here. These concepts are nested within the broader concept of Catholic education system leadership, since they directly address the professional aspects of promoting human flourishing as understood within the Catholic faith tradition through optimizing the learning of each student.

2.1 The nature of pedagogy

As for leadership, the notion of pedagogy is also complex. As a result, sustained inquiry into the nature of pedagogy over the years has also produced a vast body of literature with a large number of different definitions of pedagogy (Jackson, 1992; Kilgore, 2004; Priestley, 2011; Yates, 2009). The aim here is to arrive at a definition of pedagogy that sits coherently within this overall conceptual framework. Pedagogy was originally defined in Catholic pedagogy: a pedagogy of hope (Askew et al., 2013, p. 5) as follows:

Pedagogy is any conscious activity, based on authoritative principles of learning, performed by one person designed to enhance the learning of another.

The definition of pedagogy proposed here is:

Pedagogy is the practice of helping others learn.

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4 The paper was a collaborative work, and I found that the sharing of ideas and experiences among education leaders across three dioceses was invaluable. The final paper was a collaborative effort, and therefore some ideas could not be incorporated into this paper due to word length, and certain differences in understanding and emphasis between members.
The notion of practice in this definition, as already established above for the definition of leadership (which is also a practice) is the application of attributes through processes. The ‘authoritative principles of learning’ are attributes to the extent they are appropriated by the one engaged in the practice; and ‘any conscious activity...performed by one person’ is the ‘application through processes’. The definition proposed here is preferred because it is simple and does not imply any particular theory of pedagogy (i.e. authoritative principles of learning), and because it aligns with the conceptual structure of the definition of leadership which allows us to also readily define additional related concepts such as pedagogical leadership (see below). The definition for these pedagogical attributes and pedagogical processes is as follows:

- pedagogical attributes are attributes which enable a person to help others learn;
- pedagogical processes are operations through which a person helps others learn.

Finally, a brief elaboration on pedagogical processes. To explain pedagogical processes some constituent definitions within this conceptual framework are required:

- Pedagogical theory is a system of pedagogical principles.
- Pedagogical principles are true statements (knowledge) about how best to help others learn. Pedagogical principles draw on learning principles, where:
  - Learning principles are true statements about how one best learns.
  - Learning is the process of acquiring cognitive attributes.

As has been stated earlier in the discussion around leadership processes, definitions are not principles: principles belong to theory and as such are true insights (knowledge) arising from inquiry into experience. Any particular model of pedagogical processes is pedagogical theory. Although this paper develops a conceptual framework and not a pedagogical theory, there is a model of the pedagogical processes which I have appropriated (referred to as the pedagogical model in this discussion, although it is only one of many possible pedagogical models). The pedagogical model is now briefly outlined.

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5 The adjective ‘pedagogical’, as determined from the definition of pedagogy offered here, is ‘that pertaining to the practice of helping others learn’. Hence, for example those attributes which pertain to the practice of helping others learn are pedagogical; those processes which pertain to the practice of helping others learn are pedagogical; leadership which pertains to the practice of helping others learn is pedagogical.
2.2 Pedagogical processes

There are six pedagogical processes in this pedagogical model: pedagogical learning; structuring; planning; teaching; assessing; and reporting.

- **Pedagogical learning is the process of a person acquiring pedagogical attributes through which that person helps another learn.** This includes all formal learning such as the learning from professional development courses, and informal learning such as the learning that occurs through one’s inquiry into the experience one has into helping others learn. Pedagogical learning therefore results from one’s inquiry into one’s experience generated through the other pedagogical processes.

- **Structuring is the process of creating curriculum documents (see definition of curriculum below) at the system and school level.** Structuring is my preferred term for curriculum development. It involves:
  - *Clarifying* curriculum components including the valued knowledge and the deliberate selection of that knowledge and learning experiences; and clarifying system or school structures and resources which implicate the selection and organisation of that knowledge.
  - *Designing* curriculum structures such as conceptual organisers (curriculum organisers) and rules (e.g. Learning Areas, strands within these learning areas, learning junctures, content standards, achievement standards, programming rules)
  - *Producing* the curriculum documents.

- **Planning is the process of creating plans for teaching and assessing at the classroom level.** Planning involves:
  - *Clarifying* what students already know, including their particular interests, strengths and learning needs; the targeted content and achievement standards from the curriculum documents; available resources and the practical constraints and possibilities within the available learning environment. Note: the learning environment is the physical, conceptual and cultural space for pedagogy. That is, the learning environment is the physical, conceptual and cultural space within which occurs the practice of helping another learn. Generally, the physical, conceptual and cultural space for the
learning environment is the classroom. But it can also be an online space, such as an online learning management system, or it can be an outdoor space, or in the case of flexible learning centres, anywhere where students are able to focus on their learning (such as a park, or a street space, or a river bank).

o **Designing learning experiences and assessing experiences.** Note: a learning experience is an event within a learning environment through which a person helps others learn. Also, an assessing experience is an event through which a person determines what another person has learnt (see assessing below).

o **Producing** the plans to inform teaching and assessing.

- **Teaching is the process of implementing learning experiences within the learning environment.** The one implementing the learning experiences is the teacher; the one engaging in the learning experiences to acquire the targeted attributes is the student. Teaching involves:
  
o **Engaging** the students in the learning experience. Students become motivated to participate in the learning experience.
  
o **Weaving** through both the physical learning environment and also the cognitive environment of the learning experience. It involves active engagement by the teacher and student with the activities of the learning experience.
  
o **Reflecting** by both the teacher and student to draw insight from the learning experience. This consolidates student learning, and it is a form of pedagogical learning for the teacher, since the insights a teacher has through reflecting builds that teachers knowledge (i.e. pedagogical attributes) for future pedagogical processes.

- **Assessing is a process of determining what another person has learnt.** Assessing is actually a form of pedagogical learning, as it is the teacher learning about what the student has learnt. Whether it is formative (or for learning), or summative (or of learning) is about the use of the knowledge gained through the assessing process, and not a different definition of assessing. If the knowledge is used to inform teaching and

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6 Weaving through the cognitive environment of the learning experience is represented thorough the six teaching zones outlined in appendix 1.
learning, it may be formative. If the knowledge is used to inform reporting (see below) it may be summative. The same knowledge, drawn from the same instance of assessing, may be both formative and summative. Also, the term assessing is used here instead of assessment. This is because assessing is a process, whereas assessment is an instrument to enable assessing. Note different forms of assessment (e.g. test, an event which is observed, an assignment, etc.) may be used to enable assessing for different types of learning. Assessing involves:

- **Observing** what another person can do (perform, write, speak, demonstrate, etc.) and inferring what they know, and therefore have learnt, from what they do.
- **Judging** which is confirming one’s insight into what one has observed about another’s learning. Judging occurs against the achievement standards within the curriculum.
- **Recording** which involves systematically capturing the judgments made through judging so that they can inform future processes such as teaching or reporting.

- **Reporting** is a process of establishing and communicating what another person has learnt. Reporting is not confined to report cards or standard reporting formats; nor does reporting imply any particular approach to validating insights, e.g. qualitative or quantitative approaches. Reporting also includes such events as conversations between teachers and parents, or teachers and teachers, or teachers and students. Reporting is linked to all other processes (as each process is linked to all others and is an interconnected component of a dynamic whole) but especially to assessing, where the judgments of what students have learnt are recorded. How these judgments are recorded significantly influences what overall insight might be attained as to overall learning. Reporting involves:

- **Summarising** assessing judgments to enable insight into the overall pattern of these judgments, and therefore into the overall pattern of what students have learnt. Note that assessing judgments are judgments of student learning through an instance of student performance. They are judgments of what a student knows (i.e. has learnt) for particular targeted knowledge. Whereas within reporting summarising involves making overall judgements of
assessing judgments. The failure to distinguish between judgements of student performance and judgments of judgments creates major problems in the assessing and reporting processes. Any achievement standard must account for both the assessing judgments and the reporting judgments.

- **Explaining** is the process of a teacher first gaining an understanding of what the summary judgments mean. There are at least three questions which guide this process. What are the student’s strengths and weaknesses in knowledge? What are the student’s strengths and weaknesses in learning? What does this mean for future learning? Once appropriated by the teacher (through pedagogical learning), explaining produces pedagogical attributes (knowledge about the student) which are applied by the teacher through the operation of clarifying in the planning process.

- **Communicating** is the process through which a teacher helps others (e.g. parents) understand what the summary judgments mean. This may occur through formal reporting mechanisms, e.g. report cards and parent teacher interviews. It may also occur through other informal mechanisms. Within Catholic education, which acknowledges the parents as the first educators, communicating allows teachers to invite and enable parents to participate more fully in their child’s education.

A schematic diagram of the pedagogical processes is given in figure 2. The processes and sub-processes are dynamic, each feeding into the other. For example, assessing informs planning, and teaching through pedagogical learning, and reporting through summarizing the judgments. At the centre is pedagogical learning, which occurs throughout the processes. This is the teacher’s own learning, to help students learn.
Figure 2: Pedagogical processes
2.3 The nature of pedagogical leadership

Since the notion of pedagogical leadership often arises within Catholic education system and school leadership, a definition is also provided here before moving ahead to the definition of Catholic pedagogy. Pedagogical leadership may be defined by drawing together the definitions of pedagogy and leadership. From the definition of pedagogy (pedagogy is the practice of helping others learn) and the definition of leadership (leadership is the practice of helping people work together to clarify and achieve goals in the pursuit of a vision), the definition of pedagogical leadership is derived:

**Pedagogical leadership is the practice of helping people work together to clarify and achieve goals aimed at improving the practice of helping others learn.**

Clearly, Catholic education system leadership is a form of pedagogical leadership. Figure 3 shows these two schemata as a coherent system of processes for pedagogical leadership.

2.4 The nature of Catholic pedagogy

The notions of Catholic pedagogy and Catholic curriculum are contested. There has been:

‘criticism of the very idea of a ‘Catholic curriculum’ from within the Church. Terry Eagleton openly attached the Church for its policy on the curriculum which he viewed as damaging. He argued that there was no such thing as Catholic history and science and it was damaging for the Church to attempt to seek to create them.’ (Arthur, 1992, p. 160)

Nevertheless, the position here is that since Catholic education is aiming at something distinct, arising from a particular understanding of human flourishing within the Catholic faith tradition by optimizing the learning of each student, this distinction should be evident in the teaching and learning processes. Just as the term Catholic education and Catholic school refer to something distinctive within education arising from within the Catholic faith tradition, so too may the terms Catholic pedagogy and Catholic curriculum put sharp focus on actual distinctions in the teaching and learning. The intention here is not to undervalue the general purpose of all schools and the professional value of pedagogy in general, but to also explore the distinct purpose of pedagogy and curriculum in Catholic schools.
Figure 3: Pedagogical leadership
In Catholic pedagogy: a pedagogy of hope (Askew et al., 2013, p. 12) the following definition was developed from the initial definition in that paper of pedagogy and the moral purpose of the Catholic schools:

Catholic Pedagogy is a conscious activity, based on authoritative principles of learning, and based on scripture and the faith tradition, performed by one person designed to enhance the learning of another, such that, the learner, both as an individual and in community, develops a synthesis of culture and faith and a synthesis of faith and life.

Three points are required here before the new definition of Catholic pedagogy can be developed. First, the definition of pedagogy in this paper is different: pedagogy is the practice of helping others learn. Second, the moral purpose of Catholic education has been stated as follows: the moral purpose of Catholic education is to promote human flourishing as understood within the Catholic faith tradition by optimizing the learning of each student. Third, ‘optimizing the learning of each student’ may be understood as the student acquiring ‘a synthesis of culture and faith, and a synthesis of faith and life’ (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, p. n.37).

Through the approach adopted here of synthesizing component definitions, we arrive at the following definition of Catholic pedagogy:

Catholic pedagogy is the practice of helping others learn such that they may acquire a synthesis of culture and faith, and a synthesis of faith and life.

This definition implies two further elements. The first is a coherent philosophy (i.e. a Catholic philosophy of education, see section 3 below) to explain what a synthesis of culture and faith, and a synthesis of faith and life, actually means. The second is a pedagogical theory which would account for how such a goal might be attained. Here I would envisage using the definition of pedagogy and the proposed pedagogical model to implement pedagogical principles for achieving a synthesis of culture and faith, and a synthesis of faith and life. These Catholic pedagogical principles may be defined as follows:

Catholic pedagogical principles are true statements about how best to help others acquire a synthesis of culture and faith, and a synthesis of faith and life.
What are these principles? That, I believe, should be the focus of Catholic educational theory. And again, what this requires is a coherent Catholic philosophy of education.

2.5 The nature of curriculum
As for both leadership and pedagogy, the notion of curriculum is also complex. As a result, sustained inquiry into the nature of curriculum over many years has produced a vast body of literature with a large number of definitions. The purpose here is to arrive at a definition of curriculum that sits coherently within this conceptual framework.

Given that pedagogy is the practice of helping others learn, and given that curriculum is information about what students are to learn (incorporating content standards, achievement standards, and programming rules), curriculum is information that directs pedagogy, that is:

**Curriculum is information about what is to be learnt, which directs the practice of helping others learn.**

This invites some elaboration. First, curriculum is produced through the pedagogical processes of structuring (section 2.2). It is arrived at through deliberate choices (value judgments) made by people about what is worth learning.

Second, curriculum is to be appropriated by teachers through pedagogical learning, to become a pedagogical attribute. Once a pedagogical attribute, it becomes manifest in concrete learning experiences through the pedagogical processes of planning, teaching, assessing and reporting.

Third, teachers do not ‘deliver’ curriculum. Rather, they engage students in learning experiences (designed through planning, implemented through teaching) which are a synthesis of curriculum elements (i.e. information about what students are to learn); pedagogical principles; knowledge of students, their interests and learning profiles; and resources.
Fourth, as for pedagogy above, the same holds for curriculum: a definition of curriculum is not a curriculum theory. **Curriculum principles are true statements about how best to structure what students are to learn** and **curriculum theory is a system of curriculum principles**. The move towards a curriculum theory begins with the definition of a syllabus:

**A syllabus is a system of fundamental curriculum elements, i.e. content standards, achievement standards and programming rules.**

An analysis of these concepts is beyond this paper. However, it is my belief that a sustained focus on curriculum theory as defined here would be of value to educational theory in general, and provide a renewal of curriculum theory in particular.

### 2.6 Addressing the curriculum conundrum

Any paper which proposes a definition of curriculum must address, however briefly, the curriculum conundrum, which is the problematic aspect of the debate about the very nature of curriculum for over one hundred years. The notion of a single definition of curriculum, in light of the many different definitions which have been developed since the early 20th century, is itself problematic. 'It is a truism, perhaps, to say that one can find at least as many definitions of curriculum as one can find curriculum textbooks' (Gress & Purple, 1978, p. 1). Indeed, the entire field of curriculum studies has been for many the source of much frustration and despair. With respect to curriculum, Jackson (1992) in his *Handbook of Research on Curriculum* observes that:

"Confusion" is the dominant condition remarked on by observer after observer...Its companion is "conflict"...Others speak of a field that is "amorphous"...and "elusive"..."in disrepair"..."moribund"..."driven into disarray"...and suffering from "severe disorientation"...One commentator complains about the "chaotic state of curriculum terminology" (p.3).

How might we understand the confusion around the nature of curriculum? How might the definition proposed here avoid adding to this confusion? A brief summary of the curriculum conundrum may help to clarify the issue.
The traditional definition of curriculum is ‘a course of studies’, which defines what courses students must complete, and the content within each course. Curriculum documents provide succinct statements of the structuring and sequencing of content to be learnt. Such curriculum documents are *macro-level curriculum*, for example syllabus documents produced by State and national authorities (entities at the *macro-level*; note: schools are the *meso-level*; classrooms are the *micro-level*), and also include both content standards and achievement standards, which define success criteria determining what it means for students to have acquired the targeted learning.

Beginning with John Dewey (1902) and Franklin Bobbit (1924) there was a shift in educational thinking in the United States in the early 20th century away from the emphasis on curriculum as ‘a course of studies’ – that is, away from the macro-level statements of intent about what students are to learn – towards the micro-level learning experiences (i.e. classroom level) determining what students are to experience in order to learn. It was not enough to provide statements of knowledge as abstract information. The child, and his or her interests and prior knowledge must be also considered in the planning process, and therefore in the teaching and assessing.

It would seem that the confusion around the meaning of the word curriculum partly arose from certain ambiguity around the notion of ‘what students are to learn’. The translation of ‘what students are to learn’ as abstract content (macro-level statements of courses and content) to ‘what students are to learn’ in terms of planned learning experiences (micro-level plans) entails a distinction in this notion of what students are to learn. Failure to acknowledge this distinction resulted in ambiguity, and this ambiguity polarised the educational community. This is an oversimplification, but there were and still are certain divided camps: the *traditionalists* espousing automaticity in skills and content on the one hand; and the *progressivists* emphasising the importance of students’ prior experiences, interests and inherent human creativity and wonder as central components of the planned learning experiences on the other.

The curriculum conundrum may perhaps be resolved by understanding that there are different requirements for defining and describing what students are to learn at the macro-
level, meso-level, and micro-level of any education system, and that all three requirements are progressively synthesised in the move from macro to micro. The move from the macro, to the meso, to the micro is the move from general statements of ‘what’ at the national and State level (i.e. from considerations of the ‘general who’ (e.g. all Year 3 students in Australia)), to the school level (i.e. the ‘local who’ (e.g. the population of Year 3 students in the community who come to a given school)), to the classroom level (e.g. the ‘particular who’ (e.g. the particular Year 3 students in a given classroom)).

In the history of curriculum development, it was a short jump then, from curriculum as planned learning experiences, to curriculum as the actual learning experiences (given that the actual learning is the key issue for schools), and the actual learning processes. This culminated in the broad and all-encompassing definitions of curriculum such as ‘all the learning experiences, planned or not planned, which happen in schools’, and ‘everything that happens in schools’. From here, the notion of curriculum expanded further to include what was not experienced (i.e. the null-curriculum), what was surreptitiously experienced (the hidden curriculum), and what was actually experienced (the enacted-curriculum), etc.

The word curriculum was eventually broadened to include what is also called here curriculum, together with the pedagogical processes of structuring, planning, teaching, assessing, reporting and pedagogical learning. The explicit acknowledgement of these complex aspects of school-based teaching and learning is important, although the reference to such complexity with a single word ‘curriculum’ resulted in ambiguity and confusion. It is hoped that the attempt here to clarify the distinction in relationship between concepts, and to locate the word curriculum within the broader notion of pedagogy, may avoid such confusion and enable a reasoned focus on understanding how curriculum and pedagogy might take shape in Catholic schools.

2.7 The nature of Catholic curriculum
Catholic curriculum may be defined by drawing together the definitions of curriculum and Catholic pedagogy:
Catholic curriculum is information about what is to be learnt, which directs the practice of helping others learn such that they may acquire a synthesis of culture and faith, and a synthesis of faith and life.

This definition is an hypothetical heuristic. It gives rise to the task of understanding what this might mean, and might look like if it exists at all, in actual concrete situations in schools and classrooms. If we recognise that meso and micro level curriculum exists, and occurs via pedagogical processes (e.g. structuring and planning which draw on pedagogical attributes such as one’s beliefs and philosophy) as a transformative refinement of content into planned learning experiences, for teaching and assessing, we are then able to hypothesise how subtle transformations might occur to structure and assemble learning experiences as a result of a philosophical framework. We might then explore actual pedagogical transformations of content, and structures, in actual situations. As already noted in section 2.4, critics of the notion of Catholic curriculum point out that there is no such thing as Catholic mathematics or Catholic grammar. This is true, certainly for curriculum at the macro level (except for Religious Education). There is no such thing as Catholic mathematics or Catholic grammar. But at the meso and micro-levels, the way the content from the constituent subject areas is blended and structured, may well create learning experiences which promote a synthesis of culture and faith, and a synthesis of faith and life (Askew et al., 2013).

Section 3: Catholic philosophy of education

Prior to Vatican II, neo-Thomism (a revival of Thomism, which was the scholastic philosophy inaugurated by St Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century) was formally endorsed by Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical Aeternis Patris (Pope Leo XIII, 1879) to be the official philosophy of the Catholic Church. This position was mandated by the Church hierarchy: teachers were required to swear an oath to teach only Thomism. Such a program may perhaps be understood to some extent within the context of a Church seeking to secure a solid social foundation for Catholic education and culture, during times of rapid ideological, philosophical and cultural change.

The source of the original inspiration for St Thomas’ philosophy was the desire to synthesise faith and reason through bringing together Church teaching with Arostetelian philosophy from the 5th century BC, for a 13th century world and worldview. The obvious risk in mandating
such a philosophy for the 19th and 20th century as the basis for underpinning Catholic identity, is that in the absence of sufficient intellectual development of the philosophy for the modern world, an abstract and ultimately conceptualist philosophy would develop, devoid of relevance to concrete situations, and ultimately out of touch with a developing global context, post World War I and II, which moved Western Civilisation into the post-modern period of radical relativism and philosophical skepticism. It is not surprising then that this philosophical program was essentially abandoned as fruitless, and that little has been heard about any Catholic philosophy of education since Vatican II (Elias, 1999).

Whilst neo-Thomism was being formally endorsed, many Catholic intellectuals had realised the shortcomings of a philosophical system developed in the 13th century before the Enlightenment and the flourishing of modern science in the 19th and 20th centuries. One of these was Fr Bernard Lonergan, the Canadian Jesuit who provided a new synthesis of scholastic philosophy in the context of postmodern philosophy and science, in his work *Insight* (Lonergan, 1957). His purpose was to secure the philosophical foundations which may be used to underpin a method in theology (Lonergan, 1973).

Unfortunately, perhaps due to the complexity of the topic, and the challenge of reading Lonergan’s work (*Insight* is a very dense work of over 800 pages), his thinking has received relatively little widespread attention and appropriation in Catholic education.

Recently some (Carmody, 2011; Elias, 1999) have recognised the philosophical void that now exists in Catholic education, and the need for a new approach to securing appropriate philosophical foundations for the future flourishing of Catholic schools. These authors have recognised in Lonergan’s work a philosophy, true to the Catholic intellectual tradition and drawn from it, arising out of the thinking of Aquinas, but also responsive to the cultural and existential context of the postmodern world. And what is it, at the core of Lonergan’s thinking, which some believe holds such promise? It is that his philosophy begins with the human person (i.e. begins with the *turn to the subject*) fully attentive to the breadth and depth of his or her experiences. He avoids the abstract conceptualism of traditional metaphysics by first focussing on the human person coming to know through experiencing, through inquiry into their experiences, through insight into their inquiry, through understanding arising from that
insight, through judgments which verify their understanding. He begins with acknowledging that within each person is an ‘unrestricted desire to know’ (Lonergan, 1957). From there, through deep reflection on his own experience of coming to know, he develops a cognitional theory (his Transcendental Method, also called his Generalised Empirical Method (GEM), from which he builds an epistemology. On his epistemology Lonergan then develops a metaphysics and an ethics. Lonergan’s philosophy concludes, and is ultimately grounded in, the human person being in love in an unrestricted way with God, the ground of all being.

What does Lonergan mean by the notion of being in love with God? For Lonergan there is a journey which is deeply transformative and which has profound pedagogical and leadership implications. He writes about conversion, about his own conversion, not in the sense of a surface response to proselytising, but a deep transformation of a person from within. Such conversion is a personal shift from one horizon, from one paradigm, to another. And for Lonergan there are three conversions on this journey, which occur in no specific sequence or order. The first is intellectual conversion, which is the shift from knowing as taking a look, as remembering something one sees, to knowing which is arises from judgments into our insights. For Lonergan, knowing is more than taking a look. Though it begins with taking a look, with experiencing and with the images in one’s mind from one’s experiences, one moves to insight through inquiry, through the questions which arise from one’s experience. With respect to looking, what is obvious in knowing, is not what knowing obviously is. This is a strange notion, yet to appropriate this is intellectual conversion.

The second is moral conversion, which is the shift from the notion of the good as personal satisfaction, to the notion of good as value. For Lonergan, the good is always concrete. He speaks then of concrete goods – good food, good housing, good friendship – and then of the good of order: the arrangement of structures and systems to ensure the flow of concrete goods to all people. Finally, there are values, the knowledge which arises from insights into our experiences of concrete goods and the good of order. Lonergan argues that we come to know values through insight into human experiences. On this foundation Lonergan elsewhere develops the notion of social justice, and his economic theory. To appropriate the notion of the good as value is moral conversion.
Finally, the third is religious conversion. For Lonergan, to love is to will the good and it is God who has first willed the good. Creation has arisen from such willing, and creation is inherently good. Human beings can come to know the good, and the source of goodness within them, and yet beyond them. We come to know this through insight into our experiences, not through indoctrination or conceptualism. Now to be in love is to be captivated in an unrestricted way. And to be in love with God, is to be captivated in an unrestricted way with the source of goodness, which we experience and which we come to know partially, in all of creation, in human life generally, and in our own lives specifically. To be in love with God is to enter into a relationship with God, who invites but does not force, and through such a relationship we may in turn will the good in an unrestricted way in our own lives and in the lives of others. We may develop the habitual willingness to decide and to act in such a way as to do good. This is building the Kingdom of God, this is good news, and perhaps how we might understand the fruit of the synthesis of culture and faith, and faith and life. To appropriate a relationship with God as the source of the good leading to the full flourishing of the human person, is religious conversion.

What is the ultimate significance of a philosophy of Catholic education such as this? It is a vision of human flourishing, on which the notion of the moral purpose of Catholic education is built and which logically defines all further notions of leadership and pedagogy developed in this paper. It is a vision of people coming to know what is true and good through inquiry into their experiences, through intellectual, moral and religious conversion, through which they may ultimately develop the habitual willingness to act in such a way as to bring about that good. For Lonergan, this is all made possible because God first loves us, and we may come to know God through our human desires, and through our experiences of deep goodness and joy, through our experience of God’s love flooding our hearts (Romans 5:5). Lonergan’s philosophy leads us to a theological position, and then to a foundation for Christian spirituality (Bathersby, 1982). It is a philosophy which, if it leads us to a new synthesis of reason and faith for the postmodern world, surely lies at the very heart of Catholic education system leadership.

Section 4: A conceptual framework for Catholic education system leadership: a summary of definitions
• **Leadership** is the practice of helping people work together to clarify and achieve goals in the pursuit of a vision.

• A **practice** is the application of attributes through processes.

• **Leadership attributes** are attributes which enable a person to help others work together to clarify and achieve goals in the pursuit of a vision.

• **Leadership processes** are operations through which a person helps others work together to clarify and achieve goals in the pursuit of a vision.
  
  o **Leadership learning** is the process of a person acquiring leadership attributes through which that person helps others work together to clarify and achieve goals in the pursuit of a vision.

  o **Structuring** the organisation is the process of creating organisational structures which enable people to work together to clarify and achieve goals in the pursuit of a vision.
    
    ▪ **Clarifying** the *situation* for change (the environment for which goals are clarified and achieved) and the vision which defines the rationale for change and which inspires and directs strategic action.

    ▪ **Designing** the organisational structures to optimise situational change to produce an organisational proposal.

    ▪ **Implementing** the organisational structures by endorsing the organisational proposal and creating it within the organisation. The organisational structures define role statements and team structures.

  o **Building** the team is the process of creating and sustaining organizational teams.
    
    ▪ **Appointing** people to roles within the team.

    ▪ **Forming** the team culture through establishing team structures and team culture (including team processes).

    ▪ **Celebrating** the achievements of the team.

  o **Nurturing** the individuals within the team. Nurturing involves:
    
    ▪ **Mentoring** through scheduled conversations between the individuals and others with more expertise in the field of practise.
- **Coaching** through supported learning-in-action processes.
- **Supervising** individuals through performance monitoring and managing processes.
  - **Achieving** the goals. Achieving involves:
    - **Strategizing** which determines the plans for goals and tasks (steps to achieving the goals) and the scheduling of people and resources to achieve these goals. This links closely with the visioning and missioning processes in the clarifying aspect of the structuring process.
    - **Managing** which involves monitoring progress and adjusting strategy as required, in collaboration with the team.
    - **Reviewing** which involves the collaborative evaluation of strategies, acknowledging problems and achievements. Reviewing is an important learning process. This links closely with the process of building the team.

- **Leadership principles** are true statements (knowledge) about how best to help others work together to clarify and achieve goals in the pursuit of a vision.
- **Leadership theory** is a system of leadership principles.
- An **education system** is a network of schools and agencies which work together to educate students.
- The **moral purpose of Catholic education** is to promote human flourishing as understood within the Catholic faith tradition by optimizing the learning of each student.
- A **Catholic education system** is a network of Catholic schools and agencies which work together to educate students, and through doing so, promote human flourishing as understood within the Catholic faith tradition by optimizing the learning of each student.
- **Pedagogy** is the practice of helping others learn.
- **Pedagogical attributes** are attributes which enable a person to help others learn;
- **Pedagogical processes** are operations through which a person helps others learn.
  - **Pedagogical learning** is the process of a person acquiring pedagogical attributes through which that person helps another learn.
- **Structuring** is the process of creating curriculum documents (see definition of curriculum below) at the system and school level. Structuring involves:
  - **Clarifying** curriculum components including the valued knowledge, possible learning experiences, system or school curriculum structures and resources;
  - **Designing** curriculum structures: conceptual organisers (curriculum organisers) and rules (e.g. Learning Areas, strands within these learning areas, learning junctures, content standards, achievement standards, programming rules)
  - **Producing** curriculum documents.
- **Planning** is the process of creating plans for teaching and assessing at the classroom level. Planning involves:
  - **Clarifying** what students know and what they are to learn;
  - **Designing** learning experiences and assessing experiences; and
  - **Producing** plans for teaching and assessing.
- **Teaching** is the process of implementing learning experiences within the learning environment. The one implementing the learning experiences is the *teacher*; the one engaging in the learning experiences to acquire the targeted attributes is the *student*. Teaching involves:
  - **Engaging** the students in the learning experience. Students become motivated to participate in the learning experience.
  - **Weaving** through both the physical learning environment and also the cognitive environment of the learning experience. It involves active engagement by the teacher and student with the activities of the learning experience.
  - **Reflecting** by both the teacher and student to draw insight from the learning experience.
- **Assessing** is a process of determining what another person has learnt.
  - **Observing** what another person can do (perform, write, speak, demonstrate, etc.) and inferring what they know, and therefore have learnt, from what they do.
Judging which is confirming one’s insight into what one has observed about another’s learning. Judging occurs against the achievement standards within the curriculum.

Recording which involves systematically capturing the judgments made through judging so that they can inform future processes such as teaching or reporting.

- Reporting is a process of establishing and communicating what another person has learnt.

- Summarising assessing judgments to enable insight into the overall pattern of these judgments, and therefore into the overall pattern of what students have learnt.

- Explaining is the student’s strengths and weaknesses in knowledge, in learning, and what this means for future learning.

- Communicating the explanations for what the summary judgments mean.

- Pedagogical principles are true statements (knowledge) about how best to help others learn.

- Pedagogical theory is a system of pedagogical principles.

- Learning principles are true statements about how one best learns.

- Learning is the process of acquiring cognitive attributes.

- Pedagogical leadership is the practice of helping people work together to clarify and achieve goals aimed at improving the practice of helping others learn.

- Catholic pedagogy is the practice of helping others learn such that they may acquire a synthesis of culture and faith, and a synthesis of faith and life.

- Catholic pedagogical principles are true statements about how best to help others acquire a synthesis of culture and faith, and a synthesis of faith and life.

- Curriculum is information about what is to be learnt, which directs the practice of helping others learn.

- Curriculum principles are true statements about how best to structure what students are to learn.

- Curriculum theory is a system of curriculum principles.
• **A syllabus** is a system of fundamental curriculum elements, i.e. content standards, achievement standards and programming rules.

• **Catholic curriculum** is information about what is to be learnt, which directs the practice of helping others learn such that they may acquire a synthesis of culture and faith, and a synthesis of faith and life.

• **Catholic education system leadership** is the practice of helping people work together to clarify and achieve goals within a network of Catholic schools and agencies, which in turn work together to educate students, and through doing so, promote human flourishing as understood within the Catholic faith tradition by optimizing the learning of each student.
Appendix: The six teaching zones

The six teaching zones (the zones) is a conceptual framework to guide teaching and learning. Because pedagogical processes are integrated and function together as a coherent whole, the zones also guide planning, assessing and reporting. The zones are identified as a pedagogical model (such that: a pedagogical model is schematic construction of pedagogical principles). A pedagogical model, and in this case the zones, is therefore an instance of pedagogical theory (see section 2.1 for the definition of pedagogical theory).

The six teaching zones were developed from an insight I had in 2003 working as a mathematics education consultant for the New York City Board of Education. I was participating in a workshop addressing the Balanced Numeracy and Literacy package and the Workshop Model for lesson delivery when it occurred to me that the word ‘balance’ was being used in two ways. One as a balance across three domains of a scaffolding dimension: teacher communicating to the student; teacher and student working together; student working independent of the teacher. The other as a balance across two thinking domains (thinking situations): routine, familiar situations, and situations that require critical and creative thinking, inquiry and insight. I recall quickly sketching the three scaffolding domains along a horizontal scaffolding axis and the two thinking domains along a vertical thinking axis, and creating a simple grid of six regions: the six teaching zones.

I continued to develop this simple six zone model and apply it to my consultancy work during my time in New York. On arriving back in Australia, I further developed it during my time as Head of Department Mathematics in a secondary school, teaching it to the students as a framework for teaching and learning. Since 2005 I have worked as the Senior Leader in the area of Teaching and Learning for a Catholic education system. For 9 years in this role I have continued to further develop and apply the six zones model, integrating it into all planning, teaching, assessing and reporting in all learning areas and all Year levels across the 32 schools in the Diocese. Sustained reflection on the six teaching zones has yielded the Diocesan Learning Framework; the Diocesan Learning Profile digital curriculum management system; and most recently the assessing and reporting system for all schools for the Australian
Curriculum ACARA courses. This has arisen in the absence of any achievement standard in ACARA for assessing and reporting.

The schema for the six teaching zones is given in figure 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situations requiring critical and creative thinking, inquiry and insight</th>
<th>Task Situations</th>
<th>The Six Teaching Zones</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zone 0</td>
<td>The student doesn’t understand the task situation</td>
<td>The student is unable to independently apply the targeted knowledge, understanding and skill in situations that require critical and creative thinking, inquiry and insight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zone 1</td>
<td>The student watches the teacher apply the targeted knowledge, understanding and skill in routine, familiar situations.</td>
<td>The student is able to independently apply the targeted knowledge, understanding and skill in situations that require critical and creative thinking, inquiry and insight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zone 2</td>
<td>The teacher works with the student to apply the targeted knowledge, understanding and skill in routine, familiar situations.</td>
<td>The student is able to independently apply the targeted knowledge, understanding and skill in situations that require critical and creative thinking, inquiry and insight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zone 3</td>
<td>The student is able to independently apply the targeted knowledge, understanding and skill in situations that require critical and creative thinking, inquiry and insight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zone 4</td>
<td>The student watches the teacher apply the targeted knowledge, understanding and skill in situations that require critical and creative thinking, inquiry and insight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zone 5</td>
<td>The student works with the teacher to apply the targeted knowledge, understanding and skill in situations that require critical and creative thinking, inquiry and insight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zone 6</td>
<td>The student is able to independently apply the targeted knowledge, understanding and skill in situations that require critical and creative thinking, inquiry and insight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4: The six teaching zones**

The following points explain the important aspects of the schema:

- Teachers and students should be engaged at all times in one of the six zones.
- Zone 0 indicates that the student is unable to engage any of the zones because of the complexity of the content. The content therefore needs to be modified.
- There should be a balance across all six zones.
- The numbers do not indicate a necessary sequence. However, teaching routine, familiar situations general progresses from zones 1, to 2, to 3.
Zone 3 is the practice zone.

Although the teacher is working with the student in both zones 2 and 5, in zone 2, the teacher is giving direct instruction and demonstration, whereas in zone 5 the teacher is asking questions to prompt insight. Zones 2 and 5 are Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development.

Students can be in the ‘margins’ which means that they have disengaged the learning experience. This is different to zone 0 because students in the margins have the potential to engage. The challenge for the teacher is to help them re-engage, perhaps through taking them to another zone.

Teacher coaching and mentoring occurs around performance within and across the six zones.

The assessing and reporting system should align with the pedagogical zones. This is reflected with the red grade letters in figure 4: zone 6 aligns with an A; zone 5 a B; zone 3 a C; zone 2 a D. The definition of the reporting grade standards, and therefore the values underpinning the assessing system, are given in figure 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition of Standard</th>
<th>Report Card Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Applying</strong></td>
<td>Year 1 to 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student is able to independently apply the targeted knowledge, understanding and skills in both routine, familiar situations and in situations that require critical and creative thinking, inquiry and insight.</td>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Making Connections</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student is able to independently apply the targeted knowledge, understanding and skills in routine, familiar situations and is able to partially apply this targeted knowledge, understanding and skills in situations that require critical and creative thinking, inquiry and insight.</td>
<td><strong>B</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Working With</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student is able to independently apply the targeted knowledge, understanding and skills in routine, familiar situations.</td>
<td><strong>C</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exploring</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student is able to partially apply the targeted knowledge, understanding and skills in routine, familiar situations.</td>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Becoming Aware</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student has not yet acquired the targeted knowledge, understanding and skills and is unable to apply this in routine, familiar situations.</td>
<td><strong>E</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5: Report card grades aligned to the six teaching zones.

The six teaching zones apply equally to Catholic and non-Catholic schools. However, the ‘pursuit of human flourishing as understood within the Catholic faith tradition by optimizing the learning of each student’ (see section 1.3) is exclusively within the role
of the Catholic school. What teachers do within each of these zones to promote the acquisition of a synthesis of culture and faith, and a synthesis of faith and life, is the nature of Catholic pedagogy, as envisaged here. The identification and articulation of Catholic pedagogical principles which underpin Catholic pedagogy is an important focus for Catholic education system leadership.
References


