

DIALOGIC DEVELOPMENT PROCESS (DDP) - AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY INTO
COMPLEX COMMUNITY CHANGE IN AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

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Abstract

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The already complex nature of international schools has been magnified by the multiple external influences of rapid globalisation, the agenda of the Global Education Reform Movement and the increasing commercialisation and corporatism within the sector. As a result traditionally planned change processes have become difficult to sustain. Typically, the success of these planned change processes depends upon the personality and skills of the school leader in attempting to control or reduce the impact of complexity.

This study adopts an alternative perspective viewing complexity not as a leadership problem to be managed, but as a potential source of creativity to be embraced. The alternative approach sees change as an emergent social process best delivered through dialogue and embedded leadership. This leads to a conceptual framework of Dialogic Development Process (DDP) as a way to understand how dialogue contributes to emergent thinking and learning, the promotion of an organisational culture of innovation and to sustained organisational change.

A mixed methods action research project was conducted over three years. An intervention used a cyclical process of appreciative inquiry workshops to facilitate generative dialogue with the on-going participation of the wider community. The intervention led to better strategic planning and a number of rapid transformative shifts in thinking and practice in the school's change process. Dialogue contributed to the emergence of innovative actionable and coherent plans. Decentralised control and embedded leadership led to greater participant agency and ownership of outcomes. Community involvement contributed to organisational coherence and a networked perspective, and enhanced the legitimacy of the Head. Though further testing is required the Dialogic Development Process framework holds promise as a model for emergent change in complex organisations like international schools.

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List of Abbreviations

AI	Appreciative Inquiry
IB	International Baccalaureate
IBDP	International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme
IBMYP	International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme
IBO	International Baccalaureate Organisation
IBPYP	International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme
CIS	Council of International School
DPP	Dialogic Development Process
GERM	Global Education Reform Movement
IBO	International Baccalaureate Organisation
NEASC	New England Association of Schools and Colleges
SRQ	Supporting Research Question
5D	Define, Discover, Dream, Design, Deliver

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1. Introduction and Research Background

Globally, education is currently experiencing rapid and far reaching change from the rise of accountability to the ever greater involvement of corporations. Successfully leading schools through the impacts of these changes is critical in determining the longevity of a Head's term in office. In international schools, where leaders must grapple with unique sets of organisational and cultural circumstances, leading change has become especially challenging.

This study is an exercise in praxis (Kolb, 1984; Freire, 2000; Arendt, 1998) or the experiential learning that results from the cyclical process of action, critical reflection upon the experience of that action, refinement and further implementation. This study is the result of 25 years of experience in international schools, latterly at the executive leadership level as whole school Principal and CEO in schools in Portugal and Spain. In these settings the past ten years have seen the growth in management controls and accountability requirements from governing boards and external agencies, such as the Council of International Schools (CIS) and the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO). At the same time there has been growing bureaucratic inertia and higher levels of resistance to change from teachers. Whilst curriculum authorities' capacities for innovation and for introducing change initiatives have grown, there has been a corresponding decline in opportunities to create and innovate within the classroom. Individual international schools are increasingly incorporated into global school groups where the space for institutional innovation and change is crowded out by the requirements to introduce initiatives originating from educational partners and centralised departments. All of this has led to a growing sense of institutional fatigue, organisational anomie, structural confusion and stakeholder disengagement. It has also led to an apparent paradox of increasing institutional responsiveness to parents, but increased irritation from parents regarding the educational offer.

Yet the dominant narrative amongst leaders and governing bodies is to normalise this experience as merely 'part of the job'. Any inability to handle the challenges of leadership, or to complete operational and strategic plans successfully, must be due to poor performance or a lack of capacity. Given this context an educational administrator's conference in Istanbul in 2011 led to a professional revelation. A break-out presentation by an educational services company presenting and selling a curriculum for the middle years entitled 'Less is More' attracted into its small seminar room seemingly the entire conference. This seemed to me like a significant moment or 'tipping point' (Gladwell, 2000). Why was 'Less is More' so seductive? What aspect of the experience of leading international schools had we been ignoring or normalising away?

The thinking at the time was that the desire for simplification was a result of unprecedented levels of complexity in international schools which made leadership increasingly challenging. A dictionary definition of complexity is 'the state of having many parts and being difficult to understand or find an answer to' (Cambridge University Dictionary, 2017). A managerial perspective normalises this complexity and is unimaginative when responding to it. Barbara Tye (2000) has established that school leaders in the USA typically adopted one of three strategies when facing many tasks – coping (limiting), diffusion (constantly innovating) or goal focused (ignoring). Applied to complex tasks one can simplify, manage, control or organise complexity by limiting its impact or by endlessly innovating to meet each and every variation of it. The latter is unsustainable and the former ineffective. However, there is a paradox here. The more we attempt to control or limit complexity the more complex and out of control it seems to become. Alternatively one can ignore complexity by attempting to 'carry on regardless' secure in the belief that focusing current goals and stability are greater prizes than embracing risky and unknown futures. This risks stagnation and irrelevance.

My experience of leading whole school change processes in three schools has been a frustrating one. Many planned change programmes were only partially implemented, while others fell by the wayside overtaken by more important priorities or changes in

leadership. Implementing externally mandated initiatives simultaneously with those arising from internal reviews was unsustainable. Repeated cycles of 'initiate-partially implement-fail-initiate' became a self-fulfilling recipe for failure and stagnation. From a change leadership perspective it seemed as if our efforts were wasted.

Transformational leadership implies Principals are leaders of school-initiated change and engage stakeholders and staff so as to produce greater commitment and engagement in school goals and vision (Hallinger, 1992). Unfortunately the practice of transformational leadership has become corrupted by managerialist assumptions and directives. If one sees leadership and management as planned and controlled by a central heroic change agent then as we keep planning and controlling complexity, our attempts to change schools will continue to fail.

This study arose out of a realisation that we need to engage with complexity in international schools and thus think differently about what leadership in complex environments might mean. Rather than controlling or limiting complexity we might respond to it by liberating it; by freeing up the organisation to develop, create and generate new possibilities and solutions to meeting the school's vision, mission and goals.

1.2. The International Educational Context

International education developed as a response to changes in the structure of the world system (Bates, 2011). In the post-war period notions of what was international or internationalism were based upon a 'billiard-ball' model of the world where nation-states were viewed as solid, sovereign entities pursuing their own national interest within an anarchic global political structure (Bull, 1977). International education during this period taught experiential understanding of foreigners through travel, learning other languages, exchange visits between schools, studying world history and occasional interpersonal relationships e.g. 'pen pals'. From the mid-1970s a paradigm shift occurred in which non-state actors became as important as nation-states. Though the state was still the centre of this system, multinational and transnational

organisations could work across and around its borders thus threatening its traditional sovereignty (Keohane and Nye, 1971). This second more liberal interpretation of the international system developed into a model which conceptualised the world as an interconnected global village or 'world society' (Burton, 1972) comprising a complex web of varied interdependent international relationships (Banks, 1984). International education developed curricula to support this and promote intercultural understanding and tolerance. More recently theorising has concentrated on globally constructed systems of ideas and culture (Barnett, 2008) and international education is focusing on the values and dispositions of international mindedness.

International educational programmes developed for a number of reasons (Hayden et al, 2002). Initially this was to provide internationally mobile workers and their families a recognisable educational qualification which might act as a passport between national educational systems. However, the more enduring reason has been to educate young people for a truly global, interdependent and interconnected world in which they can contribute to a more peaceful, ordered and tolerant society. An outgrowth of this was the development of educational programmes, the most important of which were derived from the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO).

The IBO was founded in 1968. Its founders established the organisation with the aim of offering internationally minded students a pre-university programme. It now offers a range of services and support to schools offering one or all of its three programmes which are the IB Primary Years Programme (IBPYP) for ages 3-12, the IB Middle years Programme (IBMYP) for ages 11-16 and the IB Diploma Programme (IBDP) for the pre-university ages of 16-19. It also offers an IB Careers Related Certificate as an alternative pathway for 16-19 year olds. The IBO currently works with 4,795 schools worldwide. Between 2012 and 2017 the number of IB programmes offered worldwide has grown by 39.3% (International Baccalaureate Organisation, 2017).

The philosophical justification for international education and the International Baccalaureate can be traced back to the work of Alec Peterson (2011), one of the organisation's founders. The mission of the IBO states,

'The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect' (International Baccalaureate Organisation, 2017, p. Mission).

In this sense the aims of an international education are consistent with those identified by the report to UNESCO by the International Commission on Education (Delors, J. et al, 1996). This report suggested four aims of learning which would serve a person throughout their lives - learning to know; learning to do; learning to live together and learning to be. Professor George Walker (2010), ex-Director General of the IBO, identified 'learning to live together' as a key driver for future developments in international education. In the early years of its development international education was seen as 'education for international understanding'. Over time and with increasing globalisation this has evolved towards 'education for international mindedness'. Walker (2010) differentiates these concepts by defining what international mindedness is not. It is not merely knowledge and the appreciation of foods, flags, festivals, fashion and famous people. Rather, its focus is on the deeper values, dispositions, skills and actions of being 'international'. Latterly, this has come to be expressed as 'intercultural understanding and respect' (International Baccalaureate Organisation, 2017).

The contemporary international school sector comprises a diverse group of national and international schools. This means it is difficult to define an 'international school' (Hayden, 2006). Nevertheless, the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) provides an increasingly specific identification of an 'international education'. This is expressed in its mission, its programmes and through what it calls the 'IB Learner Profile'. This outlines the characteristics and attributes that all graduates should be

able to demonstrate having followed one or all of their programmes (International Baccalaureate Organisation, 2017).

1.3. The Research Problem and Focus

International schools and international educational organisations, like many public education systems around the world, have been influenced by the educational reform orthodoxy of the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) (Sahlberg, 2012a; 2012b). Agendas for change and approaches to leadership increasingly reflect the New Public Management (NPM) which has applied market inspired managerialism to education (Green, 2011). This has changed the nature and philosophy of schooling as well as attitudes to the consumption of education. In multinational international school groups, admissions and enrolment policies must reflect business realities as well as student and school needs. Budgeting choices must reflect marketing priorities as well as educational programmes. Accountability systems and documentation often take priority over relationships and teacher development. The directions for change are limited by business parameters and are short term in nature in order to respond to changes in business performance or market share.

Within this environment the key leadership role for the Head of any school is to articulate a future vision for the school and the development priorities to achieve this. This is often associated with strategic planning models. However, if they are to be transformative they must deliver sustainable change (Fullan, 2005; Hargreaves and Fink, 2005). The problem is that due to the practical complexities involved this sustainability has proven elusive.

Firstly, this is due to the particular character of an international school (Starr, 2011). Many international schools are often community schools which function as social as well as educational centres for the expatriate community. There is dissonance between an emergent school culture and that of the local country within which they are located. They are characterised by multicultural and internationally diverse communities. The varied cultural, linguistic and national educational backgrounds

collide inside classrooms, staff rooms, board rooms and parent associations and are enduring challenges for leaders and managers. The workforce in the international school sector is also fluid and the management of change and continuity another challenge. In international schools, parents of international students are frequently away from home with increasing parenting roles and provision of life skills required by the school. Schools offering the full range of IBO programmes must implement a complex, partially prescribed and interdisciplinary curriculum with a faculty of varying levels of international experience and training to deliver it. Some schools also need to manage the incoherence or overlaps resulting from the simultaneous delivery of different national and international programmes. They may also be inspected and accredited by a range of authorities sometimes at the same time to ensure its recognition and validity with universities and governments in the many different countries of the families they serve. Leading a change process must therefore account for the varied voices, perspectives and adaptive challenges presented by the unique character of international schools.

In addition to the internal sources of complexity, globalisation is having a profound impact on society and schools (Suarez-Orozco, 2007). The economic forces of globalisation mean there is greater interconnectedness between countries and their citizens. The number of international schools has grown to support an increasingly mobile workforce. This has introduced greater competition and raised the stakes in educational change with innovation seen as a source of market advantage. A predominantly private school sector has also become increasingly commercial. In recent years the profitability of international schools has led to the emergence of a number of corporate multinationals school groups. The increasingly mobile workforce means increased frequency of turnover for families and staff. Implementing changes sustainably requires continuity; a luxury often denied to international school communities.

The distinct character of an international school, the impacts of globalisation, the greater market competition and pervasive corporate practice in the sector have all contributed to complexity inside international schools. In this context continuing to

employ planned strategic change models led by heroic change agents is not likely to result in sustainable change. Might there be an alternative?

One response to complexity could be to recognise and acknowledge the world and its structures and organisations in terms of systems and how they 'learn'. By 'learn' we really mean change. A system is a bounded set of interrelated and interdependent parts (elements) which receive inputs, process transformations and produce outputs. Its component 'nested' parts may also be systems (sub-systems) operating on a number of scales and functioning to maintain the system as a whole. This means the system is self-regulating. This system represents something greater than merely the sum of its parts. In considering this proposition one can draw upon the work of Peter Senge (1994; 2006) and his colleagues in the Fifth Discipline books in which he and his colleagues identified the five disciplines at the core of a learning organisation – personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning and finally, systems thinking (Senge, 2006). In the context of education, systems thinking means that a school can better meet its purpose and core business if the actors within it see the interconnectedness of their roles and contributions (Senge, 2000).

However, we could go further by adopting complexity theory as a possible alternative to understanding the complexity of the processes involved in school improvement. Conceptualising the world and organisational structures in more overtly systemic and complex terms we might then unlock alternate perspectives about how to look at leadership in international schools. In contrast to traditional leadership approaches making change happen is then best understood in terms of organisational processes.

1.4. Research Aims and Questions

This study arose out of practice in the field rather than a review of research already undertaken. It was informed by my personal lived experience working in a number of international school contexts and my perception of the increasingly complex nature of leadership and transformative change. It is also a response to failed models of change based upon a managerial view of the school.

In responding to the complexity of the international school context it is posited that viewing the international school in complex terms and characterising change as an emergent phenomenon could open up alternative leadership approaches to organisational change. Therefore an action research project was undertaken in my school context to explore the potential for change leadership through an organisational process. A Dialogic Development Process (DDP) which is a workshop based cycle of on-going community dialogue is proposed as a delivery model for organisational change.

This study represents one attempt to develop a contribution to a set of alternative approaches using complexity which are argued to be more sustainable, more educative and more coherent ways to lead transformative change. The process which emerged out of my context may not be wholly transferrable as elements within it are contextual. However, through the implementation of a change process, which every school employs in some form or another, original knowledge about dialogue, workshop practices and complex organisational change may potentially be transferrable to other contexts and will add to the body of knowledge about complexity thinking in practice.

As Principal of an international school tasked once again with leading a strategic change process these initial insights informed thinking about how to achieve sustainable school change which is transformative and led to the overarching question for this study of:

What contribution can a Dialogic Development Process (DDP) make to the management of transformative change in my school context?

This overarching question leads to the following four supporting research questions (SRQs) which will be addressed through the design and implementation of an action research model:

SRQ1 - What are the characteristics of a Dialogic Development Process?

SRQ2 - What is transformative change in an international school context?

SRQ3 - Can a Dialogic Development Process bring about organisational change?

SRQ4 - What is the role of a school leader in sustainable change practices in international schools?

The action research project implemented in this study uses the complexity in international schools in an attempt to make the leadership of transformative change more effective. It is therefore a study into how innovation might be facilitated more positively and democratically. The study explores the way participants experienced and made sense of a change process and assesses any resultant impact through a complexity thinking lens. This was implemented using a mixed methods approach in which a primarily qualitative study is supplemented by quantitative methods and is explained in detail in chapter three. The complexity thinking lens was used to establish if and how the model contributed to innovative thinking and practice and thus to the potential for transformative change. The research theorises that this would emerge through narratives arising from the workshop structure and facilitated dialogue.

1.5. Outline of remaining chapters

The following chapters outline the theoretical framework for the thesis, the methodological basis for the research and presents and analyses the findings from the data collection.

Chapter two outlines the theoretical framework for the thesis reviewing the literature on organisational change and placing the notion of leadership as a dimension within the organisation rather than above it. Emergent change processes are contrasted with planned change approaches and by using the complexity thinking notion of emergence a community-based, democratic and dialogic approach to generating emergent

thinking and novelty is proposed. A review of the literature on dialogue as the mechanism through which individual and organisational sense making and learning is followed by the introduction of a Dialogic Development Process as the framework for sustaining organisational change.

Chapter three outlines the pragmatic stance adopted and links it to complexity thinking and a mixed methods action research project. The chapter moves through the stages of the action research explaining and justifying the reconnaissance and implementation phases of the project which involved an appreciative inquiry model using the Dialogic Development Process suggested in the previous chapter. A critical review of the methods employed and their significance for trustworthiness is then presented. Finally, the framework for the analysis of the study is described and justified together with an assessment of the ethical dimensions involved in the study.

Chapter four presents the findings from the data. Evidence is organised through the stages of the action research around the three major themes of dialogue, leadership and collaboration and emergence and sustainability. The major findings from the data are then discussed within the context of the research questions and from a complexity thinking perspective. Threads are drawn back into the literature review and the three themes for analysis

Chapter five returns to the supporting research questions to arrive at a response to the central research question. An assessment of the research is combined with contributions statement of the implications of the study for future research and professional practice.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter the argument was made that complexity presents a significant challenge in the life of international schools. Thus school leadership approaches to change which embrace, rather than reduce or ignore complexity might hold greater promise for the sustainable transformation of schools. This is because it works with the heterogeneous nature of international schools. The organisational change process and subsequent research employed in this study was developed as a reflective response to experience in the field. As the intent is to improve professional practice the project can be seen as an exercise in praxis (Kolb, 1984; Freire, 2000; Arendt, 1998).

This chapter surveys the literature on change and how leadership can better contribute to that change. It is posited that sustainable strategic change is an organisational rather than individual phenomenon i.e. that sustainable change is an organisational process of emergence and self-organisation rather than the product of an heroic leader's vision and power. Though there are a number of strands within complexity theory (Richardson and Cilliers, 2001; Morin, 2006), I agree that adopting a complexity thinking perspective with its emphasis on levels of organisation is a useful framework for understanding change.

Organisational change in the context of an international school implies complex community change. Dialogue is seen as the critical mechanism within a change process enabling people to make sense of change whilst simultaneously contributing to it. Within a community focused process of organisational change the role of leadership is to facilitate the emergence of new ideas and practices more democratically. Given the complexity of organisational change, this thesis focuses on the dialogic processes which support this.

The research project is therefore concerned with the search for a dialogic leadership approach to change which responds to complexity and manages transformative

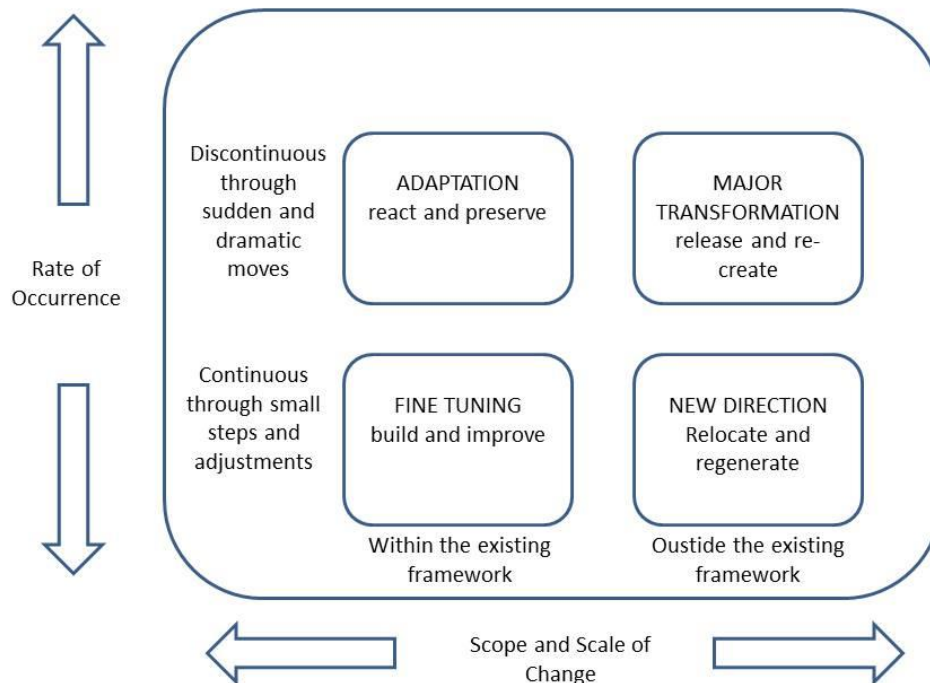
change more effectively than existing approaches. However, a research project of this magnitude cannot engage in a whole system analysis or with multiple levels of nested systems hence the focus on emergent thinking and learning in a small group, time-limited context but which has the potential for whole system impact.

2.2. The nature of organisational change

Organisational change can be understood in a number of different ways and the literature on this subject is extensive (Senior and Swailes, 2010; Smith and Graetz, F, 2011). Because the focus of this study is to consider how to lead change in my own organisation the focus is on the barriers and enablers of educational change. The section begins with a general consideration of organisational change and then looks at two models that might be employed to deliver it, within which the role of leadership can be discussed.

Theories of organisational change have been categorised in a number of ways. By (2005) and Senior and Swailes (2010) argue for understanding change through three related mechanisms of scale and scope, rate of occurrence and how it comes about. The first relates to the extent of the change. This is often presented as a linear, planned continuum of change which ranges from fine tuning to institutional transformation (Dunphy and Stace, 1993) but which can then also be differentiated by whether it affects parts or the whole of the organisation (Marshak, 2002). The second categorisation relates to the frequency of change and whether it is discontinuous, occurring in bursts of revolutionary events or, continuous and evolutionary. Iveroth and Hallencreutz (2016) combine these ideas within a matrix based on Marshak (2002) and Nadler and Nadler (1998) (Figure 2.1)

Figure 2.1. Four Different Types of Change (Iveroth and Hallencruetz, 2016, p. 17)



In the matrix the upper left hand quadrant is characterized by occasional rapid changes to sub-units of the organisation within existing frames. Often these are the result of gap analyses. In the lower left quadrant we find fine tuning where alterations are made to the sub-units continuously. Again, these are made within existing frameworks of the organisation. The lower right quadrant reflects new directions where continuous small scale changes are made, but these changes are intended to re-culture, re-structure or re-purpose the organisation. Finally the upper right hand quadrant reflects transformation where rapid and wider ranging change involving a reappraisal of existing assumptions allows the organisation to develop towards a wholly different state involving a reappraisal of existing assumptions.

This model of transformation implies a variety of processes which include activities which can be planned or emergent. Iveroth and Hallencruetz (2016) helpfully summarise the differences between planned and emergent perspectives in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Characteristics of emergent and planned perspectives (Iveroeth, E. and Hallencruetz, J., 2016, p. 24)

	Planned Change	Emergent Change
Rhythm, pattern and frequency of change	Change is intentional and infrequent and discontinuous	Change is constant and is evolving and cumulative
View of change and inertia	Change is an occasional disruption or divergence from equilibrium that is driven and managed externally Change is the outcome of the failure of adapting the deep structure of the organization to the altered outer context and environment	Change is a pattern of ceaseless modifications and alterations in processes and practices Change is the outcome of organizational instability and alert reactions to daily contingencies
Level of aggregation and standpoint of the observer	Understanding change from outside by viewing it from afar with a macro, distant and global perspective	Understanding change from within by exploring it up close on the front line with a micro, close and local perspective
Role of change agent	The change agent is an autonomous actor that functions as a prime mover that orchestrates change	The change agent is a sensemaker who senses the underlying dynamics of upcoming change and tries to redirect change accordingly through translation and conversation

Type of intervention	Predominantly top-down	Predominantly bottom-up
Change trajectory	Linear and progressive trajectory from one stable state to another that is oriented toward a clear end goal and destination	Continuous, processual and cyclical trajectory that seeks equilibrium and goes through different phases that are revisited in (it is hoped) altered form
Examples of related theories, models and applications	Lewinian three-step model, organisational development, large group interventions, gestalt psychology, evolutionary economics, punctuated equilibrium, variance model	Sensemaking, population ecology, contextualism, organizational learning, antenarrative, dialogue, sociomateriality, process model

Planned change has become the predominant approach to whole school change particularly within the context of the GERM accountability agenda. Alternatively, emergent change is always present and develops as a result of ongoing processes such as informal interactions between teachers and personal and professional reflection. Generally, the organisational change literature is heavily dependent on planned approaches and how to implement them (Cummings and Worley, 2008; Bernerth, 2004; Kotter, 1996). Planned change often assumes a progressive improvement through a number of 'steps' which can be completed within a given time scale and which take you from one stable state to another better state. An example is the Lewin-influenced approaches to action research discussed later in chapter three (Marshak, 1993). Planned change is typically controlled by a top-down process assuming leaders and managers know best and that they should create and lead the change process in their own image. Leaders are distant from day to day change processes, with those responsible for implementation not engaged or consulted, instead merely carrying out the practical consequences of the change.

In the field of education the results of strategic planning models are discouraging (Kotter, 2007; Fullan, 2007; Burnes, 2011; Hughes, 2011). As Reeves (2009, p. 78) points out 'strategic planning' can mean a 'disciplined and thoughtful process that links the values, mission, and goals of a school system with a set of coherent strategies and tasks designed to achieve those goals'. But, it can also 'induce a cringe brought about by memories of endless meetings and 'fact-free' debates.....discrete objectives, tasks, strategies, plans and goals, all left undone after the plan was completed' (Reeves, 2009, p. 78). This latter description of the process disengages staff, erodes participative culture and potentially damages the mission of the school with implications for student learning and outcomes.

The problem with planned processes is that the change plan can very quickly lose relevance as the external environment changes (By, 2005). It also underestimates the implementation challenge resulting from micro-political agendas of stakeholders (Hill, 2003; Hope, 2010) and is inflexible and overly reliant on a cause and effect rationality. It is an input-process-output model which can be analysed sequentially in cause and effect terms to determine levels of success and failure (Mohr, 1982). Transformation is seen as the result of creating and then implementing new ideas, directions and initiatives which are outside of current practice. These models assume we can know and predict the future. There is a predetermined pattern and pre-identified or assured targets. This effectively crushes the complex reality of organisations. Yet this reductive cause and effect thinking obscures the importance of the underlying process of change and the false assumptions about innovation embedded into the model. As Fonseca (2002, p. 5) states,

'One of the consequences of mainstream thinking is the loss of a sense of excitement of creating the truly new. This is replaced by the belief that movement into the future is simply the uncovering of hidden order, the realisation of some chosen goal, the unfolding of some stable form already enfolded, or the intentional production of the variety required to match uncertain conditions'.

The alternative to planned change is emergent change. This is a process model seeing change as everywhere, embedded in the context and constantly evolving. It is a continuous, cyclical process of plan, implement, review, modify where at the 'conclusion' of a project new questions and new directions might emerge (Marshak, 1993; Weick and Quinn, 1999; Cook, 2004). Change is non-linear and multifaceted, influenced by the past and asymmetrical with different contexts changing at different rates. This means you may not always be on a change trajectory for elements in the organisation. A change plan may come to an end, but new questions might emerge for other areas or allied structures within the organisation which now require attention. Further, emergent change is networked change. In contrast to how leadership is usually seen this means leadership collaborates in top-down, bottom-up and lateral processes with those that will implement change. Leadership is collaborative and pragmatic with different emphases at different times and occurs within a sensemaking capacity. Sensemaking is 'the process by which we give meaning to our experience and socially construct the world around us and the actions we take' (Iveroth and Hallencruetz, 2016, p. 47). This is why dialogic processes become critical. As a result we need multiple scales of analysis of multiple processes for research on leadership of change (Pettigrew, 1997). This is a more complex-led view of change which is why complexity thinking provides a useful framework for understanding emergent change processes.

On the other hand the problem with emergent processes is that they are time consuming and unpredictable. It can be too 'wishy-washy' and vague with few concrete outcomes (Hughes, 2010). It has been argued that there are few coherent approaches to emergent change with little agreement on how to conduct it (By, 2005). The assumption that the environment for an organisation is always dynamic and changing can also be challenged. There may be circumstances when the environment is stable and therefore planned approaches make more sense (Burnes, 2009). And finally whether change is emergent or planned there is still an element of planning and tasks to be implemented which perhaps suggests it is not that different after all.

Within the GERM agenda transformation has become a politically loaded term implying rapid and wide ranging change resulting from strategic planning models. Reflecting on Cook (2004) and Kotter (2007), Reeves (2009) suggests a dichotomy between strategic planning models that are about implementing pre-defined measures to improve school performance and outcomes, and those that are about the on-going process of strategising. This is too simplistic as no organisation is static. Emergent change is flexible rather than planned and acknowledges that change is heterogeneous varying in scope and scale within the organisation. Emergent change can also be subversive, altering the existing DNA or framework of an organisation. The matrix of transformation in Figure 2.1. implies a variety of processes involving all four types of change at each of the four quadrants. In my study some changes in the school's strategic plan were short term and quick while others took place over the long term and were strategic. Planned and emergent change models are therefore two poles of a continuum of change and an effective school change processes must therefore manage the tension between the two.

The practical reality of complexity means you need elements of both emergent and planned approaches in a sustainable and transformative change process (Iveroth and Hallencruetz, 2016; Weick, 2000). This is why the Dialogic Development Process (DDP) used in my study balances the need for planning and structure together with the desirability of emergent thinking in a continuous rolling process of organisational thinking, learning, planning and delivery. By engaging those who will implement change in a dialogic process, community involvement is embedded in the wider organisational narrative. Dialogue is a means to foster the emergent thinking and innovation within the wider culture of the school. To date the impacts, benefits and challenges of emergent change approaches are less well recognised than planned approaches. This project fits into attempts by Iveroth and Hallencruetz (2016) and others to add to this knowledge base.

2.2.1. Barriers to organisational change

In their review of organisational change in industry Iveroth and Hallencreutz (2016) cite studies which suggest on average 70 % of change initiatives fail (Smith, 2002; 2003; Kotter, 2008), and between 80 and 90 % fail to implement their strategies (Zook and Allen, 2001). Though robustness of these statistics has been questioned (Markus et al, 2000; Burnes, 2011; Hughes, 2011)) these studies suggest current approaches to organisational change have not been easy to implement.

Leaders have been seen as central to change processes within organisations and carry a heavy burden of accountability supported and nurtured by the managerial performativistic GERM agenda. At the same time they inhabit a complex space of tension where they must balance the many and often competing agendas and perspectives of the constituents of the community. The complex character of schools (Morrison, 2002; Wallace, 2003) means school leaders of change must manage a number of barriers varying in scale and scope in unpredictable and unmanageable contexts (Starr, 2011).

Most of these barriers relate to the culture of schools and the micro-political challenge of managing resistance to change (Blase, 2005). Cultural worldviews develop which root people in a 'this is the way we do things around here' mentality. When these are challenged, organisational resistance occurs (Calabrese, 2003; Starr, 2011).

Alternatively, the complex nature of the school adds to levels of ambiguity. Attempts to initiate and implement changes merely add to this ambiguity with the result that people feel a loss of control and a fear of the unknown (Wallace, 2003). These feelings are exacerbated if change is imposed top-down by a central leader or set of leaders (Hall and Hord, 2006). Another barrier is the use and abuse of time. Often time devoted is insufficient with organisational change processes placed in addition to everyday work leading to increased workload, disinterest and further resistance (Starr, 2011). If those that implement and live the changes made in an organisation feel distant from the actual decision-making process this lack of engagement can turn into apathy, subversion or dissent. Wood (2017, p. 35) suggests that this can lead to

‘zombie innovation’ ‘where a change process carries on lifeless, sometimes for years, in the twilight of official documents, plans and quality assurance reports, but never lives in the normalised practices of the organisation’.

Latterly a consideration of these barriers has come to mean a focus within the leadership of change literature on sustainability (Hargreaves and Fink, 2005; Mulford et al, 2009; Starr, 2011). Fullan (1999; 2001) has pointed to an implementation and continuation problem in that research on the success of implementation shows that leaders are rarely successful in implementing what was intended or planned and that gaining and sustaining momentum for change processes remains problematic (Fullan, 2005; Fullan, 2007). In searching for explanations he suggests:

‘Many attempts to change fail because no distinction is made between theories of change (what causes change) and theories of changing (how to influence those causes)’ (Fullan, 2007, pp. 13-14).

He therefore proposes that we focus on change which is sustainable. Sustainability he suggests ‘is the capacity of a system to engage in the complexities of continuous improvement consistent with deep values of human purpose’ (Fullan, 2005, p. ix) and argues for a different mind-set of leadership, one which uses applied practical strategies arising from both systems and complexity theory (Fullan, 2005). Whilst a useful way of addressing how to overcome barriers to change, by focusing on the central role of leadership in this we potentially miss the opportunity to explore organisational processes to change within which leadership would be embedded.

2.2.2. Bringing about positive organisational change

The educational literature on change has generally focused on the central role of the Principal and the school leadership team in managing the barriers to school change. However, an alternate perspective which embraces the complexity and ambiguity of schools has been suggested by Streatfield (2001) in which leaders in complex contexts are simultaneously in control and not in control. Therefore sustainable organisational

change means leaders must be prepared to devolve decision making and include people in an ongoing dialogue in which they contribute to the change agenda they will implement.

When we emphasise how to influence organisational change it becomes clear that leading change is about addressing the established behaviours, beliefs and assumptions of people in an organisation (Iveroth and Bengtsson, 2014). This is because a lack of 'coherence' between actors can be a barrier to implementing change. However, the relationship between change and individual and collective behaviours is complex and can be problematic. This is because the process of change can either be voluntary, or involuntary, as different individual responses to the meaning, form and consequence of change occur. These vary with our personal goals, skills, philosophy, beliefs, behaviour etc. and can be experienced as confusion, anger or fear. Change often inspires fear as an emotional response to what people consider a fundamental challenge to their daily sense of identity and role. However, in a networked organisation, a range of responses can occur with some embracing change positively so leadership in these cases may not be problematic.

In addition, embedded perceptions and behaviours are a function of an organisation's values, culture and goals at a particular point in time. This means that change processes need to engage not only with the current context but with the historical context too. In an international school the many 'organisational realities' and stakeholder agendas around these contexts make this a profoundly political environment (Blase, 1998). For example teachers' reality may revolve around overwork whilst parents' reality may focus on poor teacher responsiveness. Future contexts may also change, thus adding to unpredictability and complexity. Conflict and resistance are inevitable as leaders challenge or negotiate these realities and agendas or, are challenged and changed by them.

This complexity might explain why leaders consistently fail to devote sufficient time to understanding their contexts and how people respond to change. Studies suggest leaders either avoid this dimension or over concentrate/compensate the challenge of

addressing it with control structures and programmes for change (Davenport, 1998; Dedrick et al., 2003; Jorgensen et al., 2009). This leaves them unable to address resistance and maintain momentum (Andrews et al, 2008; Iveroth and Hallencruetz, 2016). Often an 'an ad hoc mentality' develops which results in an expedient half-hearted commitment to employee engagement in change processes (Hallencruetz, 2012, p. 63). Stronger leadership, better communication and more empowerment are offered as seductively simple remedies but are difficult to deliver in practice (Oakland and Tanner, 2007; Iveroth and Bengtsson, 2014; Iveroth, E. and Hallencruetz, J., 2016).

Unfortunately the educational literature on change implicitly aligns the centrality of the school Head with planned change models. Planned change models suggest leadership practices in line with managerial leadership models where those at the top of the hierarchy set the 'tone of the organisation' and establish the 'major official objectives' (Bush, 2011, p. 59). Yet, Fullan's (2007) review of the role of the Principal in change initiatives shows that, though still a critical position, impacts resulting from Principal-led initiatives rarely result in sustainable change. This is mostly due to the operational challenges of balancing administrative duties with leadership of the educational programme and prioritising externally imposed and senior leadership driven change initiatives rather than those derived from another scale within the school such as teachers. However, it is also due to the poor leadership and the lack of insight noted above. In planned change models the notion of the Principal as heroic change agent at the centre of the process is no longer fit for purpose. This has high stakes implications for morale and the sustained implementation we seek. As Reeves (2009, p. 7) states:

'If we have learned anything about effective change in schools or any complex organisations, it is that neither managerial imperatives nor inspirational speeches will be sufficient to move people and organisations from their entrenched positions.'

Interestingly this quote highlights the assumption implicit in much of the leadership literature that leadership and people are in some way in opposition and, if not

divorced, then distant from each other. The suggestion is that failed attempts at change exacerbate this distance leading to more not less resistance, less not more innovation, and fewer not greater numbers of creative solutions and inspirational ways to serve learning communities.

And so what is the position of leadership in change processes? Individual and collective action and thus sustained implementation results from the construction of individual and shared meaning. Fullan asserts that 'reality is always defined by individuals and groups' (Fullan, 2007, p. 30) with the group creating a shared reality through everyday interactions. Change is therefore a psycho-cultural process at once both individual and social. However, though a coherent shared reality may be Fullan's aim, change may also result from dissonance. Different perspectives, assumptions, priorities and agendas of different groups do not always converge but could still be a source of constructive change. Therefore a process designed to facilitate organisational change engages those tasked with implementing change whilst establishing structures and processes by which coherence and dissonance can be held in creative tension such that emergent thinking and innovation may take place.

Fullan's arguments for coherence within a sustainable change context point to leadership which will change existing cultures. If leaders were to place people at the centre of an emergent change process, then we might sustain change initiatives. Additionally, we might also access a rich vein of professional capital and generate further emergent innovative thinking. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) argue that the capacity for transformative change lies in the use organisations make of the knowledge and skills contained within its people. This professional capital is the combination of human, social and decisional capital. It follows that leadership is about engaging people and capturing the organisation's professional capital within change processes which may then unlock the systemic interaction necessary for change to occur. This thinking leads us towards a consideration of collegial leadership approaches which distribute, or share, decision making within the wider organisation.

In recent years more collegial models of leadership have been promoted.

Transformational or Distributed Leadership Models assume that power for decision-making is shared among members. Harris argues that distributive leadership 'concentrates on engaging expertise wherever it exists within the organisation rather than seeking this only through formal position or role' (Harris, 2004, p. 13). However, there are lateral as well as vertical dimensions to this approach which means formal managerial control is still present (Harris, 2010). Some have suggested distributed leadership is merely a pragmatic response by Heads to overload. They retain authority and control. In fact they merely delegate work without redistributing power often to other leaders (Lumby, 2009; Gronn, 2010; Hartley, 2010).

Transformational leadership is based upon a view that schools are the 'units responsible for the initiation of change, not just the implementation of change conceived by others' (Hallinger, 1992, p. 40). It also emphasises the development of shared vision and the participation of stakeholders in the process. Leithwood (1994; 1999) suggests transformational leadership involves eight dimensions including building school vision, establishing school goals, providing intellectual stimulation, offering individualised support, modelling best practices and important organisational values, demonstrating high performance expectations, creating a productive school culture and developing structures to foster participation in school decisions. Fullan's notion of coherence emerges when the motives of the leader and the follower merge (Miller and Miller, 2001).

However, as with distributive leadership it should be clear that transformational leadership is still based upon a refined notion of heroic leadership. Groups of stakeholders are leveraged centrally by a charismatic leader with a vision of the school's future state. The problem with this form of leadership is that it implies that those who do not 'buy in' to the leader's values or vision could be quickly marginalised (Allix, 2000). Further, change may be framed in terms of meeting accountability and improvement standards, often of outside agencies, rather than focusing on creativity and innovation. Hoyle and Wallace (2005, p. 151) have referred to the 'transformational rhetoric-transmission reality gap' where they argue transformation

has been politicised by heroic leaders employing social control techniques as a means to implement company or government policy. In this sense transformational leadership can be seen as insidious and corrupting in reality (Bottery, 2004). When viewed within the objectives of the GERM agenda this back-door managerialism might even be seen as a mendacious attempt to mislead.

Attempts to redefine the notion of leadership more widely in collegial terms end up merely reinforcing the central role of the individual Head. Further, these collegial approaches still downplay the importance of individuals as well as limiting goals set to the institution rather than extending it to the community. By involving those that implement change in the process suggests it is possible to seek common agreements from among diverse stakeholders. Yet this understates the very real micro-political dimension of organisations. Seeking consensus from a very diverse community may not be enough to transform a school, as consensus is only the starting point of the implementation.

Even when it is argued that leadership should recognise the operational complexity and human relational context of school life the leader is still presented as the central driver of change. In yet another of many characterisations of leadership Sergiovanni (2001) contrasts traditional leadership models where sources of authority are derived from expertise, credentials, position, experience and style from progressive leadership where authority is derived from a leader's spirit, values, meaningful ideas, beliefs, morality and character. This moral leadership merely redefines top-down leadership by imprinting it with the leader's own morality not with any values emerging from the organisation. Change models which are predicated on the primacy of the leader without effectively addressing the needs of the followers are still likely to fail. This is not to say there is no role for leadership or the leader of the school. Rather, it is to suggest the principle role of the leader is to address the working lives of those he/she leads in any change process.

Educational research seems replete with a number of different ideas of leadership which attempt to contort the complex reality of the organisation. But the leader is still

the central figure of the organisation. An alternative would be to embed leadership within the organisation in an attempt to collect it at all levels of the organisation, bringing people together, liberating them from their 'entrenched' positions, and placing them in safe, positive spaces where they can co-construct collectively agreed community based approaches to change.

Counter to the model of leadership above, an approach which balances elements of both planned and emergent change models may offer a more sustainable and positive route to organisational change. Leadership in such a model needs to facilitate emergent processes of thinking and learning, building ownership amongst implementers of change whilst also holding in tension the different views inherent in any community. Leadership should encourage the co-production of meanings and ultimately build new cultural values, norms and understandings about what the school/institution is and needs to be. The role of the Principal is then to become the facilitator of community oriented change.

In the foreword to Kaner's (2007) book on workshops Michael Doyle suggests a facilitator is:

'An individual who enables groups and organisations to work more effectively; to collaborate and achieve synergy. She or he is a 'content-neutral' party who by not taking sides or expressing or advocating a point of view during a meeting, can advocate for fair, open, inclusive procedures to accomplish the group's work. A facilitator can also be a learning or dialogue guide to assist a group in thinking deeply about its assumptions, beliefs, values and about its systemic processes and context' (Doyle, 2007, p. XV).

The role of the facilitator is then to encourage full participation; promote mutual understanding; foster inclusive solutions and then cultivate shared responsibility (Doyle, 2007). Straus (2002) also identifies four key roles for facilitators which are process guide, tool giver, neutral third party and process educator. The role of the school leader is to be aware of both group and organisational dynamics and to involve

stakeholders in participatory processes whilst defining and articulating the organisations' values and mission. In short, the role is to facilitate the process of facilitation and the work of the workshop group facilitators. Sullivan (2009) completed a study on the idea of emergent learning through three small scale case studies and established that the degree of emergence within each context was dependent upon the extent to which the teacher controlled or encouraged independent approaches to learning. This shows that leadership does count, but it is the kind of leadership that matters.

In the educational literature the primacy of the leader is unassailable but facilitative leadership starts to look at the organisation as central to change processes (Stacey et al, 2000). Based on the pharmaceutical industry, Streatfield (2001) suggests that an organisation should be characterised as a messy place where patterns of meaning emerge through a complex pattern of human relating. The organisation is unpredictable and leadership by command and control is not appropriate. Rather complex organisations require leadership approaches of 'being in control' and 'not being in control' at the same time. This means moving away from compliance and toward participation and empowerment. Control is within the interactive dynamics of the system which means all sections and representatives from them should be involved (Marion and Uhl Bien, 2002).

The job of leadership for transformative change that matters is therefore about challenging, reframing or ending existing practices, behaviours and ways of thinking. Through a dialogic process which facilitates learning, unlearning, and then relearning, the transformative leader can help people engage in innovation and change. If people are to do this, they must 'make sense' of the argument for change and be exposed to structured opportunities and processes which motivate their engagement in it. Looking at the school through the lens of sustainable change we need to enhance relationships and communication. The role of the Head, therefore, is to facilitate and frame the positive conversation in inclusive and democratic structures. This is dialogic leadership rather than transformational or distributive leadership where the hero is the wider organisation and not the school Head. In effect the Head voluntarily gives up some

his/her power but gains the influence from adopting the role of an internal consultant creating an emergent process which empowers the community to identify the future direction of the school and that is only ever planned in a skeletal sense. The implication of emergent community change processes is that we seek a genuine partnership of collaboration in co-constructing the change the community believes the school needs.

If we want to understand this emergent change process we need to understand the dynamic of complex emergence and its relationship to organisational learning. Adopting a complexity framework gives us a lens through which we can better understand emergent change processes and assists us in pointing to practical strategies for occasioning and sustaining it.

2.3. Complexity Theory

Whilst much of the discussion above rests on ideas of the 'complex' and the 'emergent', the use of complexity theory in education has been a peripheral exercise. The change processes used in this study were influenced by assumptions that one could liberate and embrace complexity rather than attempt to control and reduce it. Complexity theory originated in the natural sciences and cybernetics and developed out of chaos and open systems theory (Von Bertalanffy, 1968). In an early articulation of complexity theory Weaver (1947) identified three categories of phenomena – 'simple' (in which only a few elements interact and causally determined links can be established between them); 'complicated' (where there are many variable components which interact but where the relationships between them are fixed and clearly defined and predictions can be made about the processes and outcome of their behaviours) and 'complex' (where the relationships are not fixed and clearly defined and which are subject to continuous change and adaptation). The key point is that a complicated entity can be 'analysed and integrated' i.e. taken apart and put back together again (Byrne and Callaghan, 2014, p. 4) whereas complex phenomena cannot because they will adapt and change during the process.

‘The behaviours of simple and complicated systems are mechanical and can be thoroughly described and reasonably predicted on the basis of precise rules, whereas rules that govern complex systems can vary dramatically from one system to the next’ (Davis and Sumara, 2006, p. 11).

Complexity implies many interrelated and interacting parts so much of the complexity theory literature focuses in on the systemic structures where this takes place. A system is a bounded set of interrelated and interdependent parts (elements). Systems receive inputs, process transformations and produce outputs. In active systems, such as school organisations, the component parts and their agents interact so a change in one part affects other parts as well as the system as a whole. For example the introduction of a new grading policy might lead to more parental engagement and more work for teachers.

There are a number of strands of complexity theory with as yet no unified theory (Richardson and Cilliers, 2001; Osberg and Biesta, 2008). Despite different models of complexity there are underlying commonalities as to what characterises complex phenomena (Cilliers, 1998; Davis and Sumara, 2006; Byrne and Callaghan, 2014). Some of the central principles are open systems, emergence and non-linearity.

- **Open Systems** - Organisations are made up of many different elements which simultaneously interact across different scales and layers of activity. There are constant exchanges of information both within the organisation and with other organisations. In terms of the international school this could be with the IBO or its accrediting agencies. A process of ‘level jumping’ or ‘moving across levels of complex organization’ (Davis and Sumara, 2006, p. 107) enables us to analyse individual parts of the organisation whilst at the same time viewing this within a multi-layered whole. In complex organisations networks develop as a result of the relationships between individuals. In schools these might include departmental, pastoral, curriculum, section (primary or secondary school) networks. These networks can exist autonomously but also as elements of the wider organisation. For example departments and sections within schools. The

boundaries between networks are blurred and ambiguous. For example, a member of the science department may also be a member of the secondary school but be offering teaching in the primary school and also be a mother of a student. At organisational level a distinction can be drawn between open and closed systems. Complex systems, like schools, are open systems which exist at far from equilibrium states i.e. they are in a state of flux and constantly require energy (in the form of information, people, ideas, resources) from the surrounding environment (beyond the organisation) to allow it to continue to function and change. Conversely any organisation characterised by a closed system tends to be stable with limited or no interaction with its environment and thus receives little or no new energy and inputs. These organisations move towards equilibrium leading to stasis and decay.

- **Emergence and Self Organisation** - Complex structures comprise many autonomous decentralised networks which organise themselves from the 'bottom up' (Marion, 1999). In terms of the school organisation, self-organisation is 'a process in which teams and groups of individuals form themselves spontaneously around issues with the participants themselves (not the managers) deciding what the boundaries will be' (Morrison, 2002, p. 14) . Decentralisation is more adaptable to change in complex systems because contrary to centralised networks if one element fails the whole system does not break down but is compensated by the adaptive capacity of other elements. The diversity and autonomy of the networks means they can spontaneously self-organise when responding to feedback (Cohen and Stewart, 1995; Kelly and Allison, 1999; Marsick, 2000). This means they can adapt their structural states such that new patterns of organisation (working, processing thinking, producing outputs) can emerge more easily than in heavily 'planned' approaches to change. Emergence is the process by which collectives develop properties or capacities which exceed those that might be possible if the same group of individuals were made to work independently of each other. They thus display what Waldrop (1992, p. 147) refers to as 'perpetual novelty'. New ideas and insights occur due to the interaction of individuals working together. So

emergence is best understood through the interplay of individuals over time, and across scales which can lead to new and unpredictable ideas and states. The Dialogic Development Process (DDP) used in this study is an attempt to facilitate the conditions and opportunities for emergent thinking and novelty to take place.

- **Non-linearity-** Complex organisations are non-linear meaning inputs into the system do not result in effects or outputs which are proportionate i.e. small causes may have more than proportional impacts and vice versa. Non-linearity has implications for our ability to predict what will emerge from a change or its impact on the wider organisation. This means that widely different expressions of organisation can emerge from the interaction of individuals and networks. The key point here is that this unpredictability means we can never really fully analyse complex systems (Cilliers, 1998) or fully plan our change outcomes. Richardson et al (2007, p. 8) characterises complex organisations as 'incompressible' meaning 'it is impossible to have an account of a complex system that is less complex than the system itself without losing some of its aspects'. In complicated systems it is easy to work out the impact of a change whether originating from within or from outside the system, but with complex systems you never know how the system will adapt and this is especially the case in human systems. This is because complex systems are learning systems whereby the adaptation results from the unknown impacts of a multitude of interactions between many networks on many levels. This means identical systems may respond in completely different ways to similar changes so generalisation is impossible. The introduction of a new appraisal system may work well in the science department but not so in the primary school. Further, past processes play an unpredictable role in forming the present, the net result of which is that prediction and planning for a known future is not appropriate. Nevertheless, we can still understand them better if using methods which gather richer, if partial, data on the system of interest (Cilliers, 1998).

Thinking in complex terms is particularly well suited to international schools. Schools are characterised by a multitude of different interactions happening across a range of space and time by individuals and groups using written and spoken media, both informally and formally. The potential for disorder is great and this is certainly a feature of daily school life. But at the same time schools are remarkably stable. This is because complex systems do have patterns, they are not chaotic. The interactions within them lead to the emergence of new ideas, thinking, practice and structural arrangements which perpetuate the school system. However when schools stop changing then a closed system is created leading to its decay and decline.

This potential for emergence arising from the interaction of its agents and parts means the school is more than the total of its parts. But more importantly it shows the way the organisation adapts and learns as it moves forward. One school of thought within complexity theory is complexity thinking. This is useful because it provides a way to understand the tension between planned and emergent change models. In seeing change (transformation and adaptation) in complex organisations as the result of learning it points to leadership approaches which facilitate the conditions for emergent learning to take place.

2.3.1. Complexity Thinking

Complexity thinking is a school of thought within complexity theory which is pragmatic in nature (Davis and Sumara, 2006). Davis and Sumara (2006) argue that educational research to date has focused on describing complexity rather than offering pragmatic advice to educators and researchers about how to manage it. As a result it adopts a transdisciplinary approach which aims to 'embrace, blend and elaborate the insights of any and all relevant domains of human thought' in an attempt to understand and affect change in complex entities (Davis and Sumara, 2006, p. 7). Complexity thinking, then, is posited as a discourse and a lens through which to understand the world.

Educational organisations are perceived as complex learning systems where adaptations and changes are the result of emergent processes of thinking and learning

as its elements and actors interact. Davis and Sumara (2006) critique the practical leadership strategies suggested by systems thinkers (Senge et al, 1999; 2006) which tend to focus on improving the relationships between actors within the structural mechanics of systems. In education this may take the form of enhancing the use and availability of communication between departments. This leads to characterising change in terms of the maintenance or improvement of 'already existing social units without addressing the vital educational issue of the production of complex knowledge' (Davis and Sumara, 2006, p. 82). In other words this work does not address the notion of ideational emergence instead emphasising only the structural aspects of emergence. By this Davis and Sumara (2006) mean to suggest that systems thinking strategies stress the means to develop the networked structures and relationships between physical units that produce what is known at the expense of networked structures of ideas and meanings which emerge from the interaction between them.

Novelty and innovation in the form of new thinking, ideas, practices and initiatives can materialise from the establishment of structures and processes which facilitate emergence. Davis and Samara (2006) identify the conditions necessary for ideational emergence and self-organisation through three sets of dyads.

- **Specialisation** – living the tension between internal diversity and redundancy. Internal diversity is the range of capacities and experiences within a social group which are the sources of new ideas and actions. Internal redundancy is the excess or duplication of these capacities necessary for continued co-activity between agents. The diversity enables creativity and innovation whilst the redundancy enables coherence, stability and interactivity. A mixture of both is required at many levels of the organisation for emergence to occur.
- **Trans-level Learning** – enabling neighbour interactions through decentralised control (Streatfield, 2001). Learning must take place at many levels of the organisation beginning at the individual level, for there to be impact on the wider collective. Communication processes and opportunities within decentralised structures are critical to enabling this interaction to take place. Conceptual or ideational interaction e.g. sharing hunches, queries, ideas, and

understandings will take place through the mechanism of conversation and dialogue where agents can arrive at, share and develop their learning.

- **Enabling Constraints-** balancing randomness and coherence. This is the mix between those structures and processes which establish clear pre-defined boundaries for the work of the organisation and those which encourage creativity and originality and the production of novelty. These could be rules of behaviour or process, cultural and personal levels of commitment, or structural arrangements such as time schedules and deadlines and facilitative leadership and dialogic process. The balance between the two is therefore critical in generating novelty.

A complexity thinking approach provides us with a framework for better understanding of organisational change as emergence. Leadership for emergence implies employing approaches which leverage specialisation, trans-level learning and enabling constraints in order to create the structural and processual conditions for organisational learning and sense making to take place. This places leadership firmly within an organisational framework suggesting a focus on processes which support sensemaking through dialogue.

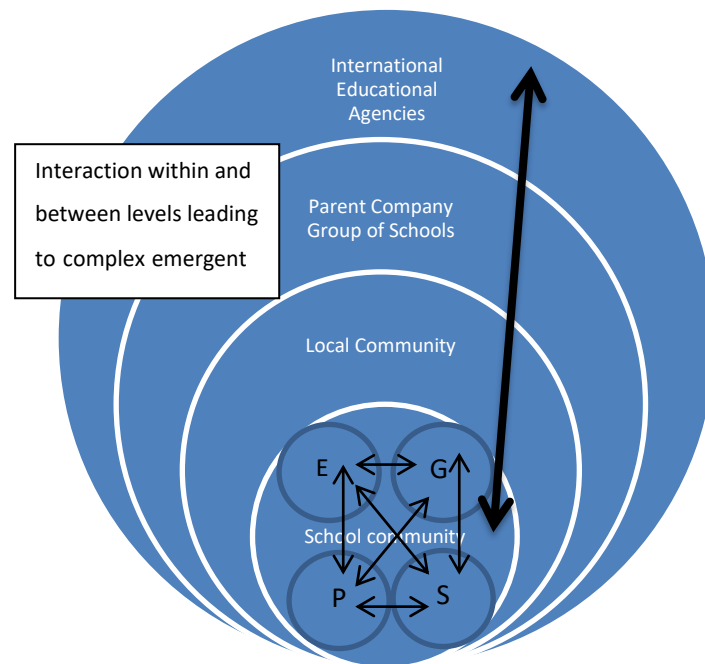
2.4. Organisational Learning and Sense Making

Complexity thinking and its focus on emergence is the basis for understanding how organisational change is the result of organisational learning and sensemaking. Complexity thinking suggests these may arise from and between the interactions of autonomous agents in bottom up decentralised contexts.

Learning in organisational terms is understood through level jumping 'between and among different layers of organisation, any of which might be properly identified as complex and all of which influence (both enabling and constraining) one another' (Davis and Sumara, 2006, p. 26). These layers of knowledge-producing entities are constantly interacting and negotiating what counts as collective knowledge. For

example, within the international school context we might suggest the following Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2. Level Jumping in Education- Adapted from Davis and Sumara (2006, p. 75)



Key

E Educational Staff (Support Staff, Senior Leaders, Middle Leaders, Teachers)

P Parents (Parents Association, Parents)

G Governance (Advisory Board)

Students (Student Council, Students)

This leads us to consider how organisational learning can be facilitated. A change model that is developed as a collective learning process, and which seeks to facilitate emergent thinking and learning could then contribute to the innovation necessary for sustained organisational change. The interacting layers of the school organisation engage in complex adaptive knowledge creation whilst simultaneously adapting to what is learned. This interplay between each of the ever deepening layers of the organisation can be likened to a viral organisational conversation (Herrero, 2008) spreading throughout the organisation and enhancing its adaptive capacity. The model employed in this study is an attempt to bring representatives from the many layers of

the organisation together within a social structure for emergent organisational learning. Those representatives will then transmit these outcomes back to the layers of organisation from which they came facilitating the interactive dialogic process between the different levels which will lead to organisational learning and sustained scale level change.

In this study of an international school the wider organisation is seen as the community which includes all members of teaching, administrative and ancillary staff, students, parents and board members. The assumptions in the DDP are that change processes which fail to engage all stakeholders are not sustainable and organisational learning is community learning where members of the community can create together their own organisational reality and then plan together how to shape the organisation's future (Sergiovanni, 2000; Stoll et al, 2003).

How does this community learning begin to occur? Dialogue is seen as the vehicle through which learning and sensemaking can take place. Associated with Weick (1995; 2001) sensemaking structures and orders experiences by turning them into words and images so that they take on meaning and thus reduce the equivocality and ambiguity in what we do and experience. 'Sensemaking creates some sort of order to the flow of events that we are undergoing and in so doing the world becomes structured in such a way that it becomes meaningful and workable' (Iveroth and Hallencruetz, 2016, pp. 47-48). The sensemaking process starts with a process of noticing. Observations and experiences are provisionally gathered together and then labelled. This is followed by retrospectively linking them to prior understanding. There is a relationship between a frame and a cue. The frame is the earlier attained knowledge and the cue is the immediate experience or observation that acts as a trigger to suggest something does not yet make sense.

Organisational sensemaking can also occur (Stensaker et al, 2008; Maitlis and Christanson, 2014) around corporate objectives or the school's strategic direction. This is constructed socially through conversations and dialogue with others (Weick et al, 2005)

‘Collectively people together interpret and translate information, events and experiences of an organisation with the aim of constructing a commonly shared meaning that makes the organisational world more workable and sensible’ (Iveroth and Hallencruetz, 2016, p. 49).

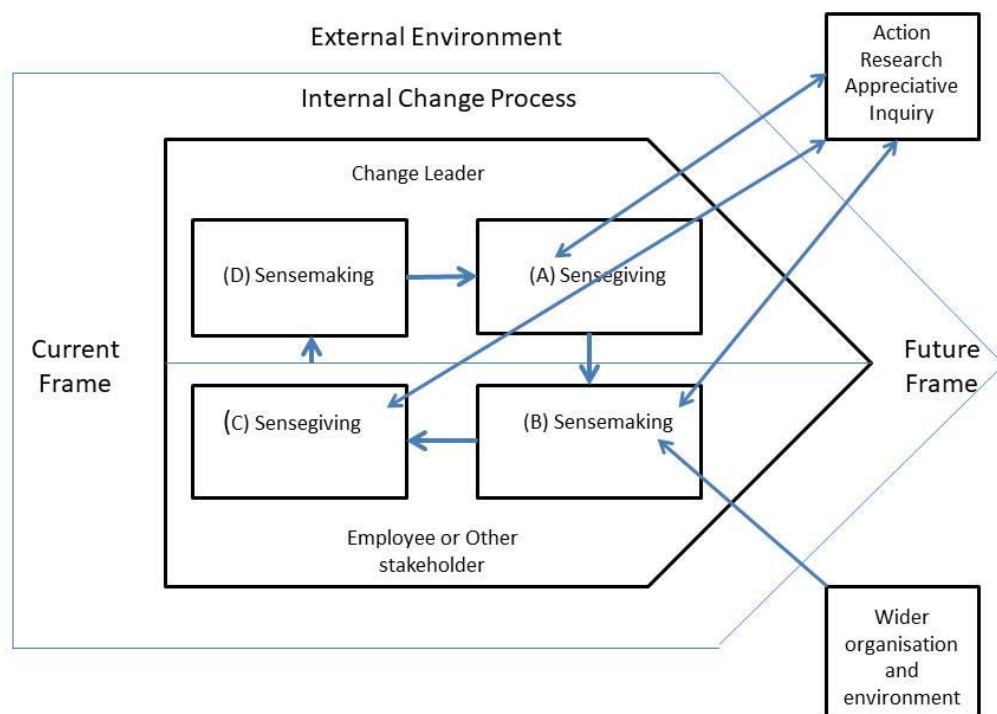
In organisations there is a great deal of presumption based upon historical experience. People will act on sensemaking already completed.

The link between organisational (community) learning and sensemaking is strong as it is through the process of sensemaking that narratives about what the school is and what it could become will emerge. Change processes which allow actors to engage in sensemaking will also address commonly held feelings of fear and uncertainty about change. However, without leadership there is no guarantee that a single coherent organisational narrative will emerge. This again resonates with Streatfield (2001). The leader is central to change but also not central at the same time.

If a school is a complex learning system its leaders need to focus on ways to facilitate the relationships between the many agents and nested systems within it. This means being acutely aware and being able to leverage the formal and informal micro-cultural, micro-structural and micro-political processes at play (Blase, 1998). Leadership of change is important for setting the parameters and limits of change and for bringing together the many organisational narratives for the sake of coherence. Iveroth and Hallencruetz (2016) refer to this role as centred on the process of sensegiving (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991; Rouleau, 2005; Maitlis and Lawrence, 2007). This is where a leader will provide perspective and conceptual models (Senge, 2006) through which individuals can better understand and make meaning out of agendas for organisational change. Typically, leaders will use both formal and informal modes of communication and may employ micro political techniques inter alia intimidation, coercion, rewards, support (Blasé and Anderson, 1995) to influence stakeholder interaction and behaviour. The use of informal conversation in the lunch queue, dining hall, staff room or in the corridors, as well as the provision of cues and mental models in meetings and

presentations are ways in which a leader can affect the construction of meaning for others. Stakeholders and employees use this when making sense of change. However, stakeholders also receive sensegiving information from other sources including each other in the same way. Hence, the leader is not in control of the process and indeed the leader's sensemaking capacity is also influenced by followers' sense giving activity. The interaction is therefore a reciprocal act of both sensemaking and sensegiving. It is a continuous and iterative cycle suggested by Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3 The reciprocal process of sensemaking and sensegiving Adapted from Iveroth and Hallencreutz (2016, p. 51)



In this study the leader's role in the sensemaking-sensegiving cycle is also influenced by the action research on a change process employing an appreciative inquiry model. As change takes place the change leader receives sensemaking information from stakeholders within the intervention but is also receiving sensemaking information

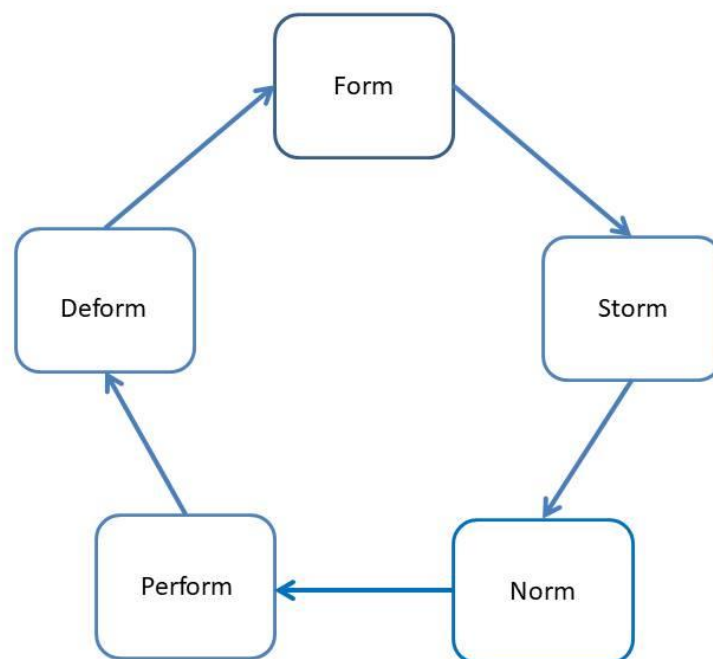
from the research and elsewhere e.g. the data collected and external agencies. This information is used in a sensegiving capacity and passed back to stakeholders within the process. Stakeholders also receive sensemaking information from outside the intervention which in turn is passed on to the researcher-leader in a sensegiving capacity to be used in the research.

The idea of sensemaking and sensegiving is a useful tool for illuminating how organisational change processes can work and the role of leaders within any intervention. For example, what is the role of facilitation? How can we explain the researcher-consultant role of the Principal? Sensemaking theory also highlights the importance of narratives and dialogue in change processes (Barrett et al, 1995; Quinn, 1996; Ford and Ford, 2009). The act of conversation with others transmits meaning between actors and narratives emerge (Brown et al, 2008; Albolafia, 2010). These co-created narratives about a change may clash, be negotiated and develop over time in the constant conversation and dialogue between different actors.

Conversation-based workshops encourage emergence by providing a setting in which to revisit and challenge prevailing organisational worldviews, practices and values and by questioning and understanding how these influence the school culture. (Claxton, 1999). Any dissonance resulting from the interplay of ideas and opinions can contribute to new insights, connections, relationships and patterning. If facilitated skilfully they create the conditions for emergent thinking and learning (Perkins, 1995). Structurally the group dynamics of teams and workshops have been described as developing linearly through four stages towards maximum efficiency and impact (Tuckman, 1965) – ‘forming’ (in which the team acts as individuals and there is little clarity on tasks and direction), ‘storming’ (where conflict, dissent and difference emerges and actors establish their roles and influence), ‘norming’ (in which a level of consensus and collective understanding is reached and ways of working and actors’ statuses are established) and finally ‘performing’ (where the group can function autonomously and shares a clear direction and where conflicts are resolved within the established values and agreements of the group). In emergent change processes Marshak (1993) has suggested the trajectory of development is cyclical and added a

fifth phase of 'deform' or 'decline' once goals had been completed. This would then mean the team would re-form and re-norm and move onwards as new membership is added and new goals established in the light of changing circumstances (Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4. Emergent Change Group Development Trajectory (Marshak, 1993)



In moving from a planned approach to a focus on emergent processes of change we need to think about leadership in conceptually different terms. Dialogue and conversation becomes one vehicle through which sensemaking and organisational learning can take place. On-going community dialogue and inquiry mindedness challenges assumptions and builds shared understandings (Bohm, 1985; 1999; Earl and Lee, 1998) shifting the school towards collective knowledge creation (Louis, 1994) but it is the role of leadership to facilitate the conditions which allow this to take place in the organisation and to ensure the open system does not close. This includes ensuring inputs (information, ideas, and resources) can come from outside of the organisation through conferences, professional development, turnover of staff etc. Shaw (2002) argues for a notion of the organisation as a collection of people working and talking

together instead of a structural entity existing over and above the individual and groups of individuals that inhabit it. The organisation is then conceptualised as a conversation and the act of conversing is then the process of organising. This is not to suggest paperwork and standard operating procedures do not have their place only that the bureaucracy should support the flow and exchange of ideas and perspectives. It is in these interactions that a patterning of understanding emerges which can co-construct and create potential futures for the individuals and groups concerned and thus for the organisation as a whole. Leadership for emergent change is then a question of facilitating organisational learning through cycles of inquiry based dialogue and sense making.

2.5. Dialogue

Davis and Sumara (2006) refer to action research as a process for opening up space for people with often differing motivations to come together to 'theorise' through discussion about a given topic. Despite divergent views and ideas within a particular group the dynamics of the practice of open discussion can lead to convergence and new learning based on syntheses or appreciations of existing ideas and practices. Better still they lead to new learning, resulting from wholly different ideas or practices which emerged from the practice of discussion. A good example of the impact of dialogue on emergent change can be found in the work of Fonseca (2002) on innovation and complexity in organisations. Fonseca suggests changes in the way we converse and the ideas which then emerge are responsible for innovation in complex systems (Fonseca, 2002). For Fonseca (2002, p. 5) innovation is quite simply the 'new patterning of our experience of working together' where what is known, understood and learned emerges in the on-going relating of people in the living present and 'organisational change, learning and knowledge creation are the same as change in communicative interaction, whether people are conscious of it or not.' (Fonseca, 2002, p. 8) In other words, innovation is the new thinking that is done between people as they engage in conversation. The narratives produced maintain the complex organisation as an open system. From this perspective the degree to which organisations and their people change and innovate is dependent upon the quality of

the conversational life within it and the back and forth interactive process of sense making and sense giving (Iveroth and Hallencruetz, 2016).

Leadership for innovation and organisational change is therefore about liberating the organisational processes for emergence through a dialogic process. Osberg and Biesta (2008, p. 323) conceptualise a classroom as a 'space of emergence'. This requires the existence of a plurality of ideas and people where the role of the educator is 'to complicate the scene, to unsettle the doings and understandings of those being educated, in order to keep the way open' for emergent possibilities (Osberg and Biesta p. 325). Borrowing this idea the Dialogic Development Process implemented in this study is an attempt to influence a 'space of emergence' through dialogue within a community workshop structure.

2.5.1. Dialogue and Organisational Narratives

Sustainable change in complex organisations involves mastery of communication skills and particularly how to facilitate and encourage dialogue. This is the means for connecting diverse agents in the formal and informal interrelationships necessary for emergent thinking and learning (Morrison, 2002). It is also a means to access the psycho-social processes of how people make sense of their surroundings (Iveroth and Hallencruetz, 2016). In order to understand change processes in individuals and organisations we need to acknowledge the connection between internal dialogues and learning, and what we say and learn in conversations with others. As Susan Scott (2002, p. 83) states, 'All conversations are with myself, and sometimes they involve other people'. We all have many voices which can take the form of images, words, sounds, sensations or feelings. Coherent with the complexity thinking idea of level jumping our internal dialogue can influence and be influenced by those with whom we interact.

Dialogue is the way we construct and negotiate shared ideas, understandings and meanings about reality through talk. Scott (2002, p. 47) calls this reality our 'ground truth'. During conversation you listen and deliberate weighing up, selecting and

processing information to make meaning of experiences and arguments. Dialogue provides a feedback mechanism in our sensemaking about the world. This can take place formally and informally and at different levels. Dialogue can be regressive or degenerative and which individualises, inhibits, excludes, reduces and simplifies. Or it can be progressive and generative, which collectivises, includes, deepens, flows and amplifies (Perkins, 2003). Typically narratives about school change tend to be based on a deficit model of the organisation – what is wrong and how can we fix it. A process which is positive and generative may hold promise for greater creativity and novelty.

Generally we think of dialogue as good conversation but a more developed definition is offered by Isaacs (1999, p. 19) who states, 'It is a means for accessing the intelligence and coordinated power of groups of people'. It is a conversational flow of meaning where people think together (Bohm, 1999). Thinking together implies you suspend your own opinions and levels of certainty and are receptive to alternatives. Dialogue has the power to alter, reset or harmonise mental pathways for the individual. It is therefore a transformative activity in that it attempts to bring about personal and ultimately organisational change at the level of people's thoughts and feelings (Isaacs, 1999; Shaw, 2002).

'In dialogue, one not only solves problems, one dissolves them. We do not merely try to reach agreements; we try to create a context from which many new agreements might come. And we seek to uncover a base of shared meaning that can greatly coordinate and align our actions with our values' (Isaacs, 1999, p. 19).

Narratives, or stories, play a central role in sensemaking in organisations (Iveroth and Hallencruetz, 2016; Jabri, 2012; Brown et al, 2008) and conversation is the vehicle through which we express them. The everyday interaction of individuals at work and the continuous process of conversation lead to co-created narratives of organisational meaning and identity. In organisations there are many narratives and thus versions of reality. As Iveroth and Hallencruetz (2016, p. 62) state:

‘It is through the exchange of utterance that: a) we begin to understand what and why others think and act in a certain way in regards to change and b) at the same time we form an opinion about what we ourselves think about change and how we should now act upon it’.

Stakeholders speak through their own narrative (Jabri, 2012). Leaders who listen to them legitimise and engage these stakeholders both in the process of change and by connecting them with others in the development of a wider organisational narrative. Leaders can thus influence the direction of change by becoming active participants in co-creating these organisational narratives (Streatfield, 2001).

Isaacs (1999) argues that most change efforts fail because of two contradictions. First is a structural contradiction or trap (Kantor, 2013). In order for change to work people need to take responsibility and be committed to it. Yet they are often told what the change is and how they should think about it. Juanita Brown et al (2005) argue that traditionally talk in organisation is seen as the precursor to getting things done. Followers are essentially passengers who receive information and then are expected to accept it (perhaps without question) and behave accordingly. Instead of creating conditions where empowerment and learning naturally emerge conversation is used to manufacture them (Isaacs, 1999, p. 338). Isaac’s second contradiction is that empowerment is often seen as ‘a thing to achieve rather than a path to follow’ (Isaacs, 1999, p. 338). By focusing on delivering programmed outcomes instead of emergent processes, choice and ownership is withdrawn and engagement fades.

An alternative is to adopt an approach where dialogue is a core process in a process of change (Shaw, 2002; Stacey, 2012). New thinking and practice emerge out of a process whereby shared meanings are co-constructed between individuals and between them and their leaders. This potentially could lead to greater ownership, commitment and agency. We then open up the possibility in organisations for discovering new insights and formulating sustainable responses to the challenges of organising continuous improvement and change. The change model used in this study adopts a community-wide, inquiry focused, dialogic process approach to organisational learning and which:

‘suspends taken-for-granted ways of operating in order to develop the capacity to ‘see the system’ and reflect on the structure and forces that produce incoherence; which respects the ecology of relationships that develop in and around the organisation; which listens in order to empower actors to stay present and fully participative and which finds, enhances and strengthens the organisation’s central voice or story’ (Isaacs, 1999, p. 340)

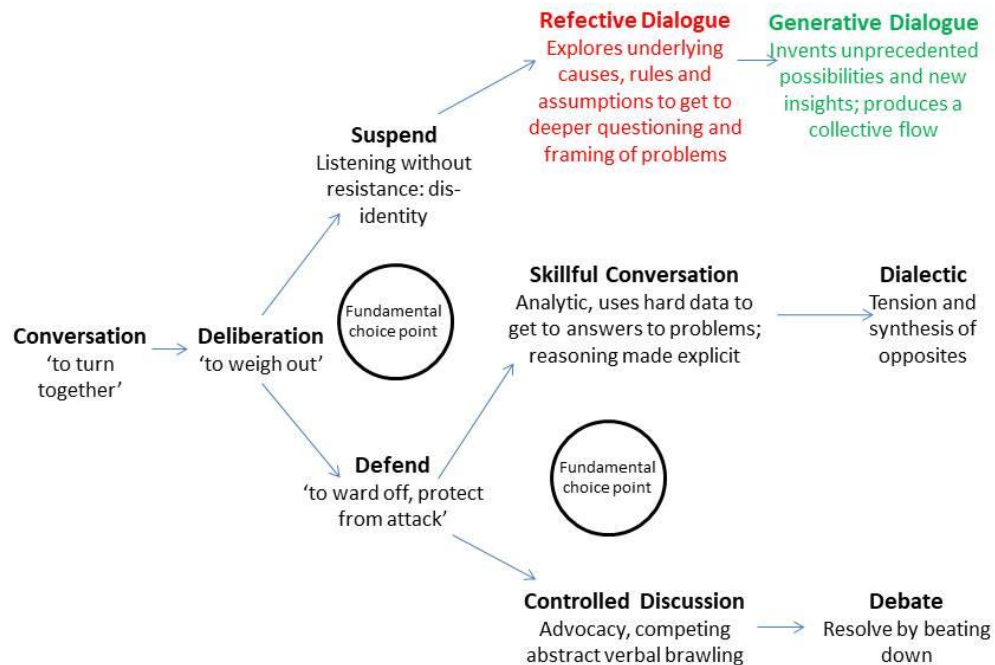
So, how can we understand the function of dialogue within such a model?

2.5.2. Towards Generative Dialogue

Isaacs (1999) provides a description of the progression and choices we make in moving towards the space of emergence where we are thinking and talking together with others rather than alone (Figure 2.5.). This is generative dialogue. Conversation is the start of dialogue and begins with a conscious choice to turn together. During conversation individual beliefs about the world can be confronted with alternative beliefs. At this point we face a choice either to suspend what we think or defend it. If you choose to suspend your thinking you will move towards ‘reflective dialogue’ where you begin to explore with others the assumptions, sources and arguments for your position. This may lead to ‘generative dialogue’ where you create together new possibilities, insights and ideas contributing to a collective flow of emergent creativity and novelty.

If you choose to defend your position the alternative route is towards ‘discussion’. Here you remain, in thought though not in person, separate from others in the group. The conversation resembles a ping-pong or billiard ball process where ideas are batted back and forth together using data and explicit reasoning as dialectic or, in an unskilled way, simply by force of personality or power based means to win a debate (Isaacs, 1999).

Figure 2.5. Progression to Generative Dialogue Adapted from Isaacs (1999, p. 41)



Discussion assumes agreement will emerge after engaging in a battle of ideas between two alternatives. Decisions lead to outcomes and outcomes lead to actions. Dialogue, on the other hand, is about widening that choice and exploring ways to develop insight and free up assumptions and thinking. We need both, of course, and indeed this rather linear description obscures the ebb and flow of the process and the choice making but emergent thinking and learning is likely to occur as a result of dialogue rather than discussion and the objective of generative dialogue a goal in a Dialogic Development Process for emergent thinking and learning. It is for this reason we concentrate on the route from defending to suspending.

2.5.3. Facilitating Generative Dialogue

A variety of practical dialogic leadership practices and models have emerged from writers in the commercial world (Scott, 2002; Perkins, 2003; Brown et al, 2005; Ford

and Ford, 2009) but these are often developments of ideas drawn from Bohm (1999), Isaacs (1999) and Scharmer (2009). Perkins (2003) identifies generative and degenerative conversational cultures and the actions which characterise them. Actions that shape generative conversations include moves that clarify, probe, test, invite and integrate. Actions that shape degenerative conversation include moves that dismiss, assert, defend, criticise and isolate.

Writers on dialogue distinguish conversations for advocacy and inquiry (Argyris, 1990; Isaacs, 1999; Scott, 2002; Ridings, 2011; Kantor, 2013). When conversation is for advocacy participants speak truths, take positions, make judgements and take stances. These conversations take the form of debate to test the validity or rigour of an argument. By contrast, conversations for inquiry are more open aiming to seek what others know, see and understand; where different meanings are shared and common meanings may arise (Jabri, 2004). Generative dialogue is characterised by a balance between advocacy and inquiry (Argyris, 1990; Isaacs, 1999). Therefore speaking with authentic voice, respecting others, listening for understanding and suspending judgement are the key practices for facilitating generative dialogue (Isaacs, 1999).

Dialogue can exhibit high or low levels of advocacy or inquiry. A conversation which is high advocacy/low inquiry is one-way communication—which is helpful when giving information, but without generating understanding of different perspectives or building commitment to action. Advocacy that imposes one person's views usually creates compliance or resistance. A conversation which is high inquiry/low advocacy is also one-way but in a different sense because the speaker does not state his or her views. This could be interpreted as meaning there is a hidden agenda with questions being employed to help the participants uncover what the speaker already believes is correct. Low inquiry/low advocacy conversations also flow in one direction with lots of observation but little participation. Conversations which are high advocacy/high inquiry foster two-way communication and learning and balancing advocacy and inquiry. When we find the correct balance mutual learning can occur when advocacy is based on data and when inquiry seeks others' views and probes thinking that led to them.

One of the difficulties of dialogue is managing dissent. If conflict is creative, forming part of a discussion, this can be useful as a way to change negative feedback loops to the positive (Perkins, 2003). Leadership which facilitates consensus and mutual learning can help groups develop generative dialogue.

2.5.4. Fields of Conversation

Dialogue is a particular form of conversation which involves the thinking and talking together of a shared inquiry. Scharmer (2009) describes four fields of conversation with different kinds of conversational energy or flows which are understood as dialogic processes leading towards generative dialogue. Others have referred to these fields as tides or hidden undercurrents (Ridings, 2011) whereas Isaacs (1999) sees them as part of the invisible architecture of dialogue. These fields are characterised as Politeness; Breakdown; Inquiry and Flow. Dialogue in the fields of politeness and breakdown are marked by discussion and advocacy; that which is in the fields of inquiry and flow suggest reflective and generative dialogue. Dialogic leadership manages the ecology of the workshop facilitating behaviours which progressively move individuals through the four fields to the field of flow. In so doing leaders enhance the reflective capacities of the participants and build an identity which focuses on the big picture of the collective (system) rather than the individual (parts of the system).

2.5.5. Dialogic Leadership of Change

The above discussion suggests sustainable change is an emergent learning process best led collaboratively through dialogic processes which engage participants and facilitate personal and organisational sense making. A number of writers identify the need for different leadership styles and approaches for convening dialogue depending upon which field of conversation you are working with (Isaacs, 1999; Perkins, 2003; Scharmer, 2009; Ridings, 2011). This section is not an attempt to add to the already vast number of leadership typologies. Rather the approach being presented here is the facilitation of emergent thinking and learning which is achieved by guiding groups

progressively through a dialogic process of generative dialogue from discussion to inquiry to flow.

Yet reflective and generative dialogue is not necessarily always effective for emergent thinking and learning. Perkins (2003) identifies three pathologies of collaborative conversations. The first is what Perkins calls 'Brownian motion' sometimes referred to as the 'multi-headed animal syndrome' (Doyle and Straus, 1976). This is the idea that with large groups and complex problems you get many voices around the table talking in different directions rather than talking and thinking together. Without an organising leadership, shared meaning, outcomes and product might fail. A tyranny of process takes over. Secondly we see the phenomenon of 'downspiraling'. Here conversation gets stuck in a spiral with no end due to the force of character of one person or the fruitless pursuit of irrelevance or frivolity. Again, leadership is required to manage time and focus. Lastly we have 'groupthink' (Janis, 1972). This is where conversation settles into neat comfortable agreement for the sake of consensus. This excessive compliance can lead to a form of blindness which stifles novel emergent thinking and learning.

This is why the role of leadership in the emergent change processes focuses on facilitation (Straus, 2002; Doyle, 2007). But if we are seeking collaborative leadership practice for generative dialogue – dialogic leadership – Perkins (2003) argues this is not really good enough. In other words, facilitation moderates discussion whereas collaboration means more than mere participation and mutual sharing. The implication here is that Streatfield's (2001) notion of leadership of being in control by not being in control is subtly different from leadership by leaving alone or leadership by letting go. The latter is messy and prone to poor outcomes and a tyranny of the process. Amongst their guidelines for leading change through sensemaking Iveroth and Hallencreutz (2016) argue that leaders should unblock improvisation such that it narrows the time between planning and execution, facilitate learning such that it allows for the adaptation of a shared mental model and translate ideas within the organisation into something understandable and workable for people. A collaborative inquiry-centred leadership approach where leaders are simultaneously in control and not in control

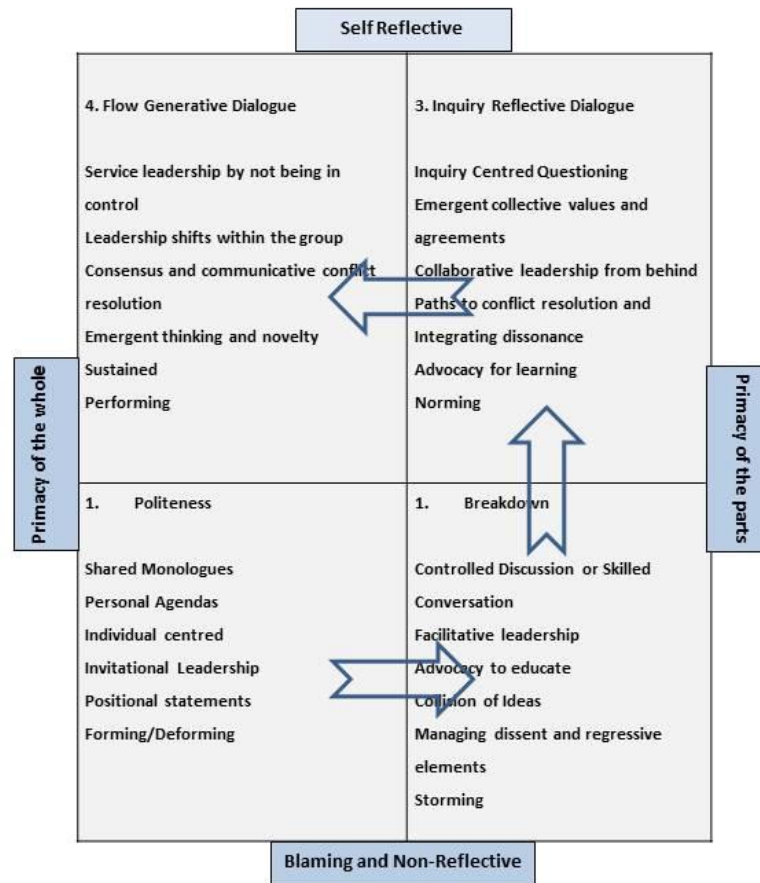
encourages both inquiry and emergent outcomes by setting the appropriate frameworks within which sensemaking and emergence can take place.

By adopting a complexity thinking perspective organisational change becomes an emergent social process where emergent potential can be encouraged, inter alia, by decentralised control and enhanced neighbor interactions. In developing a model of dialogic leadership of change we are therefore asserting that dialogue is the central mechanism through which much of our individual and organisational sensemaking, motivation, and thus narratives emerge. To think and talk together can bring about individual and then organisational change at the level of feelings and thoughts. It is therefore appropriate that we begin with the model of generative dialogue suggested by Isaacs (1999) and Scharmer (2009).

Isaacs (1999) differentiates Scharmer's (2009) idea of fields of conversation from what he prefers to coin 'containers' of conversation (Isaacs, 1999, p. 242). Fields are spaces in which there is a particular quality of energy or exchange. Containers, on the other hand, are vessels into which relatively observable features of fields - distinct characteristics, patterns and pressures - can be added and combined to create emergent transformative potential. Bringing diverse perspectives from the community together within an inquiry-focused workshop structure establishes a container within which the conditions for emergence can arise. However, managing this process of human interaction and ideational interchange within groups and teams requires organisation so as to avoid a tyranny of process and to bring coherence to the outcomes. This is especially so as groups and teams develop their collective sense of identity and loyalty, ways of working and seeing the world (Tuckman, 1965; Marshak, 1993). During this process managerial power and prior intention can impede generative dialogue and transformative capacity so we need practice where leaders set aside management intention and instead embrace the wider self-organising dynamic inherent in complex process. This implies organisers participating collaboratively in the construction of meaning and from which collective rather than an individual leader's intention emerges facilitating process but not in control of outcomes (Streatfield, 2001).

Integrating these ideas leads us to the notion of 'dialogic contexts' rather than simply fields of conversation, or the more developed notion of dialogic containers. These dialogic contexts combine and integrate elements of models of dialogic practice and group dynamics with the leadership approach suggested by complex process. We can then adapt the Isaacs-Scharmer model by establishing a four quadrant model of observable characteristics we can call a Dialogic Development Process (DDP) (Figure 2.6). The quadrants specify the observable leadership approach, group dynamic and dialogic mode for each context illustrating the way dialogue develops through four fields beginning with the non-reflective personal or parochial agendas displayed in 'politeness' and 'breakdown' and then moving to the wider organisational, reflective thinking of 'inquiry' and finally to the generative dialogue and emergence of 'flow'. Embedded leaders facilitate the dialogue for advocacy and dialogue for inquiry in such a way that talking and thinking together can take place and outcomes are produced. Greater advocacy can be seen in the discussion of 'breakdown' and more inquiry evident in the dialogue of 'reflection'. The generative dialogue of 'flow' balances inquiry and advocacy for emergent thinking and novelty (Isaacs, 1999). A workshop that exhibits a 'performing' group dynamic and dialogic flow self manages - collaborating within shared collective values and behaviours; invites alternative perspectives - inquiring about assumptions, knowledge claims and discursive logic; seeks consensus through respectful negotiation and accommodation and is sustained by facilitators who are embedded leaders in control of the eventual outcome but framing the direction of thought and talk. This is complex process because dialogue is informed and developed by the energy from information and people from outside and because it brings together to think in organisational terms many representatives of local networks establishing the freedom and coherence necessary for new ideas and insights to emerge from the process.

Figure 2.6. Dialogic Development Process Contexts Adapted from Isaacs (1999), Perkins (2003), Scharmer (2009)



2.6. Conclusion

The world is complex, dynamic and constructed, interpreted and experienced by people in their interactions with each other and with wider systems. International schools must adapt to the complexity of the world they are educating for. Studies suggest few leaders are successful when leading planned sustainable organisational change indicating a gap between the rhetoric and the reality suggested by planned change models taken from the commercial world. These models simplify a complex reality by avoiding the human dimension of change in organisation and decoupling them from leadership. Transformational leadership, characterised by vision-centred

heroic leaders, is rarely enough to engage people and sustain change over the long term.

This requires a complex response, a component of which is complexity thinking. Adopting a complexity thinking lens helps us to understand change as a contextualised emergent social process of organisational learning and sense making; a process which takes place on many scales and levels within the organisation. Rather than a fixed destination to be achieved, change becomes a continuous process spreading virally between and through the many levels of interrelationships within the organisation (Gladwell, 2000; Herrero, 2008; Iveroth and Hallencruetz, 2016).

Once we adopt a complexity lens it becomes clearer what the role of the leader should be in an international school and where leverage in change models should be applied. Leading organisational change is about becoming part of the organisation embedded in the process of change rather than sitting over and above it. It also means connecting community stakeholders in the change process (Judge and Bauld, 2001; Wood, 2017). This suggests a decentralised, collaborative leadership model where the leader acts in a sensegiving role facilitating dialogue between stakeholders. Dialogic leadership of change enables people to develop and own the innovations and changes they collectively arrive at. Novelty and change are sustained through greater community engagement and a guided but rolling process of emergent thinking and learning.

Innes and Booher (2010) argue for planning approaches in complex systems which embrace emergence. They argue for a move away from top-down "fixes" and instead toward creating and implementing structures of deliberation among a broad and diverse set of stakeholders. This means collaborative practices which fall heavily on the use of dialogue within a community of inquiry. This is an argument also made by Shaw (2002) about the role of dialogue and Brown et al (2005). Dialogue serves as a vehicle for information discovery and exchange, and for continuous learning and knowledge production which can then be used for planning for change. Dialogue is critical because face to face communication is essential for the discovery of mutual benefits and because without it change processes might be unsustainable. Conversations in small

groups can contribute to a larger consensus as opportunities are provided to challenge assumptions and power differentials. Relationships, not facts, are the key ingredient for lasting outcomes (Innes and Booher, 2010, p. 85).

The Dialogic Development Process (DDP) is the conceptual framework for the practical model of emergent change implemented in this study. It was designed to create an emergent process which is only ever planned in a skeletal sense - providing the parameters for what is practicable and bringing coherence to the many emergent narratives. The model then allows sufficient space for participants in a workshop setting to contribute their particular ideas and interests and to provide a means for a continuous negotiation of possible innovations. It is for this reason that workshop committees were constituted from diverse voices in the school community and led by self-selected facilitators employing partially structured conversations. In the context of an international school transformational leadership is establishing the means for the community to drive the change.

The intervention is one of a number of approaches which could be taken and which may not be appropriate in all contexts. However, it is an approach which could potentially have relevance in whole or in part to other contexts suggesting routes or tools for the leadership of change for others attempting to address similar issues.

Chapter 3 – Research Methods

3.1. Introduction

The chapter critically establishes the rationale, assumptions and strategy for the choice of research approach. It will make the argument that a pragmatic philosophical stance, coherent with a complexity thinking framework, is the most useful way to understand the praxis of facilitating organisational change through the vehicle of a Dialogic Development Process (DDP). This model is an appreciative inquiry and is best studied using a mixed methods research design. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical and epistemological implications of this approach.

3.2. The Research Context

The research context was an international school located in Spain of 750 students drawn from 50 nationalities, and 100 staff drawn from 20 nationalities. The school offered three of the four curricula offered by the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO). It was a member of a multinational group of 44 schools and had been a sole proprietor run school for some forty years prior to being sold to a small international schools group in 2011. This was then bought by the larger multinational in 2013. This impacted the school in many ways with the introduction of a regional management team, a central education department and controls from the company on school systems, especially financial. Company policies and procedures were introduced to systematise and align the diverse practices of acquired schools and the company's brand and marketing strategy was refined and relaunched across all schools.

The school was regularly accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), the Council of International Schools (CIS) and the IBO in a joint model involving a whole community self-study. This culminated in an evaluative visit by a team of peers and appointed external accreditors. This was in addition to inspection processes by the parent company and the Spanish Ministry. At the time of

research these processes were not yet aligned, so multiple processes of review took place impacting on implementation and sustainable change. This picture is typical of many independent international schools.

The result of these processes fed into a strategic plan which typically lasted for five years. The existing strategic plan was in need of updating having been largely written by the former Head of School following consultation with the Advisory Board and the Senior Leadership Team. A new plan was required to reflect the mid-cycle progress visit from CIS, the report from the five year evaluation of the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) and the impact of new ownership. It was this development of the plan which was the focus of the study.

3.3. Positionality of the Researcher

During the research period I was simultaneously the Head of School (Principal) and the researcher and, as lead facilitator, I was also both an embedded and a semi-detached participant in this process. Fulfilling these three roles was of continuous concern as the objectives and purposes of all three positions influenced the practice of the other. In practice this meant addressing participants' professional vulnerability, desire for anonymity and concerns for confidentiality. It also involved minimising the influence of the leader's position of power on responses during data collection and participants' behaviour during the implementation of the model. My positionality was therefore an on-going practical, methodological and ethical consideration during the study. These concerns were minimised through radical transparency and frequent opportunities for feedback during the regularly scheduled meetings with participants. They were also addressed specifically in a letter of participation which also stated what and where data gathered can and would be used.

Of particular consideration in the conduct of the research and the implementation of the model was therefore the role played by power and ethics, specifically, the potential impact of the influence of the Head over the research findings and the outcomes from the DDP process. In addition this means addressing any potential risk

to participants of contributions or comments made as a result of participation which might impugn or question other employees, the values or the mission of the company or school or which could have placed them and others in unprofessional situations.

In terms of the research the ethical and methodological implications of conducting the research as school leader embedded in the project were continuously addressed through reflective and reflexive feedback loops. The research journal and the regular strategy meetings with close associates in the project support team checked and balanced the influences of the author's positionality in the study. Conclusions drawn or observations made were scrutinised by this team and/or cross-referenced against responses from participants within the interviews.

Another aspect of considering power and ethics was my directional influence over the process and outcomes. Though I had no formal role in the generation of new ideas and tasks, the design of the model and the facilitation of the process was the responsibility of the Head as lead facilitator. This left me free to frame the parameters of the inquiry and observe and intervene when guidance was sought or to help participants move towards outcomes. In taking a position 'outside' of the workshop process the leader was a facilitator of change, rather than a leader of change. This encouraged democratic 'bottom up' emergent processes.

During the AI cycle I intervened twice. On one occasion I offered guidance to a group who had requested permission to include what they believed to be a subversive idea in their vision statement. On the second occasion I offered a form of words to a group to help reframe an idea which they had already identified but were struggling to articulate. These interchanges show how my power and influence was used collaboratively and my actions were consistent with the role of an internal consultant facilitating sensegiving for participants. Members of bodies with leadership responsibilities such as the senior leadership team, parent association, school advisory board were also involved in the process. It could be suggested that these members could have been directed by me or voluntarily assumed managerial intent to fill the space vacated by the Head. Though there were recorded incidences where their

respective power and authority was exercised, observation and data from interviews appears to suggest they were considered no more or less powerful than any other member. In fact, though their voices may have carried more weight in conversations they were listened to as moderating forces in the discussions as a result of their expertise rather than as a result of any forced agreement. None of the senior leaders were asked, nor showed any willingness, to facilitate committees.

In addition, interview responses from participants to questions relating to my influence confirmed my contribution was to the organisation of the process rather than to the production of outcomes. One specific incidence during data collection serves to illustrate how participants were empowered. Questions to a focus group on employee effectiveness were framed to gather data which would eventually inform the design of the model. However I carelessly conflated the objectives of the research with objectives driven by the company to improve the school which resulted in distrust and scepticism about the true motivation for the focus group. Some participants questioned my motivation to improve the school whilst others questioned my motivation to conduct objective research. Rather than hold back criticism for fear of going against the company and the Head, participants spoke truth to power by pointing out that I had crossed an ethical line between research and management. This incident is evidence that the power to coerce participants into responses I might have sought by virtue of my position was not, in fact, an active concern. Taken together with the evidence from the interventions and the corroborating interview responses it can be argued that I was successful in managing the issue of power and ethics and that adopting a position as research-consultant to mitigate the impacts of leadership power over a democratic process within an action research project can work.

The position I adopted in the action research was consistent with the idea of 'research-consulting (Stacey and Griffin, 2005, p. 75)' where the roles of consultant and researcher are merged. This is seen as useful in action research because it embraces subjectivity, builds accounts of narrative experience and sense making and sees theory and practice as one and the same thing (Stacey and Griffin, 2005). Christensen (2005, p. 14) describes this as 'emerging participative exploration' where the researcher

participates in the ongoing process of emergent policy and practice. Reflective and reflexive conversations are used to derive narratives from and with participants about how we make sense of what is going on and how 'the future is perpetually constructed' (Christensen, 2005, p. 100). The position of the researcher is therefore to participate in 'making sense of and reporting from within these processes' (Christensen, 2005, p. 101) and with the possibility that these emerging narratives will show changes in meaning and identity as a result of the on-going interaction and dialogue.

Seen through a perspective where the leader is central to change it could be argued that this participative, democratic approach might diminish the influence of the leader over future direction for the organisation. However, seen through an organisation perspective this approach changes the nature of leadership by embedding it within an organisational process. The researcher-leader's position of authority and power, his values, preferences and commitments will still be influential in the community, but now the role of the leader as researcher is to transparently act as an internal consultant framing the boundaries of conversation, provoking inquiry and adding coherence to integrated outcomes. In this way he collaborates with participants in a 'sense-giver' role leading the process of dialogue (Iveroth and Hallencruetz, 2016). The evidence presented above supports the view that I was successful in mitigating the potential impact of power by positioning myself as research-consultant.

It is also important to acknowledge the messy reality of carrying out practical action research whilst simultaneously being embedded in that research as the Head of School. Combining the two roles involves having to balance the complex and temporal constraints that arise from both internal and external sources. The author occupied a pivot point between wanting to initiate an emergent change model but also needing to implement many other agendas and priorities often mandated from outside. These competing priorities mean micro-political challenges and time pressures conspire to make the implementation of action research hardly simple. It is not always possible to follow the systematic, consistent, symmetrical journey that some consider 'proper' research. For example, during the course of this study it was not always possible to

collect the volume of data and at the right time that might have been preferred. Similarly, in the spirit of complexity thinking the research journey frequently led to unexpected questions or veered off into unplanned routes of enquiry. This experience has been referred to by Cook (2008) as the 'mess' of action research.

Nevertheless Cook argues that such mess can produce many useful insights. Rather than seeing messy action research as sloppy research Cook (2008) argues that action research is about engaging with what she calls the 'messy area' where interventions cause reframing to take place and new knowledge to emerge. Mess is therefore a vehicle through which individual and collective learning takes place and which subsequently leads to the very transformative practice and change we seek.

3.4. The Aims of the Study

The change management model and research was developed as a reflective response to experience 'in the field'. As the intent is to improve professional practice the project can be seen as an exercise in 'praxis' (Kolb, 1984; Freire, 2000; Arendt, 1998). The aims of the research are to develop a model of participative transformation which, by engaging with complexity, offers new insights into effective schooling and which contributes to a body of practitioner knowledge about the leadership of change in international schools.

3.5. Research Questions

The main research question for this study is:

What contribution can a Dialogic Development Process (DDP) make to the management of transformative change in my school context?

This overarching question leads to the following four supporting research questions (SRQs) which will be addressed through the design and implementation of an action research model:

SRQ1 - What are the characteristics of a Dialogic Development Process?

SRQ2 - What is transformative change in an international school context?

SRQ3 - Can a Dialogic Development Process bring about organisational change?

SRQ4 - What is the role of a school leader in sustainable change practices in international schools?

The data gathered, methods used and questions posed are used as part of a holistic analysis of the intervention. Whilst acknowledging the arguments of Morin (1992) about the reductivism implicit in holism, a holistic analysis is adopted because it is coherent with the complexity thinking perspective of schools as learning systems though the unpredictability of complex entities suggests a full and complete understanding of them would never really be possible

3.6. Ontological, Epistemological and Methodological Assumptions of the Study – Pragmatism and Complexity Thinking

Knowledge resulting from linear, reductivist thinking and simplification contrasts with more complex, systemic or interrelated thinking. This study assumes that knowledge will be multi-causal, multivariable, co-constructed and shared socially in many contexts. Some of this knowledge may be hidden emerging unpredictably from the process of human interaction. In short, knowledge is the result of complex processes and is always seen as provisional. As the focus is on an intervention designed to respond to and embrace organisational complexity this study adopts a stance based on organic, non-linear and holistic assumptions. It is for this reason the study adopts a pragmatic philosophical stance with a mixed methods methodology. Complexity thinking is used as a lens through which to see and analyse the research problem and the proposed change model.

Pragmatists are not committed to any one system of philosophy or methodology and do not believe in an absolute unity for the world. They reject traditional dualisms (e.g., rationalism vs. empiricism, realism vs. antirealism, free will vs. determinism, subjectivism vs. objectivism) except where these work in solving problems. The natural or physical world is considered as important as the emergent social and psychological world of human experience in action. Thus, knowledge is viewed as being both constructed and based on the reality of the world we experience and live in (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Creswell (2009) suggests Pragmatists (Rorty, 1983; Cherryholmes, 1992; Peirce and Turrissi, 1997) are more concerned with what works and solutions to problems rather than 'antecedent conditions' (Creswell, 2009, p. 10). They assign meaning or significance to phenomena on the basis of 'their empirical and practical consequences' (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17). What is true is what works at the time and in context for as long as evidence supports it. Pragmatism endorses eclecticism and pluralism e.g., different, even conflicting, theories and perspectives can be useful. Pragmatism is therefore well suited to developing practical theory which arises out of, and contributes to, practice (praxis). It is the objective of this study to contribute 'practitioner knowledge' about the practice of change leadership (Schon, 1983).

This has implications for the way we conduct research. What matters is the practical solution to an existing issue. This means a pragmatic researcher can consider mixing methods, assumptions and philosophies depending upon the problem being investigated and be better placed to produce valid and reliable practical knowledge. In effect one should 'choose the combination or mixture of methods and procedures that works best for answering your research questions' (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17).

In order to effectively utilise a range of data collection tools, researchers need to consider the relevant characteristics of quantitative and qualitative research. For example, in general quantitative research focuses on deduction, confirmation, theory/hypothesis testing, explanation, prediction, standardised data collection, and statistical analysis. By contrast qualitative research focuses on induction, discovery,

exploration, theory/ hypothesis generation, the subjectivity of the researcher in data collection, and narrative analysis (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Whilst qualitative and quantitative research approaches are often seen as contrasting paradigmatic stances, pragmatism offers a way of bringing these traditions together.

Pragmatism is sceptical of the 'analytical reductionist' thinking that Positivist approaches can lead to (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Radford, 2006). This thinking assumes the world is probably knowable through logical, cause and effect relationships. The educational researcher 'seeks to reduce complex wholes to particular factors and to identify correlations between them and desirable outcomes' (Radford, 2006, p. 178). This is unhelpful if it is the only stance taken as it does not give us a sufficiently rich insight into the sense or meaning being made by participants in a dialogic model of change (Jorg et al, 2007; Elkana, 2000).

Within this framework of a pragmatic stance, the study relating to a small-scale, praxis driven context is nevertheless idiographic in nature and so sees change within a given context as a cultural phenomenon and schools as meaning-making systems within which many realities are socially constructed (Schutz, 1972; Garfinkel, 1984; Gergen, 2009; Luckmann and Berger, 1966; Mead, 1934). The reality of change is therefore created in the cultures of schools and in the minds of multiple actors through continuous and negotiated dialogue or conversation. Stacey and Griffin (2005, p. 7) go further than this by identifying a 'complex responsive processes of relating' in which organisational reality is constructed both socially through the actions of groups of people as they interact, and simultaneously, individually as one interacts with others and oneself. Organisational reality is the emergent 'process' of co-creating meaning and any researcher must therefore engage in both reflective and reflexive processes with their participants in order to study this (Stacey and Griffin, 2005). At the same time the study involves an evaluation of the impact of an intervention which can add to any arguments regarding transferability. Indeed many empirical studies have argued for and used complexity as a framework (Toh and Soh, 2011; Phelps and Graham, 2010; Radford, 2008). Mixing research traditions and methods enables us to hypothesise deductively about the impact of the model whilst simultaneously building

theory inductively from the data (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Locating the study within a pragmatic tradition also allows us to contemplate the idea of unpredictable emergent truths arising from multiple contexts and realities. Viewing change as an emergent process of organisational learning coheres both with pragmatism and complexity thinking (Morrison, 2002; Davis and Sumara, 2006).

In referring to the ontological and epistemological basis of complexity thinking Davis and Sumara (2006) reject 'scientific *objectivity*, and relativist *subjectivity*, and structuralist or post-structuralist *intersubjectivity* as satisfactory foundations for any claim to truth' (2006, p. 15). Rather, they assert that with the collaboration of researchers in any investigation we strive for *interobjectivity*. This is the idea that what counts as reality and truth is the result of a constant dynamic conversation as 'the learner/knower (e.g. individual, social collective, or other complex unity) engages with some aspect of its world in an always-evolving, ever-elaborative structural dance' (Davis and Sumara, 2006, p. 15). Within the process implemented in this study dialogue between people is informed by, produces and uses artefacts such as the physical plans produced in the workshops. This implies moving beyond the ontological and epistemological limits of scientism and humanism and embracing both claims to knowledge. As such it is both pragmatic and interdisciplinary in nature. Complexity thinking also helps us to position the researcher within a multi-level system of learning and knowing. The researcher is part (one layer) of the phenomenon being researched. It helps us to 'take on the work of trying to understand things while we are part of the things we are trying to understand' (Davis and Sumara, 2006, p. 16)

The focus of the study is on the emergent processes, actions, situations and consequences which influence and create change in international schools rather than primarily its causes. It is primarily a study to change rather than to understand. The aim is to generate practitioner knowledge (praxis) rather than to test existing theory. As a result the research is best located within a pragmatic complexity thinking philosophical stance.

3.7. Research Design

Researching a school as a complex system implies embracing complexity in the research design. Emergent random contextual noise and disruption is a characteristic of complex unities. This means that 'research problematics can rarely be rigidly set in advance, but must be subject to continuous revision through the course of the research as new insights emerge and new questions arise' (Davis and Sumara, 2006, p. 149). As the context changes so do the questions and therefore the methodology. In this sense the researcher, as part of the complexity being researched is employing an emergent research design. This might suggest the adoption of a highly interactive and unstructured methodological bricolage approach (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Kincheloe and Berry, 2004). Such an approach accounts for complexity in meaning-making processes by allowing contextual contingencies to dictate which data-gathering and analytical methods to use. However this sounds like a recipe for poor research - one lacking coherent direction, conceptual or theoretical continuity and clarity. Rather the pragmatic complexity thinking philosophy adopted suggests a deliberate mixed methods methodology. This study adopts an action research methodology using mixed methods. The action research project is of an appreciative inquiry intervention in which a dialogic development process is used to facilitate emergent thinking and learning for organisational change.

3.8. Mixed Methods

Mixing methods is often seen as pragmatic in nature because it assumes that combining data collected from many sources using multiple methods will be superior to monomethod studies (Johnson and Turner, 2003). Mixing methods implies that positivist (single, objective) and interpretivist (multiple, subjective) views of reality can co-exist. It also assumes one can be both neutral and committed (semi-detached) when engaging with the research, use both inductive and deductive reasoning to arrive at explanation and understanding and can employ both pre-determined and emerging methods (Creswell, 2009; Newby, 2010).

Four factors – timing, weight, mixing and theorising- can influence the way a mixed methods design is implemented (Creswell, 2009). Creswell identifies 6 strategies which arise from these factors and which can be differentiated using shorthand notation where ‘qual’ represents qualitative and ‘quan’ represents quantitative. Capitalising the notation weights or prioritises the collection, interpretation and analysis in the mix. Strategies may then be either sequential with one form (e.g. qualitative) building on another (e.g. quantitative) or concurrent with both forms collected at the same time sequentially (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Data gathered from mixed methods can be compared, contrasted and cross-referenced for complementarity through a process of triangulation which adds to validity.

In this study, due to the small scale ideographic nature of the research a concurrent embedded mixed methods design was employed where predominantly qualitative (QUAL) methods supported by quantitative (quan) where applicable (QUAL + quant) were collected simultaneously. Adopting a purely qualitative (QUAL) approach would lead to a narrative analysis which could have been reductive in nature. This is due to the idea of incompressibility introduced in chapter two. Complex systems are so complex that any analysis attempting to capture it would be impossible. Conversely isolating individual parts obscures the complexity (Cilliers, 1998). This is why we need to use ‘quasi-“paradigmless,” or multi-perspective, thinking’ (Richardson and Cilliers, 2001, p. 12) such as a pragmatic mixed methods approach to generate rich but partial knowledge about the complex system we are studying. As Ulrich (1993, p. 583) states,

‘This much is certain: the quest for comprehensiveness ... is not realizable. If we assume that it is realizable, the critical idea underlying the quest will be perverted into its opposite, i.e., into a false pretension to superior knowledge and understanding’

From the complexity thinking perspective therefore, a concurrent embedded mixed methods approach provides a way to level jump and it is possible in part to identify larger scale trends or patterns in the process involved (i.e. measure its impact) and

combine them with contextually rich data (i.e. appreciate and understand it) (Gorard and Taylor, 2004). This increases the explanatory power of the research i.e. the correctness of the insight and the legitimacy of the interpretation. A weakness of this approach is the potential impact at the analysis stage as a result of the decision to prioritise one source of data over the other.

A pragmatic position implies a mixed methods approach where methods are used coherently to provide multiple and contrasting lenses. The more lenses one has the better view you have of complexity. Using narrative alone would simply distil the complexity down too much and tend towards reductive explanations.

3.9. Action Research and Complexity Thinking

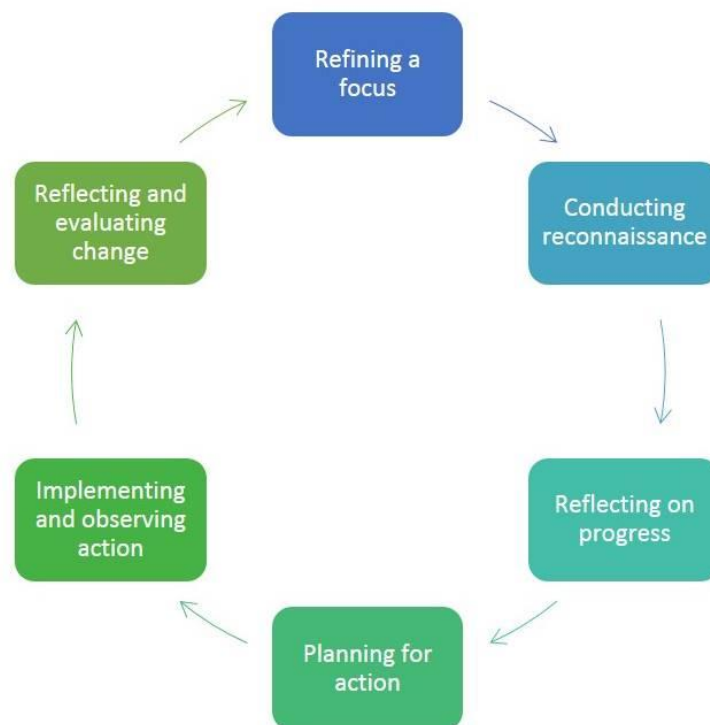
The pragmatic complexity thinking stance for the study suggests a clear link to notions of action research. This is because action research approaches provides an umbrella framework for researching democratic social action and organisational change. McNiff and Whitehead (2005) see action research as a vehicle for generative transformative capacity in organisations because it as a professional learning framework. Action research has also been considered complementary with complexity thinking because in its methodology it can assert, *inter alia*, the use of cyclical reflective processes and agent interaction within open, non-linear systems which adapt unpredictably as a result of shared learning ((Winter, 1989; Dadds and Hart, 2001; Phelps and Hase, 2002; Phelps and Graham, 2010).

Action research is a family of approaches making it difficult to define (Reason and Bradbury, 2008; Whitelaw et al, 2003). Kurt Lewin (1946) established a basic action research model for organisational change in an industrial context. This consisted of a cycle of four activities of reflect-plan-act-observe. The model begins with a review of current practice followed by planning to improve it, implementation of the plan and then collection of data for reflecting on success or failure. A second cycle would then begin with another period of evaluation and a revised plan. This model was embellished within an educational context by Corey (1953), Stenhouse (1975) and

Elliot (1991) and started to look at ways in which evidence could be collected to inform decision making within the process.

More recently Townsend (2013) has developed this further by emphasising the importance of an initial phase of 'reconnaissance' to inform subsequent iterations of the cycle and can be seen in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1. Action Research Cycle (Townsend, 2013)



Reconnaissance focuses on gathering formal and/or informal data. Initially the data is used to refine and clarify the focus of the action research project, to establish the role of the researcher in the action and to understand what is already happening in relation to the focus (Townsend, 2013, p. 19). It is used as a way to get more objective and deep understanding of the issues surrounding the proposed change to be implemented. Evidence from a number of perspectives helps the researcher classify and justify initial thinking about the proposed project. Later, reconnaissance is used to

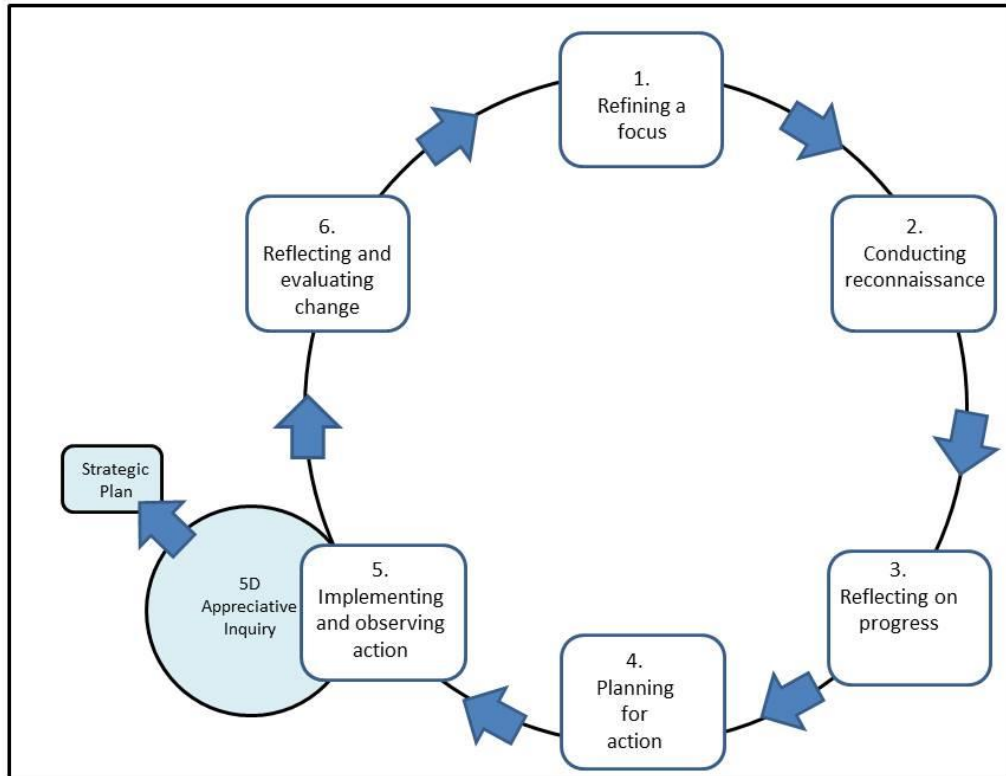
inform on-going assessments of progress within the cycle and to make any changes. Townsend's model 'slows' the cycle down by placing an emphasis on the use of data to drive decision making during the action research. This provides a firmer foundation for the work to be implemented.

This is an embellishment of Lewin's basic model. The emphasis on the use of reconnaissance data as a basis for dialogue and iterative reflective practice is coherent with the interobjectivity of complexity thinking. Action research of this nature may also offer potential for embracing the complexity of idiographic approaches to research.

3.10. The Action Research Project

This study was an action research project involving the implementation of an emergent change model between 2013 and 2016. Figure 3.2. shows the trajectory and phases of the research and the relationship between the action research and the intervention

Figure 3.2. Action Research Project



3.10.1. Refining the Focus

The genesis of the study arose from professional learning and reflection as a result of professional practice and was triggered by the proceedings of the international leadership conference referenced in the introduction. The initial focus for the study was leadership and complexity in international schools but this was subsequently refined to focus on the role dialogue could play in leading complex change.

3.10.2. Reconnaissance Phase

The reconnaissance phase of the action research explored the factors and dynamics affecting the research context in preparation for the intervention. Reconnaissance

began with a pilot study (also part of the EdD) conducted in a different school context which developed and trialled a facilitator training programme. A steering committee of eight volunteer workshops leaders was constituted to lead the self-study of the upcoming external accreditation process. Pilot study data was collected using semi-structured interviews of a purposive sample of the three workshop leaders chosen to participate in the training programme. This was followed in the new school context with ‘found data’ gathered from a variety of internally and externally generated sources including an employee engagement survey, the obsolescent strategic plan, student and parent satisfaction surveys and inspection/accreditation documentation. Primary data was also collected from two focus group interviews of 11 and 8 members of staff respectively to explore some of the issues arising from the employee effectiveness survey. Those interviewed formed part of an opportunity sample as attendance was voluntary. Finally, as ‘mood music’ for the implementation of the model a faculty led futures thinking workshop was held, the report from which included a recommended student profile of skills and attitudes for an envisioned school of the future. This data was gathered together and used as qualitative material for reflecting upon how to design the model and take the project forward. Reference is made to these findings within the findings chapter. The data collection is summarised in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Summary of Reconnaissance Phase Data Collection

Date	Activity	Sampling	Data Capture
May 2013	Pilot Study	Purposive	Structured Interview Transcripts
February-March 2014	Futures Thinking Workshop		Report of Outcomes
May – May 2015	Found Data		a) Employee Engagement Survey

			Executive Summary
			b) Old Strategic Plan
			c) Parent and Student Satisfaction Survey Results
			d) School Accreditation and Inspection Reports
		Opportunity	e) Employee Engagement Focus Groups Transcripts

3.10.3. Reflecting on Progress and Planning for Action

The next phase of the action research involved looking at the results of the reconnaissance in order to decide what form of intervention would be most appropriate. Analysis of reconnaissance data led me to propose a positive, aspirational, big audacious development goal (Collins, 2001) for the school which would attract and engage the organisation. This was 'Establish (the school) as the unrivalled leader for innovation in international education'. The identification of this big audacious goal was consistent with practice in other schools within the group but the deliberate framing of the change goal within an innovation concept was unique.

I chose an appreciative inquiry model (Cooperider and Whitney, 2005; Hammond, 2008; Magruder Watkins et al, 2011) as an explicit rejection of reductive improvement models traditionally used in this school context. Given my focus on complexity

thinking, emergence and dialogue, appreciative inquiry was judged to offer the most appropriate model to support the Dialogic Development Process (DDP) whilst attempting to provide stability and flexibility, coherence and freedom within a democratic and positive model of emergent change. I.e. to manage the tension between planned and emergent models of change. The appreciative inquiry links clearly to a complexity thinking perspective of change. It explicitly acknowledges that reality is co-constructed through dialogue and conversation on many levels of the organisation. By advancing the process as a cycle of collective thinking and learning it addresses continuity and sustainability issues. By adopting positive image and inquiry it specifically links engagement in change with learning.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is defined as:

‘a collaborative and highly participative, system wide approach to seeking, identifying and enhancing the ‘life-giving forces’ that are present when a system is performing optimally in human, economic and organisational terms’ (Magruder Watkins et al, 2011, p. 22).

AI is a pragmatic model because it responds to the context by taking what is working in the organisation and seeks ways to improve it.

AI is premised upon five principles and one overarching principle (Magruder Watkins et al, 2011). Firstly, AI is constructionist – we create through social discourse and conversation how we see the world and create what we can imagine. The key to change is then discovering how we see the organisation. Second, AI assumes simultaneity – meaning as soon as we inquire and ask questions we begin to change. A facilitator who poses the questions helps frame the process of change. Thirdly, AI is anticipatory – collective imagination, or dreaming, about preferred futures contributes to engagement (Bushe and Coetzer, 1995). Fourth, AI is poetic – the organisation is a collection of co-authored narratives open to endless interpretations around which people coalesce. Fifthly, AI is positive – people and organisations gravitate to the light. Overarching and encompassing the other five, AI works on the principle of wholeness –

the whole is greater than the sum of its parts and the challenge for sustainable change is getting people to think and act inside systems.

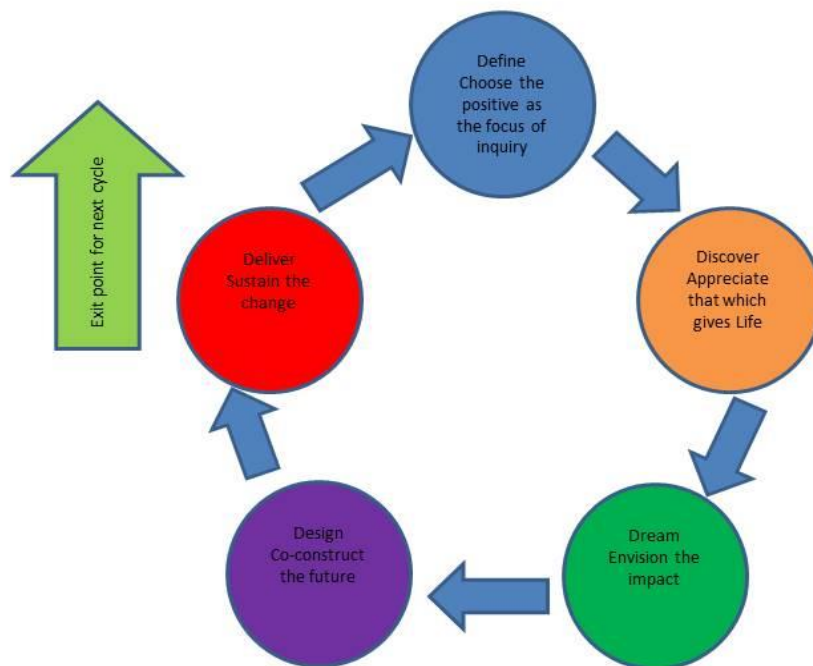
Though the AI model has taken on a number of forms the 5-D model of Cooperider and Srivastva (1987; Cooperider, D. and Whitney, D., 2005) was adopted in this study. Initially Cooperider and Srivastva identified a four stage process – Discovery, Dream, Design and Deliver - but a Define stage was later added to the model to allow for the integration of planning and preparation into the process (Cooperider and Whitney, 2005; Magruder Watkins et al, 2011).

This seems to suggest a systematic and linear approach but these core change processes and stages in the AI model are conceived as more overlapping than sequential. Indeed, Iveroth and Hallencreutz (2016) and Weick (1999) argue that, seen through the lens of sense making, the change process should be seen as a spiral rather than a sequential or cyclical model (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988). This is because change is rarely linear and the process can be disrupted by unanticipated events, disagreements and improvised adaptations. Cyclical approaches can be ‘caged’ processes locked into the repeated stages with no exit point. They do not allow for changes to the process resulting from its implementation. (Van de Ven and Poole, 1995; Iveroth and Hallencreutz, 2016). A spiral model suggests an exit point which liberates the process to develop at a speed and in a direction the sense making and sense giving conversations take it. Magruder Watkins et al (2011) refer to this as ‘change at the speed of imagination’.

The AI cycle begins in the midst of on-going change which in complex systems is already emerging on many levels. Effectively this means capturing what is being delivered at an organisational level within a coherent narrative. I.e. embracing the complexity and using it as energy for coherence, momentum and transformation. In the define stage we prepare to choose the positive as the focus of inquiry. In the discover stage we inquire into stories of life giving forces in the organisation. In the dream stage we challenge the status quo by envisioning a preferred future where ‘images of the future emerge out of grounded examples of the organisation’s positive

past' (Magruder Watkins et al, 2011, p. 88). In the design stage we create shared images through possibility statements for the on-going creation of that preferred future. Finally, in the deliver stage we find innovative ways to implement that future. This last stage is an on-going process of continuous learning, adjustment and improvisation i.e. it includes elements of the previous stages in ongoing inquiry, envisioning and designing. Thus we have a 5-D model as shown in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3. Appreciative Inquiry Cycle Adapted from (Magruder Watkins et al., 2011, p. 86)



Research into appreciative inquiry where the researcher is also a member of a collective process can lead to very personal reflective accounts. In addition because appreciative inquiry is a context-based, small-scale process of change generalisation to other contexts is difficult. The model's assumptions that participants are naturally able to be positive can also be questioned and the focus on collective dialogue can lead to a

tyranny of the process at the expense of outcomes so facilitative leadership is important.

Yet complexity thinking specifically acknowledges the complicity of the researcher in the emergent learning process (Davis and Sumara, 2006). A workshop structure provides the setting for collective dialogue. Facilitative leadership of dialogue creates the conditions for organisational learning and emergent organisational change. We now turn to how this was implemented in practice.

3.10.4. Implementing and Observing Action

This phase of the action research implemented a 5D appreciative inquiry (AI) cycle. Data was collected for three cycles of the intervention in order to observe, reflect on and understand the emergent process of the dynamics for change within the DDP. A description of the data collection may be found in section four of this chapter. A description of the intervention is in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2. Description of Intervention

Appreciative Inquiry Intervention
A strategic thinking committee of 32 volunteers was established. This included representatives of the whole school community such as the Senior Leadership Team, Advisory Board, Parents (including the Parents Association), Students and Faculty (education and administrative staff). Student participation was limited to those on the Student Council. In order to minimise the perception of the leader directly influencing outcomes of the intervention participation in the appreciative inquiry was voluntary. Further, it was not within my power as Head to force participation in such processes. This is consistent with an intervention designed to be as democratic and as ‘bottom-up’ as possible. However, one consequence of voluntary participation was variable levels of attendance and commitment. Thus, during the course of the period of research, membership of the committee varied as participants dropped out or were

replaced. Further, the membership limit of 32 was not fixed. This was to promote the regenerative energy and conditions necessary for self-organisation, emergence and sustained innovation.

The committee was structured into planning groups covering five operational areas – Finance and Facilities, Marketing and Communications, Learning and Teaching, Technology and People. These operational areas were identified by me in the role of ‘sensegiver’ (Iveroth and Hallencruetz, 2016) by providing the sensemaking framework for the workshops. Each group was formed of representatives of senior managers, teachers, parents, students and board members and also formed part of the larger strategic thinking committee responsible for monitoring progress towards implementation of the plan and for thinking about future innovation and change.

AI Cycle 1

The first 5D cycle served as the entry and capture point for the subsequent strategic plan establishing the direction of change for the next four years. The strategic plan was not meant to be a roadmap but a working, living organic expression of the school’s direction of travel at any point in time. It was developed and owned by the community and can be amended by it in the light of changing circumstances. At the end of its use planning would begin again to create a new strategic plan.

Define stage – this began with an orientation session and the election of facilitators and secretaries. A presentation by the Head about the nature and principles of appreciative inquiry was made after which workshop groups were asked to use materials from the reconnaissance data to come to a personal view about their aspirations for the school. In preparation for the ‘discovery stage’ each participant was asked to conduct a simple survey of the community for use in a one day workshop (Appendix 1)

This was followed by the facilitators’ training programme developed and trialled in the

reconnaissance phase. The design of the programme included established practice from a number of commercially available packages (Senge et al, 1994; Scott, 2002; Shaw, 2002; Smith and Wood, 2012; Highmore Sims, 2006; Holman, Devane and Cady, 2007; Kaner et al, 2007; Ridings, 2011) and was designed to provide orientation in the skills of dialogic leadership, conversational facilitation and participative decision making.

A full day workshop was then held, the first session of which was to complete this stage. This first session included a schizoanalytic metamodeling (Delueze and Guattari, 1993) activity loosely based on ideas from an 'Independent Thinking Day' used by Wood (2013). This activity required workshop groups to use hexagon cards to co-construct concept maps about workshop operational areas and its issues. These were then shared with other groups to build an interconnected web of issues and themes. The objective was to build workshop groups' collective knowledge base and develop complex systems thinking.

Discover stage- through conversation each workshop uncovered 2-5 'provocative propositions' or positive themes to drive thinking about the future of the school. 'Provocative Propositions' describe the circumstances that create the possibilities to do more of what works in the school, keeping the school's best at the conscious level. The 'discover stage' prompts may be found in Appendix 2.

Dream stage- through conversation each workshop then wrote vision statements and strategic objectives followed by an inter-group critique exercise for refinement purposes.

At each stage of the one day workshop the researcher-leader acted as lead facilitator providing the structure, the conceptual frameworks and the inquiry tasks to support the generation of conversation. Workshop participants were then free to develop their own narratives, priorities and ideas.

Design stage - following the full day workshop four evening planning sessions were held before the publication of the Strategic Plan to the community. The first of these was to interrogate the vision and strategic objectives derived from the previous workshop. A series of questions were provided for workshop groups to consider when refining their work. The facilitators and Principal then met to finalise the submissions prior to consultation with the senior leadership team. The questions may be found in Appendix 3. The next two workshop sessions were devoted to identifying the operational tasks and timelines imagined for the implementation of the strategic objectives.

At prescribed points in the cycle the five groups came together to dialogue about their experiences and to contribute to the development of aspirational statements and recommendations for change. These larger group meetings provided a reflexive dimension to the workshop groups. A planning form was provided to all workshop groups and may be found in Appendix 4.

In the last session of the year workshop groups came together as a committee to present and critically review each other's work. Any changes resulting from this were incorporated into the strategic plan. Though editing for vocabulary and clarity was undertaken by the lead facilitator, subsequent iterations of the plan were returned to the committee for validation before publication. The strategic plan was then published to the community not as a 'railway timetable' with a fixed destination and specified timelines for tasks, but as a cyclical, rolling process which foreshadowed the expectation of change and the plan's provisional status. This completed the 'design stage' of this cycle.

Delivery stage – during the year initiatives arising from the process were taken up by the senior team and acted upon. This was the subject of a report back to the community.

AI Cycles 2-5

This phase involved condensed annual cycles of AI. Given the existence of a current strategic plan the **Define stage** was limited to focusing on orienting new participants and reinforcing the positive and appreciative element of the model. The emphasis was naturally on the **Deliver stage** and progress towards implementation. Nevertheless the model also required participants to inquire and think together about modifications and innovations to the original plan. The sessions facilitated in this phase combined the intents of the **Discover, Dream and Design Stages**. In so doing it stimulated the individual workshops and the larger committee to continuously think about innovation thus becoming a focus point for change in the community.

Data collection was to observe how the intervention worked and was experienced through the AI stages and cycles and to reflect upon its contribution. Observations and reflections were captured and organised within the field notes of a reflective journal. In addition audio of the work of two groups was recorded for a narrative analysis and to triangulate against observations. Initially the idea was to follow one workshop committee through the entire process but it became clear that the initial workshop group of Teaching and Learning was atypical having four members who were first language Spanish speakers. The audio capture of the People Group was therefore added to the collection for comparison. Semi-structured and focus group interviews of facilitators and participants was employed to gather data on the experience of leading and participating in the process and an impact questionnaire and change readiness survey were used to gauge levels of participant engagement and the utility of the model.

The research population was the 32 members of the strategic thinking committee. This committee was sampled using a mixture of opportunity and purposive sampling. Opportunity sampling is where the researcher draws from the people who are available at the time the data is collected. Purposive sampling is where the researcher identifies specific people or functions from the sampling frame. Opportunity sampling

was used at the end of the cycle with the impact surveys. Purposive sampling was used for the semi-structured interviews. A mixture of both was used when interviewing a focus group about the workshop experience and the role of dialogue. A general invitation was made to the committee but individual facilitators were also approached separately.

After each cycle the data is analysed and a reflection on progress made. Changes can be made to developing practice and the focus of inquiry refined. Chapter four describes this in more detail but following cycle 1 it was clear the model was working and so the focus of data collection in cycles 2 and 3 narrowed to questions of sustainability and the impact of dialogue on emergence. A lack of time and priority conflicts meant the data collection was limited to the use of the field notes and research journal.

A summary of the data collection for this phase is in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3. Implementation Phase Data Collection

Phase of Action Research Project	Date	Activity	Sampling	Data Capture
Implementation Phase – Appreciative Inquiry Cycle 1	18 November 2014	Planning Session #1 – Orientation and Formation of Strategic Planning Committee and Workshop Groups		Field Notes (Observation Notes) Audio Recording Transcripts
	24 and 29 November 6 December 2014	Facilitator Orientation Session		Field Notes (Observation Notes) Audio Recording Transcripts
	13 December 2014	Planning Session #2- Full Day Workshop		Field Notes (Observation Notes) Audio Recording Transcripts
	15 January 2015	Planning Session #3 – Action Planning Workshop		Field Notes (Observation Notes) Audio Recording Transcripts
	4 February 2015	Planning Session #4- Action Planning Workshop		Field Notes (Observation Notes) Audio Recording Transcripts

	11 February 2015	Planning Session #5 – Action Planning Workshop	Purposive Opportunity and Purposive Mix	Field Notes (Observation Notes) Audio Recording Transcripts Facilitator Interview Transcripts February 2015 Participant Focus Group March 2015
	16 June 2015	Planning Session #6 – Action Planning Workshop and Review Plenary	Purposive Opportunity Opportunity	Field Notes (Observation Notes) Audio Recording Transcripts Facilitator Interview Transcripts June 2015 Participant Questionnaire Participant Change Readiness Survey

Implementation Phase- Appreciative Inquiry Cycle 2	10 December 2015	Thinking and Planning Session #1 -Workshop		Field Notes (Observation Notes and Audio Recording Transcripts)
	10 March 2016	Thinking and Planning Session #2 -Workshop		Field Notes (Observation Notes and Audio Recording Transcripts)
	10 June 2016	Thinking and Planning Session #3- Workshop		Field Notes (Observation Notes and Audio Recording Transcripts)
Implementation Phase- Appreciative Inquiry Cycle 3	22 November 2016	Thinking and Planning Session #1 -Workshop		Field Notes (Observation Notes and Audio Recording Transcripts)
	February and May 2017	Thinking and Planning Session #2-#3		

3.11. Reflecting and evaluating change and refining the future focus

Following collection of data, analysis and reflection take place. The results of this may be found in chapter four. This analysis represents part of an on-going evaluation of the intervention pointing to further lines of inquiry and recommendations for revision. It will also suggest ways to further refine the focus of the research and how to take the project forward. Section 3.13 describes the analytic framework adopted for the analysis.

3.12. Data Collection

In this section the methods of data collection used during the action research project are explained and reviewed. The Head is both lead facilitator and researcher so a power relationship exists between the researcher and the participants. There is a potential for 'values creep' and 'group think' where participants may be unduly influenced by what the researcher 'wants' to see either for approval or to avoid conflict and vice versa. This could lead to an inaccurate negotiated observed reality. The mixing of methods, combined with reflexive and reflective feedback loops, addresses these issues and is detailed in what follows.

3.12.1. Reflective Research Journal (Observation and Field Notes)

During the research I was both lead facilitator and researcher and therefore both inside and outside the process. Observation was used to gather first-hand experience of the process in practice and to record the way the process worked as it occurred. My role was as participant observer in which my research role known but was secondary to my role as participant. Data was recorded in field notes and organised thematically within a research journal.

Field Notes 'are intended to be read by the researcher as evidence to produce meaning and an understanding of the culture, social situation, or phenomenon being

studied' (Schwandt, 2007, p. 115) so the research journal served as the vehicle for vignette writing. During the first cycle the focus of observation and the field notes was the process and how it was experienced so they included description of the settings and tasks and the behaviours of participants. During cycles two and three observation remained within these themes but shifted in focus from process and experience to impact, sustainability and continuity – the latter focusing on changes in the way the themes were seen and experienced between the cycles.

From scratch notes commentaries or vignettes were written and used for reflection and interpretation. The framework for recording the observation arose out of the literature review and the reconnaissance phase data and was formed of four themes:

- **Evidence of Leadership and Collaboration** - How were workshop groups formed and led within a 'bottom-up' model? What were the patterns and frequencies of interactions? What were the micro-political dynamics involved in decision making? What was the impact of the facilitator training programme? How was dissent and disagreement addressed within the workshop? How did different workshop groups interact and connect?
- **Evidence of the Role of Dialogue** – In what ways was dialogue used in the workshop groups? What form did the conversation take within the workshop structure? What dialogic patterns arose in the process of reaching goals and completing tasks? What language, vocabulary or conversational energy flows were used and what was their impact?
- **Evidence of Emergent Processes**–To what extent did novelty, innovation and learning take place? Did new thinking, ideas or initiatives emerge? To what extent did participation and engagement change as a result of the process?
- **Reflections on Research Methods** – What was the experience of researching as a leader-consultant? How effective were the methods alone and in combination for addressing issues such as validity, transferability, credibility and reliability?

My dual role as researcher-leader raises the potential for bias or partial interpretation in what was observed. In addition Burgess (1991) identifies a number of other methodological challenges when using field notes. There is the practical challenge of recording description in the moment rather than reflection after the fact. This is not possible when the researcher is also facilitating. This raises questions over the validity of delayed-time data and the greater chance of inaccuracy as default biases or values emerge and recollections change. There is further potential for misinterpretation in the data gathering process if detailed reflection notes vary from scratch notes.

To counter this, reflexive and reflective feedback loops were established through the research journal and a regular 'strategy meeting' between the researcher and his support team. The research journal was used as a general vehicle for personal on-going reflection on data and methods. Data from other sources could be used in a triangulation exercise to verify the validity of the observation records (McKee et al, 2008), although, as this enters the mix, what was understood from field notes can gradually shift and alter (Burgess, 1991). Thus, the strategy meeting was used to critically evaluate the accuracy of the field notes and to plan further stages of the cycle.

The difference in status between the observed and the researcher as leader was also considered. This may lead to conflict or atypical behaviour so to build trust and confidence, regular and transparent communication was employed. This focused on the aims of the model and reinforced the central role of participants in defining the changes required for the school.

3.12.2. Audio Capture

To supplement the observations from the field, audio recordings of the '**discover**', '**dream**' and '**design**' stage sessions of two workshops groups - the Teaching and Learning group and the People group - were made. These two were selected as they seemed to be the most productive in the one day workshop. The purpose of the audio

capture was to gather data (textual and aural) in the workshop setting for a deeper analysis of the dialogic development process.

The recording software used was 'Audacity'. These recordings were made unobtrusively direct to computers placed on the table and so are natural and rich sources of sensemaking data. Transcripts were later produced for thematic narrative analysis. In one session the software programme failed so written raw notes or jottings were made which were then validated, verified or rejected in a subsequent conversation with a participant and again in the reflexive setting of the strategy meeting.

3.12.3. Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used three times during the study – during the pilot study, at the mid-point of cycle one and again at the end of the first cycle. The use of semi-structured interviews was chosen in order to collect content, meaning rich data about the experience of the training programme and change processes. By establishing the questions in advance of the interview it was possible to link them to the research questions and to compare responses between participants. The freedom to go beyond these questions means the researcher can elicit deeper, more personal accounts using customised questions prompted by participants' responses. This approach was considered consistent with the conversational element in the model and within complexity thinking. In this way the method could also be seen as a reflective element in the intervention enabling participants to demonstrate the emergent learning the model was designed to liberate. Interviews took place outside of the process in the Head's office and were recorded and transcribed for analysis.

On the other hand semi-structured interviews are time consuming especially regarding transcription and analysis. There is a high risk of researcher influence during the interaction as the interviewer leads participants through open questions, a risk heightened given the dual role of the researcher. Though there was a sense that participants understood the boundaries between the roles of Head, consultant and

researcher it would be naïve to suggest the interviewer was without some influence on the subjects. Interviews provide indirect information filtered through the lens of the interviewee and not all people can express what they saw with equal facility. For all these reasons ongoing reflection and triangulation were built into the study.

The first interview took place during the reconnaissance phase. The three participants who had experienced the programme responded to questions on the impact of the structure and content of the training programme on their personal learning and leadership skills and also their attitudes towards change and leadership (appendix 5). Data from this was used in decisions about the design of the DDP. Table 3.4. shows how the questions addressed the research questions.

Table 3.4. Pilot Study Interview Questions to Research Questions

Pilot Study Interviews	
Supporting Research Question	Interview Questions
SRQ1	1, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12
SRQ2	7
SRQ3	4,5,13,14,15,17
SRQ4	12,16

A further semi-structured interview was conducted during the first cycle of the intervention with the six facilitators (five elected and one co-facilitator). Again, this method was chosen as a structured conversational technique for gathering content rich data about how participants made sense and meaning from their experience of the model. Open framed questions for this interview covered four themes (appendix 6):

- Participants' attitudes to, and experience of, the leadership of change
- Participants' understanding of the structure and content of the model

- Participants' experience of leadership in the model in managing divergence, reaching consensus and engaging emergence
- Participants' assessment of the utility of the facilitators' training programme

Table 3.5. shows how the questions addressed the research questions.

Table 3.5. Mid-Cycle Interview Questions to Research Questions

Mid-Cycle Interviews	
Supporting Research Question	Interview Questions
SRQ1	2,3,5-11,13,18-23,34-38
SRQ2	12,14,18,23,35-39
SRQ3	15-22,30-32
SRQ4	1,4,8,12,14,24-35,39-40

A further semi-structured interview of 5 participants was conducted at the end of the first cycle with the intent to see if there had been any changes in the experience of participating in the model. Questions now focused on exploring three themes (appendix 7):

- The degree to which engagement in the process had changed
- The role and impact of dialogue on facilitators' capacity to lead professional learning and facilitate emergent thinking
- The degree to which the model generated innovation

Table 3.6. shows how the questions addressed the research questions.

Table 3.6. End of Cycle Interview Questions to Research Questions

End of Cycle One Interviews	
Supporting Research Question	Interview Questions
SRQ1	7-9
SRQ2	2-6,8-10
SRQ3	1,6
SRQ4	4,5

3.12.4. Focus Groups

Focus group interviews were conducted three times during the study. The first two were part of the reconnaissance phase and the third was held towards the end of cycle one of the implementation phase. The decision to employ focus group interviews was an assertion in the methods of the power of group interaction, an assertion also made within the DDP. The assumption was that this would release more useful data more quickly as participants would open up more readily.

Focus groups were held as follow up to the company mandated employee effectiveness (engagement) survey and provided contextual data on levels of coherence and dissonance within the school. Participation was voluntary with no restrictions on size and make-up. The first focus group of 11 discussed barriers to productivity. The second focus group of 8 discussed a particular barrier identified in the first of performance management processes in the school. These focus groups were moderated by faculty members; no member of the senior team was present. A set of topics and prompts were provided by the Head to the groups in advance in the form of discussion questions (appendix 8 and 9). All were recorded and/or transcribed for analysis.

The most commonly cited difficulties with focus group interviews are the domination of the conversation by one or two members, the superficiality of data resulting from complex group conversations and the influence of the moderator in steering

unstructured conversations in biased directions. Many of these became apparent. Some participants used the opportunity to raise their own personal agendas regarding specific management and leadership styles. Questions arose within the senior leadership team regarding the validity of the feedback from an unrepresentative opportunity sample. The use of a faculty member as a moderator was consistent with bottom-up leadership approaches, but the focus on employee satisfaction survey issues mandated by the parent company merely increased suspicion about the process. Linking an improvement process with a research process confused participants about the motives of the Head. One participant saw the interviews as ‘just to support the Head’s research’ rather than a genuine attempt by the organisation to understand the factors affecting employee engagement.

A third focus group of six participants including both facilitators and participants was held following the full day workshop. Attendance was voluntary but facilitators were approached to attend. The relatively small sample illustrates the challenge of encouraging participation with busy members of a school community. Questions were designed to explore the engagement in the process, the role and impact of facilitators and dialogic leadership, and the impact of the model. Open framed questions were formulated around participant’s experience of the process (appendix 10). Table 3.7. shows how the questions addressed the research questions.

Table 3.7. Focus Group Interview Questions to Research Questions

Participant Focus Group Interview	
Supporting Research Question	Interview Questions
SRQ1	4-7,11-13,20-21,25-28,33
SRQ2	10,20-23,25-28,32,35
SRQ3	1-3,7,12-17,19-20,31,35
SRQ4	8-9,18-24,29-35

3.12.5. Impact Surveys - Participant Change Readiness Survey and Questionnaire

On completion of cycle one a change readiness survey of 18 of the 32 participants in the strategic thinking committee was employed. This instrument was to be used as an evaluative instrument for assessing participants' personal engagement in change as a result of the model and as part of the reflection upon change within the action research project. This survey instrument as a whole, and the matrix in particular, addressed SRQ 3, but the narrative questions that led to a placement point on the matrix also addressed SRQ1 and SRQ4. The opportunity sample represented only 50% of the full strategic planning committee as a result of poor attendance at this final session of the year. The intention was to run this survey at the start and end of each cycle but due to messy factors described above this did not happen (Cook, 2008) so no cause and effect conclusions can be drawn from its results. To counter this, a participant survey was added which when combined and cross-referenced with data from the change readiness survey contributes to a holistic analysis of the model's utility.

The survey was an adaptation of the assessment tool designed by Reeves (2009) (appendix 11). Questions led participants through the creation of personal stories about their previous experiences of change. The survey is based on a key assumption of sense making that our written narratives illustrate how we perceive, understand and thus engage with change (Weick et al 2005).

Participants were asked to reflect upon an experience of personal change, describing and evaluating the role played by planning, prioritisation, commitment, leadership support and accountability. Participants rated each factor's level of importance in the change and combined them to reach a total. They were then asked to identify a story of organisational change they were involved in and describe and assess this in the same way. Each total was then used to place the participant on a matrix of four quadrants which identify them as 'ready for learning', 'ready for resistance', 'ready for frustration' or 'ready for change' (Figure 3.4.). One can then systematise the responses to the level of the organisation and infer a leadership response.

Figure 3.4. Change Readiness Survey Matrix (Reeves, 2009)

Leadership change capacity	100	Ready for Learning	Ready for Change
	0	Ready for Resistance	Ready for Frustration
		0	100
		Organisation Change Capacity	

If individuals are 'Ready for Learning' this suggests a history of successful change with a strong capacity for planning and execution within the organisation. The participant is open to learning from the example of the leader so leadership means creating a data rich environment and clear communication channels. If individuals are 'Ready for Resistance' this suggests that neither the leader nor the organisation has a history of successful change. New initiatives will be met with anger, apathy or rebellion so leadership means building stakeholder support and leadership capacity. If individuals are 'Ready for Frustration' then an organisation has a history of successful change but is being led by leaders who do not have the capacity or vision for wide systemic change. The organisation gets ahead of the leader so leadership means involving those that implement change in the change process. If individuals are 'Ready for Change' this suggests the leader and the organisation have exceptional change capacity and the organisation is resilient. The organisation responds and adapts to organisational and

environmental shifts occurring at a number of levels and engagement in change is palpable. Leadership means devolving and embracing the energy for innovation.

The quantitisation of narratives can be questioned as can a method which suggests change readiness is the result of how we perceive our experiences of personal and institutional change. Further, the assertion that organisational readiness can be inferred from the combination of individuals' change readiness ignores the complex processes at work in the interaction of those individuals which might lead to unpredictable outcomes at the organisational level. However, the concept of change readiness is useful in assessing cultural dispositions towards change resulting from the model. As such the data used from this survey is used as an impressionistic rather than an exact complementary tool in an initial holistic analysis of the model.

To address the weaknesses of the survey and to strengthen any initial evaluation of the utility of the model a simple questionnaire of participants was added. Questions were simple and narrowly focused on impact and the capacity of the model to produce sustainable and meaningful plan for change. Responses were recorded on a sliding scale of agreement. A sliding scale rather than simple closed questions was chosen so that the differentiation could be triangulated with other sources of data (appendix 12).

Questionnaires are formal means of gathering responses to standardised questions from a number of specified participants in order to make generalised statements about a larger population. The participant questionnaire was delivered to 18 of the 32 members of the strategic planning committee on the same day as the change readiness survey. Data complemented the change readiness survey data. Table 3.8. shows how the questions addressed the research questions.

Table 3.8. Questionnaire Questions to Research Questions

Participant Questionnaire	
Supporting Research Question	Questions
SRQ1	N/A
SRQ2	3,4,7,10
SRQ3	5,6,8,9
SRQ4	1,2

3.13. Messy Action Research

Earlier in this chapter I referred to the ‘messy’ nature of action research which may have advantages and disadvantages (Cook, 2008). The operational reality of being a Head and a researcher meant I had decreasing amounts of time to devote to the research. This was especially the case when I was also leading the school through the disruption and construction of a 6 million Euro building project. Cycle one showed transformative shifts so only fine tuning to the model was required in cycles two and three. However I was also forced to take a more restrictive view of the process. This meant I relied more heavily on field notes and the research journal than I would have liked. In the findings chapter there is therefore greater discussion of data drawn from cycle one. This is unfortunate and restricts the number of claims that can be made but given that a complexity perspective implies we can only ever have a partial view of complex unities this does not mean the claims made have no validity.

3.14. Data Analysis

Data analysis was an integrative process as a way to develop a holistic view of the intervention (Richardson and Cilliers, 2001) and represents the final phase of the action research. In their study of collaborative planning on patient education programmes Strom and Fagermoen (2012) developed a model of systematic data integration which combined analyses of field notes and interview texts. Each was first analysed separately and then compared with global themes emerging which integrated

the two. Their assumptions and method for integrating data influenced the choice of an emergent thematic coding strategy and a meta-level complexity thinking analysis of the data.

Qualitative data from the observation and field notes, interview transcripts, audio recordings, and the written responses from the change readiness survey were interpreted systematically through a thematic emergent coding strategy. This is the predominant element in the mixed methods approach. Quantitative data from participant surveys, quantitised qualitative data and the change readiness survey were considered together when judging the impact of the model. The findings from the combination of impact and narrative analyses were then interpreted holistically through a complexity thinking lens in order to reach conclusions about the appreciative inquiry project's utility.

3.14.1. Thematic Emergent Coding - Identifying the Focus for Analysis

Since the research investigation is primarily a narrative analysis we need codes.

'A code is a researcher-generated construct that symbolises or translates data and thus attributes interpreted meaning to each individual datum for later purposes of pattern detection, categorisation, assertion or proposition development, theory building and other analytic devices' (Saldana, 2016, p. 4)

The purpose of coding is to organise and sort narrative data; to label, summarise and synthesise (Saldana, 2003).

The study adopted a simple, exploratory form thematic and emergent coding strategy with a complexity thinking analytical framework or lens for the integration of the data collected. This was considered appropriate for what is a chronological analysis of the sensemaking experience of the model. Emergent thematic coding is where as the researcher reads the data he assigns macro or mesa level significance to sections or stanzas of it which can then be further differentiated and analysed. Because the act of

identifying themes and concepts from interview or observational data involves interacting critically with it, one can argue that the act of coding is also an act of analysis.

Thematic analyses are consistent with mixed methods approaches (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2009; Boyatzis, 1998; Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003; Smith and Osborn, 2008; Creswell, 2009). However, Haggis (2008) warns that they can be reductive by concentrating on static categories which can change over time. In addition, when identifying 'transcendent categories' which amalgamate certain aspects of different narratives, we can decontextualize them obscuring the complexity of the social context. The use of an emergent process to identify themes reduces but does not eliminate these risks.

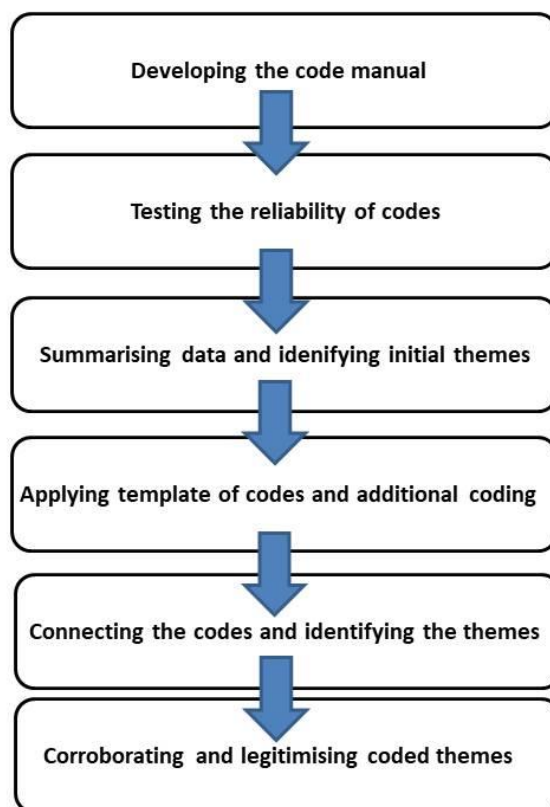
Generally themes arise out of codes. This is important within a mixed methods approach because of the use of deductive and inductive logic. i.e. when one is researching inductively the codes and themes emerge from the data; if you work deductively the coding manual is the 'known' which is being tested with evidence from the data. However, the coding strategy used here was the result of a pragmatic choice to be coherent with the conceptual framework. As a result a provisional list of thematic codes was developed for deductive first cycle coding where the codes were derived from my personal experience and values, from a review of the literature and existing theory. These pre-codes were therefore 'a priori' in nature representing the main themes and ideas as seen by the researcher entering the data analysis stage. Themes identified related to Dialogue, Leadership, Collaboration, System and Structure, Agency and Emergence and are described below.

However, thematic coding makes assumptions open to the biases and preconceptions held by the researcher and can lead to one erroneously seeking or seeing evidence of codes in the data which may not apply. To avoid this a second cycle of coding was conducted where codes and themes emerged inductively out of the data. These emergent codes were then compared and contrasted with the thematic pre-codes and a new set of codes developed for a further round of critical reading and reflection.

During this emergent phase coded patterns of behaviours, concepts, issues, relationships and meanings were reviewed, refined, rejected or combined. These refined emergent themes are phrases that identify what a unit of data is about. This process is termed 'themeing the data and metasynthesis/summary' by Saldana (2016) where the idea through the analysis is to develop an integrative theme which weaves codes together. Once identified, these themes can then be used to create a synthesis of validity from different data sources.

A similar approach to integrating data driven codes with theory driven ones was adopted by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006). They employed a hybrid process adapted from Boyatzis (1998) of inductive and deductive thematic analysis to interpret raw data in a doctoral study on the role of performance feedback in the self-assessment of nursing practice. The steps followed are indicated in Figure 3.5. This approach to thematic analysis has been adapted to my own data.

Figure 3.5. Coding Data (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006, p. 84)



In addition magnitude coding was employed. This is the process of ‘quantitising’ qualitative data by adding an alphanumeric or symbolic code to indicate frequency or intensity or evaluative content. This is considered useful when using narrative text to gauge opinion or impact. Text from audio transcripts, interviews and the written component of the change readiness survey were interpreted using evaluative codes to represent positive, negative, neutral opinions about the model and a recommendation code. The results were tabulated and general statements derived from them.

3.14.2. Pre-Codes and First Reading Coding

The three overarching themes identified in the field notes of leadership and collaboration, dialogue and emergence and sustainability provided the basis for a set of pre-codes used in first cycle coding. Leadership and collaboration referred to the organisational and decision making dynamics of the workshop groups including patterns of interactions and the impact of power relationships. Dialogue referred to the dialogic processes seen within workshop groups including the use of language, conversational facilitative techniques and the impact of any conversational energy. Emergence and sustainability referred to the impact of the model’s structures and leadership processes on individual and group engagement, and learning as well as the quality of outcomes. This led to the identification of seven codes (Table 3.9).

Table 3.9. Themes and Pre-Codes

THEMES	PRE-CODES
Dialogue	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use of dialogue and conversation for advocacy and reinforcement 2. Use of dialogue and conversation for inquiry and novelty
Leadership and Collaboration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Mutual sharing and collective decision making 4. Leadership that is in control by not

	being in control
Emergence and Sustainability	5. Novel thinking and new ideas 6. Flexible response to process and participation 7. Adherence and commitment to structure and tasks

These pre-codes were applied deductively to all of the data whilst simultaneously allowing for alternative codes to emerge which differentiated, contradicted or developed them. Following the first reading the pre-codes were re-written and then applied again to a second reading of the data (Table 3.10).

Table 3.10. First Emergent Codes

THEMES	PRE-CODES	EMERGENT CODES FIRST READING
Dialogue	1. Use of dialogue and conversation for advocacy and reinforcement 2. Use of dialogue and conversation for inquiry and novelty	Arriving at common positions through dialogue and debate
Leadership and Collaboration	3. Mutual sharing and collective decision making 4. Leadership that is in control by not being in control	Informal neighbour interactions- learning through socialisation Facilitation which both incorporates dissenting opinions and manages the ecology of the workshop

		Recognition of the impact of and on different levels of the organisation
Emergence and Sustainability	<p>5. Novel thinking and new ideas</p> <p>6. Flexible response to process and participation</p> <p>7. Adherence and commitment to structure and tasks</p>	<p>Collective knowledge processing and decisions making</p> <p>Novelty and the dynamic of collective emergence</p> <p>Managing time whilst delivering an outcome</p> <p>Role of personal values in increased engagement in the process</p> <p>Response to direction and hierarchy</p>

3.14.3. Second Reading Coding

Following a second reading of emergent thematic coding, the seven codes were re-written and sub-codes identified (Table 3.11). These codes were applied to the whole of the data in a thematic and temporal (chronological) analysis.

Table 3.11. Second Emergent Codes

THEMES	EMERGENT CODES	SUB-CODES
Dialogue	1. Dialogue to organise 2. Dialogue that enhances emergent processes	a. Includes and captures b. Builds consensus c. Completes tasks d. Manages time a. Advocacy- asserts, defends, challenges and clarifies b. Inquiry- suggests, questions, provides insight
Leadership and Collaboration	3. Leadership by not being in control	a. Leadership as facilitation b. Manages disagreements c. Devolves and Delegates
	4. Willingness to work with others to find solutions	a. Mutual sharing and problem solving b. Collective decision making c. Personal positions become group positions
Emergence and Sustainability	5. The organisation as community	a. Awareness of wider system b. Seeing the 'big

		picture' c. Working across workshops
	6. Participant agency and commitment to process	a. Ownership of process and outcomes b. Attitudinal readiness for change c. Engagement - attendance and continuity
	7. Emergence of clear foci/outcomes for future development	a. Novel thinking b. New ideas c. Actionable product

Thematic analysis of narrative (sense-making) data from codes 1-7 above will address research questions SRQ1, SRQ2, and SRQ4. The words and actions of the participants will be presented as interpretable evidence about the way the model was experienced. To arrive at an assessment of 'utility' and address SRQ3, an impact analysis will be derived from a combination of participant questionnaire, change readiness matrix, interview confidence ratings, narratives from codes 6 and 7 and magnitude coding of narratives referencing the utility of the model.

3.14.4. Questionnaire Analysis

The two questionnaires used in this study were employed as complementary sources of data to study the impact of the process on attitudes to change, perspectives on leadership and participant agency and engagement. Given the voluntary nature of the process response rates could not be guaranteed so response bias was addressed by cross-checking data with a few non-respondents by phone.

The participant questionnaire employed a Lickert scale against a number of statements which might indicate impact or utility. The results were collated and presented statistically by scale to identify patterns or clusters of responses and to derive indicative data which could then be triangulated with other sources.

The change readiness survey is a form of auto-magnitude coding in which participants use their own narratives to arrive at a numerical assessment of their readiness for change. Each participant's response was graphed on a collective matrix of the four quadrants to arrive at a generalised statement about the impact of the group on change readiness.

3.15. Trustworthiness

Typically if a piece of research is to be considered trustworthy it should be valid, objective and reliable. For findings to be valid they ought to be representative of the issue, be grounded in the evidence, be complete and be transparent. For findings to be reliable the same results would be replicated if the data was collected again by another researcher. Much of this applies to post-positivistic approaches using quantitative methods where true explanations of reality are sought. However in qualitative research there may be multiple realities and therefore truth is problematic. A pragmatic stance understands truth as what works so is more concerned with what is 'viable, reasonable, relevant and contingent' (Davis and Sumara, 2006, p. 26). Therefore the alternate concepts for trustworthiness used by qualitative and mixed methods researchers of credibility, dependability and confirmability are preferred here (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

The use of a mixed methods approach allows for multiple and contrasting lenses which may be used in a process of triangulation – a process whereby credibility is claimed by comparison of evidence from a number of sources. This means comparing participants' interview responses to the same questions and comparing interview data with other sources. The use of triangulation in addition to framing any conclusions in more appropriate terms of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Guba

and Lincoln, 1994) will enhance the trustworthiness of this study's findings and recommendations.

In addition, in adopting a complexity thinking lens the idea of reductionist, linear, cause and effect thinking becomes problematic. One cannot or should not attempt to predict generalisable systemic effects resulting from multiple and varying causes. Generalisability can be an objective but it cannot be a requirement. On the other hand such assertions have been contested by complexity scientists who argue causality is possible and desirable within a complexity theory framework (Opfer and Pedder, 2011; Morrison, 2008; Lemke and Sabelli, 2008). In this study the primary aim was not generalisation but rather exploration. Future trends and directions might be suggested by the data but prediction cannot. Following a number of cycles of the model and an evaluation of a sufficient data set the model or elements of it might indicate practices and principles of transferable benefit to other international schools.

3.16. Ethical Considerations

In conducting the research the study abided by the Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research established by BERA (2004), the University of Leicester Code of Practice and the principles established by Stutchbury and Fox (2009) and Pring (2000). Prior to undertaking the research an analysis of the research design was completed using the ethical guidance suggested by Stutchbury and Fox (2009). Their template of questions requires consideration of the main areas of ethical risk such as informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality. These were addressed together with implications of my dual role as researcher and leader of the school. Of particular risk to participants was the potential impact of contributions or comments made as a result of participation which might impugn or question other employees, the values or the mission of the company or school or which could have placed them and others in unprofessional situations.

To counter these issues a general power point presentation was developed during the pilot study and prior to the start of research. This was first used with the company

together with a letter requesting access to the research context. Following approval, the presentation was made to the whole community together with a letter inviting participation and consent. The letter included commitments to the protection of participants and non-participants. A non-disclosure statement was explicit in the statement of ethical values underpinning the research offering assurances regarding the use of alternate names and pseudonyms and to protect identities and anonymity in the event of any publications. The letter also ensured participants were made aware of and understood the purpose of the research, were clear about how they were chosen and the intended use of any information gathered. Participants were informed of the extent to which they could comment upon the analysis and conclusions and their rights to refute or withdraw their contribution. Involving members of the secondary school student council leadership implied additional parental permissions for those students contributing to data collection under research conditions. A statement of ethical conduct was included for all participants (appendix 13).

The ethical and methodological implications of conducting the research as school leader embedded in the project were continuously addressed through reflective and reflexive feedback loops. The research journal and the regular strategy meetings with close associates within the senior leadership team checked and balanced the influences of the author's positionality in the study. However my responsibility as Head to ensure the delivery of a plan which would move the educational programme and institution forward meant that, ethically, sometimes this role came before my research role. This was particularly the case in cycles two and three of the data collection.

Participants' contributions to interviews, questionnaires and audio recordings were treated and stored confidentially. Data from research was stored outside of the school in secure electronic format. Physical data was protected from unnecessary access and information from interviews was transcribed anonymously.

3.17. Conclusion

This chapter makes the argument for a pragmatic mixed method appreciative inquiry. It argues that the philosophical stance and the research design are consistent with the implications of adopting a complexity thinking framework. The strategy adopted for a holistic analysis coheres with the assumptions of sense giving and complexity thinking theory which are then established as a lens in the analytical framework for understanding the study. The next chapter presents the findings from the research and begins to construct a narrative for assessing the contribution of the model to the research context.

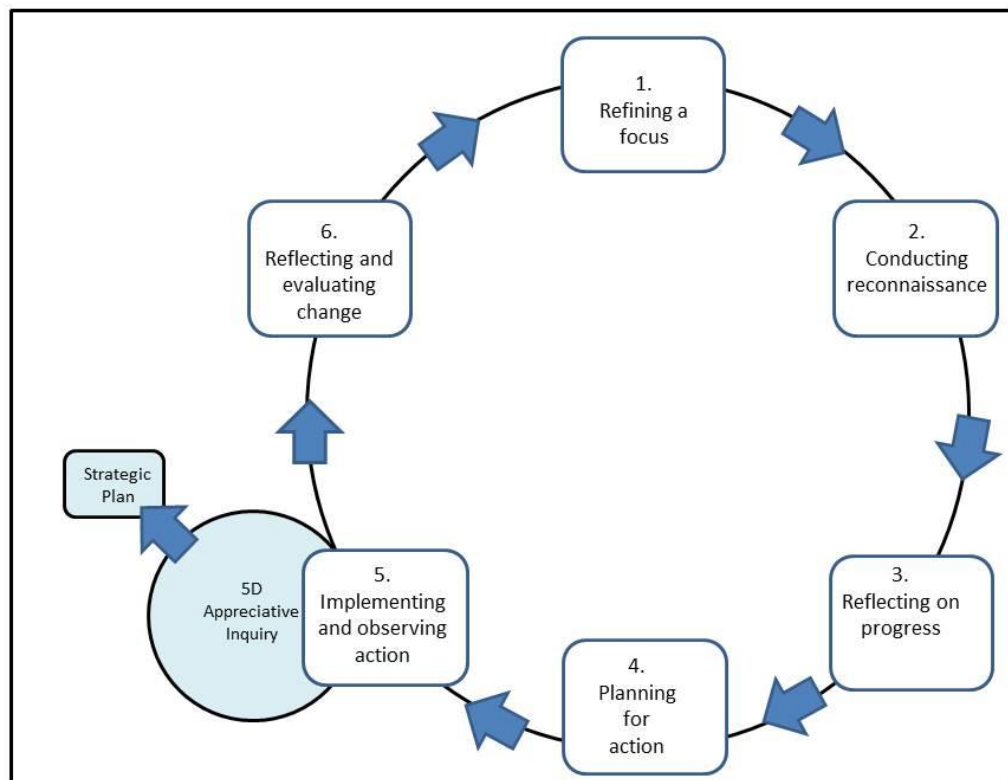
Chapter 4 - Findings and Discussion

4.1. Introduction

As a result of experience of change processes over a number of years and triggered by proceedings at a leadership conference in Istanbul during 2011 this research was undertaken to explore an alternative approach to change in international schools. This study explored the utility of an approach based on the use of a dialogic development process and which embraced the complexity inherent in school organisations.

The previous chapter outlined the methodological approach to the research, presented a justification for the choice of methods used and outlined a strategy for the analysis of the data collected. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected in the reconnaissance and implementation phases of an action research methodology (Figure 4.1). Therefore this chapter begins with phase 2 of the action research with a review of the results from the reconnaissance phase and describes how these informed planning for action decisions and the subsequent choice of an Appreciative Inquiry. The results from the implementation of that intervention are then presented followed by a discussion of their significance for the research questions.

Figure 4.1. Action Research Project



4.2. Reconnaissance Phase Baseline Data

As an incoming Head looking for a model for sustainable school development the action research project began with a reconnaissance phase. Between May 2013 and November 2014 data was gathered together from a mixture of ‘found data’ repurposed for the developing model and a pilot study completed in a prior professional context (see chapter 3 pp75). Table 4.1 details the chronology of activity and data collection. Themes emerged from the reconnaissance data which contributed to the design of the intervention. These were attitudes to change and participation in change processes, potential change leadership approaches and the school development priorities. These themes are the framework for the results.

Table 4.1 Chronology Reconnaissance

Date	Activity	Data Collection
May 2013	Pilot Study	Structured Interview Transcripts
February-March 2014	Futures Thinking Workshop	Report of Outcomes
May – May 2015	Reconnaissance Data Gathering	Employee Engagement Survey Executive Summary Parent and Student Satisfaction Survey Results School Accreditation and Inspection Reports Employee Engagement Focus Groups Transcripts

Evidence from the pilot study interviews indicated teachers feel uncertain, nervous and apprehensive about organisational and personal change processes. ‘I think a lot of teachers feel hesitant about change. I think it makes us feel insecure as if what we're doing isn't good’ (Teacher A Pilot Study). As a result respondents highlighted the necessity of personal engagement in change as a pre-cursor to organisational change. ‘We are changing because we want this to happen’ (Teacher C Pilot Study). Another respondent stated ‘I think teachers need to believe that change is going to improve their practice and their students’ learning. I think that belief and buy-in is the key and they have to agree. They have to believe’ (Teacher A Pilot Study). This suggests organisational change is personal and begins with individuals. Leadership and change models must employ practices which help individuals to understand, process and engage with change.

Pilot study interviews suggested teachers saw involvement in change processes as an act of professional development because they wanted to improve their skills as leaders

or to contribute to the future direction and quality of the school (Teacher A Pilot Study; Teacher C Pilot Study; Teacher B Pilot Study). Yet, evidence from the new school's employee engagement survey indicated only 23% felt there were sufficient development opportunities (Employee Engagement Survey). Evidence from the Futures Thinking Survey suggested parents were motivated to take part in change processes because they wanted to learn more about their school and its future and wanted to work with school leaders to improve it (Futures Thinking Report). This data suggests that participation in change processes is driven by a desire to learn and to be of service. In an effective change model the data suggested a focus on learning which could be facilitated at organisational level by capturing input from members of each constituency in the community.

Evidence from the employee effectiveness survey indicated an element of dissonance between the goals and strategy of the school and that of the parent company (Employee Engagement Survey). Indeed, the Focus Group on employee effectiveness identified an uncoordinated and overwhelming array of change initiatives coming from both inside and outside the school which reduced time available to focus on seeing changes through effectively (Effectiveness Focus Group Pilot Study). Whilst 94% responded that they care about the school (Employee Engagement Survey) only 61% of employees indicated they were engaged and only 59% felt enabled. The Focus Group on Employee effectiveness suggested that compliance with corporate commercial requirements was driving change rather than student learning and that the 'why' (Sinek, 2009) for the corporation was very different to the 'why' of an international school. (Effectiveness Focus Group Pilot Study). The Focus Group on performance management expressed the perception of employees that they did not 'fit in' with the values and mission of the parent corporation (Appraisal Focus Group Pilot Study). Though morally and professionally engaged, employee frustration had been growing as the school was increasingly absorbed into the corporate group that now owned it. The data suggested that an effective change model would need to empower more people within the local organisation in change processes whilst also connecting them to the parent company.

Data also suggested an effective change model should include greater collegiality with participatory and collaborative leadership styles indicated as a preference by teachers. In the employee engagement survey teachers identified issues of professional trust, availability and recognition as barriers to productivity (Employee Engagement Survey). Collaboration with the Senior Leadership Team was viewed unfavorably compared to the rest of the school - an observation echoed in the Focus Group on effectiveness (Effectiveness Focus Group Pilot Study). The Focus Group on performance management also expressed a desire for greater transparency and conversation with leadership as well as involvement of staff in generating policy and procedures (Appraisal Focus Group Pilot Study). This suggested an effective change model in this context involves members of the faculty and community in school wide decisions.

Pilot Study respondents favoured leaders that 'allow other people to show their best' (Teacher C Pilot Study) and are able 'to work with people to help them choose change rather than to implement change' (Teacher A Pilot Study). On the other hand responses referred to the need for structures which provide clear vision, 'I think there needs to be a very strong sense of what needs to be done, very clear objectives' suggesting leadership is not completely devolved but collaborative. When asked about leadership in a workshop setting one pilot study participant stated that 'a good workshop leader has to be somebody who is flexible and maybe more inquiry based in terms of working towards changing thinking rather than working towards decision-making or information giving' (Teacher A Pilot Study). What arises from this is the suggestion that leaders are facilitators of thinking and learning. Leadership for change focuses on attitude change and inquiry. Communication and conversational skills would play a central role in achieving this which is why the focus for the research was refined to focus on dialogue as a vehicle through which working and thinking together can lead to new learning, greater engagement in change and new practice.

During the reconnaissance phase a futures thinking workshop was implemented to trial the Dialogic Development Process (DDP) and to generate some impetus for strategic thinking and planning. Responses to a survey on the experience suggested the use of stimulus reading prior to the workshop was counter-productive and rarely

referred to. Further, the parameters for discussion were too wide and unstructured leading to outcomes which were neither practical nor focused. 'The events were lacking in content. Attendees were given targets that were too wide-ranging as to have any in-depth specific response (Futures Thinking Report). Respondents also stated that membership of the workshops was too large making it difficult to focus the discussions in the time available. 'My group were particularly difficult to deal with when it came to discussions. Perhaps a (loose) set of rules for how discussions should proceed was needed. Unfortunately, people just spoke, sometimes shouted, over each other' (Futures Thinking Report). The involvement of teachers, parents and students was widely applauded though there was a desire for greater involvement from teachers and students. This data suggested that an effective change model could benefit from the inclusion of a participant initiated 'discovery' or reconnaissance phase in the model, that workshops should be of 'workable size' and that direction from the centre would support and engage participants in producing smart outcomes. Data also supported the contention that a workshop is an appropriate place for personal learning seen as foundational to personal and organisational change. One participant stated 'often others had a view point I had not considered. I have come away with new ideas regarding what I want my children's education to look like' (Futures Thinking Report).

In preparation for a facilitator led dialogic workshop process a workshop facilitator training programme was piloted and studied in my previous school. Its utility and content was the subject of the pilot study interviews. Participants identified the most impactful elements as those related directly to personal practice and the power of inquiry modes of communication (Teacher C Pilot Study). Participant B noted that the programme was very content heavy and that he got a lot more from 'the times when we got to do role-play exercises and listening to other members and listened to you talking in a personal way rather than a professional way' (Teacher B Pilot Study). Responses from these interviews prompted a reduction in the didactic style and its replacement with a more conversational approach where personal learning emerged through reflexive activities designed to elicit personal reflection.

4.2.1. Reflecting on Progress and Planning for action

A review of the various inspection and accreditation reports supplemented with data derived from parental and employee feedback suggested the five operational areas, within which to focus school change. These were Teaching and Learning, People, Technology, Finance and Facilities and Marketing and Communications. Workshop groups were established within the AI to address these areas.

The reconnaissance data provided insights about how a change process could be effective in this school context and suggested three themes which needed to be addressed and taken forward in the design of the process and the research which followed. It suggested that the typically negative attitudes towards change and change processes felt by employees should be addressed by greater collaboration between leaders and employees. It suggested that the school needed a devolved, robust and inclusive organisational development process which enhanced the ability of the school to assert its unique identity as it was absorbed into a global schools group. And it suggested dialogue could potentially be impactful in empowering and engaging those tasked with implementing change. As a result of this the appreciative inquiry model was chosen as a way to frame change as an organisational and emergent social process where dialogue would be the vehicle for facilitating engagement and a culture of innovation. This positive, democratic and more educative community-driven development process contrasted with a management-driven inspection model typically used in schools, which removed ownership from those that implement change, increased suspicion and anxiety and which seemed difficult to sustain.

Having chosen the appreciative inquiry as the intervention, it followed that any evaluation of its contribution would need evidence from participants about attitudes towards change, levels of engagement and the impact of facilitated dialogue and democratic processes. Taken together with ideas suggested by a review of the literature on change, complexity and dialogue the insights derived from the reconnaissance phase were captured within three overarching themes of dialogue,

leadership and collaboration, and emergence and sustainability. These became the focus for the research into the intervention and the emergent coding strategy which followed.

4.2.2. Dialogue

The role of dialogue, particularly generative dialogue (Isaacs, 1999), in facilitating emergent thinking and learning is a key process in the emergent change model. This means exploring patterns of conversation for advocacy and inquiry. At the same time a performing group dynamic is dependent upon the capacity of the participants to do this together so this also means exploring how dialogue is used by leadership to organise this work. This led to the development of an integrated framework (DDP) and the emergent thematic codes of **dialogue to organise** and **dialogue to enhance emergent processes**; the latter generated novelty and innovation while the former captured that in concrete outcomes for implementation.

Two problems should be acknowledged. The first is that it is unnatural and difficult to split dialogue up in this way with advocacy and inquiry sometimes observed concurrently or in the same sentence or stanza. Generalised conclusions drawn about dialogue emerge from a consideration of the two codes simultaneously, but this will inevitably be the author's interpretation. Secondly, viewing stanzas or quotations in isolation runs the risk of obscuring the wider context, intentions, trajectory and flow of the conversation. Such reductive practice could lead to selective-certainty or assumption-creep where the researcher unconsciously seeks confirmation of their own values and perceptions. Whilst temporal analysis of the larger data set will go some way to counter these issues, even the identification of generalised patterns could suffer from the same fate. Thus, triangulation against data from other codes and other data sources is necessary to assure credibility.

4.2.3. Leadership and Collaboration

Allied to the use of dialogue was the role and nature of leadership and collaboration in the DDP. Though still important, leadership of change is seen as embedded within an organisational dialogic process rather than being the focal point from which change flows. A group dynamic within such a DDP suggests the idea of **leadership by not being in control** (Streatfield, 2001) where leadership means democratic, collaborative approaches and the facilitation of generative dialogue. This means exploring the role of the workshop leader in organising the dialogue, managing disagreements and the extent to which thinking and planning was devolved and delegated. It also means reflecting upon the role of the Head in facilitating the entire process. A DDP also suggests patterns of collaboration characterised by a **willingness to work with others to find solutions**. This means exploring the nature and extent of mutual sharing, decision making and how differences are resolved. It also means assessing the coherence of emerging collective positions.

A problem which may arise with the data of leadership and collaboration is the impact of the embedded leader simultaneously researching and participating in the study. This may affect the quantity and quality of the data gathered so the analysis may be partial, impressionistic and more prone to subjectivity than other themes.

4.2.4. Emergence and Sustainability

The assumption in the DDP is that an effective change process must generate innovative outcomes which can be practically implemented. This process can be sustained if the community is engaged as a partner in an on-going dialogue about school improvement. Focusing on aspects of emergence and sustainability begins to address the level and nature of the impact of the model.

One aspect is the degree to which the process led to a sense of **organisation as community** and whether the change plans were coherent and connected. In other words, the degree to which agents drawn from different interpenetrating systems of

the school community were able, through communication and interaction in workshop groups, to contribute to the change of the grander system (the school organisation). A further aspect relates to the degree of **ownership and commitment to the process** displayed by participants. This means considering issues of continuity such as patterns of attendance, adherence and engagement over the life course of the process. A final aspect is the degree to which the DDP led to the **emergence of clear foci/outcomes for future development**. This means assessing the quality of the emergent thinking and actionable product resulting from the process.

4.3. Implementation Phase - Appreciative Inquiry First Cycle Data

The insights gained from the reconnaissance phase led to an attempt to implement the dialogic development process through an appreciative inquiry between November 2014 and June 2015. This first cycle led to the publication of the first version of the strategic plan. Further rolling cycles of AI continued as an emergent process with updates of the strategic plan published annually until the end of 2020 when a new planning year begins.

The first cycle implemented the 5D stages of the AI in which the focus was the way the model worked. Table 4.2. indicates the chronology of the cycle and the data collected.

Table 4.2. Cycle One Chronology

Date	AI Stage	Activity	Data Collection
18 November 2014	Define	Planning Session #1 –Orientation and Formation of Strategic Planning Committee and Workshop Groups	
24 and 29 November 6 December 2014	Define	Facilitator Orientation Session	
13 December 2014	Define, Discover, Dream	Planning Session #2-Full Day Workshop	Field Notes (Observation Notes) Audio Recording Transcripts
15 January 2015	Design	Planning Session #3 – Action Planning Workshop	Field Notes (Observation Notes) Audio Recording Transcripts
4 February 2015	Design	Planning Session #4-Action Planning Workshop	Field Notes (Observation Notes) Audio Recording Transcripts
11 February 2015	Design	Planning Session #5 – Action Planning Workshop	Field Notes (Observation Notes) Audio Recording Transcripts Facilitator Interview Transcripts February 2015 Participant Focus Group March

			2015
16 June 2015	Design	Planning Session #6 – Action Planning Workshop and Review Plenary	Field Notes (Observation Notes) Audio Recording Transcripts Facilitator Interview Transcripts June 2015 Participant Questionnaire Participant Change Readiness Survey
June 2015	Design and Deliver	Publication of Strategic Plan and Annual Update of Progress	

The **Define stage** began with an orientation session and a facilitated discussion in groups to assess the performance of the school. At the end of the orientation session each participant was asked to conduct a simple survey of the community for use in the discovery stage of a one day workshop (appendix 1). Between this orientation session and the one day workshop elected facilitators from each group attended a facilitators' training programme to orient them into their roles.

The full day workshop completed the define stage and progressed the work to the discover and dream stages. This session was structured and facilitated by the Head who continuously reiterated the values and rationale for the process and provided the inquiry tasks to enable work to progress.

In the **Discover Stage** groups were required to uncover 2-5 'provocative propositions' or positive themes to drive thinking about the future of the school. This was then followed by the **Dream Stage** in which groups wrote vision statements and strategic objectives around the positive themes. These were then shared and critically reviewed by the larger committee.

The **Design Stage** covered three planning sessions. The first was to interrogate the vision and strategic objectives derived from the one day workshop and the next two were devoted to identifying the operational tasks and provisional timelines imagined for their implementation.

At prescribed points in the cycle the five groups came together to dialogue about their experiences and to contribute to the development of the plan. Final editing was undertaken by the Head and the strategic plan was then published to the community.

4.3.1. Dialogue

Dialogue is characterised by the existence of conversations for advocacy and inquiry (Isaacs, 1999). With advocacy participants assert and defend positions, challenge or

clarify facts. With inquiry participants suggest, pose questions, invite new perspectives or provide insight. Generative dialogue, and thus emergent thinking and learning, is more likely when there is a balance of advocacy and inquiry. During the cycle dialogue was used for two purposes – to organise the flow of work and to facilitate talking and thinking together. Data were gathered to understand how this took place and developed over the course of cycle 1.

4.3.1.1. Dialogue to organise

Each workshop group was composed of volunteer representatives of teachers, parents, board members and students (see 3.2 pp81). This diversity led to differing advocated positions or opinions throughout the stages of the cycle. For example, parents were often critical of current practices requiring teachers to defend or clarify in response.

When dialogue was used to organise the work of the group it was to develop an efficient participatory group dynamic which delivered on tasks and where communication was open and transparent (Field Notes). This meant including and capturing diverse opinions. Natural leaders emerged who were able to effectively synthesise arguments for others or who managed to identify shared positions or offered compromises and often they were elected the group's facilitator. Facilitators used their role to elicit participant engagement and the sharing of personal experiences and anecdotes. This was achieved by 'opening communication avenues' (Facilitator B), summarising discussion and 'repeating it back to the group' (Facilitator A).

For example, during the '**define stage**' orientation session, structured open questions provided an initial opportunity for participants to assess the schools' performance. In this session of 'free-form' conversation, redolent of the 'politeness' quadrant of the DDP, participants invited each other into conversations, sharing anecdotal monologues and advocated for personal agendas (Field Notes). As one facilitator noted, 'An awful lot of the early conversations were very unconnected, disconnected, whatever the

word is. It took a while for people to understand....it took an awful lot of rewording of original conversations' (Facilitator F). The different perspectives within each group and the varying levels of knowledge and understanding prompted an interaction in which dialogue contributed to a sense of shared understanding about the state of the school, and solidified the workshop groups' solidarity around the larger committee's purpose (Field Notes). This is suggestive of the characteristics of the 'breakdown' quadrant of the DDP.

In order to ensure tasks were completed the dialogue needed to be managed within the time available. For example, the People group observed during the '**dream stage**' became more unstable and conversation broke down when there was collective anxiety over task completion (Dream Stage Audio). This led to increasing side bar conversations and participants talking over each other. Typical techniques used to manage dialogue included suspending a line of discussion, appealing for consensus and referencing the larger objective or task. Facilitators were observed progressing the work with phrases such as 'I'm going to time us' (Discover Stage Audio), 'we're running out of time'... (Discover Stage Audio) and 'I think we need to move on a little bit because we've been talking about this for half an hour' (Design Stage #5 Audio). As a result workshops were very effective at completing tasks and producing outcomes which could then be incorporated into the strategic planning document (Field Notes).

By the '**discover**' stage facilitators had established their credibility and their utility in the process. During the discussion about the school's life giving qualities facilitators were observed inviting contribution, ensuring everyone's voice had been heard and moderating advocacy rich conversations using phrases such as 'I'm going to suggest', 'What do you think?', 'Does anyone want to change anything? And 'Is everybody still happy with that as an order? (Discover Stage Audio; Dream Stage Audio). This practice enabled defined positions and perspectives to be heard, rehearsed and refined. When conversations started to become dominated by personal agendas the conversation and the conflict was managed. Facilitator C stated her approach was to be 'very firm and remind people this is a constructive conversation etc. and remind them of their commitment to it... (Facilitator C) whilst Facilitator B described the whole process as

akin to working with a jury saying, 'If you've got one vociferous bossy person, you know, the other eleven have to somehow get that person on the same level as the others so that a conversation can take place and ideas can come forward without one person being the overruling or predominant person with their opinion' (Facilitator B). These early stages indicated dialogic practice rich in advocacy and consistent with the 'politeness' and 'breakdown' quadrants from the model.

4.3.1.2. Dialogue for emergence

The talking and thinking together characteristic of generative dialogue involves a balance of dialogue for advocacy and inquiry. In facilitating inquiry facilitators used open questions inviting opinion and discussion to help participants think about scale e.g. in considering whether and how the school shares information within the community, 'Are we using the full range of communication or can we improve on this?' (Discover Stage Audio); About differing perspectives e.g. 'What do you think the students might say?' (Discover Stage Audio), and about the credibility of assumptions e.g. 'Do you think generally there is an attitude, a value, of supporting one another?' (Discover Stage Audio). These effectively widened the field of consideration, complexified the issue and suggested alternative perspectives to how the group could see and ultimately act around an issue.

Observation and audio recordings of the Teaching and Learning group during the '**discover stage**' suggested that, even at this early stage, the group's dynamic moved into the DDP third quadrant of 'inquiry'. Once opinions and perspectives had been captured, groups often searched for new concepts or models into which these diverse contributions could fit. For example, following a series of entrenched statements made about the school's best life giving quality, a line of inquiry was introduced by the facilitator around the idea of the IB Learner Profile attributes and dispositions that schools want to develop in students. 'So which of those do you feel would perhaps most describe what it is that we think, that without it, our school would be completely different?' (Discover Stage Audio). The interchange that followed led to a vision

statement which included a commitment to embedding IB attributes into the curriculum and a pedagogy which is continuously innovating and adventurous (Dream Stage Audio). In addition, when discussing what the future priorities for the school might be there was a disagreement in the teaching and learning group about the importance of ESL and language learning more generally. One participant reframed the debate in terms of inclusivity effectively capturing and including the advocated positions and building consensus around this new umbrella concept.

‘Are we giving the students access to everything, to the courses, because that’s what, you know, in an international school, we have to make sure that we’re providing access to the course. Okay. We didn’t talk about that..’ (Discover Audio).

This integrating dynamic is characteristic of the ‘inquiry reflective dialogue’ quadrant and a pre-cursor to consensus and agreement.

Moving into the ‘**dream**’ and ‘**design**’ stages observation and audio data showed advocacy remained a strong feature of conversations. Facilitators encouraged the interrogation of individual participants’ and workshop groups’ positions (Field Notes) as a way to establish a collective ‘ground truth’ (Scott, 2002, p. 47), or agreed understanding, before you could then dream about solutions and strategies. This was achieved by turning advocated positions into group inquiries using phrases like ‘Do you think that?’ ‘I wonder if the evidence supports this?’ and ‘Thank you for that, what do other people think?’ and providing space for reflection. For example, during a lively discussion in the People group about improving academic and social support for students, one participant forcefully advocated for a programme of stress management for students (Design Stage #4 Audio). This led to a suggestion about mindfulness from another participant and a facilitator-led invitation to the group to suggest solutions. She did this by encouraging inquiry based questions which suggest or provide insight and inviting participants to imagine alternatives. For example, when considering the role of the tutor in student stress management programmes one participant asked, ‘why doesn’t the tutor group go and do some team building, you know, a team

building exercise'? (Design Stage #4 Audio). This shows that by counterbalancing advocacy with inquiry participants were able to discuss widely and were free to create their own opinions and ideas, but that this was within a coherent structure provided by the Head and facilitator (Davis and Sumara, 2006).

It is tempting to see personal advocacy as a source of disruption and dissent which erodes the group's cohesion and is a barrier to reaching collective agreements. A focus group participant noted the impact of this on their group. 'I think people slightly hijacked ours to try and feedback on issues which more rightly should have been take up one-to-one with key people in the management structure rather than trying to influence the group to go down a particular road and that took a lot of, you know, in the end they're saying, 'Well okay. That's a very valid issue, but..'' (Focus Group). Facilitators understood that one of their roles was to protect the intent of the debate by 'directing the conversation' and 'keeping one or two people in check to make sure it stays constructive and focused' (Facilitator C). In fact, advocacy came to be used and viewed as essential input to provoke emergent thinking and learning. For example, during discussion of a strategy about the school's curriculum management system called 'ManageBac' (an IBO product), one participant pushed for its adoption throughout the school (Design Stage #5 Audio). Rather than seeing this as a source of conflict, the group reflected on their own understanding and knowledge and embraced the suggestion within the spirit of collaboration and collective learning amending the wording of their objectives.

On the rare occasions when this became regressive or destructive a ruling was made as to whether it was pertinent or not. As Facilitator B states, 'I asked questions about it, which were taken note of and then I made the point 'Well obviously this is a matter which needs to be addressed in another context. So we will put it to one side. You've said it. Thank you very much for raising the point' (Facilitator B). When dealing with disagreement participants questioned positions by interrogating context, motivation and veracity or by establishing new lines of inquiry. In terms of the role of conversation for inquiry in managing conflict and dissent small group discussion was seen as advantageous. A focus group participant stated,

‘You can hear other opinions and you can discuss from different points of view. It’s different if you are student or if you are a teacher. These two positions completely in opposite way. Sometimes, for me, it is a very rich experience’ (Focus Group).

By the latter ‘**design**’ stages observation and audio transcripts of the People group suggested inquiry focused interchanges and dynamics consistent with generative dialogue and the fourth quadrant of flow though it was challenging to differentiate them (Field Notes). For example a range of new ideas emerged during the last planning session (Design Stage #5 Audio) occasions when facilitators stepped back, only occasionally moderating conversation as the group became self-sufficient. In some circumstances the leadership was taken up by a participant (Design Stage #4 Audio; Design Stage #5 Audio) illustrating complex self-organisation.

In summary, dialogue was employed to manage work and develop group dynamics. This was seen in the way groups worked to invite, capture and include the diverse opinions within a cross-community workshop. Task completion was maximised through dialogic control of time and by building consensus. Facilitation contributed to the development of a culture of participation and an efficient group dynamic in which **multiple and dissonant views gave way to coherent collective positions**. Dissent and advocacy remained important but evolved from assertions to contributions which added to group thinking and learning.

Dialogue for advocacy and inquiry was always present but towards the latter stages of the cycle a notable shift occurred towards greater inquiry. This contributed to the emergence of new ideas, thinking and collective, rather than individual positions. Advocacy remained a necessary complement to inquiry in emergent collective learning and the gradual alignment of individual positions over the course of the cycle. As the model progressed through the AI stages the pattern of dialogic practice evolved through the first three quadrants of the DDP from ‘Politeness’ and ‘Breakdown’ to ‘Inquiry’ as **controlled discussions gave way to looser inquiry focused dialogue**. The

result of reflective dialogue within inclusive contexts was seen in the re-framing of issues and ideas as a pre-cursor to consensus and agreement. However, it was not clear that groups exhibited the generative dialogue of flow consistently and field notes suggested some groups' dynamics were more consistent with the inquiry and breakdown quadrants (Field Notes) suggesting that the development in group dynamics and in dialogic practice was not linear.

Finally, findings from the participant survey indicated strong agreement with statements addressing the utility of conversation and dialogue as a means for delivering effective strategic planning suggesting promise for greater ownership of the process and outcomes in future cycles. 42% of those surveyed fully agreed with the statement 'I think that the first published version of the ICS Strategic Plan captured the conversations in my workshop group and in the committee as a whole' rising to 84% when 'partially agree' responses were included. 31% of respondents fully agreed with the statement 'I think that the first published version of the ICS Strategic Plan addressed conversations about school development typical in the wider community' rising to 68% when 'partially agree' were included. Most significantly, 57% of respondents fully agreed with the statement 'I think that a conversational workshop approach is useful for planning school development' rising to 78% when 'partially agreed' were included.

4.3.2. Leadership and Collaboration

Organisational change processes which embrace the complexity of the organisation require leadership that is embedded in the organisation. This leadership facilitates, through dialogue, the collective thinking and learning which leads to the emergence of new ideas and insights for the organisation. Leadership which is simultaneously in control and not in control models and promotes collaboration (Streatfield, 2001). At the same time embedded leadership also implies collaboration and willingness to share and work together. Data were collected to discover how these were perceived and emerged during the process.

4.3.2.1. Leadership as facilitation

In the focus group one participant expressed a view of what leadership of change should look like saying, 'In my opinion should be introduced in the way that the change come not from you that want to introduce it, from the others that are putting in practice the change. That should play into the psychology of the recipients' (Focus Group). This is coherent with the intent of the intervention which was to address the weakness of planned change models which downplay the importance of engaging those that implement change in decisions about what change should look like (Iveroth and Hallencruetz, 2016). Change is more likely to be sustained if it is owned by those in the wider organisation. This participant's view also mirrors how facilitators saw their role. One facilitator described the role as, 'To open communication avenues. To make people feel confident that they can say things that they will be listened to, but then not really being told what to do or how to do it, that is, kind of coming from them' (Facilitator A). At the same time, facilitators acknowledged the importance of getting things done by having 'a specific goal in mind, a specific objective' (Facilitator B) and by coaching participants to 'explore ideas, share them, but also shape them in order to achieve a certain aim' (Facilitator C). There is a role for leadership but it is to facilitate and capture the work of others, creating conditions for ideas to emerge, but framing the process of emergence so that they are coherent. The combination of producing actionable product and engaging people in decisions about what that is, and how it is achieved coheres with the idea of being in control whilst not being in control (Streatfield, 2001).

A review of audio and field notes suggests facilitation styles varied during the process. In the early '**define**' and '**discovery**' stages facilitators established a participatory dynamic to include diverse opinions and to encourage participants to share them. Participants 'were quite resistant to opening up at the first one or two sessions, but then into the subsequent ones that was it' (Facilitator D). The role of facilitators, following the Head's lead, was to establish the parameters for the work to emerge coherently. Once the positive participatory values had been recognised within the

group dynamic of each workshop, the resultant rich encounters led to productive conversation and product.

However there is also evidence of more hierarchical collaborative practice by facilitators. Observation and audio transcripts of the Teaching and Learning group indicated the facilitator acted as opinion seeker but also opinion maker, both not in control and in control. When leading discussion they moderated but also advocated for positions or directions which prompted or provoked colleagues into opinions which could then lead to an outcome for the group (Field Notes). For example, during the **'discovery stage'** it was the facilitator who was a key 'mover' in advocating for the IB Learner Profile to be the conceptual framework through which to view the school's curriculum objectives and into which participants could locate their ideas. 'So are we in agreement that that would be the thing that covers all of the things that we would miss? Okay. Alright' (Discover Stage Audio) This apparent directive statement led to a group agreement at the 'dream stage' that the IB Learner Profile should be more widely implemented in the school as evidenced by the facilitator saying, 'I think what we do need to incorporate is the IB values that we identified as important which are caring, open-minded and principled, and that links to justice because principled is about fairness' (Dream Stage Audio). This shows the influence of the facilitator in a collaborative leadership role – having captured diverse opinions, facilitated an inquiry focused dialogue, she then controlled the agenda by framing the outcome in a wider discussion and conceptual framework within which other perspectives could be located. This advocacy led to a reflective interchange and a collective position. Thus, the facilitator is not the servant of the group but is working with it to find consensus and generate collective positions.

Did this practice have any impact on the way participants viewed the role of the leader? By the end of the **'design' stage** change readiness survey responses indicated leadership of workshops was experienced as loose and dynamic. One participant stated, 'In our group, there were no structured processes followed. It was mainly based upon open discussion and interchange of ideas. Suggestions would be made and

opinions were considered (Change Readiness Narrative, Participant 1), while another described leadership as 'a bit slow, indecisive until some people took charge. At times there was a feeling of going in circles' (Change Readiness Narrative, Participant 10). So, whilst facilitators saw their leadership as collaborative, participants perceived this approach as unstructured and time consuming i.e. not being led.

However, participants with divergent opinions were not always included within the emerging group consensus. The positivity of the collective either encouraged them to modify their positions or to accept the limits of their influence perhaps suggesting an anti-democratic tyranny of the majority. A participant noted in the change readiness survey, completed at the end of the cycle, 'In our group there was a few people focused only on the failure because they had a personal opinion about the different questions and they forgot the rest of the group. But there were people more enthusiastic and they were collaborative in many senses' (Change Readiness Narrative, Participant 16). Those with divergent views 'very much retained their opinion. But they said, 'This opinion, this thing which I find I do not like, because of what we're discussing, in the context of what we're discussing can and will be one of the things that will improve ' (Facilitator B). This is exemplified in the case of one participant in the People group who was a consistent critic of the school during the process, seeing tasks through the lens of her own agenda and experience. By the '**design' stage**' her dissenting voice had shifted towards that of a moderating voice, 'on board' but shaping the objectives and solutions agreed for implementation (Design Stage #4 Audio). This shows the influence/pressure exerted by the group over individuals. The willingness to find common ground and to sacrifice or modify personal positions illustrates the growing commitment to the process and loyalty to the workshop. However the continued presence of dissenting voices overridden by a dominant positivity in groups' dynamics shows this was not a perfect process.

During the '**dream' stage** there were incidences when facilitators effectively stopped facilitating. In a discussion about the nature of an international school in the teaching and learning group the facilitator let the conversation flow (Dream Stage Audio) re-

entering only to re-focus the group on the task and deliver the proposed outcome to the group. This also occurred in the People group during a discussion about school support for student performance (Design Stage #4 Audio). This second group produced a number of initiatives as a result of this discussion demonstrating the impact of this facilitator's approach on emergent thinking and learning. Though there were occasions when a breakdown in both process and cohesion was observed when facilitation was withdrawn there was more behaviour consistent with inquiry focused reflective dialogue indicating the benefits of a devolved but still managed process and leadership by not being in control (Streatfield, 2001).

4.3.2.2. Managing disagreements

How conflict was managed also varied. One focus group participant suggested the argument made to them was 'Okay, the majority feel this way. So, if that's how you feel you either resign yourself or you take it up in a different way, a different route' (Focus Group). This behaviour was sometimes seen as an attempt to control outcomes contrary to the democratic values of the process. For example, one participant stated, 'I did feel throughout the whole process that she knew where she was going and no matter what we said, we were all going with her' (Focus Group). This suggests facilitation was more managerial overriding individual positions with a centrally determined collective one.

On the other hand facilitators saw this practice as a question of managing time and product with one suggesting 'I was not there to debate or argue or have sides and say 'Okay. Who votes for? Who votes against?' It wasn't about that. It was about discussion and letting people talk because only by letting them talk will we ever find out what it is that we want to do, you see' (Facilitator B). This suggests a more participatory facilitation to ensure arguments are heard, suspend judgement and lead an inquiry. Outcomes emerged from the discussion and were to be captured by the facilitator to ensure 'everybody feels as if they've had the opportunity to say what they want to say, whatever that is, and they contributed that without threat or ambiguity or that type of thing' (Facilitator D). Generally these managerial moments where 'people

felt cajoled, directed, maybe at times pressured to move on, where they wanted to continue talking about a specific subject' (Facilitator D) were viewed as natural in a time-pressured facilitation context (Focus Group).

By midway through the '**design stage**' the frequency of dissenting voices had decreased as agreements on vision, objectives and priorities emerged and participatory values had become embedded (Design Stage #5 Audio; Field Notes). Advocacy became focused on outcome production and innovation. This indicated a turning point in the group dynamic towards norming (Tuckman, 1965). However, this depended upon the collective level of knowledge within each group and the skills of the facilitator (Field Notes). The People group, for example, worked with the persistent tension created by a parent and her supporters who had clearly arrived with an agenda. This impacted on the process and the time necessary to reach collective positions. By the end of the **design stage** groups were working at different speeds. The limitation of time shifted the balance of this group's dynamic away from participatory facilitation for emergence towards managerial facilitation for product.

4.3.2.3. Collective decision making

The intention was to make decisions through consensus. As one respondent from the change readiness survey stated, 'Suggestions would be made and opinions were considered. When the majority was in agreement, it would be accepted. At times, we had a clear idea of what was needed and other times things were not so clear, but we would strive to arrive at a consensus' (Change Readiness Narrative, Participant 1). Qualified majority voting was rejected as 'it would have created conflict' (Facilitator B) at odds with the participatory values explicit in the process. Arriving at consensus followed a dialogic process of hearing, listening and respecting dissenting voices (advocates), then suspending judgement until inquiry had been completed and a majority view formed, which could then be captured by the facilitator. However, the data above suggests that though consensus was the goal there were examples where decision making was not fully consensual as dissenting voices remained. For example frustration was expressed at the time necessary to elicit decisions reflecting the impact

of dissonance 'given wide participation by most members present and aims to achieve consensus ..' (Change Readiness Narrative, Participant 13). However, agreements did ultimately emerge.

By the end of the first cycle findings from the participant survey suggest mixed perspectives on the role of leadership in the model. 47% of respondents fully agreed with the statement 'I think that change in organisations is best led by involving as many stakeholders as possible' rising to 73% when 'partially agreed' responses were included. More interestingly, 47% of those surveyed disagreed or partially disagreed with the statement 'I think that change in organisations is best led by the senior leaders' rising to 64% when 'neutral responses were included. This appears to show support for the community led change process but 36% of respondents also fully and partially agreed with the statement perhaps indicating recognition of the collaborative nature of the process or a rejection of the dialogic process and more participatory leadership styles.

4.3.2.4. The role of the Head

As lead facilitator my role was outside of the workshop conversations guiding, framing and structuring the process but allowing content and priorities to emerge from within the process. This was a significant departure from prior practice where the Head wrote and directed change using the processes and results of an external accreditation model. I was not required to mediate disputes or to restructure time for tasks. My editing role in the production of the strategic plan was to suggest amendments to forms of expression and vocabulary (International College Spain, 2016). Changes were only made after consultation and approval from the workshops. On two occasions during the dream stage I was asked for guidance (Dream Stage Audio) (Dream Stage Audio) . A review of the audio transcript shows the first intervention provided permission to question the received wisdom about the school, and the second intervention reinforced a position the group had already reached but were unable to articulate. These interventions can be viewed as 'sense-giving' actions (Iveroth and Hallencruetz, 2016) consistent with the role of researcher-consultant. This is supported

by evidence from the focus group interview in which a participant stated, 'You provided the guidelines. You gave us the structure, the body, and we put in the content'. (Focus Group).

I also led a facilitators training programme during the define stage to provide orientation and skills development for the elected facilitators. Though facilitation was productive the training programme received little acknowledgement in interviews and where it was, the impact on facilitation appears to be negligible. In response to pilot study interviews the programme was significantly slimmed down with less didactic content and more active experiential learning. The revised programme also received mixed reviews. One facilitator stated 'I thought it was good' (Facilitator A) but, '...I don't think we needed so much theory behind it' (Facilitator A) while another asked, 'Did they learn on the job? I think some did while others were effective without knowing it' (Facilitator E). Having revised the programme as a result of the pilot study this was surprising and suggests a rethink about the rationale as well as the content of the programme.

In summary, as participatory values became inculcated, collective identity established, and personal positions understood, productive working relationships emerged. Data suggested facilitators worked collaboratively as 'first among equals' in which they led others in capturing and processing received ideas emerging from the workshop but also contributing and framing ideas of their own whilst simultaneously ensuring groups met the demands of time and task. Facilitation in the process balanced the tension between managing dialogue for emergence and organising this dialogue for product. While a participative dynamic supported the former, a managerial approach tended to support the latter. The role of the Head as lead facilitator performed in the same way. Embedded leadership is not about 'letting go' but is the facilitation of the freedom for content to emerge whilst ensuring coherence by managing the process and editing the final product.

Though divergent opinions persisted, participants were more willing to work together, to compromise and to support the group in completing tasks, sometimes at the

expense of their own positions (Field Notes). Overall the picture from the data was that **embedded collaborative leadership contributed to an evolving identification with the group and ownership of the process**. Decision making was intended to be consensual but was not always so, such that **personal agendas were integrated or discarded as collective group dynamics influenced the emergence of shared positions**.

4.3.3. Emergence and Sustainability

The Dialogic Development Process was designed to be a more educative and positive approach to school change than the school had been used to and was aimed at creating the conditions for the on-going emergence of new ideas, practices and initiatives. Davis and Sumara (2006) point to three conditions for emergence - specialisation, trans-level learning and enabling constraints (see 2.3.1 pp41 above). By bringing a range of capacities and experiences together within a cross-community workshop group, the intervention intended to establish the level of specialisation necessary for the process and groups to adapt and be sustained. By focusing on dialogic process the model intended to establish the communicative mechanism necessary for trans-level learning to be developed within and between groups; and by decentralising and embedding leadership within the model, the intention was to establish the freedom for different people and ideas from across the organisation to interact whilst still providing a framework and structure to maintain organisational coherence. Emergent change would be sustained as a result of increased community ownership of outcomes and commitment to the process. Therefore data collected focused on developments in perceptions of change processes, the nature and scale of emergent novelty, and indicators of participant engagement and agency.

4.3.3.1. The organisation as community

During the '**discovery**' stage discussion on the life giving forces of the school the notion of 'school as community' emerged (Discover Stage Audio). This idea developed from thinking in terms of community segments to the notion of community interacting

with its wider environment. 'We are an open and inclusive community, a school community, because it's everybody together. It's not only the parents but also with the school....XXX (the school) is the sum of individuals' (Discover Stage Audio). By the time we reach the '**dream**' stage the notion of school as community has widened to include the world system too, 'our teaching and learning needs reflect our global position as well as our national and our local position in this country' (Dream Stage Audio). In the '**dream**' and '**design**' stages a more nuanced understanding of potential impacts of interpenetrating systems emerges. In a discussion about implementing a new curriculum management system participants referenced the potentially limiting impact of the parent company and curriculum authority on planning possibilities within school. One respondent in the change readiness survey suggested, 'I'm not sure if we all entered the dream stage as I feel that we were a little bogged down/limited by the IBO and what it could/would not allow' (Change Readiness Narrative, Participant 18) while a focus group respondent stated, 'In our group we would think of ideas and things we would like to do but we would always stop short and say, 'We don't know because can we do this? Would XXXX (the parent company) permit this?'' (Focus Group). Participants began to appreciate the impact of complexity on the design process too 'realising that what we were dealing with was much bigger than we had originally kind of imagined, there was a sense that 'No. Some of this is covered by this' and we started also seeing connections between things that we'd already talked about' (Facilitator A).

When asked about what effective change in an international school might look like facilitators pointed to the idea of community change. 'The test of good change is that it is positive, that people are happy, that the changes that are taking place, the whole community agrees with and is liking and that is producing good results' (Facilitator B). By the end of the cycle participants also acknowledged the utility of a community based change process, 'It is essential that the whole community is involved in the strategic planning process. In the past it had been decided for us, and this ensures input from all stakeholders and builds on various scenarios from experiences which is also essential' (Change Readiness Narrative, Participant 8).

The idea of the 'school as community' shows that participants already saw strategic change as an organisational process and that organisation for them meant the wider community. During the process they came to develop a more complex understanding of this notion and its implications for organisational change. However, although the plenary sessions at the end of each AI stage were structured to build inter-group links and grander whole school improvement themes, this did not happen, perhaps suggesting the need for more direction from me. Though groups referenced other groups' work they did not actively attempt to link this to their own work. Editing of the whole school document and coherence work was left to the Head.

In summary, references to how different sections of the community interrelate and how local community and outside agencies can impact on planning were articulated very early in the process. **Big picture sensemaking about change developed in scale and level from the personal (local) to the organisational.** This contributed to the capacity within the DDP for trans-level community learning and collective agreement about school direction. However, though participants were aware of the implications they did not engage in cross-group planning at the workshop level and were reactive rather than pro-active at the committee level.

4.3.3.2. Engagement and Ownership

A focus group participant referencing the experience teachers have of poor planned change processes argued that, 'what you want more than anything is for it to be bought into, a democratic decision' (Focus Group) because 'we want to be the ones who control the changes. We want to be the ones who implement the changes rather than somebody telling you, coming from outside' (Facilitator E). What did the data tell us about participant engagement?

A significant element of the appreciative inquiry was the principle of viewing school performance through a positive lens. During the '**discover**' stage the interchange between participants in the Teaching and Learning group indicated that this had to be learned. Initially there was frustration, 'Positive. I don't know where the negatives

have gone...we don't have any space for negatives. Maybe that comes later on' (Discover Stage Audio), which was countered by others advocating for the positive, 'And positive. I believe the spirit is positive because all the people, all the students, has one, two, three, or a lot of positive...we should focus more on learning' (Discover Stage Audio). In this case the notion of 'adventurous' learning emerged from this interchange. The learned positivity and the emergent idea were the culmination of a passage of discussion which started out sceptical and ended up aspirational and provided a platform for the envisioning exercise in the 'dream stage'.

The focus group were asked about the challenge of remaining positive. One participant thought it 'helped a lot of people think differently' (Focus Group). A facilitator agreed saying it 'made it less of a whinge-fest which it would have been....I thought this was really nice because actually you realised in that process how much you do value what is there already and that we do have a good foundation for change' (Facilitator A). Facilitators too noted the way participants responded to the positivity in the process with one stating, 'it was difficult to stop them running away with so many positive thoughts and ideas and suggestions, that sometimes we didn't have enough time' (Facilitator B). Facilitator D stated, 'I was amazed how quickly people bought into that' (Facilitator D). On the other hand Facilitator C described it as just 'very difficult because people have a mind-set' (Facilitator C) and another participant suggested 'people still think in the negatives' (Focus Group) indicating that context and variations in group dynamics can be factors.

There is evidence of the impact of the model on increasing ownership of process. A good benchmark is the behaviour of those who came to the process with personal agendas. Facilitator D referred to the changed behaviour of a participant in her group as the process progressed because 'their behaviour was positive. I think they felt an obligation, a want, a desire to contribute' (Facilitator D). In addition a participant wrote in the response to the change readiness survey, 'I feel like we have a voice and can believe that we are heard and trusted – very important- gives me a sense of ownership and responsibility towards the school' (Change Readiness Narrative, Participant 5). Another teacher participant remarked how different she felt about the

outcomes produced as a result of this process saying, 'I've never felt a sense of ownership about where my company is going in all my years of work, whether that's my previous career or since being a teacher, and in fact I felt absolutely the opposite' (Follow up Participant B). The focus group cited a greater sense of community, a greater understanding of issues, solutions and practice as a result of involvement in the process (Focus Group). One participant stated, 'I think the most important thing for me I think in the group, it was discovered the possibility to speak and being part of the school, a part of the life of the school, and this is very important, because now we have the possibility for change. We have the key, if we can use it, it's possible' (Focus Group)

By the end of the first cycle one participant said that 'I came away feeling really proud of what we'd done more than anything and also it made me feel like 'Oh good. Wow! I have been listened to' (Follow up Participant B). She went on to say, 'Also I am wholly prepared to get behind that strategy, because we wrote it, which makes me feel a much greater affiliation to the school, much greater loyalty, and more kind of motivated, I suppose, to make those things happen' (Follow up Participant B). Once the process had reached the '**design**' stage participants were strongly committed to the process and the outcomes, 'It was quite clear that failure was not an option. If we were to achieve our 'big audacious goal of establishing XXX (the school) as the unrivalled leader for innovation in international education, change was required' (Change Readiness Narrative, Participant 1).

Further evidence for increased engagement and ownership in the change process can be gleaned from the change readiness survey. Of the 18 respondents (one attendee left before they could complete the survey) 89% of the sample identified themselves as 'ready for change'. It is not possible to draw a linear cause and effect conclusion between their attitudes to change and the experience of the model as no entry survey was conducted for comparison. Nevertheless, taken together with data from other sources can indicate the impact of the model on participants. The instrument suggested three respondents were 'ready for resistance' but on closer examination of the raw data they had miscalculated their scores from the questions and thus wrongly

located themselves on the matrix. None of the sample identified as ‘ready for frustration’. The participants are located on the change readiness matrix (Table 4.3.)

Table 4.3. Change Readiness Matrix

<p>11 (1)</p> <p>Ready for Learning</p>	<p>18, 17, 14, 13, 12, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 3, 2, 1 (14) Note- Plus 16,15 and 4 (17)</p> <p>Ready for Change</p>
<p>16, 15, 4 (3) Note – wrongly calculated their scores</p> <p>Ready for Resistance</p>	<p>Ready for Frustration</p>

Factors identified in the focus group as barriers to engagement and emergent thinking included proficiency in English and poor leadership/facilitation (Focus Group). However, it was not possible to verify this as little data was collected on why participants left the process. Informally, participants cited ‘the time, general time, not of the process but his own timing’ (Facilitator E) as a factor. A barrier to emergent thinking was the varying levels of knowledge in each group. A focus group participant stated, ‘We spent a lot of time learning and unlearning and relearning as we developed a community perspective on the issue’ (Focus Group). Though seen as a barrier this is evidence of the interplay of specialisation within each group which leads to emergence.

4.3.3.3. Sustainability and Continuity

When looking at sustainability and engagement, attendance and the degree of wider community buy-in must also be considered. Attendance at sessions varied as the cycle progressed (Field Notes). In cycle 1 this was perceived as a problem impacting on continuity and outcomes. The data suggests that this pattern of attendance was influenced by a number of factors. The first relates to the questionable motives of participants who attended the first meeting, but did not return 'because they are a bit nosy and they want to understand what's happening...' (Facilitator D). A second factor was frustration with the process of facilitation. For example, 'speaking to other groups, they in general couldn't recall any suite of questions being tabled' (Facilitator D). Another factor was the positive orientation of the model which felt to some like the 'real' issues were being ignored. As one facilitator stated, 'If I was in a group where I felt my voice wasn't being heard or I felt the facilitator wasn't writing down things that I was saying or taking notice of them or the group were going off on tangents and getting nothing done, I would have slipped by the wayside as well' (Facilitator A). Facilitators also cited process design issues like the mismatch between the managed process and expectations of participants to get talking, 'If you don't feel that's working, that's frustrating –so that's why people drop out I reckon' (Facilitator A). Another facilitator was sanguine about poor attendance saying, 'If people won't come, what can we do? This is the problem' (Facilitator F). Indeed, whilst acknowledging a concern for continuity, participants also understood that variable attendance was a natural aspect of a flexible process, 'I think we've all agreed that we need to be able to adapt to any changes that may come along' (Follow Up Participant A). So, though attendance was variable and was potentially problematic control over what was a voluntary process was impossible.

In fact there was widespread understanding of the aim of the flexible change model and evidence of a willingness to adapt. As one participant stated, 'it's the first time that I see in a strategic planning or in strategic thinking process in which the goal can be shaped by the circumstances that are coming during the time of implementation' (Follow Up Participant D). Another participant noted that, 'shifting can take place

perhaps in priorities but also complete changes in how you thought about one of the objectives, say, that might go in another direction or may be deemed more superfluous' (Follow Up Participant C). Facilitator F summed it up thus, 'The situation of a school or any organisation I would have thought can change tremendously from one year to the next. The whole make-up of who's running the school and the influential parental people, parent groups, that can change tremendously from one year to the next, and as a result, the whole direction that you're trying to go in which is important, not the individuals that make it up. So it's got to have flexibility in it. So, the committee can come and go, but what the committee's trying to do, that's what's going to be in place' (Facilitator F). By the end of the first cycle participants were positively disposed to organisational change as an emergent and adaptive process. One participant said, "It's not a railway track' I think was the expression, and it's not going to always go along the track. It can change and that will depend on so many factors inside and outside the organisation and I think we all understand that, that this is based on what we know today and what we want today, but things may change tomorrow. We may need to rethink part, or all, of the plan according to those circumstances' (Follow Up Participant A). Evidence from field notes showed that individuals and groups adapted to changes in attendance adding to evidence regarding sustainability and specialisation.

Another factor which could influence sustainability is the wider community's buy-in to the work. At this point in the cycle the senior leadership team had not engaged in very much implementation, and communication was still in its infancy. Nevertheless comments in the change readiness survey showed concern for legacy (more evidence of commitment and agency). One participant stated 'within the strategic planning committee there was plenty of support. However, outside of that I have not seen or felt support of any kind' (Change Readiness Narrative, Participant 15). On the other hand another, writing in Spanish, acknowledged that committee members will be opinion formers and leaders when returning to their networks within the community (Change Readiness Narrative, Participant 18). Two facilitators noted the potential for impact on the wider community, 'So the surprising thing for me was the acceptance of change as part of the procedures of the school.....the possibility that is now open for

them is to participate in the process as well' (Facilitator D). So, whilst wider community buy-in was yet to be seen a transparent process had been established which was open to all.

In summary, data suggests the positivity in the AI was learned and generally embraced and there was clarity of understanding around the flexible emergent nature of change. Data also suggests increasing ownership of the process and its outcomes and change readiness survey data indicates values and behaviours consistent with readiness for change. Findings from the participant survey indicated strong agreement with statements addressing the ownership and engagement with the process suggesting promise for sustainability through future cycles. 31% of those surveyed fully agreed with the statement 'I think that the first published version of the ICS Strategic Plan addressed conversations about school development typical in the wider community' rising to 68% when 'partially agree' responses were included. 52% of respondents fully agreed with the statement 'I think that the strategic change process and the ICS Strategic Plan will help the school to realise the school's big audacious goal' rising to 83% when 'partially agree' responses were included. Most significantly, 68% of respondents fully agreed with the statement 'I think that the idea of a flexible/adaptable rather than fixed strategic plan is useful for implementing School development' rising to 73% when 'partially agree' responses were included. However, participants expressed concern about attendance and the level of buy-in from rest of community citing the need for careful communication processes to follow up. Though attendance varied, the core of the committee showed resilience and adaptability. Their concern for continuity and a desire to look for ways to assure legacy shows how **passive engagement has become active ownership** of the process. This attitudinal change indicated promise for sustainability.

4.3.3.4. Emergent product and novelty

There was evidence in facilitators' comments of positive experiences of novel thinking. 'We could have carried on talking for maybe three hours and still have had fresh ideas and fresh thoughts to put in' (Facilitator B). Facilitator D referred to 'many wild and

crazy ideas came out but from one or two of those crazy ideas was a little nugget of genius' (Facilitator D) and a participant noted in the follow up interviews 'I didn't realise we could be so creative and get to where, with so many people and so many different ideas, how we could get to the final document that we've come up with' (Follow Up Participant A)

During the '**discover**' stage three ideas emerged from the discussion. The first was the student behaviour attribute of 'risk taking' (Discover Stage Audio). This attribute was already part of the IB Learner Profile. By suggesting the school had not yet prioritised it the group argued that it was a novel idea. Another idea was bilingual programmes and exchanges with other company schools (Discover Stage Audio). This was also not currently part of the programme but had been mooted within the wider parent company's group of schools. And finally, there was the idea of the Duke of Edinburgh Award (Discover Stage Audio). This had been run previously in the school but had lapsed. During the '**dream**' stage the one hour discussion led to statements which, though positive and aspirational often reinforced current practice. A proposal was made to introduce grade level 'meet and greets' for parents to differentiate social introductions from the learning conversations of the parent-teacher meetings (Design Stage #5 Audio). Ironically, this is precisely what the leadership was attempting to introduce but which received resistance from staff. Once in the plan we implemented this measure, thus demonstrating how a community led change process can add legitimacy to a leader-written school development plan.

During the '**design**' stage observation of another group showed further ideas emerging leading to three practical proposals- a data collection protocol for students (traffic light procedure), a training programme for tutors, and a new job specification for the role. (Design Stage #4 Audio). Once collective agreement had been reached as to the nature and importance of these issues a 'door' opened to freer thinking with many additional proposal emerging - an opening of year tutor led activity, an online progress report, regular student-teacher personal interviews, variable time frames, greater counsellor support.

Ultimately the outcomes from cycle one published in the strategic plan evidence the model's effectiveness. Strategic visions, and objectives had emerged and improvement tasks written but were they innovative and transformative? In the focus group discussion towards the end of the **'design' stage** there was some disagreement. One participant stated, 'Do you not think that the objectives that we came up with were a bit sort of predictable?' (Focus Group). Whilst another participant reflecting on their plans said, 'Ours? Well they weren't revolutionary, but I think they all would make a significant improvement if implemented' (Focus Group). On the other hand another participant stated, 'I think we found very specific items and topics for the structure, objectives and the goals' (Focus Group) and another who argued that what is innovative depends on the context. Another participant suggested objectives were owned and so had potential to be transformative. These comments show that confidence and quality in the outcomes varied by workshop illustrating the subjectivity of definitions of novelty and the complicated relationship between transformation and innovation.

Facilitators also disagreed over the relative strength of the different outcomes. Facilitator A said, 'I just think we've produced some things I'm really proud of as a group...in terms of what we've produced, I think we've done a really good statement' (Facilitator A), but then qualified this when asked to reflect on the objectives and tasks. 'Yeah. Vision and objectives definitely. Tasks? Not so much' (Facilitator A). On the other hand a facilitator from another group said, 'Clear objectives? Yes. Tasks? My goodness! Yes. Plenty of tasks. Some of them need to be looked at closely...we need to simplify them' (Facilitator B). Facilitator C stated, 'I think we achieved some very balanced, even objectives, that if you can figure out a way to implement would be fantastic and make this an even more wonderful place than it is.' (Facilitator C). Facilitator D referred to the lack of measurable specificity of the objectives saying, 'If anything, when we wrote the objective, the strategic objective of the group it was a bit too wet and woolly.' (Facilitator D). Findings from the participant survey seem to support these statements. 37% of those surveyed fully agreed with the statement 'I think that the strategic vision and objectives agreed and contained in the ICS Strategic Plan are sufficient' rising to 79% when 'partially agree' responses were included. Only

5% of those surveyed fully agreed with the statement 'I think that the first year tasks identified to support the strategic objectives are sufficient' rising to 73% when 'partially agreed' responses are included.

In summary, throughout each stage of the process all groups produced actionable outcomes i.e. provocative propositions, vision statements, strategic objectives and strategic tasks for implementation. Asked about whether there was coherence in the final published plan Facilitator C said 'I get this sense of more or less there's a shared vision of what this school, or other great schools, should look like' (Facilitator C). However, a review of the published plan illustrates tasks that either confirmed current thinking or reinforced current practice. Some tasks and objectives lacked originality or specificity. So, **emerging ideas and tasks were drawn together into a coherent integrated strategic plan**, but with questionable novelty. The real question is whether this matters and what novelty means in this organisational context.

4.3.4. End of First Cycle Impact Commentary

A review of the qualitative and quantitative data collected to this point indicated developing practice in areas of leadership, dialogue and emergence. This data can be used to begin to assess the utility of the DDP as a model for sustained organisational change in this school context. Examples of interventions established in the strategic plan and arising out of the first cycle included inter alia restructuring of middle management, introducing mindfulness into the curriculum, implementing a 6 million Euro building project, investment in a 1:1 iPad programme and introducing a new appraisal programme.

Reviewing the impact and relevance of the model in participant follow up interviews at the end of the first cycle, one participant stated, 'I know that a lot of things that we have agreed that we will develop are worries that parents have and so it's almost as though before they come to us with that worry, we've already come up with the solution' (Follow Up Participant A). Another participant reflected on the on-going iterative nature of the process which provided opportunities to address the lack of

specificity in the original objectives saying, 'I think at the beginning it seemed like a really quite an airy-fairy loose sort of objective, but that kind of became more clear as we went on and I think the opportunities for kind of honing it were really important.' (Follow up Participant B).

Follow-up interview data completed towards the end of the first cycle also indicates how confidence in the process contributed to increasing participant agency and ownership of the outcomes. 'I think it's a testament both to the process but also to the people involved. Everyone stuck at it and remained focused. It's really kind of amazing!' (Follow up Participant B). Yet another said, 'I'd like to think it will be seen as a vital component of the school organisation, school set-up....Those that are not that familiar, I'm sure just with a cursory glance at the document will be reassured that we have a process and it's there, and I'd like to think that for many hopefully it'll be a reference point that we can go back to as we move forward...' (Follow Up Participant E). Change readiness survey narratives also illustrate evidence of growing confidence in the process. This is important as the real impact of the model on the transformation of the school cannot be gauged for a number of years. As one participant stated, 'I don't feel that today we are able to assess whether the plan has failed or succeeded' (Change Readiness Narrative, Participant 18). On the other hand, another participant commented, 'Excellent to see initiatives being implemented ahead of publication of plan' (Change Readiness Narrative, Participant 6) and 'We have already seen many of the objectives begin to take form' (Change Readiness Narrative, Participant 15). One other consequence of the process appeared to be increased legitimacy and moral currency within the community for the Principal. As one participant stated, 'I do hear 'He wants to change things' as a positive, you know and that kind of thing, like hopefulness, because we all want the best for our kids and that's why we're here' (Follow Up Participant C).

Quantitative data and quantified qualitative data were also collected to contribute to the start of an analysis of the utility of the model. **Magnitude coding** of the qualitative data was undertaken to uncover participants' perceptions of the model. Specifically, references were identified from a review of responses to questions 14, 15 and 17 from

the pilot study interviews; 8-14 and 30-34 from the facilitator interviews; 12-17, and 19 from the participant focus group and questions 2-6, 8 and 9 from the participant interviews (Appendices 5,6,7 and 10). Stanzas and sentences commenting on the model were assigned an evaluative code - positive, negative, neutral or recommendation. Of the 179 references to the utility of the model 100 (56%) were positive, 50 (28%) were neutral and 29 (16%) were negative.

It is important to emphasise the assignment of codes was an interpretive process. Decisions about which piece of textual data was to be coded and whether the comment was positive, negative or neutral were taken by the author. Similarly the frequency was determined by decisions made about whether the comment could stand alone as a phrase or was part of a larger sentence or part of a larger stanza. The results are tabulated in Table 4.4. From this data we can see that 84% of comments were either positive or neutral in nature indicating the potential utility of the process for sustainable change. However, this only provides a generalised indication of how participants experienced the model and so further corroborating data is required.

Table 4.4. Participant Perceptions of the Model

Data Source/Response	Positive	Negative	Neutral (mixed response and/or recommendation for more or less of something)
Training Programme Interviews (Questions 14, 15 and 17)	11	3	9
Facilitator Interviews Questions 8-14 and 30-34)	50	15	27
Participant Focus Group Interview (Questions 12-17 and 19)	19	7	4
Facilitator Follow Up (Questions 2-6, 8 and 9)	20	4	10
Totals	100	29	50
Percentage	56	16	28

Corroborating data was gathered from a simple **participant questionnaire** of 19 participants at the end of the cycle. Participants responded to questions on a 0-5 point scale with 0 as 'no response', 1 as 'fully disagree', 2 as 'partially disagree', 3 as 'neither agree nor disagree', 4 as 'partially agree' and 5 as 'fully agree'. The questions and the responses are tabulated in Table 4.5.

In global terms the responses were significantly positive with 72% of response 'partially' or 'fully' agreeing with the statements. Though the response rate represents only 60% of the research sample it should be noted that responses were from those choosing to attend the final session of the year. Non-respondents were participants who could not attend or who had already absented themselves from the process prior to its completion. Those who attended were the core members of the committee who were engaged and committed to completing the cycle which may have skewed the results.

Responses to individual questions are triangulated with qualitative data in the sections above and are summarised in Table 4.6. but of particular relevance to impact is question 8 where 47% of those surveyed fully agreed with the statement 'I think that the 5-D Appreciative Inquiry is useful for planning school change and development' rising to 73% when 'partially agree' responses are included. This positive response adds to claims that the model can be sustainable through further cycles.

Table 4.5. Participant Survey Results

Theme	Question/Response Frequency	0	1	2	3	4	5
Leadership and Collaboration (code 3)	1. I think that change in organisations is best led by the senior leaders		3	6	3	5	2
Leadership and Collaboration (code 3)	2. I think that change in organisations is best led by involving as many stakeholders as possible		2	1	2	5	9
Emergence and Sustainability (code 7)	3. I think that the first published version of the ICS Strategic Plan captured the conversations in my workshop group and in the committee as a whole			1	2	8	8
Emergence and Sustainability (code 5)	4. I think that the first published version of the ICS Strategic Plan addressed conversations about school development typical in the wider community	1		1	4	7	6
Emergence and Sustainability (code 7)	5. I think that the strategic vision and objectives agreed and contained in the ICS Strategic Plan are sufficient		1	1	2	8	7
Emergence and Sustainability (code 7)	6. I think that the first year tasks identified to support the strategic objectives are sufficient	2	2		3	13	1
Emergence and Sustainability (code 7)	7. I think that the strategic change process and the ICS Strategic Plan will help the school to realise the school's big audacious goal			1	2	6	10

Leadership and Collaboration (code 3)	8. I think that the 5-D Appreciative Inquiry is useful for planning school change and development	2		2	3	4	8
Dialogue (codes 1,2)	9. I think that a conversational workshop approach is useful for planning school development			1	3	4	11
Emergence and Sustainability (codes 6,7)	10. I think that the idea of a flexible/adaptable rather than fixed strategic plan is useful for implementing School development?			2	3	1	13
Totals/95		4	8	16	26	60	76
Totals/100		4	8	17	27	63	80
% of whole		2	4	8	14	32	40

Table 4.6. Participant Survey Results by Theme and Code

Theme	Code	Questions	Findings
Dialogue	1 Dialogue to organise 2 Dialogue for emergent processes	9	There was broad agreement with the utility of dialogue as a means for delivering effective strategic planning
Leadership and Collaboration	3 Leadership by not being in control	1,2,8	Responses to the utility of the AI (5D model) were broadly positive with strong agreement to the involvement of stakeholders. There was a more mixed view of the role of senior leadership suggesting change processes led WITH senior leaders rather than BY or WITHOUT them.
Emergence and Sustainability	5 The organisation as community	4	Responses show strong agreement agreed that the strategic plan had effectively captured the improvement issue of concern in the community
	6 Participant agency and commitment to process	10	There was strong agreement and buy-in to a flexible, rolling, positive process of organisational change
	7 Emergence of clear foci/outcomes for future development	3,5,6,7 and 10	Positive responses to questions about the quality of outcomes (the vision, objectives and tasks developed) indicated the model's utility.

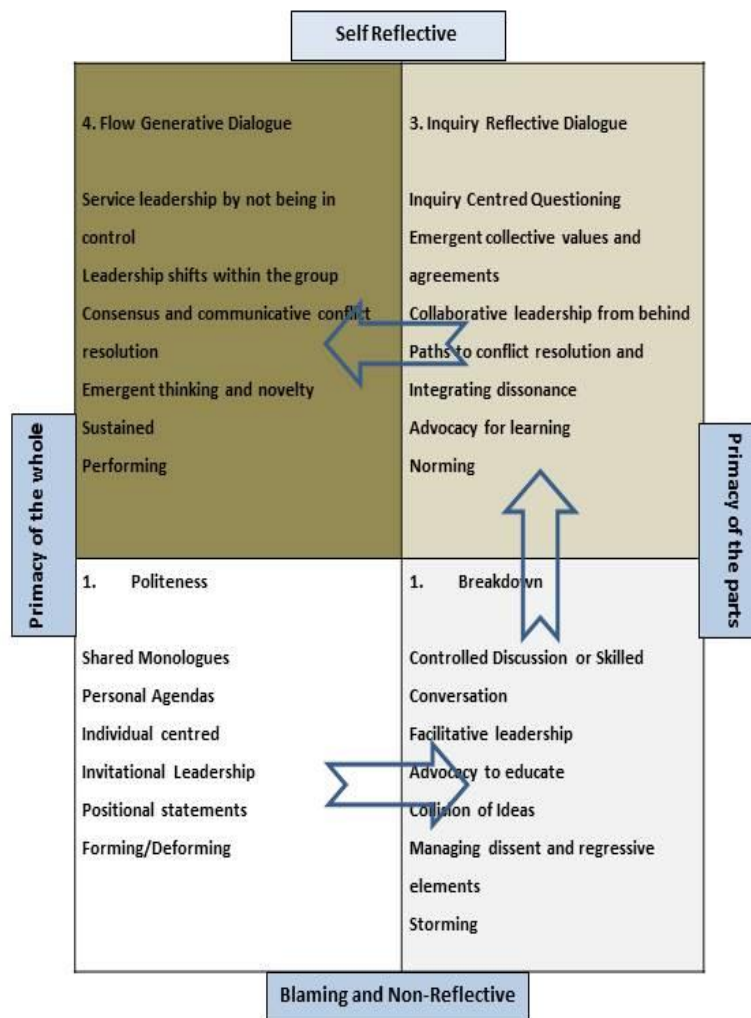
Additionally, a **simple opinion survey** was included as part of the follow-up interviews with participants. Participants were asked to assess their degree of comfort with the process at the end of the planning cycle. All five participants expressed very strong or strong comfort with their experience of the cycle.

Looking through lens of the three themes of dialogue, leadership and collaboration, and emergence and sustainability a number shifts in developing practice precipitated out of the data.

- Through dialogue multiple and dissonant views gave way to coherent collective positions
- Dialogic practices moved through the DDP quadrants from controlled discussion to looser inquiry focused dialogue
- Embedded collaborative leadership contributed to an evolving identification with the group and ownership of the process
- Personal agendas were integrated or discarded as collective group dynamics influenced the emergence of shared positions
- Sensemaking about change evolved in scale and level from the personal (local) to the organisational.
- Participation in the process developed from 'passive' engagement to 'active' ownership
- Emerging ideas and tasks were drawn together into a coherent integrated strategic plan

Taken together and referring back to the scale and scope issues identified in Figure 2.1 it can be argued that this shows a transformation in the process as deep and whole scale alterations occurred in the predominant practice framework for organisational change. The framework of the Dialogic Development Process proved a useful tool for understanding the way emergence can take place through a dialogic process. Group dynamics transitioned through Marshak's (1993) development stages and dialogue moved through Isaac's fields (1999). Data suggested that dialogic practice moved through the DDP's quadrants from 'politeness' to 'inquiry reflective dialogue' and possibly into 'flow generative dialogue' (Figure 4.2.). The evidence of participants' developing organisational perspective added to coherence within the groups and to the generation of objectives and tasks within the plan. Facilitated leadership began with invitational and participatory styles, but developed into a prevailing collaborative practice, though some evidence of managerial behaviour to assure outcome might seem at odds with the assumptions in the model. The combination of diverse perspectives, decentralised control and facilitated dialogue within a cross-community small group workshop enhanced individual and collective reflection and the conditions for emergence to take place. The resultant plan evidenced the actionable product of this emergent thinking and learning.

Figure 4.2. Impact of Dialogic Development Process



Comments from the change readiness survey and responses from the participant questionnaire show strong support for the AI structure and its embedded leadership. Nevertheless, though the model appeared to be working we realised that we needed to streamline the process for further cycles. The purpose of the following cycles was to audit the progress of the plan and to amend it by engaging in on-going thinking about innovation. The level of detail in the 5D process required to establish the plan was not required in cycle two. In addition once the publication of the strategic plan had occurred it proved difficult to retain people with such a high level of time commitment. It was also evident that refreshed membership was required as a result

of movements within the community and faculty. In addition, data suggested that the objective of generative dialogue and flow had not yet been conclusively met. This became the focus of research in the next cycle.

4.4. Implementation Phase - Appreciative Inquiry Second and Third Cycle Data

The second and third cycles took place between September 2015 and June 2017. However, I left the organisation at Christmas 2016, mid-point through the third cycle. Table 4.7. shows the chronology of activities and data collection during this period.

Table 4.7. Chronology Cycle 2 and 3

Cycle	Date	AI Stage	Activity	Data Collection
Cycle 2	10 December 2015	Define	Thinking and Planning Session #1 -Workshop	Field Notes (Observation Notes and Audio Recording Transcripts)
	10 March 2016	Discover, Dream	Thinking and Planning Session #2 -Workshop	Field Notes (Observation Notes and Audio Recording Transcripts)
	10 June 2016	Design	Thinking and Planning Session #3- Workshop	Field Notes (Observation Notes and Audio Recording Transcripts)
	June 2016	Deliver	First Annual Update of Strategic Plan Published	
Cycle 3	22 November 2016	Define	Thinking and Planning Session #1 -Workshop	Field Notes (Observation Notes and Audio Recording Transcripts)
	Intended February 2017	Discover, Dream	Thinking and Planning Session #2- Workshop	Author had left the organisation
	Intended May 2017	Design	Thinking and Planning Session #3- Workshop	
	Intended June 2017	Deliver	Second Annual Update of Strategic Plan published	

The first cycle indicated that participants were responsive to the DDP and that the appreciative inquiry structure helped progress the work and deliver emergent outcomes. Data suggested a transformative shift in practice, so few changes were required. However, adaptive challenges to the process were presented by the variable attendance and the withdrawal of participants as they either left the community or decided not to continue. The committee was therefore reconstituted through a similar process of open invitation. The new committee, comprising 32 participants, included both returning and new participants. This process was repeated at the start of the third cycle. For reasons established in the last section a further change to the process was to reduce the number of sessions. By the end of cycle two with the first annual update it was clear the model was working and so no further changes were made.

The second and third cycles involved three planning sessions per year and the publication of an annual update of the strategic plan. Both years began with an orientation session. In the opening session I framed and structured the work within notions of emergent innovation and 'beyonding' (Perkins and Chua, 2012) i.e. where the strategic thinking focused on going beyond what we already knew and were doing in the school.

Data from cycle one suggested that workshop groups had entered the inquiry quadrant of the DDP. An aim was to get participants and groups to model generative dialogue or 'flow'. Therefore, it was decided to allow the process to mature in the hope that evidence could be gathered to demonstrate workshops operating in 'flow'. The already persuasive evidence of the model's utility and the impact of operational priorities meant data collection was from observation using field notes with a reflexive contribution from the support team referred to in Chapter 3. Though field notes were still organised around dialogue, leadership and collaboration, and emergence and sustainability, the focus narrowed to sustainability and generative dialogue. As a result the next two cycles are considered together as the start of an evaluation of its contribution to change in this school context.

4.4.1. Dialogue

During the first **'define'** stage session in the second cycle, on-boarding of new participants was challenging. 'Those new to the process needed to understand the principles and learned practices of the appreciative inquiry whilst those returning to the process wanted to protect the work already done' (Field Notes), but needed to engage with new ideas and fresh thinking. Conversation inevitably focused on revisiting previous work and processing progress by the school to date. Observation appeared to confirm data gathered in the first cycle at this stage with dialogic practice consistent with the DDP quadrants of 'politeness' and 'breakdown' - invitational leadership, shared monologues and positional statements leading to discussion and debate. This pattern was replicated in the first session of cycle three (Field Notes). Once groups had agreed the priorities for the year, a transition seemed to occur in which the characteristic practices of inquiry were observed. Observation of the workshop groups during the next **'discover'** stage session suggested dialogic practices similar to those observed at the end of the first cycle. The arrival of new members contributed fresh thinking and energy, advocating different perspectives and new ideas stimulating returning participants in a collective inquiry. For example, the arrival of an HR specialist to the reconstituted People group prompted a line of conversation about new professional development initiatives. It was notable that this group 'were looking for more ambitious changes for this cycle' (Field Notes). The confidence garnered from working with an already extant plan clearly contributed to this (Field Notes). Overall, dialogue was more positive and the group dynamic more cohesive than the previous year.

Whilst there was no 'eureka' moment when the characteristics of 'flow' were clearly observed there did appear to be a transitional 'tipping point' (Gladwell, 2000) when workshops started to demonstrate characteristics of generative dialogue. Here, facilitators balanced the flow of the group dialogue, advocated positions were loose and open to revision, participants initiated lines of inquiry and the needs of the group and organisation took precedence over personal and local agendas. New ideas and initiatives emerged from the interplay of diverse perspectives and opinion. In cycle one

this appeared during the **'design'** stage. In cycle two the transition point appeared to arrive more quickly between the **'define'** stage of session one and **'discover/dream'** stage of session two. During cycle two, attendance again varied, on one occasion forcing me to temporarily merge two groups. The affected groups adapted and reorganised themselves, showing the self-organisation of complex open systems and arguably produced more coherent, more networked outcomes as a result.

The only session observed in the third cycle addressed the **'define'** stage of the AI and began in the same way as the second. Observation of the Teaching and Learning group indicated a rapid movement through the development characteristics of the process. Experienced facilitators appeared more skilled in coaching reflection and inquiry, and advocacy was open and constructive. Conversations flowed and new ideas emerged. The observation made in the moment and validated later by the support team was that we saw practices consistent with generative dialogue. In informal conversation after the session, 'old hands' commented on the different atmosphere and expressed enjoyment at the fertile nature of the conversation (Field Notes).

4.4.2. Leadership and Collaboration

At the end of cycle one, participants indicated satisfaction with a change process which involved stakeholders in decision making. Facilitators were collaborators in their groups though interview data showed participants' frustration with facilitators who were too participatory, but also with facilitators who were apparently too directive in their approaches. All facilitators from cycle one continued onwards into cycle two and three and their increased facilitation skills were observed (Field Notes). Their enthusiasm for a process visibly producing results was undoubtedly infectious. Though still focused on product and outcome, they were 'more effective at orchestrating discussion and reflection and employing moderation, synthesis and invention to balance dialogue for advocacy and inquiry' (Field Notes). This pattern was repeated in the observation in cycle 3.

One other explanation for the increased effectiveness of facilitation and the positive engagement in the process is that people stopped believing the process was a ‘clever’ way for the Head to get everyone to agree with his direction, rather than a genuine collaborative community exploration of alternative routes to organisational change. In fact, the visible and transparent evidence of implementation increased my legitimacy as a change leader. Those responsible for implementing change could no longer claim leadership was unresponsive as a vehicle existed for their voices to be heard and shared. I left my position in December 2016 to focus on writing, but with the publicly stated enthusiasm of the new Head for the process and the strategic plan, the prospects for sustaining the process were encouraging.

4.4.3. Emergence and Sustainability

In the second cycle the focus was on sustainability as the DDP was working well to produce novel ideas and change initiatives. One aspect of sustainability is participant agency and wider organisational ownership. Interest in the process was a constant agenda item of parent association meetings and interest in participation remained constant. However, attendance continued to vary. On the other hand, engagement by academic staff remained limited suggesting commitment priorities elsewhere. There was also continuing disinterest in things long term or not directly related to their daily activity. Antipathy towards the parent company in a very challenging building project year may also have contributed to low interest - change may have been seen as an extension of the ‘long arm’ of the company’s influence. This meant those teachers who did participate had to represent a significantly diverse range of views, opinions and vantage points about the school (Field Notes). Though teachers involved in the DDP spoke positively about the process outside of the committee, I had not yet established mechanisms for addressing the concerns for legacy and organisational buy-in expressed by participants coming out of cycle one.

At the end of the ‘**design**’ stages I presented an update on progress towards implementation of the strategic plan. Workshop groups presented three proposals for innovation that had emerged, and been developed, during the year. Of those tabled by

each workshop the majority focused on developments of what was already in process with reluctance to propose new initiatives before those already planned had been delivered. The cycle had produced momentum for change in the school with potential projects identified for development during the next cycle (Field Notes).

By cycle three it was clear 'the principles and practices of the AI were now embedded into the process and were being modelled by continuing members for those new to the committee' (Field Notes). This suggests a culture of innovation and increasing potential for sustainability. In cycle one facilitator interviews, participants had suggested that attitudes to change and change processes were generally fearful and suspicious. By the point I left the organisation levels of confidence in the process had grown. Evidence of implementation was published to the community in two revised versions of the strategic plan. This visible and transparent communication of the outcomes of the process gave legitimacy to it, reduced suspicion about the source and motivation for change and engaged participants. Involvement of representatives of each element of the school community increased the credibility of the change process and arguably modelled the benefits for individuals within the school. Far from being a hindrance to emergence, changes in membership added energy and propelled the process of strategic thinking forward.

4.4.4. End of cycle impact commentary

The impact of the process in cycle one was transformative whereas the few changes required in cycles two and three were indicative of fine tuning suggesting the process was sustainable (Iveroth and Hallencruetz, 2016). For example, observations from cycles one and two suggested that the DDP quadrant of 'inquiry reflective dialogue' was well embedded and that during the process characteristics consistent with generative dialogue were also observed.

Following one group observation in cycle three the assumption has been made that the AI has enabled us to move groups during the DDP through the four quadrants to the generative dialogue of 'flow'. However this is, as yet, difficult to confirm. There are

a number of reasons for this. Partly this is because to differentiate 'inquiry' from 'flow' is difficult in practice and because transitioning through the quadrants of the DDP is not linear. Partly this is also because there is still insufficient data. As the process was working in cycle one, a decision was taken to rely on field notes, but operational priorities resulting from being a Head meant that the delivery of outcomes from the AI took precedence over research into it. Finally, I left the organisation mid-cycle, so there were no further opportunities for data collection. Despite being partial data some summative conclusions can be drawn and can be grouped by theme in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8. Summary of findings

THEME	FINDINGS
Dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Facilitation for emergence managed the tension between dialogue for inquiry and dialogue for advocacy b. Facilitators were active participants, embedded in the process, whose opinions formed part of the mix of ideas used to arrive at positions adopted and owned by the whole group. c. The act of thinking and talking together engendered collaboration and participatory values in which divergent opinions were integrated into collectively agreed positions. d. Workshops developed dynamics consistent with the ‘inquiry reflective dialogue’ and ‘generative flow’ quadrants of the DDP, representing a significant shift in organisational practice during the course of the AI cycles.
Leadership and Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Facilitation of dialogue reduced dissent and dissonance, and increased collaboration and agency. b. Not all decision making was consensual, though this was the intent. c. Though facilitators structured and led workshops towards outcomes, participants saw this as facilitated group collaboration. d. Leadership was embedded in the organisation and in the model - in control of the process but not in control of the outcomes. e. The training programme was influential but not instructive
Emergence and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The use of a five step AI model was effective in capturing the conversations within the workshop

Sustainability	<p>and contributed to the sustainability of the DDP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. The DDP contributed to community learning and an organisational perspective. c. Changes in membership prompted groups to self-organise and adapt, adding to their capacity for emergent thinking and learning. d. Actionable objectives and tasks emerged within a coherent strategic plan but were of variable novelty. e. The DDP contributed to a culture of innovation which is not yet embedded in the wider organisation. f. The positive orientation of the AI model contributed to changes in engagement in change processes. g. The DDP contributed to community confidence in the Principal's leadership of organisational change.
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In summary, the data suggests that the development of an AI approach to DDP allows for a radical and quite rapid shift in organisational culture and that this has potential for generating innovative thinking and practice. There is evidence that we are beginning to see sustainable change embedded in the procedures of the school, and that the emergent and flexible nature of change is well understood. The prospects for the complex community change process becoming a reference point for a culture of innovation, and which goes 'viral' (Herrero, 2008) as it is increasingly embedded into the life or fabric of the organisation, are encouraging. The process required little change during the cycle. However, the role of the Head remains critical, because although it can be argued with evidence that the research-consultant role can work, without the Head's commitment to continue the process and to see change as an organisational phenomenon rather than an individual one, continuity will be put at risk and the process will not be sustainable. Increased agency and commitment from participants and their constituencies, plus the community expectation of implementation and development of a published plan will be countervailing forces against a partially committed or resistant Head, but leadership still matters. Organisational change requires sustained community involvement but any sustained change is not possible without the organising energy of embedded leadership which is in control but simultaneously not in control (Streatfield, 2001).

4.5. Discussion

In the previous section the findings from the data about the major themes of dialogue, leadership and collaboration, and emergence and sustainability were presented. These themes integrated coded data derived from a range of sources to expose the narratives which describe how participants made sense of, and experienced, the Dialogic Development Process. In addition, impact data from magnitude coding, a questionnaire and a change readiness survey were presented which can be used to judge if the process is sustainable. Taken together the analysis can illuminate the nature of the intervention's contribution and utility for leading organisational change in an international school context.

In the literature review the argument was made that sustainable change is an organisational process rather than the product of one leader's vision and power (Iveroth and Hallencruetz, 2016). Complexity thinking helps us to understand change as a contextualised emergent social process of organisational learning and sense making; a complex process which takes place on many scales and levels within the organisation (Davis and Sumara, 2006). Rather than a fixed destination to be achieved, change is a continuous process which takes place and spreads virally between and through the many levels of interrelationships within the organisation (Gladwell, 2000; Herrero, 2008; Iveroth and Hallencruetz, 2016). This implies that facilitating organisational change involves engaging all levels of the organisation which in an international school context is seen as the community of teachers, students, staff, parents and board members.

Dialogue is the critical mechanism within a change process enabling people to make sense of change whilst simultaneously contributing to it (Weick, 1995; Isaacs, 1999; Shaw, 2002). The role of leadership in community focused change processes is to facilitate the emergence of new ideas and practices by connecting community stakeholders (Judge and Bauld, 2001; Wood, 2017). This is achieved by embedding leadership within the organisation and process of change rather than sitting over and above it. This suggests a decentralised, collaborative leadership model where the leader acts in a sensegiving role facilitating generative dialogue between stakeholders. Leaders live the paradox of retaining control over the process whilst ceding control over the priorities to the community (Streatfield, 2001). Dialogic leadership of organisational change means establishing the structure for community based collectives to develop the values and processes which lead to emergent thinking and learning (Tuckman, 1965; Marshak, 1993; Isaacs, 1999; Perkins, 2003; Scharmer, 2009). Novelty and change are sustained through greater community engagement and the embedding of a culture of innovative thinking.

This study has therefore been predominantly focused on the nature of leadership in organisational change processes. What is the contribution of complexity thinking to

understanding organisational change? And what is the contribution of the DDP intervention to change in my school context? These ideas are discussed by research question.

4.5.1. SRQ1 - What are the characteristics of a Dialogic Development Process?

In chapter two it was argued that research suggests planned change models (Kotter, 1996; Bernerth, 2004; Cummings and Worley, 2008) are not suited to complex organisations and that sustainable change means engaging those that implement and experience change in the process of change (Kotter, 2007; Fullan, 2007; Burnes, 2011; Hughes, 2011). Dialogue and sense making are the critical means to effect sustainable change (Weick et al, 2005; Iveroth and Hallencruetz, 2016). Viewing the school in complex terms led to the development of a Dialogic Development Process (DDP) which involved facilitating community based workshops through cycles of structured dialogue in an appreciative inquiry of the school (Magruder Watkins et al, 2011). The expectation was that the resultant thinking and learning that emerges from this dialogue can contribute to a culture of innovation and lead to greater engagement in sustained change. An appreciative inquiry was adopted as the best delivery model because it locates dialogue and sensemaking within a learning focused, positively framed, democratic structure.

4.5.1.1. The contribution of complexity thinking

The DDP is an attempt at complexity thinking in practice. It is complex process because it explicitly acknowledges the organisation as complex and made up of many networks interacting on different scales and levels. It is 'centrally concerned with what is involved in the transformation of a group of affiliated but independently acting agents into a unity in which personal aspirations contribute to grander collective possibilities' (Davis and Sumara, 2006, p. 136). By involving members of these networks in dialogic processes of collective inquiry and thinking, the individual (local) perspectives and concerns of its members are brought into contact with the community (global) narratives and ways of seeing the school. In so doing the wider implications of these

ideas and perspectives and how they interconnect become visible, leading to the emergence of new thinking and learning. The assumption is that the collective knowledge will be greater than the sum of the knowledge of each of its members. That is, it is capable of 'actions, interpretations, and conclusions that none would have achieved on her or his own' (Davis and Sumara, 2006, p. 136)

The conditions necessary in workshops for emergence to occur have already been stated in chapter two. These are conditions i.e. circumstances or pre-requisites, rather than qualities i.e. structures and dynamics of emergence. We can then apply these to the themes used for analysis of the data.

- **Specialisation** – emergence can occur in community constituted workshops because they can take advantage of the diverse capacities, experiences and knowledge of their members and capture them through the framework of the appreciative inquiry. Leadership for specialisation balances individual personal agendas with the group's need to continue as a group or, its need for consensus. For example, during the course of the AI participants perspective and identification with the group and the organisation grew and enhanced each group's capacity to largely integrate personal agendas into collectively owned group initiatives.
- **Trans-level Learning** – emergence can occur in community constituted workshops because decentralised control enables interactions between the diverse networks and levels within the organisation. Novel thinking is achieved by the crashing together or 'the bumping, colliding and juxtaposing' (Davis and Sumara, 2006, p. 142) of ideas, questions, opinions, anecdotes in a communicative context. The DDP established the structure and process to achieve this. Leadership for trans-level learning is therefore to activate the ideational interchange through decentralised facilitation and dialogue. For example, the interplay of diverse perspectives from different parts of the community enabled participants to develop a greater systemic understanding of the school, which was harnessed through dialogue and which led to new collective learning.

- **Enabling Constraints** – emergence can occur in community constituted workshops because the social rules and group dynamics contained within a social collective allow for the sustained focus on thinking and learning together, while the facilitated dialogue between diverse members enables this thinking and learning to adapt and change without being destroyed. Leadership is therefore about orienting agent's actions and facilitating flexible responses. For example, facilitators were collaborators orchestrating the dialogue for emergent thinking AND to elicit outcomes. This was achieved flexibly, sometimes pushing (directing), sometimes pulling (inviting), sometimes nudging (suggesting) and sometimes letting go.

Table 4.9. provides a summary of how these conditions for emergence might arise within the themes used for analysis.

Table 4.9. Conditions for Emergence

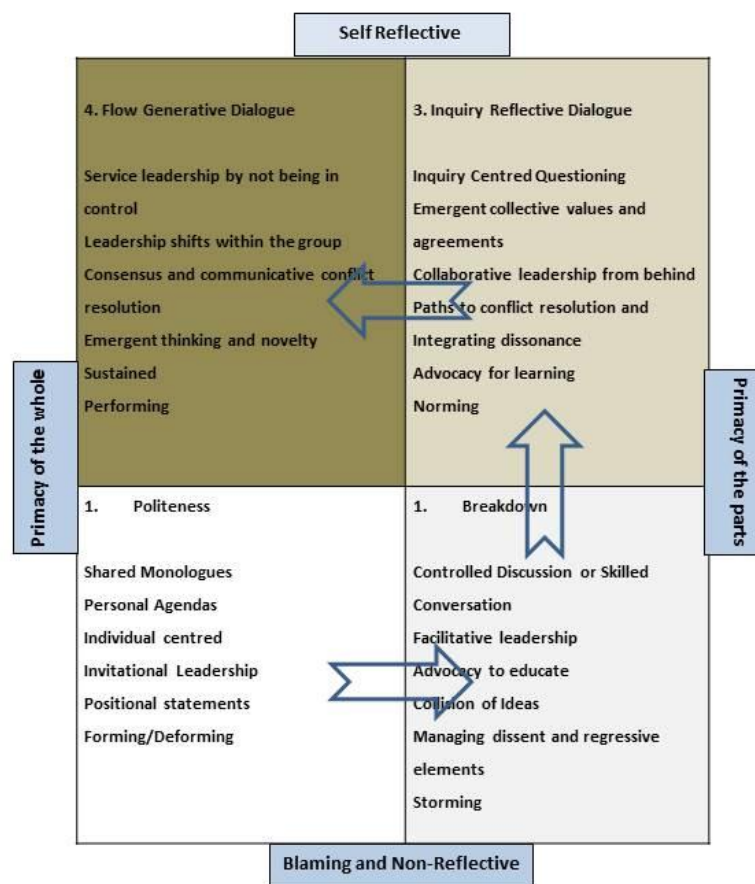
CONDITIONS FOR EMERGENCE (DAVIS AND SUMARA DYADS)	THEMES
Specialisation – internal diversity internal redundancy	Leadership and Collaboration Emergence and Sustainability
Trans-level Learning – neighbour interactions decentralised control	Leadership and Collaboration Dialogue Emergence and Sustainability
Enabling Constraints- randomness coherence	Dialogue Leadership and Collaboration Emergence and Sustainability

4.5.1.2. The impact of the intervention on group dynamics and dialogic practice

The DDP is the way groups develop through four stages or fields of dialogic interaction beginning with 'politeness' moving to 'breakdown' and then to 'inquiry' and the 'flow' of generative dialogue and innovation (Tuckman, 1965; Marshak, 1993; Isaacs, 1999; Scharmer, 2009). It is an integrated model which combines group dynamics, dialogic practice and complex process. The characteristics of each field are reproduced again in Figure 4.3. In each of these fields, groups are facilitated by embedded leaders who organise the dialogue so that talking and thinking together can take place and outcomes are produced. Facilitation is of dialogue for advocacy and dialogue for inquiry with greater advocacy in the discussion of 'breakdown' and more inquiry in the dialogue of reflection. The generative dialogue of 'flow' balances inquiry and advocacy for emergent thinking and novelty (Isaacs, 1999).

Data suggested that as groups moved through the 5D AI model there was also movement through the four stages of dialogic fields. By the end of the research period it was clear groups were operating in the upper quadrants of 'inquiry reflective dialogue' and 'flow generative dialogue'. However, this was not a linear process so it was difficult to be definitive during the AI stages when transitions occurred. Moreover, whilst it was easy to note the differences between 'politeness', 'breakdown' and 'inquiry', the differences between 'inquiry' and 'flow' were less well marked with the boundary between the two blurred with dialogue appearing to ebb back and forth between the two. A further issue was the categorisation of leadership where the model indicates a more pragmatic use of styles than the model suggests.

Figure 4.3. Impact of Dialogic Development Process



Movement through the quadrants was characterised by temporal changes in group dynamics, leadership and dialogue. By the end of the research the group dynamics of the workshops had developed through the five stages of forming, storming, norming and performing with deforming occurring at the point of transition from one cycle to the next (Tuckman, 1965; Marshak, 1993). The increasing collaboration suggested participative values had become inculcated, social relationships formed and individual positions publicly shared and understood. Dialogue helped participants to know the minds of colleagues building group identity and reducing conflict. Decision making involved very few rules and was generally through consensus, though this obscures the fact that dissenting voices remained but were marginalised by the influence of strong participatory values. These values implied everyone contributed and bought in to the outcomes and the larger project.

The facilitator's opinions formed part of the mix of ideas used to arrive at a group position, which would then be part of the emerging consensus and which would then be adopted and owned. The same behaviour was adopted by participants. Personal agendas, concerns and ideas found a conceptual space into which they could be integrated. Along the way some divergent opinions were discarded but advocates remained in the committee, but within the conceptual framework or position adopted by the group and within the wider objective of completing outcomes and being innovative. In this latter role dissent became a focus for inquiry offering counter arguments and probing questions to refine and sharpen collectively arrived at group positions (Perkins, 2003). They became integrated into an emergent consensus or dialogic field within the dynamic of the group. The workshop group absorbed the disruption (feedback) and self-organised to maintain its integrity thus behaving like a complex system (Davis and Sumara, 2006). This is consistent with the descriptors assigned to the 'Inquiry' and 'Flow'.

The role of the facilitator was an important factor in the dialogic process. Without a facilitator some groups were unable to create synthesised concepts or co-construct others which would form the basis for consensus. There was also a breakdown in the working dynamic of the group with smaller groups emerging, more side bar conversations and talking over each other. However even in cases when facilitators stepped aside, or out of the conversation, the group naturally re-organised to replace them for a time and product still emerged. This again shows the capacity of these groups to self-organise and adapt in response to internal disruptions. At the same time, when facilitation was present, but limited, participants expressed discomfort and frustration with the length of the process, yet collaboration continued and product still emerged.

Moving through the AI, dialogue was increasingly used for learning with participants advocating ideas and arguments which contributed to task completion rather than to establish an alternate direction for the group. Inquiry-focused, open ended questions provoked reflection and discussion around the impact, knock-on effects and

stakeholder reaction to proposed initiatives. The outcomes from these questions were then used to suggest or provide insight and invite participants to imagine alternative perspectives or solutions. As the model evolved participants and their facilitators were observed engaging in voicing, listening, respecting and suspending judgement whilst balancing advocacy and inquiry. This indicated the conditions necessary for generative dialogue (Isaacs, 1999) which is necessary for collective intelligence, emergent thinking and ultimately, novelty.

In complexity terms, workshops and their facilitators were able to take advantage of the mix of capacities of their participants to respond to different and unpredictable emergent situations caused by conflict, changes in personnel and provocative or unconventional new ideas. They were able to adapt because these were counterbalanced by the collective wisdom and knowledge of the group which collectively, through dialogue, found a way to integrate them into a collective sense of identity and an emergent consensus. This is the condition of emergence called 'specialisation' (Davis and Sumara, 2006). Internal adaptation was observed in the way workshop groups and the committee reacted to membership changes. In the first cycle sometimes this meant reorganising within the workshops for absent facilitators or reorganising tasks and refining thinking to compensate for absent participants. Transitioning from cycle one to two and so on also involved changes to membership and leadership. If anything the process appeared to work more efficiently and field notes suggest a more fertile dialogue and group dynamic for emergent outcomes (Field Notes). This structural and ideational adaptation assured continuity.

Complexity thinking suggests how dialogue, and the leadership of it, is the vehicle through which emergence can occur. Workshop conversations were structured by the Head as researcher-consultant (Christensen, 2005) to guide participants through the 5D stages of the AI. The Head articulated the overarching aim for the dialogic context and the appreciative inquiry model identified the positive and collaborative values for working together. Whilst the conversations were structured through the step-by-step AI process, with orienting questions, the actual process and outcomes were devolved completely to the workshop groups and their facilitators. The process contributed to

complex emergence by balancing the requirements of coherent structure with the freedom of dialogic process allowing for the emergence of new thinking and learning. Facilitators were the embedded leadership in the process working within and together with community constituted workshop groups. This decentralised control enabled trans-level learning to occur through generative dialogue providing the mechanism for the collision of ideas, understandings and insights to be shared, examined, and critically evaluated (Davis and Sumara, 2006). This allowed for new or synthesised ideas and understandings to emerge.

4.5.1.3. Contribution of the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) model

The AI provided a number of benefits which made it coherent with the complex process of the DDP. These were the focus on a structured process of inquiry, the principle of positivity and the inclusive decision making (Cooperider and Srivastva, 1987; Magruder Watkins et al, 2011). The focus on stages of inquiry worked well and was broadly very well received. The inquiry focused questions engaged participants and stimulated discussion and imagination. Some participants found the early focus on 'define' and 'discover' stages frustrating and a misallocation of time, but this was important as part of establishing the positivity in the model and the foundations for community learning and generative dialogue. The explicit positivity of the AI was generally embraced but had to be learned through the dialogic process and through the experience of the participative dynamic in the model. It was a challenging mind set for some given that it varied from the traditional critical organisational narrative which evaluates the organisation, decides what is going wrong or absent and then fixes it (Magruder Watkins et al, 2011). In the early stages this traditional way of approaching change collided with the more aspirational dream based approach producing bemusement or frustration in some cases. Once adopted and embraced it led to the emergence of positive, ambitious outcomes but, it is questionable as to whether these goals were innovative. Would the same outcomes have emerged if a negative stance had been taken? My view is that many, but not all, of the outcomes might have been replicated with a traditional paradigm of change, but it is doubtful if the degree of commitment and engagement to them would have been sustainable. The positivity

added an attitudinal dimension freeing up creativity and possibility and enabling people to see themselves authentically as partners with leaders in changing the organisation. This increased engagement and agency, together with evidence that participants embraced the ideas of community dialogue and flexible continuous planning, indicates the use of AI has a good chance of being sustained throughout the cycle and beyond. The inclusive decision making was also helpful, though again frustration was expressed at how long this sometimes took. The AI was sufficiently robust to ensure the continuity of the process and the process was sufficiently decentralised to produce the outcomes that were sought.

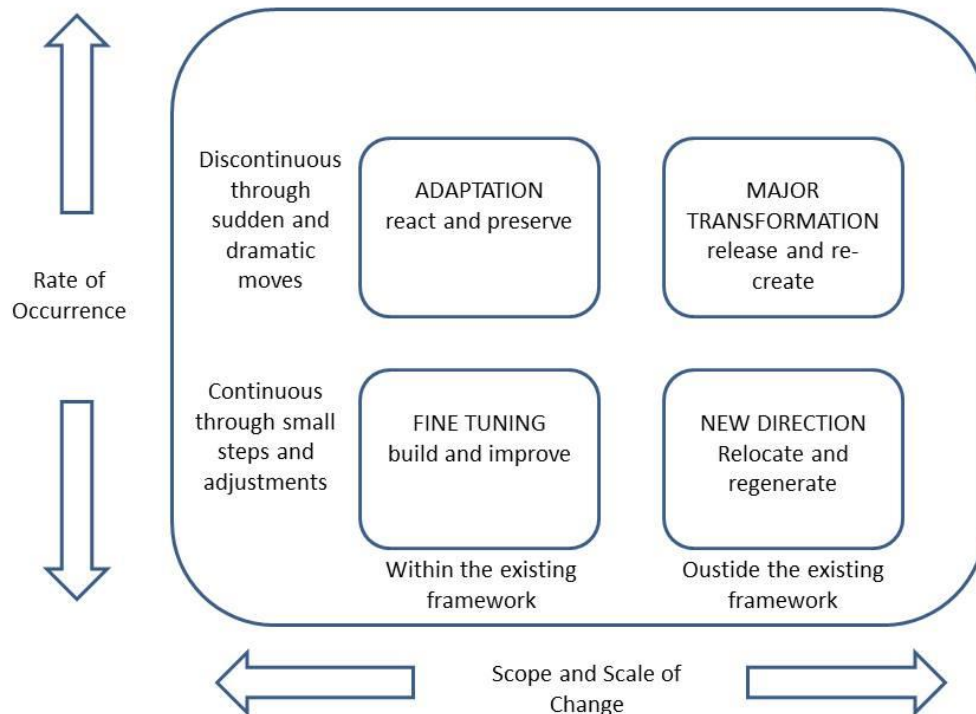
4.5.2. SRQ2 - What is transformative change in an international school context?

Transformation is a politically loaded term usually meaning rapid and large scale. The change which the DDP was attempting to implement in this international school context was an emergent social process of complex community change (Wood, 2017). The assumption therefore of the model is that transformation occurs when sustained community conversations lead to emergent change practices. These may be strategic and large scale or operational fine tuning (Marshak, 1993; Iveroth and Hallencreutz, 2016).

4.5.2.1. Transformative change and novelty

In chapter 2 it was argued that there are a number of ways of understanding organisational change (Dunphy, D, and Stace, D, 1993; By, 2005; Senior and Swailes, 2010; Smith and Graetz, 2011). Iveroth and Hallencreutz (2016) provide a matrix within which we can plot the rate of occurrence of change against the scale and scope of change (Figure 4.4.)

Figure 4.4. Four Different Types of Change (Iveroeth and Hallencruetz, 2016, p. 17)



This model describes transformation as a discontinuous large scale revolutionary process (Iveroeth and Hallencruetz, 2016). But determining transformation is more complex than this matrix suggests. A number of innovations for change emerged from the dialogue in the workshops e.g. proposals for an expansion project, a 1:1. Ipad programme, a student engagement programme and a mindfulness programme. However, a few participants argued the outcomes from the model were quite predictable, unimaginative lacking specificity. Others noted that what was impactful depended on the needs of the school at that point in time, its relevance to the mission and vision of the school and whether it leads to community buy-in. This raises the question of whether changes which adapt or fine tune existing practice can also transform the organisation. The answer depends upon one's definition of novelty.

As noted in chapter 2 it seems there are a number of ways to define novelty (Fonseca, 2002). For Fonseca (2002) innovation is the new thinking that is done between people

as they engage in conversation. From this perspective the degree to which organisations and their people change and innovate is dependent upon the quality of the conversational life within it (Shaw, 2002), and the back and forth interactive process of sense making and sense giving (Iveroth and Hallencruetz, 2016). Yet this seems insufficient. The changed relationships and deeper learning resulting from more effective conversations is certainly desirable, and would be a pre-condition for change, but will be only partially significant if they do not lead to action. In traditional strategic planning terms the assumption is that innovation is the partner of transformation. But in practical terms, innovating or introducing novelty is a matter of definition. Generally, it would be considered as adding new practice which has not yet been introduced. But it could also mean reprioritising existing practice, or reintroducing lapsed previous practice or improving existing practice or, perhaps, adding to existing practice.

This illustrates the difficulty of characterising innovation and novelty and their relationship to notions of transformation. Is innovation the same as improvement, or problem solving? The latter suggests adaptation, the former, fine tuning. Neither describes transformation in the sense used by Iveroth and Hallencruetz (2016). The problem is that definitions of innovation associated with many planned change processes suggest it is 'the uncovering of hidden order, the realisation of some chosen goal, the unfolding of some stable form already enfolded, or the intentional production of the variety required to match uncertain conditions' (Fonseca, 2002, p. 5). If, instead, we use Fonseca to define innovation more widely as sustained community conversations which lead to any change practice, then one can then argue that a change process is transformative even if it is not innovative. It is deceptively seductive to argue that transformation requires innovation, but this is reductive and linear and locks change processes into a negative culture of failure when initiatives are not implemented as originally envisaged. Given sustainable change or transformation is dependent upon people buy-in and engagement, what is transformative is whatever sustained alteration in practice can be achieved in the context in question. So, a coherent integrated strategic plan emerged whose originality and novelty can be debated. The real question is whether this matters if sustained change practices have

emerged from on-going dialogue about innovation. The evolutionary and continuous process of development in the DDP embeds conversations about novelty in the organisation. Some of the outcomes will be innovative, some fine tuning existing practice. All of them will transform if the organisational change conversation is sustained.

Another way of looking at this question is in terms of complexity. Deacon (2007) has argued that there may be three types of emergence. First order emergence is characterised by the coming together of elements in a way which leads to a 'simple' higher-order property. Second order emergence accounts for the development of both the properties of the lower order elements and the whole system over time. This means that a prior state in the system is replaced by characteristics of a new state of the system. Finally, third order emergence can be evolutionary in which an input can lead to a more than proportional amplification across all scales of the system. This can be positive or negative and means this input can create a state which then becomes a condition for future states of the complex system. The model implemented in this study was designed to effect organisational change. If organisational change is a continuous and emergent process by definition change will be sustained and thus will over time transform on a number of different scales and level of the organisation. Therefore all orders of emergence will be transformative.

4.5.3. SRQ3 - Can a Dialogic Development Process bring about organisational change?

Data suggests the Dialogic Development Process is a potentially sustainable mechanism for strategic thinking and innovation (Fullan, 2005; Hargreaves and Fink, 2005). This is because it leads to coherent, actionable plans and more engagement, and therefore agency, in change processes and their outcomes. It is also because it leads to increased confidence in the leadership and greater understanding of how the school works.

4.5.3.1. The emergence of coherent actionable plans

An organisational change process should produce coherent plans which connect networks across the different levels of complex organisation. By identifying with the notion of 'school as community' participants demonstrated understanding of the relationship and significance of the process within the wider organisation. The idea of the 'school as community' took on a number of forms. Often it was expressed as comprised of different groups of people operating within the same systemic entity but with different identities and roles. At other times it was expressed as a complex unity interacting with its external environment using vague notions of the local Madrid and Spanish communities or the rest of the world. On occasion 'school as community' meant obligations to be involved with and to serve the world outside of its doors or in terms of locating it within a larger system when referencing the influence of the parent company, the IBO and the school's accrediting agencies. This suggests the process of 'community learning' referred to in chapter 2 (Sergiovanni, 2000; Stoll et al, 2003) as a vehicle through which a 'communal mind' or shared sense of the organisation can emerge and which points to commonly agreed directions for future change.

Though there were personal agendas and a myopic focus on their own tasks participants were able to adopt an objective whole school view, suspending their judgement as a parent or teacher or student, although their advocacies and arguments were informed by their nested network perspective. However, in spite of employing a concept mapping activity within the practice of the model, there was little commitment to cross-workshop interaction. Participants recognised the linkages of their work to other workshop groups, but did not actively seek specific outcomes that embraced these synergies either in their own workshop or during plenaries at committee level. During the design phase this organisational thinking was set aside as participants got into the detail of completing tasks and generating outcomes for their own operational area.

The lack of cross-workshop communication might suggest the need for greater direction at workshop level or a failure of facilitative leadership at committee level.

The role of the Head was to generate the feedback loops in the plenaries and between sessions during the life course of the model. This seems not to have worked as well as expected. Though there was limited data on the subject it is reasonable to suggest that participants either felt that this was the Head's responsibility as 'editor in chief' or that it was unnecessary. Other factors for poor inter-group activity raised by participants referenced the variable attendance as a disruptive factor absorbing energy away from thinking about how to capture diverse ideas and views and instead focusing on how to convert existing ideas into actionable product.

The Strategic Plan was published in June 2015 and subsequently revised and updated each June of the years that followed (International College Spain, 2016). It illustrates the actionable product of the process. Hughes' (2010) arguments that emergent planning models do not produce concrete outcomes has not come to pass in this organisational context. This is because the model holds planning and emergence in creative tension. On the surface the model may appear similar to those planned models currently in use in other international school contexts, but the impact is below the surface on engagement and sustainability.

4.5.3.2. Participant agency and wider organisational engagement

A key factor in claims for the sustainability of the DDP is the degree of commitment and agency from participants (Iveroth and Bengtsson, 2014; Iveroth and Hallencruetz, 2016). Criteria for judging this might include a consideration of the degree to which workshops completed tasks, produced actionable product, engaged positively, developed a favourable attitude towards change and attended sessions.

In general, data suggested collective ownership and engagement in the process and its outcomes increased and evolved during the AI. Tasks were completed, discussion was passionate and open and plans were produced. By the end of the first cycle participants spoke with enthusiasm about the model and the outcomes and their potential impact. In addition, attitudes to change processes appeared to have shifted. As with data from the reconnaissance phase, participants also expressed attitudes to

change as hesitant, fearful, uncertain of the impact on personal lives, and suspicious that change is criticism of current practice. They disliked change that was imposed from above and which was introduced too rapidly. These sentiments described notions of leadership in managerial terms of 'being done to' rather than collaborative terms of 'doing with'. Narrative data suggested participants felt differently about change processes as a result of experiencing the model. Responses gathered cited a greater sense of community, greater understanding of issues, solutions and practice, a greater voice in the life of the school, greater pride and loyalty in the institution, greater understanding of change as continuous and adaptive and a greater capacity to think and act strategically in their daily work. All this suggests attitudinal modification had taken place as a result of living the experience of the process.

However, this did not translate into attendance patterns which varied within cycles and between them. Factors cited as affecting the level of attendance included time conflicts, suspicion of the positive principle of the AI, and dissatisfaction with the quality of facilitation. It was thought the varying attendance levels would affect continuity and outcomes, but this appears not to have been the case. In any event it was a variable that could not be controlled and participants accepted it as an adaptive challenge consistent with the model's intentions. Indeed, by the second cycle and despite, or perhaps because of, changes to membership, collaboration and the dynamic of working together was markedly more effective in completing tasks. It is unclear as to whether this was because of an increase in the credibility of the process or whether the increased confidence and experience of returning 'old hands' meant more efficient workshops.

Another concern is that to date there is little evidence of wider organisational engagement. The DDP garnered interest at parent company level because it produced changes which led to improvements in performance indicators used by the company to report to investors. The ideas within the DDP were captured and used at company planning level and integrated into leadership programmes. However, control over outside agencies is not possible. Internally, participant comments in the change readiness survey showed concern for legacy and for safeguarding their work which is

an indicator of commitment and agency. These concerns, the unknown impact of a change in Head and the lack of mechanism for outreach from the committee to the wider organisation's networks have not yet been addressed nor researched. There was also scepticism about wider stakeholder support and community buy-in and the inevitable micro-political challenge of comprehensive implementation (Blase, 1998).

4.5.3.3. Sustainability

A number of factors suggest making definitive statements about the sustainability of the model should wait until the five year plan and all cycles of the AI have been completed. Though participants expressed confidence in the coherence of the plan and satisfaction with the process, citing the outcomes already implemented and the direction provided for future development, their impact will not be known for some time. The buy-in from the wider community will also need to be researched and measured. Change readiness survey narratives showed that participants accepted their obligation to be opinion formers in this regard with their respective sections of the community. Their impact would also need to be assessed.

The data suggests that, in spite of attendance variations, the Dialogic Development Process is robust and has potential to be sustainable. The key to sustainability is participant engagement and leadership resolve. After three cycles there is evidence that participant engagement increases but subsequent leaders at school, committee and workshop levels need to be committed to the DDP.

4.5.4. SRQ4 - What is the role of a school leader in sustainable change practices in international schools?

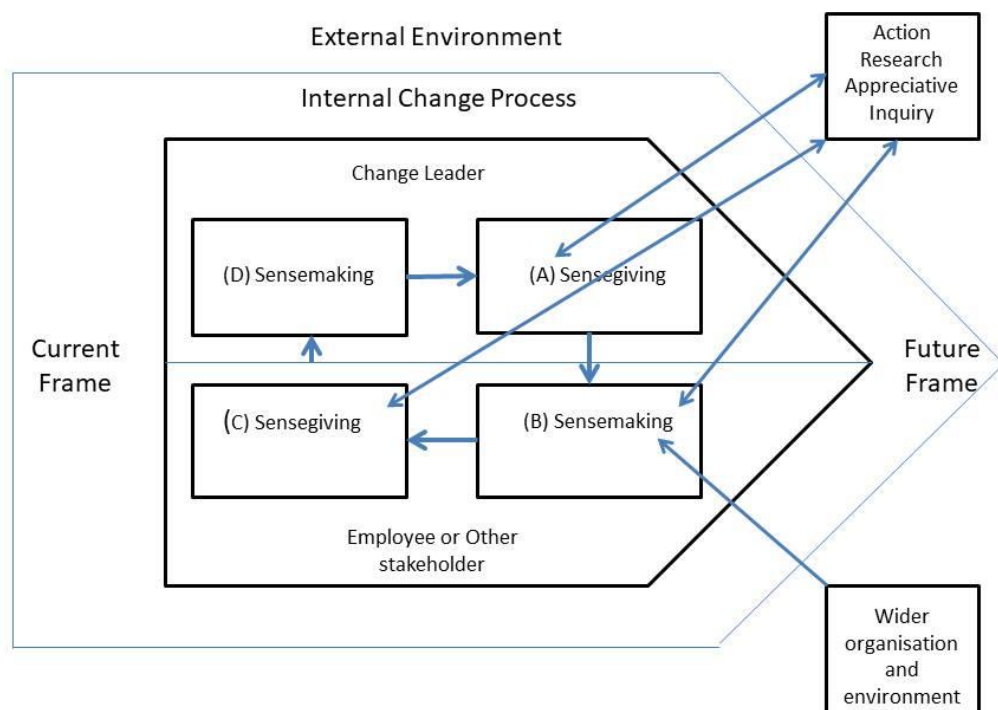
'Heroic' leadership models place the leader over and above the organisation in planned models of change (Leithwood et al, 1999; Sergiovanni, 2001; Harris, 2004; Gronn, 2010). By contrast leadership for sustainable change means embedding leadership within the organisation in emergent change processes. Leadership in emergent change processes is collaborative and dialogic facilitating sensemaking for

emergent thinking and learning. The role of the leader is to inhabit a paradoxical space characterised by being in control whilst not being in control (Streatfield, 2001).

4.5.4.1. Embedded leadership and sensemaking

Participants suggested that the role of leadership in change processes was to work out how to manage the organisation, but also the individuals and the interactions between individuals. This is suggestive of complexity thinking. Whilst acknowledging that one's perspective of change depended upon one's position and function in the system, participants also stressed the importance of communication between change leaders and the implementers of change, especially through clearly directed goals and objectives. This description resonates with the reciprocal relationship between sensegivers and sensemakers suggested in chapter 2 (Weick, 1995; Iveroth and Hallencruetz, 2016) and reproduced in Figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5. The reciprocal process of sensemaking and sensegiving Adapted from Iveroth and Hallencruetz (2016, p. 51)



Leaders both at model and workshop level acted as collaborators and facilitators of the work, dialogue and thinking of others. In this role they acted as sensegivers establishing the mental models, conceptual frameworks and organisational parameters through which participants and groups could make sense of the process, the school and their own understanding. For example in my role as Head and lead facilitator I framed the process as strategic 'thinking' to highlight the process as emergent and continuous rather than planned. The prompt sheets and open questions supplied to facilitators provided the parameters for the dialogue which followed. Moderation of the plenaries and the editing of the plans were also examples of sensegiving activity. At the same time I received information from the participants as researcher and leader which influenced my planning of the AI and my perceptions of the change agenda for the school. It was interesting to note that the eventual strategic plan bore close comparison to much of the objectives contained in the Head's operational development plan though these were arrived at independently by a community based committee. Data indicates that my interventions were consistent with the role of researcher-consultant and sense giver (Christensen, 2005; Iveroth and Hallencruetz, 2016).

In the same way, participants framed the sensemaking of participants, but also learned from the interactive dialogue with their workshop colleagues. For example facilitators acted as sensegivers by framing debates in new mental models whilst not prescribing the content of the proposed changes. This sensemaking activity was framed and influenced by the facilitation of the dialogue which was in turn shaped by the Head. Facilitators also received sensemaking data from the participants which in turn influenced the way they saw the task provided by the Head. For example one facilitator described herself as 'like a mirror. I was soaking it up and then a light went on and they could see everything that was being said,' (Facilitator B). She also acknowledged that her own influence on others went both ways when she said 'Even if you have an opinion, well you can still have it of course, but - so I didn't know all these things. So that was very useful' (Facilitator B). This is suggestive of the continuous interplay of sensegiving and sensemaking between leader and follower (Iveroth and Hallencruetz, 2016).

4.5.4.2. Perceptions of the role of leadership

Facilitators described their leadership roles with regard to generating novel thinking in various ways – moderating, synthesising, ‘letting go’ or participating in mutual learning. Analysis of the dialogic process and interchanges identified the way ideas were collected, collated and reflected back to the group for critical reflection. This appears to resemble moderating behaviour. But is this the same as facilitation? Does this matter? Moderation is where leadership involves managing or presiding over a discussion. A principle function is to ensure equality of access to the discussion and to ensure all contributions are heard. Facilitation is to make this discussion easier and smoother so that its product can emerge more effectively. The former is more participatory and reactive implying ‘letting go’ of the process, the latter more collaborative and active. The observation data suggests the latter was the dominant mode of leadership in practice but which adapted depending on the stage of the model, the issue and time available. Moderation and participatory styles which ‘let go’ of the process enhanced creativity and generated novelty but did not always lead to well specified outcomes. Facilitation and collaborative styles engaged in mutual learning led to a focus on practicability and delivery.

On the other hand participants saw leadership in terms of giving clear direction, yet advocated for change processes that utilised approaches which were flexible and devolved. Participants clearly recognised that people choose change rather than react to it whilst at the same time acknowledging the role of leadership in engaging with people to complete tasks and outcomes. When asked about the experience of leadership in the process the data suggests solidarity and pride in the dynamic of the team and in the work and progress made. The role of the facilitator received little attention in responses perhaps because the facilitator was seen as an equal and integrated component of the group rather than a position which was superior, apart or decoupled from the rest of the group. Though facilitators structured and ‘led’ workshops towards outcomes leadership was seen as facilitated collective group collaboration. This is significant because it suggests a shift in how leadership is seen.

The emergent code arising from the data was 'leadership by not being in control'. This is the paradox of control suggested by Streatfield (2001). There were at least two observed occasions when the facilitator stepped back from the conversation and 'let go' with one facilitator unable to define her work as facilitation suggesting she had done very little to elicit the outcomes. Nevertheless this code obscures the nuance in the data. Perkins (2003) identifies 'leadership by leaving alone' which is not the same as Streatfield's (2001) conception of 'leadership by not being in control'. The former assumes no role for the leader which can lead to a tyranny of the process and unproductive conversations. When this was employed observational and audio data suggested a rise in collective anxiety. The latter implies using participants' voices to arrive at collective positions (Perkins, 2003). Some control remains but the group has reached the point of self-regulation where generative dialogue and emergence is part of the dynamic of the workshop and where the leader is still in control as a collaborator and as *primus inter pares* or 'first voice/advocate among equals'. Both Perkins and Streatfield's conceptions of leadership tend towards messy experiences of decision making, but Streatfield's is more productive.

In practice the data indicated that facilitators were mostly collaborative in style – simultaneously opinion makers and seekers, executive secretaries, and moderators. They employed their subjectivity and engaged in the production of outcomes as sense givers helping participants to 'see' school issues and priorities and to articulate the group's innovations. However, this collaboration oscillated between flatter more participatory styles and the hierarchical more directive styles. In the former dialogic leadership was for moderation and inquiry whereas in the latter it was for discussion, advocacy and product. The dominance of one style over another was dependent upon the stage of the AI, the personality of the facilitator and the dynamic of the workshop group concerned indicating context matters.

In complexity terms this devolved embedded leadership contributed to the conditions for emergence. The data shows how the leadership style enabled workshops to gather and use random noise from diverse participants whilst still retaining their integrity as a unit. Collaborative leadership structured this process by providing the sensegiving

orientation for agents' thinking about tasks whilst simultaneously encouraging flexibility in the generation of responses. Without this ideational structuring within a workshop setting no emergent process would take place. Evidence of ideational emergence and adaptation can be seen in the integration of numerous alternative perspectives and initiatives into the collective positions of the groups and the committee and plan.

4.5.5. Evaluation of the Dialogic Development Process

This section returns to the central research question of the study which is:

What contribution can a Dialogic Development Process make to the management of transformative change in my school context?

Over the short period in which the DDP was implemented and studied few changes have been made to the process and yet quite significant changes appear to have occurred as a result of its use. Participant agency and engagement grew during the course of the model, substantive actionable outcomes were produced; a coherent vision of the school was articulated. Though the degree of genuine novelty can be questioned, a culture of innovation had started to be established. This culture of innovation, the cyclical process of strategic thinking and the commitment to actionable strategic tasks will, if taken forward, transform the school over a number of years. Pragmatically, the themes identified from the reconnaissance data and the literature review became less important as we moved through the process and as the focus shifted from viability to sustainability.

Evidence of this developing sustainability can be drawn from magnitude coding and impact questionnaire responses which suggest strong satisfaction with the model from amongst participants. A clear majority of respondents agreed that the strategic plan had effectively captured the contemporary issues for improvement in the community, that the idea of a rolling positive process of organisational change was a good thing and that the work completed would contribute to the delivery of the school's

audacious goal. The change readiness survey clearly indicated values and behaviours consistent with readiness for change at the end of the process. 89% of the sample identified themselves as 'ready for change'. All five participants in the end of cycle follow up interviews expressed very strong or strong comfort levels with their experience of the cycle. However, insufficient data on wider organisational engagement means we need to be cautious in our claims at this point.

The appreciative inquiry as a sequentially structured delivery model for the dialogic development process proved highly appropriate to an organisation steeped in the history of inspection-influence planned change processes. The positive orientation established the foundations for the participatory values and collaboration necessary for generative dialogue. The focus on inquiry and imagination established a planning process that was inquisitive rather than critical and which aspired to rather than accounted for the proposed changes. With its assertion of constructionism it also cohered well with the embedded leadership of facilitation. It does however require more time than more linear, top down planned approaches. The process allowed me to understand, however partially, the way dialogue can contribute to change.

By defining transformation to include fine tuning as sustained community dialogue which leads to change practices it is possible to argue that the contribution of the model holds promise for organisational transformation but this will require further data from numerous cycles of the model.

4.6. Conclusion

This study adopted a model and leadership practice which embraced the implications of complexity. The model used in this school context is not proposed as applicable to every international school context. However, the data suggests that the combination of appreciative inquiry and Dialogic Development Process provides us with a workable opportunity to lead organisational change in a more educative, sustainable and positive way.

In the intervention dialogue between diverse agents was placed at the heart of the change process. Generative dialogue within workshops run collaboratively produced a number of alternative narratives, some of which were discarded, some were stored and some integrated to be used within the published plan. The on-going generation of ideas within the model means that in terms of strategic thinking and planning the school is better positioned to adapt to external and internal changes. However, complex community change and ideational emergence take time and depend on an enlightened view of leadership which recognises complexity and places the organisation and community dialogue at the centre of change processes. To get a true picture of the impact of the DDP one would need to re-visit and gather data on subsequent cycles annually.

When reviewing the utility of the DDP framework as a means for understanding the role of dialogue in emergent change processes I referred above to issues concerning its assumed linearity, its assumptions about specific leadership styles and the difficulties of delineating generative from reflective dialogue during observation. This suggests some amendments to the framework or to how it is researched which would become clearer after further use. Nevertheless, it was useful as a means for making sense of a dialogic approach to an emergent social process of organisational change.

Chapter 5 - Conclusions

5.1. Introduction

Research on planned organisational change processes suggests it is difficult to implement and sustain (Fullan, 2005; 2007). These processes fail to engage those that implement change and fail to recognise that change is an unpredictable and ongoing process rather than a predictable path towards a definite end point. Nevertheless, an emergent change model which fails to identify and plan for an uncertain future risks incoherence and stagnation.

In this study it has been argued that effective organisational change is a complex emergent social process (Davis and Sumara, 2006). This is because international schools are complex organisations characterised as open systems with multiple interconnected networks across many scales and levels. Leadership of organisational change involves connecting these networks in ongoing communication to facilitate individual and collective sensemaking out of which unpredictable new thinking and learning about the organisation and its future can emerge (Iveroth and Hallencruetz, 2016). Leadership of emergence cannot be done alone, but at the same time cannot be left alone as the organisation needs a way to balance the freedom to adapt and change with the coherence which allows it to continue to exist. Therefore leadership must be embedded within the organisation, focused on creating the conditions and opportunities for emergence to occur. In an international school this means involving the community's stakeholders in decision making about the school's change priorities. Dialogue is the critical vehicle through which this takes place so leadership is principally concerned with facilitating the generative dialogue which will allow for emergence (Isaacs, 1999). This implies a collaboration in which leadership paradoxically is still in control of the process but not in control of the outcomes (Streatfield, 2001).

In attempting to lead my international school through a change process a Dialogic Development Process (DDP) was implemented. This combines the workshop structure

of an appreciative inquiry with a dialogic process and is the vehicle through which diverse perspectives from different stakeholders within a school community can come together to envision and plan for its future. The results of the intervention are contained in the strategic plan published on the school's website (International College Spain, 2016).

This study does not attempt to suggest that the intervention employed is the only approach to leading change, nor that it works in all contexts. However, it can be seen as one of a number of related approaches which can apply in complex organisational contexts and it suggests viable and sustainable approaches for other school leaders attempting to address similar challenges. This study is also a contribution to a growing body of research based practice within what might be termed a 'complex ready' concept of effective schooling. This refers to a notion of a school equipped with the leadership perspective, strategies and models to thrive during an era of increasing complexity.

5.2. Major conclusions

Four supporting research questions were posed at the start of the study.

SRQ1 - What are the characteristics of a Dialogic Development Process?

Adopting complexity thinking and sensemaking as a lens through which to understand organisational change suggested the design and justification for the dialogic development process. This is a cyclical process of workshop structured appreciative dialogue which is led collaboratively with the on-going participation of the wider community. This model balances the coherence of planned models and the freedom of emergent change models. The appreciative inquiry, though not the only model, coheres well with the dialogic approach because it is learning focused, has a positive orientation, sees organisational reality as co-created democratically, and emphasises imagination. The data supports the argument that this can become a sustainable model which transforms the interaction between diverse segments of the community

towards generative dialogue and the emergence of new thinking and learning about the organisation.

SRQ2 - What is transformative change in an international school context?

At the model level the data suggests the DDP led to major shifts in dialogic practice, engagement in change processes and perspectives of the role of the leader. In the first cycle data suggest the model was transformative and required only fine tuning in subsequent cycles.

At the organisational level the notion of transformation is more complex. Firstly the model assumed a five year cycle of ongoing thinking, planning and implementation. Data was collected for only three of these. We would need more data from the remaining cycles to make any claims to transformation with confidence. However, the notion of transformation is politically loaded and linked to definitions of novelty and innovation. What is considered novel depends upon who is talking and where it occurs. Often transformation is assumed to be rapid and large scale, but this downplays the impact of cumulative, small scale alterations and adjustments. The former is suggestive of planned approaches while the latter of emergent processes. Organisational change can be, at the same time, both rapid or long term and small scale or strategic. The data suggested that though the Dialogic Development Process led to the emergence of new ideas for the workshops these were not always innovative for the organisation, but that if implemented, would change current practice. Consequently, by defining innovation more widely in dialogic terms the argument made in this study is that complex community change is transformative when sustained community conversations lead to emergent change practices. In other words transformation is the progressive implementation of the emergent thinking and behaviour which results from dialogue.

SRQ3 - Can a Dialogic Development Process bring about organisational change?

The DDP led to the production of a comprehensive community owned strategic plan (International College Spain, 2016). This plan was published initially after the first cycle and was subject to amendment in the light of successive cycles of innovative thinking and planning within the DDP. The data suggests the model led to increased confidence in the school's leadership, greater understanding of how the school works and more engagement, and therefore agency, by participants in change processes and their outcomes. These are strong foundations for a sustainable mechanism for strategic thinking and innovation. Involving stakeholders from the whole community stimulated community learning and organisational, rather than, local thinking and adding to organisational coherence. It also contributed to collective ownership of outcomes and identification with the change process. However, it is not yet clear as to the extent of wider organisational buy-in and the sustainability of the model is still a function of the commitment and change perspective of the Head, whoever that may be.

SRQ4 - What is the role of a school leader in sustainable change practices in international schools?

The DDP was developed as a reaction to 'heroic' leadership models where planned change is based around the centrality of the leader's development priorities and values. Once we begin to see the international school as complex how we leverage the emergent potential inherent in the scale and level of organisation becomes clearer. Leadership provides the mental and structural frameworks within which individuals can make sense of organisational change. This means embedding leadership within the organisation in a reciprocal sensegiving-sensemaking role so that change arises out of it rather than being imposed on it. Positive, collaborative, dialogic approaches are best described as facilitation in which leaders make dialogic interaction easier by partially ceding control over decision making and priority identification whilst retaining influence to shape and manage the process. The data supports the efficacy and utility of this approach. Though facilitation is essentially a leadership activity it was perceived by participants as collective action thus relocating leadership to the level of the

organisation within change processes. The Principal becomes the arbiter of school and wider organisational needs acting as the mediator between different agendas, stakeholders and external agencies.

These lead to the main research question posed at the start of this study which was:

What contribution can a Dialogic Development Process (DDP) make to the management of transformative change in my school context?

Perkins (2003, p. 224) refers to the law of global impact.

‘Transformation toward a culture of progressive practice depends on a contact architecture that mixes people enough to foster propagation of progressive practice from group to group (‘flock to flock’) along with a critical mass of developmental leaders to seed the process’.

In the context of my international school this meant implementing the DDP in the hope that its impact on the organisation would be the spread of an embedded culture of innovation (Herrero, 2008). Its contribution is developed in the next section with the following caveat. To date there has been partial implementation of the strategic plan, but what this is showing is that the DDP has been very effective. However, a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of the intervention would require data from many more cycles of the process than we currently have. In addition, adopting a complexity lens suggests cause and effect analyses are misleading obscuring the very complexity we are attempting to respond to. There may be multiple causes which produce a variety of effects some of which are not yet apparent. Rather, the purpose of the research was to investigate the rich narratives emerging from the experience of the model as a way to understand how to take the organisation in which the author was located forward.

5.3. Contribution and implications of the study

The learning and original knowledge produced as a result of the intervention implemented and researched in this thesis has the potential for huge impact in schools and indeed within the wider education sector. It adds to practitioner knowledge about organisational change theory and complexity thinking by suggesting leadership of change is an organisational phenomenon rather than an individual one.

Though this is an emergent model it has already received public exposure within the wider group of schools to which my school belongs. The parent company adopted elements of the model into its wider organisational level leadership training and organisational planning processes, and aspects of the model in development were presented at company regional and global conferences. Other Heads within the schools group expressed interest in the findings and how the practises might be applied to, and benefit, their own schools.

It is the only piece of work on strategic change in international schools from a complexity thinking perspective. Beyond the confines of my own school and group of schools the IBO has also shown interest in complexity theory. The author attended a seminar at the IB World Heads' Conference in The Hague in 2015. This suggests complexity is a concept whose time has come. The insights gained from adopting a complexity thinking perspective suggest a number of radical and exciting departures from the current practice of organising and leading schools. This study also shows how bringing new thinking and ideas from both complexity theory and the commercial world to the leadership of change in international schools can deepen a practitioner's critical understanding of their own practice. It has the potential to challenge and thus re-educate both school leaders, and members of the community they serve, through a shared experiential journey from managerial to collaborative practice. So, although transferability may depend upon different leaders holding similar values, the educative potential within the model can also contribute to its transferability. It also suggests the value of approaches which employ internal research-consultancy.

The contribution and implications of the study may be divided into those which relate to future research and those which relate to developing practice.

5.3.1. Future Research

This was a small scale study of an emergent model and so claims made beyond the context in which it was conducted are limited at this point in the development of the model. Though there is a high degree of confidence that the intervention is effective the degree to which it is sustainable and the scale and quality of its impact are yet to be conclusively assessed. Whether it will lead to the viral spread (Herrero, 2008) of a culture of innovation remains to be seen.

Despite articulating a strong sense of commitment to the model and its impact on them personally, some participants questioned the practicability of implementing the tasks without wider buy-in beyond the committee. To date no data is yet available indicating a 'tipping point' in the wider community which might lead to the viral spread of innovation. However, what we can say is that the data shows that the model contributed to a greater sense of community, greater pride and loyalty to the institution and a reaffirmation of the school's mission and vision amongst those who participated. It also contributed to a greater understanding of school issues and became a source of solutions and innovative thinking on developing the school's offer. The model and its committee became a reference point for enhanced interaction between senior leadership and the wider organisation signalling the way in which we would go on together. We can conclude from this with a high degree of confidence that the model is likely to be sustainable if the model and its cycles are continued, but this takes time.

In addition, the wider schools group, to which this school belonged, took great interest in the model and the ideas which supported it. Invitations to present to colleagues in other schools and regions, to contribute to leadership training and to lead group level development planning illustrate some viral spread of the influence of the model and of

its potential for building organisational coherence and reducing the corresponding dissonance. This is more evidence of the potential sustainability of the model.

Therefore the knowledge and insights gained from this research serve as a starting point to see how dialogue is used within organisations and specifically within educational organisational change. More research is needed to address these issues of impact and sustainability leading to the following recommendations:

1. That more impact data is gathered from further cycles of the model to test the degree to which it has altered attitudes to change, the degree to which strategic objectives have been implemented and the degree to which the wider organisation has embraced the process and embedded a culture of innovation. This latter factor could perhaps be evaluated using normalisation process theory (Wood, 2017)
2. That further research is conducted into sustainability through an evaluative comparative study of the model's use with another school or group of schools. In addition to a model level evaluative study a phased research by stage of the AI cycle would also assist in assessing the relative influence of the AI on development through the dialogic contexts of the DDP.

5.3.2. Developing Practice

In my own school context the DDP led to greater engagement of the community in school improvement and direction-setting. The strategic plan produced and published by the strategic thinking standing committee provided 'a directional north' and the process provided a viable and potentially sustainable source of innovation. The research findings from the implementation of the model indicate the potentially far-reaching impact for international schools seeking sustainable change processes. However, the practices employed in the DDP – suitably adapted to context - could equally apply to other schools or indeed to the wider educational sector, including further and higher education. Indeed, given the influence of practice and research on this thesis from the industrial sector one could also claim it has potential for any

organisation seeking alternative approaches to sustainable change. The model attempts to create a dialogic organisation and the study shows that dialogue as a means for personal and organisational transformation can work. The success of the coaching, counselling and psychotherapy industry is evidence also evidence of that and indeed there is much to be learned from it.

Acknowledging that further testing of the model is still required recommendations from participants arising through the data led to the following recommendations:

3. That the facilitator training programme be further redesigned to provide sufficient time and activities for participants to come to a more developed view of facilitation in complex learning environments
4. That the Head provide a summative briefing document at the '**define**' stage
5. That the Head provide direction at the '**dream**' and '**design**' stages on how to add specificity to objective setting
6. That more time is devoted to orienting participants to the positive dimension in the appreciative inquiry and to the role of workshop facilitators
7. That the school establish the digital means for participants to communicate with each other outside of workshop sessions
8. That a mechanism be established for replacing participants during each cycle

This study contributed to practitioner knowledge of organisational change theory and complexity thinking. Being both leader and participant in the change process involved living the tension between a desire to facilitate dialogic processes of emergent thinking and learning, whilst simultaneously managing that process to ensure the emergence of usable product and outcomes. In other words, practising the paradox of control described above (Streatfield, 2001). This requires a paradigm shift in which your practice is more sensitive to the wider organisation, instead of viewing change through the traditional hierarchical structures, power and authority of the leader.

The experience and learning arising from the study offers promise for consultancy in the hope that it can alter views and practices at a range of scales, not just in

international schools but in a wide range of educational and non-educational contexts. For example, this may also include educational organisations in the tertiary and higher education sectors and in national as well as international contexts. The design of products and services to assist schools engage in change at many levels of the organisation might involve developing leadership, mentoring and training programmes and theoretical and practical based publications. This consultancy, its products and associated writing can be of real practical use to leaders.

5.4. Evaluation of Research – restrictions and limitations

During the action research I was an embedded researcher simultaneously serving as the school's Head. It is important to recognise the range of impacts that this may have had on the claims to knowledge made in this study. The pragmatics of institutional leadership in busy schools means constantly balancing priority conflicts. Earlier in this thesis I referred to the 'mess' of action research (Cook, 2008) which was seen in this study in two ways. Firstly, due to operational issues noted in chapter three I had less time to address research in cycles two and three of the intervention. Though evidence from cycle one suggested the model had been transformative and needed only to be 'fine-tuned' the lack of opportunity to collect more confirmatory data would have enhanced the validity of conclusions drawn. Secondly, my ethical responsibility as Head was to ensure the intervention contributed to the development of the school and its programme. This meant that the appreciative inquiry often took precedence over the action research.

Related to this issue of positionality is the risk of bias and the influence of my values and behaviour over the behaviour of participants and the data collected from them. Fulfilling three roles – school leader, internal consultant and researcher- proved complicated. The objectives and purposes of all three influenced the practice of the other. Reflecting upon my interventions during the AI cycle and during the conversational interviews the interchange was mutual and in a reciprocal sensemaking capacity. The participants interacted with the author throughout the process so their observations and perspectives influenced the author's assessment of the model and

the way the data was interpreted. Objectivity was never a claim in this action research but reflexivity was. My values also coloured the way in which the data was interpreted and analysed, for example in my identification of the main themes for analysis and use of thematic codes. This can lead to one seeking or seeing evidence in the data which may not apply. To minimise this, an 'a priori' pre-coding process was followed by two cycles of emergent coding to ensure the researched voices were the focus of the analysis.

A further potential limitation is the contextual nature of action research which means making claims about the value of the study to other contexts is challenging. Whilst transferability is a hope it cannot be a requirement given the nature of complex unities. However, learning derived from this context based action research project may still have applicability to similar schools. The conceptual framework, or elements of it, can still be tested in other contexts the results from which can cumulatively add to its wider value in the sector.

This study adopted a pragmatic mixed methods methodology so that multiple and contrasting lenses would give us a better view of complexity and increase the explanatory power of the research. In this study of a small group committee the sample size was small and as it was constituted voluntarily, ran the risk of poor response rates. This was counterbalanced by the triangulation of evidence from different sources but the data collected was wide and deep complicating triangulation. The narratives derived from the model needed to be organised and reduced so that through comparison similarities and differences could be identified. In the act of doing so generalisations emerge which are the result of what was a reductive process. This may have led to generalised conclusions which overstate linkages and reductive causes and effects. However, the analytic framework of codes grounded in the narratives of the participants added to the coherence of the thesis argument and to the credibility of claims made in support of it.

The longer it takes to write field notes after observation the greater the risk of inaccuracy, changing attitudes or recollections and the stronger the influence of the

researcher's default biases and values. Most notes and interpretations were made within 48 hours of an event, but what was recorded needed to be interpreted for usable value. Inevitably this was done over a longer period after ongoing reflection. It is possible that this led to researcher bias but this was difficult to avoid as a lone researcher in a leadership position within the organisation.

When employing open questioning within the semi-structured and focus group interviews, a key challenge to credibility was the power relationship between the participant and the researcher-leader. This interchange between them may have led to a negotiated observed reality rather than the reality observed by either one. Similarly, the potential for 'values creep' and 'group think' where the participant(s) may be unduly influenced by what the researcher 'wants' to see either for approval and/or to avoid conflict may have impacted credibility. The leader-researcher's values and behaviour likely influenced participants during the collaborative change process. The risk is that it led to an 'overly positive-question confirming' set of answers. There is plenty of evidence to the contrary. The committee was made up of people with little allegiance to the Head – parents, students, board members – only teachers had a direct line of accountability to the leader. Yet they produced some of the more critical responses.

Turning to the quantitative data, a small sample size and a poor response rate generally implies less validity which is not representative of the whole. However those responding had completed the entire cycle and so could respond more accurately. Also, the method by which personal narratives were quantitised within the change readiness survey can be questioned. This is a form of auto-magnitude coding by participants of individual's perceptions and emotional responses to questions posed vary. Taken alone the credibility of the generalisation derived from this data source would be weak which is why a cluster of data (some quantitative; some qualitative) was used to arrive at conclusions on the same topic. The impact survey employed closed questions using a numerical continuum of agreement to disagreement. This added to understanding but reduced the ability to make any direct cause and effect statements. Any claims made would then be generalisations of generalisations which

would again reduce their credibility. However, to restate, the ultimate aim was not to make cause and effect statements but rather to indicate impact and describe the experience of the model. Hence, once again the key was to triangulate this data against others sources and as part of a cluster of data (quantitative and qualitative).

5.5. Concluding Remarks

Much of the drive within the international education sector is towards metrics, managerial control and commercial corporatism. This is the influence of the GERM (Sahlberg, April 2012) and NPM (Green, 2011) agendas. This appears to be at odds with the assumptions and practices contained within my model. By employing dialogic leadership as a tool in the creation of a wider notion of complex ready organisation we open up the discourse on alternative approaches to leadership and demonstrate how greater influence of the periphery on the centre is something to be embraced rather than controlled. A more democratic, collaborative and educative approach to organisational change can also reduce dissonance within the organisation and with its wider environment.

The evidence from this study suggests that community based dialogue under the watchful eye of embedded leadership can be effective in facilitating organisational change. At the very least this suggests an alternative to planned change approaches driven by accountability, performance and testing. As such it adds to a body of research and evidence based practise which serves to counter the assumptions and practises suggested by the predominant GERM agenda. It therefore represents a contribution to a continuing debate about what is educationally most productive for delivering sustained organisational change which best serves the community, students and learning.

Appendices

Appendix 1	Discover Stage Community Survey
Appendix 2	Discover Stage Prompts
Appendix 3	Design Stage Prompts
Appendix 4	Design Stage Strategic Planning Form
Appendix 5	Pilot Study (Training Programme) Interview Schedule
Appendix 6	Facilitator Interview Schedule
Appendix 7	Participant Interview Schedule (Follow Up)
Appendix 8	Focus Group Effectiveness Questions
Appendix 9	Focus Group Appraisal Questions
Appendix 10	Focus Group Participants Questions
Appendix 11	Change Assessment Survey
Appendix 12	Participant Questionnaire
Appendix 13	Request for Informed Consent Letter



International
College Spain

A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL

STRATEGIC THINKING DISCOVER STAGE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

NAME OF PARTICIPANT:

YOUR STRATEGIC AREA:-

a) Best Experience – Tell me about the best times that you have had with our school; when you felt most alive and most involved. What made this exciting?

b) Values- What is it about our school which you value? What is the single most important thing that your school has contributed to your life?

c) Core Value/Life Giving Factor-What is it that, if it did not exist, would make our school totally different than it currently is?

d) Three Wishes- If you had three wishes for our school, what would they be?

GROUP FACILITATOR NAME:-

GROUP SECRETARY NAME:-

Appendix 2 Discover Stage Prompts

Facilitators for ‘The Discover Stage’ of the Workshop

Below are some generic questions which can be used to facilitate the discovery or inquiry based focus group interview during the ‘Discover Stage’ of the workshop. We will be sending all participants a stimulus pack of information to help the conversations. Using this, the interview data brought by all members from the Orientation Session and the Community Interviews gathered you can apply the following to the areas defined in the ‘Define Stage’. The exact questions you frame and ask can be decided by you or will arise out of the group. Still other will emerge during the conversation. These questions are based upon the SOAR model.

Part One: The Positive Foundation of School Development

1. **Best Experience** – What does our community identify as the best times they have had with our school; when they felt most alive and most involved? What made this exciting?
2. **Values**- What is it about our school which is valued? What is the single most important thing that ICS Madrid has contributed to the life of the community?
3. **Core Value/Life Giving Factor**-What is it that, if it did not exist, would make our school totally different than it currently is?
4. **Three Wishes**- What three wishes do the community have for our school?

Part Two: Applied Questions to the Operational Area

5. **Strengths**- What can we build on? What are our strengths in this area?
6. **Opportunities**- What are our stakeholders asking for in this area? How can we extend, enhance or expand our work in this area to meet both our mission and our stakeholder needs and wants?
7. **Aspirations** -What do we care deeply about? What new capabilities do we need in this area? How can we deliver our Big Audacious Goal within this operational area? How do we maintain the things we care about as we change? What do we need to access and leverage in order to be successful in this area?
8. **Results** – How do we know we are succeeding? What indicators or criteria will enable us to measure the impact of our work? What systems and processes are required to assure this?

Appendix 3 Design Stage Prompts

Writing Provocative Propositions – A step by step mechanism for uncovering Positive Themes from the Discovery Interview

What makes the extraordinary positive on a daily basis? What have people told us about our school? The discussion led by the Facilitator will have uncovered a number of data points and themes which now need to be identified, framed positively and then prioritised.

In getting at the positive themes which can be used to write a provocative proposition ask yourselves the following questions:

1. What are the examples of what is best in this operational area?
2. What circumstances made this best possible?
3. Then, write affirmative present tense statements that describes this. Examples of written provocative propositions that arose out of an inquiry around 'customer service':
 - We are proud to be part of this organisation
 - We anticipate the needs of our clients and have the information available when they call, visit or write
 - We do our best and know that our decisions are appreciated by others
 - We continually learn as we work

Appendix 4 Design Stage Strategic Planning Form



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Strategic Planning Objective & Task Setting Form

1. Agree and then number the Strategic Objectives for the workshop group in order of importance and priority for the group
2. Focus on the first two prioritised objectives
3. Unpick the objective and package its implementation into a number of developmental tasks - there will probably be a number of staged tasks which need to be completed, which will enable the entire objective to be implemented
4. Remember that the same process will be completed for Implementation Year 2, 3, 4 and 5 so that all the objectives will be met in order of priority during the lifetime of the Strategic Plan. Some tasks may need to be carried over for two consecutive years.
5. Complete the form attached. This will be a living document and will be updated annually.
6. Finally, ask the question 'Are our tasks realistic, ambitious, deliverable and time specific for the next academic year?'

Objective (What)	Task (How)	Imp Yr (When)	Complete (Impact) Yes/No	Evidence (Impact)
1				
2				

Appendix 5 Pilot Study (Training Programme) Interview Schedule

Pilot Study Facilitator Training Programme Participants

40 minutes

May 2013

The Facilitator Training Programme Draft Interview Guide Cycle 1 – 40 minutes

Part One- Ask about facilitator-leaders' leadership experience and invite examples

QUESTION	TARGET RESEARCH QUESTION
1. What is your role in the school and why have you volunteered to lead a self-study committee?	1
2. What do you think makes a good leader? What skills, values and experiences make a good leader?	4
3. Which of these skills, values and experiences do you think would be needed to run a workshop?	4

Part Two - Probe around facilitator-leaders' attitudes to, and experience of, change

QUESTION	TARGET RESEARCH QUESTION
4. How do you think most teachers feel about change in schools? Why?	3
5. What do you think teachers need in order to contribute to change in your school?	3
6. Tell me about any change process you have recently been involved in? Was the resultant product useful and beneficial?	1
7. How did you feel before, during and after this process? Why?	2
8. If you had to go through it again what, if anything, would you do differently? Why?	1

Part Three - Probe around facilitators-leaders' understanding and appreciation of the structure and content of the workshop – invite examples in each case

QUESTION	TARGET RESEARCH QUESTION
9. Tell me what you thought about the structure of the training programme? What topics did you find helpful?	1
10. What topics do you think were missing?	1
11. What would you have liked to have seen done differently?	1

Part Four - Probe around facilitator-leaders' personal learning through the workshops

QUESTION	TARGET RESEARCH QUESTION
12. Have you ever led professional development for teachers before and if so what was that like for you? What approaches did you employ and how successful were they?	1,4
13. How do you know when a colleague has learned something new? What does this look like?	3
14. Having been through the training programme, what have you learned about facilitating professional learning that was new?	3

Part Five - Probe around facilitator-leaders' enhanced leadership capacity

QUESTION	TARGET RESEARCH QUESTION
15. Has your attitude to change changed as a result of this programme?	3
16. In your opinion what skills and attitudes do leaders need to facilitate change in your school?	4
17. Do you feel you have developed any of these from this programme?	3

Appendix 6 Facilitator Interview Schedule

The Facilitator Interview Schedule- In depth Interview

Approximate Time: 1 Hour

Part ONE - Facilitators' conceptions of leadership and workshops

Interview Question	Target Research Question(s)
1) What is your role in the school and why did you volunteer to facilitate a Strategic Thinking Workshop?	4
2) What do you see as the function and purpose of a workshop?	1
3) So, what would be the advantages of running a workshop structure?	1
4) What skills, values and experiences make a good leader?	4
5) Which of these skills, values and experiences do you think are needed to effectively run a workshop?	1
6) Tell me more about.....	1
7) From your experience of our process were there any factors that got in the way of this happening? Describe them.	1

Part TWO –Facilitators’ understanding and appreciation of the objectives, structure and content of the facilitator orientation programme

Interview Question	Target Research Question(s)
8) Tell me what you thought about the structure of the facilitator orientation programme?	1,4
9) What topics or activities did you find most helpful?	1
10) What topics or activities did you think were missing or redundant?	1
11) What would you have liked to have seen done differently?	1
12) To what extent were the ideas and strategies we discussed in the orientation programme in your mind or did you use in the workshop?	2, 4
13) What do you think about the use of a workshop methodology for developing a strategic plan?	1
14) How difficult was it to focus on the positive during the different stages of the appreciative inquiry?	2, 4

PART THREE- Facilitators' attitudes to and experience of change

Interview Question	Target Research Question (s)
15) How do you think most people feel about change in organisations?	3
16) Why do think this is so?	3
17) When you think of the word 'transformation' what images or words do you see?	3
18) What would be required from teachers if we wanted them to engage in change in your school?	1, 2, 3
19) Is there a 'good change' and 'bad change' in school contexts?	1, 3
20) What would that look like?	1, 3
21) What do you think a good change process involves?	1, 3
22) What would it look like?	1, 3

Part FOUR- Facilitators' application of skills of facilitation- managing divergence, consensus and emergence

Interview Question	Target Research Question(s)
23) Tell me about what you understand as facilitation?	1, 2

24) Describe the way (what you typically heard and saw) in which the strategic vision, set of objectives and planned tasks arose? Specifically how the group worked, thought and acted	4
25) What was your role in this? What did you do	4
26) Tell me about the decision making processes. How did this happen?	4
27) Were there any incidences of dissent, divergence of opinion or discord? Why? Give me some examples	4
28) What did you do if you didn't reach an agreement? Did you seek consensus or a qualified majority agreement? Why?	4
29) Let's talk a little more about that technique of X or Y. How did you do this? What phrases or strategies did you use?	4
30) What was the impact of this on different people in the workshop group?	3, 4
31) What happened to their contribution? What changed?	3, 4
32) Was there any impact of this strategy on the quality of the outcomes produced?	3, 4
33) What if any influence did the school Principal have over your facilitation of the workshop committee?	4
34) If you had written the vision, objectives and tasks yourself, would it have produced better outcomes?	1, 4

Part FIVE – The impact of the process and structure on outcomes from each workshop group

Interview Question	Target Research Question(s)
35) In the finish do you think we got a coherent set of visions and objectives from the workshop conversations?	1, 2, 4
36) Why?	2
37) How effective were the planning sessions?	1, 2
38) How effective do you think a planning structure based upon a standing audit committee and an annual implementation and progress process will be?	1, 2
39) So, how easy or difficult do you think it will be to implement the outcomes from the workshop groups in school?	2, 4
40) Is there anything else you would like to share with me about facilitating strategic planning workshops?	4

Appendix 7 Participant Interview Schedule (Follow Up)

Interview Questions for Facilitators/Participants (sample size 5)

40 minutes

Impact on change culture of participants June/July 2015

QUESTION	TARGET RESEARCH QUESTION
1. How do you see change in organisations?	3
2. What impact, if any, has the strategic planning process this year had on you and your views of change? Tell me why.	2
3. Is this different from what you expected?	2
4. What contribution, if any, has the strategic planning process had on the strategic planning committee as a whole? Tell me why.	2,4
5. Is this different from what you expected?	2,4,
6. In what ways, if any, do you think this will be seen by the wider community? – Parents, Students and Staff?	2,3
7. If I were to characterise the strategic planning approach used this year as 'flexible implementation' tell me what you understand by that phrase?	1
8. What might be lost by employing an annual (cyclical) process versus a five year fixed term? (Ambiguity, specificity, coherence)	1,2
9. What might be gained by employing an annual (cyclical) process versus a five year fixed term? (ambiguity, specificity, coherence)	1,2
10. On a scale of 1-5 with five being most comfortable and 1 being least comfortable how do you feel about the strategic planning approach being used in this school?	2

Appendix 8 Focus Group Effectiveness Questions

Focus Group Interview Questions

Employee Engagement Survey Objective: To identify the barriers, conditions and leadership approaches which negatively impact enablement and productivity and then to identify suggestions to address this

Conditions for Employee Effectiveness (Enablement and Engagement) (10 minutes)

Name a circumstance or condition which you think enables you to be effective in your role within our school?

Barriers to Effectiveness (10 minutes)

What kinds of things/factors get in the way of you doing the best job you can?

Leadership Approaches (15 minutes)

- a) In what ways do the Senior and Middle Management Teams influence you to be (i) less or (ii) more effective as an employee in our school?

- b) In what ways do the Regional and Central Teams influence you to be (i) less or (ii) more effective as an employee of our company?

Strategies for improvement (10 minutes)

What do you think needs to happen in order for you to be more effective in your job?

Prompts for the Moderator

- Resources
- Administrative Systems and Policies
- Institutional culture and values
- School versus Company values and goals
- Working relationships and Leadership Approaches
- Professional Development and Opportunities
- Time
- Salaries, pay and recognition for work

Appendix 9 Focus Group Appraisal Questions

Focus Group Interview Questions

Assessment and Feedback on Professional Feedback processes at ICS (20 minutes)

- a) How well does the school's PMR and Appraisal process contribute to employee effectiveness and address the need for regular feedback and recognition for staff?
- b) Do you think there are any differences between the professional values and expectations of our staff, our school and the wider organisation?

Strategies for improvement (20 minutes)

- a) What do you think needs to happen in order for us to meet the twin objectives of assuring employee accountability and supporting professional growth?
- b) How should we move the development of the ICS PMR and Appraisal Process forward?

Prompts for the Moderator

- Forms and paperwork
- Deadlines and Timelines
- Professional Development, Training and Talent Development
- Standards and Rubrics for performance
- Staff Engagement, rewards and recognition
- Administrative Systems and Policies
- School versus Company values and goals
- Management (senior and middle) responsibilities and Leadership Approaches
- Coaching and Conversational skills

Appendix 10 Focus Group Participants Questions

PART One- Participants' attitudes to and experience of the leadership of change

Interview Question	Target Research Question (s)
1) How do you think most people feel about change in organisations?	3
2) Why do think this is so?	3
3) When you think of the word 'transformation' what images or words do you see?	3
4) Is there a 'good change' and 'bad change' in school contexts?	1
5) What would that look like?	1
6) What do you think a good change process involves?	1
7) What would it look like?	1, 3
8) What skills and attitudes do you think leaders need to be effective when leading change?	4
9) What are the most commonly repeated errors made by leaders of change?	4
10) What would be required from teachers if we wanted them to engage in change in your school?	2

Part Two -Participants’ understanding of the structure and content of the workshop and conversations model – invite examples in each case

Interview Question	Target Research Question(s)
11) What do you understand by the term ‘workshop’?	1
12) What do you think about the use of workshops for leading change processes?	1,3
13) We used an Appreciative Inquiry to guide the structure of our workshop model-Tell me what you thought about the way we approached the task of generating a strategic plan?	1,3
14) What did you think worked best?	3
15) What do you think went less well?	3
16) What would you have liked to have seen done differently?	3
17) How difficult was it to remain focused on the positive during the process?	3
18) In what way, if at all, did the Principal influence the process?	4
19) In what way, if at all, did the Principal influence the content of the eventual strategic plan?	3, 4

20) Is there anything else you would like to tell me about the Strategic Planning Process at this school?	1,2,3,4
---	----------------

Part Three- Participants' experience of the workshop and conversation model - managing divergence, reaching consensus and engaging emergence

Interview Question	Target Research Question(s)
21) Describe the way (what you typically heard and saw) in which the strategic vision, set of objectives and planned tasks arose? Specifically how the group worked, thought and acted	1,2,4
22) Tell me about how the group determined the priorities for change within the school?	2,4
23) How influential was the facilitator in this process? What did they do or say?	2,4
24) Were there any incidences of dissent, divergence of opinion or discord? Why? Give me some examples	4
25) When there were incidences of conflict were there any examples of differences in values and agendas of the different groups within the school?	1, 2
26) When there were incidences of conflict were there any examples of differences in values and agendas between the school and outside	1,2

agencies such as NAE or the IBO?	
27) How did you and your team account for this?	1,2
28) How much did it influence the outcomes?	1,2
29) Tell me about the decision making processes. How did this happen?	4
30) What did you do if you didn't reach an agreement? Did you seek consensus or a qualified majority agreement? Why?	4
31) What was the impact of this on different people in the workshop group?	3, 4
32) How influential was the facilitator in this process? What did they do or say?	2,4
33) If you had written the vision, objectives and tasks yourself, would it have produced better outcomes?	1, 4
34) What role did talk and conversation play in your group's work? Tell me more about how this worked?	4
35) To what extent did the group come out of the process with a new perspective or idea for changing the school?	2,3,4

Appendix 11 Change Readiness Survey

Change Readiness Survey (sample size 25-30)

Part One: Personal Change Readiness Assessment

Task: Consider a personal change you have made in the last five years. This could be a job or work behaviour change, a change in your personal life like an improved diet, exercise routine or a change in your personal relationship. You will then be given a series of question prompts to help you write a short story about how you engaged with, planned for and implemented this change

Next you will be asked to evaluate that change against a number of criteria on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 representing **NO** evidence of the criteria's characteristics and 10 representing **EXCEPTIONAL** evidence of those characteristics.

Let's start with the written description of the change in terms of the criteria. Write brief answers to the following questions:

1. **Your Personal Change** - Think of a change you have made – behavioural, personal, relational, physical or other – in the past five years. List or describe it below.

2. **Degree of Planning** -Evaluate the degree of planning you used to complete it. Did you define steps to take? Did you have a clear idea of what you needed to do to complete the change? List the important steps you took in the planning process.

3. **Sense of Urgency** - Evaluate your sense of urgency with the change. Did you have a clear sense of what failure and success might look like? To what extent was the price of failure much higher than the price of change? Write down what would have happened if you had failed to make the change and what would happen if you succeeded in making the change.

4. **Personal Support** - Evaluate the degree to which you received personal support from family and friends. Describe how your family and friends supported you.

5. **Personal Focus** - Evaluate the extent to which you were personally focused and committed to the change. Describe how much time and energy you devoted to the change and maintaining it despite other competing priorities and your busy schedule.

6. **Effect on Results** - Evaluate the extent to which the change produced results. Describe the specific and measurable results of the change you made in as much detail as you can remember.

Part Two: Personal Change Readiness Assessment Form

Directions: For your personal change and using the thinking and writing completed above enter a score 1 to 10 in each column where 1 represents **NO** evidence of the characteristic described and 10 represents **EXCEPTIONAL** evidence of the characteristic

Personal Change	Planning I planned in advance the steps I would take and knew clearly how to make the change	Sense of Urgency I knew that the price of failing was much greater than the price of changing	Personal Support My family and friends knew I was making a change and supported me	Personal Focus I devoted time to initiating and maintaining the change despite other priorities and time pressures	Effect on Results I can measure the results of the change, and they are clear and significant
Score 1-10					

Part Three: Organisational Change Readiness Assessment

Task: Consider our work this year on organisational change through the Strategic Planning Process.

Again, you will then be given a series of question prompts to help you write a short story about how you and your team/workshop engaged with, planned for and implemented this change process.

And then again you will be asked to evaluate that change against a number of criteria on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 represents **NO** evidence of the criteria's characteristics and 10 represents an **EXCEPTIONAL** evidence of those characteristics.

Write brief answers to the following questions:

Let's start with the written description of the change process in terms of the criteria.

Write brief answers to the following questions:

1. **The Organisational Change Process/Strategic Planning Process** - Think about our organisational change process of strategic planning. Briefly describe it below.
2. **Degree of Planning** -Evaluate the degree of planning your workshop group used to complete the action plan. Did you define steps to take? Did you have a clear idea of what you needed to do to complete the changes identified? List the important steps you took in the planning process from the five stages 'Define' through to 'Deliver'.

3. **Sense of Urgency** - Evaluate the sense of urgency that the workshop group had towards the strategic planning process. Did the workshop group have a clear sense of what failure and success might look like? To what extent was the price of failure much higher than the price of change? Write down what would have happened if the workshop group had failed to identify the changes required and complete the strategic plan, and compare it with what might happen if the workshop group succeeds in making the changes identified in the plan
4. **Stakeholder Support** - Evaluate the degree to which the workshop group received support from employees, teachers, students, parents, senior leaders, governors or owners, external authorities such as CIS, NEASC, NAE or the IBO. Describe how these stakeholders supported the proposed organisational changes.
5. **Leadership Focus** - Evaluate the extent to which the workshop group was focused and committed to the strategic planning process of organisational change. Describe how much time and energy the workshop group devoted to the change and maintaining it despite other competing priorities and your busy schedules.
6. **Effect on Results** - Evaluate the extent to which the strategic planning process has already produced an outcome and will eventually produce results. Describe the specific and measurable results so far in as much detail as you can.

Part Four: Organisational Change Readiness Assessment Form

Directions: For the organisational change enter a score 1 to 10 in each column, with 1 representing **NO** evidence of the characteristic described and 10 representing **EXCEPTIONAL** evidence of the characteristic

Organisational Change	Planning	Sense of Urgency	Stakeholder Support	Leadership Focus	Effect on Results
	Workshop Action Plans were clear, detailed and effectively communicated	A widespread sense of the immediate need for change was apparent in the workshop	Employees, clients and the wider community understood and supported the strategic planning process and the plan for change published	Senior Leadership will make this process their clear and consistent focus long after it has been initiated	The strategic plan and its actions will have measurable and significant effects on the school and student learning
Score 1-10					

Part Five: The Change Readiness Matrix

Now take your score for each of the assessments – one for the Personal and one for the Organisational. The number out of 50 can be doubled to provide you with a score out of 100.

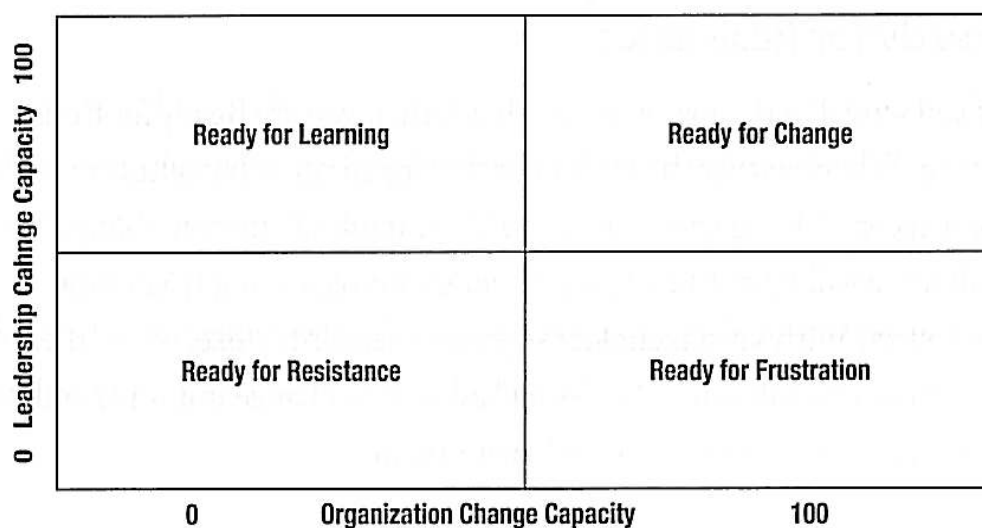
So, if your personal score is 34 double the number on the vertical axis to give you a matrix score of 68/100

So, if your organisational score is 48 double the number on the horizontal axis to give you a matrix score of 96/100

Then place an **X** on the matrix at the point where the two plot. This will place within one of the quadrants. Using the above numbers of my example your feedback suggests you and the school are 'Ready of Change' but this might not be the case for everyone with their feedback.

Submit your reflections and the change matrix with your X placed in the relevant quadrant to the facilitator. Copies of these can be made and returned to you.

Figure 3.2 | Change Readiness Matrix



Appendix 12 Participant Questionnaire

Questionnaire of Participants – Questionnaire on Impact of the Strategic Planning Process (sample size 25-30)

Task: In the light of published document 'ICS Strategic Plan 2015-16' and the process which led to, please respond to the following questions using the five point scale 1-5 provided.

On the scale a level 1 response indicates that you disagree and a level 5 response indicates your full agreement.

On the scale a level 0 indicates that you have no opinion or do not know

After reading the questions locate the numbered response which best represents the degree of agreement you hold with the statement and then circle the number which best represents your level of agreement

Question	Response 1= Disagree and 5= Fully Agree
1. I think that change in organisations is best led by the senior leaders	0 1 2 3 4 5
2. I think that change in organisations is best led by involving as many stakeholders as possible	0 1 2 3 4 5
3. I think that the first published version of the ICS Strategic Plan captured the conversations in my workshop group and in the committee as a whole	0 1 2 3 4 5
4. I think that the first published version of the ICS Strategic Plan	0 1 2 3 4 5

addressed conversations about school development typical in the wider community	
5. I think that the strategic vision and objectives agreed and contained in the ICS Strategic Plan are sufficient	0 1 2 3 4 5
6. I think that the first year tasks identified to support the strategic objectives are sufficient	0 1 2 3 4 5
7. I think that the strategic change process and the ICS Strategic Plan will help the school to realise the school's big audacious goal?	0 1 2 3 4 5
8. I think that the 5-D Appreciative Inquiry is useful for planning school change and development	0 1 2 3 4 5
9. I think that a conversational workshop approach is useful for planning school development	0 1 2 3 4 5
10. I think that the idea of a flexible/adaptable rather than fixed strategic plan is useful for implementing school development?	0 1 2 3 4 5

Appendix 13 Request for Informed Consent Letter

**Participant information sheet for Research Project in partial fulfilment of the
conditions for a Doctorate in Education**

**Innovation through professional conversation: A complexity thinking approach to
transformative change in an international school**

Researcher

Jeremy Singer, ids@leicester.ac.uk

**This research project is undertaken with the agreement of Nord Anglia Education and
under the supervision of the University of Leicester in the United Kingdom.**

Dear Member of the Community,

Invitation to participate in educational research and Ethical Informed Consent

You are invited to take part in this research study. The following explains why the research is being done and what it will involve.

What is the purpose of this study?

To explore the extent to which professional conversations and a workshop model have utility in contributing to the management of transformative change in international

schools. In my approach I have adopted a view that an international school is a complex adaptive human system. This involves a consideration of how human communication systems and interrelationships can encourage the personal, professional and organisational learning, self-organisation and emergent processes which can lead to sustainable organisational change. Therefore the study may also be able to identify the leadership strategies or approaches which facilitate change and innovation.

Why you are being asked to take part?

I need to collect information from questionnaires and audio-recorded interviews, either in focus groups or individually, about student, parent and teacher attitudes towards change; the management and leadership values and approaches which impact most effectively on personal and organisational change and through a dialogic analysis of a workshop process identify the conversational and leadership techniques which facilitate commitment to sustainable change.

What will happen if you decide to take part?

I will ask you to sign the consent form attached as part of a general invitation to take part in the study. This will cover participation in a focus group or individual interview, a strategic planning workshop as a participant or as a facilitator or to complete a workshop facilitator training programme.

As part of your involvement in my research I commit to the following principles which will underpin my practice and approach to any information gained by your involvement.

1. I will give priority to your interests at all times
2. Your identity will be protected at all times unless you give me specific permission to name you
3. You are free to withdraw from the research at any time whereupon I will destroy all data relating to you unless you give specific permission to do

otherwise except from any role considered part of the general expectations as an employee of the company.

4. I will check all data relating to you before I make it public
5. I will make a copy of my research available to you prior to its publication

Will the information you provide be kept confidential?

Your contributions to interviews, questionnaires and audio recordings will be treated and stored confidentially as required by the Research Ethics Code Conduct of the University of Leicester and the Data Protection Act 2003. All research will also meet the requirements and guidelines established by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) in their document 'Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research' (2011). Information from your interviews will be transcribed anonymously and given to you to check for accuracy. Any publications from this study will protect participants' anonymity.

What are the likely benefits and costs of taking part?

Taking part will cost you the time required for interviews or questionnaires in addition to being part of the strategic planning or facilitator training programme. This is likely to be about one hour, on three occasions during the study, as well as whatever time you choose for checking the transcriptions. As well as contributing to a research study that will inform educational policy makers and leaders of international schools your participation will contribute to practitioner knowledge about the leadership of change and strategic development of international schools.

Thank you for taking the time to read this sheet. If you have any queries please ask for further clarification.

Jeremy David Singer, M.Sc. (Econ), B.A. (Hons.), PGCE, FRSA

If you are now willing to join the project, please sign and date the consent form below returning it me. You are advised to keep a copy for your records.

Participant Consent Form

Innovation through professional conversation: A complexity thinking approach to transformative change in an international school

Please circle your answers:

1. I understand the information sheet for this study and have had the opportunity to ask any questions. **Yes /No**

2. I agree to take part in the above study. **Yes/ No**

3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and can withdraw at any time. **Yes /No**

4. I agree to interviews and my contributions within workshops can be audio recorded. **Yes /No**

Name of Participant:

Signature:

Date:

Your Email contact address:

Researcher

Jeremy Singer jds26@leicester.ac.uk.

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