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NEW CHALLENGES FOR LEADERSHIP

contents

Editorial: New times, new leadership and new partnerships

ROSS DEAN

> *"The pace of change is mandating that we produce a faster, smarter, better grade of human being. Current systems are preventing that from happening. Future education systems will be unleashed with the advent of a standardised rapid courseware-builder and a single point global distribution system."*
>
> — Thomas Frey, executive director and senior futurist at the DaVinci Institute, February 2007.

WHILE WE COULD debate at length Frey's vision of the future of education, there is no doubt that we live in new times.

School leadership is and has been changing for some time, and approaches that focus on flexibility, collaboration, crossing boundaries and collective leadership are now common in our schools and broader community. What we are seeing at an organisational level is a move from leadership as an individual approach (ie, leadership as a position) to an approach that is clearly more collective (leadership as a process).

New leadership is a broad term we can use to acknowledge the many significant changes that have occurred during the past decade (the new times) in both the context and the practice of school leadership. The movement required in terms of leadership approaches can be demonstrated across Australian educational settings in the recent emphasis on evidence-based practice — the collection and analysis of relevant data and research and the application of this evidence to teaching and learning and to whole school improvement.

How might these new approaches influence leadership practice? From various researchers including Johnson, Groundwater-Smith, Hopkins, Earl, Hattie, and Boudett come comments on the key features of evidence-based practice. A 2007 research paper for ACT government schools describes it this way:

> *From this research, it seems schools with the following features are able to build and sustain professional knowledge:*
>
> - *The development of shared values and expectations about children, learning, teaching and the relationship of these to the local environment*
> - *A collective focus on student learning, which becomes part of the normative control of the professional community*
> - *Collaboration which includes sharing expertise, a readiness for people to call on each other and the refinement of understandings about effective practice*
> - *Habits of inquiry and reflection — self-awareness of school community members and deep conversations across the community, debating issues and testing conclusions.*
>
> — from *Teachers and School Leaders: making through evidence-based practice*

Clearly these new times require a response that includes an emphasis on sharing, collaboration, collective focus and "deep conversations across the community"; hence the need for "new partners and new partnerships" to support the work of school leaders and school communities alike.

For the purpose of this editorial we can define a partnership as a cooperative relationship between people or groups who agree to share responsibility for achieving some specific goal.

In 2005 the Center for Creative Leadership, a top-ranked, global provider of executive education, released its *Changing Nature of Leadership* (CNL) research, confirming the move to new leadership.

> *Its focus: to explore the current field of leadership and forecast future trends. CNL relied on several interdependent streams of research, including academic literature, surveys, benchmarking and classroom research. More than 300 respondents completed one or more aspects of the*

> *research. Of these respondents, 84.3 per cent believe that the definition of effective leadership has changed in the last five years — indicating some interesting trends in leadership.*
>
> — André Martin, *Changing Nature of Leadership Report,* CCL 2005.

Among the trends were:

- Challenges becoming more complex
- Greater reliance on interdependent work
- Shifting reward systems
- The rise of a new leadership skill set
- Leadership viewed as a collective process
- Global organisations at the cutting edge of collective leadership.

When considering the new school leadership required by each of our *Professional Voice* contributors we need not only to be aware of new paradigms, contexts and capabilities but also to recognise and understand that hand-in-hand come new partnerships, to support "leadership as a collective process".

For those of us working in or with schools the question might be: Does a school's fate rest on how well the leader(s) understand, nurture and develop partnerships and how they make them more effective?

Bill Mulford's excerpt from his major work (*The Leadership Challeng*e, 2007) was chosen to provide a timely reminder of the important questions that he asked three years ago in terms of new times and new leadership. In light of the issue of leadership recruitment and retention Mulford calls for the challenging of the traditional and hierarchal approach to careers, by providing opportunities for people to move in and out of positions at the classroom, school and system levels. It is a relevant response to new times and the need for new partnerships.

For Frank Crowther, (*The Critical Importance of Teacher Leadership in Successful School Capacity-Building: New insights*), the constructs of parallel leadership and teacher leadership enhance the leadership goals for student and school success:

> *Parallel leadership is a process whereby teacher leaders and their principals engage in collective action for the purposes of schoolwide development and revitalisation to enhance the school's capacity.*

Crowther's "parallel leadership" is underpinned by three values: mutual respect, a sense of shared purpose, and allowance for individual expression. They define the highly successful IDEAS Project that has delivered enhanced "educational capacity" in Victorian schools. If leadership is to retain its conceptual and practical utility, then it has to be reconstituted in a distributed, as opposed to a focused, form.

Leaders (and their partners) are in the business of change and Pat Thomson, in her highly entertaining piece (*Principals and Black Lagoons: Reflections from England on headteachers and power*), refers to Michael Fullan's response to the English educational reform model dominated by carrots and sticks.

> *He advocates the provision of incentives, collective capacity building and the development of trusting relationships between layers and sectors of the education system. Only then, he says, is it possible to intervene strongly in any sites where "under-performance" still remains.*

Thomson's insight is that, through this relationship-building approach, both partners and leaders are constantly confronted by the power/lack of power paradox under which many English headteachers operate.

In our "new times" for there to be leadership, there need to be partners, but in the case of early childhood, recent significant and unprecedented upheaval has in no way clarified the already murky waters of workplaces "characterised by non-hierarchical structures". For those working in early childhood the issues are in many cases unique. Quite often early childhood teachers are thrust into leadership without leadership authority. Added to this dilemma is the fact that the "partners" (if they see themselves as such) in this case are likely to be parent and community members. Max Grarock (*Crafting a Position for Leadership in Early Childhood*) quite rightly acknowledges that some of the answers may have already been worked through:

> *While there is a need for specific research and training in early childhood leadership there is also a lot that can be imported from mainstream education leadership theory. Specifically they point to "distributed leadership" …*

The "murky waters" of leadership that pertain to the early childhood context are replaced in John West-Burnham's paper (*Learning in Context: Thinking beyond the school*) where he sees a clear and distinctive direction for leadership — the development of social capital which he defines as:

> *… essentially about networks, trust, engagement, communication, shared values, aspirations and interconnectedness. What is clear is that high social capital enhances academic success, personal wellbeing and social engagement. … If educational success is a function of high social capital, then educational leadership has to make its development a high priority.*

In the Andy Hargreaves interview, the extension of a broad umbrella of educational discourse and support is further expanded within the context of the "Fourth Way" where "a good school is like a good classroom — a place where you can make demands on people you know well and who trust you to do the best for them." For Hargreaves, "leadership here is not individual or idiosyncratic but systemic". The new policy direction, the Fourth Way (as distinct from the previous three) proposes a leadership approach that emphasises collaboration rather than competition, the pursuit of a common good, and a true sense of shared community.

In the sense of partnership, the Fourth Way clearly calls for a broader understanding of community at a leadership level. According to Kouzes and Posner in their book

The Leadership Challenge, the "content" of leadership has not changed but the "context" has. Clearly who the partners are is changing within the school context, and leaders need to seize the opportunity to lead differently, which means understanding how to approach the changing context affecting the partners.

How School Leadership Influences Student Learning by Ken Leithwood provides a new conception of leadership influence. This influence on student learning is seen to flow along four paths, the rational, emotional, organisational and family paths. Each path is populated by a distinctly different set of variables or conditions, and selecting the most promising of these variables and improving their status is a central challenge for school leadership.

Leithwood, in discussing the emotional path, directs leaders to the need for emotional awareness when he writes:

> *A recent review of more than 90 empirical studies of teacher emotions and their consequences for classroom practice and student learning unambiguously recommends leaders' attention to variables on the emotions path as a means of improving student learning. Exercising influence on variables located along the emotional path depends fundamentally on leaders' social appraisal skills or emotional intelligence.*

New times in education provide three perspectives worth considering that arise from the changing context of schools and the leader/partner relationship. They are:

1. Leadership when leader and partnership roles are not clearly distinguished.
2. Leadership when there is not a clear authority hierarchy.
3. Leadership when the active role of partners is seen in the leadership process.

To return to Martin's *Changing Nature of Leadership*:

> *It's no longer the time of the heroic leader — the leader who walks in and takes up all the space in the room. The job of today's leader is to create space for other people — a space in which people can generate new and different ideas; a space where seemingly disparate departments and people in the organisation come together and have a meaningful conversation; a space in which people can be more effective, more agile, and more prepared to respond to complex challenges.*

The contributors to this edition point towards an approach to leadership that needs to move beyond a leader-centric approach (one focused on the impact that the characteristics or behaviours of leaders have on the attitudes, behaviours and performance of partners) to systems and processes that involve multiple people working together to make leadership happen. This is relationship-based leadership where we utilise relationships as the key aspect of producing leadership that is for a new context and a new group of partners.

Learning in Context:

thinking beyond the school

JOHN WEST-BURNHAM

THIS PAPER ARGUES for a change in focus in the strategies that are being used to maximise the achievement, attainment and wellbeing of every child. The historic focus on school improvement has been successful in many respects and has had a demonstrable impact on school standards. What it has failed to do in most developed nations is to secure greater equity. Therefore it may now be appropriate to raise the question of the extent to which this improvement can be sustained; and the capacity for raising standards for all children, given that increasing investment and effort do not seem to be producing commensurate outcomes. This is a classic example of "more for less" or what economists would describe as diminishing returns — increased investment is not producing an appropriate return; the focus on the school is not addressing the fundamental issues of maximising equity and realising the potential of every individual. The following diagram illustrates the issues involved.

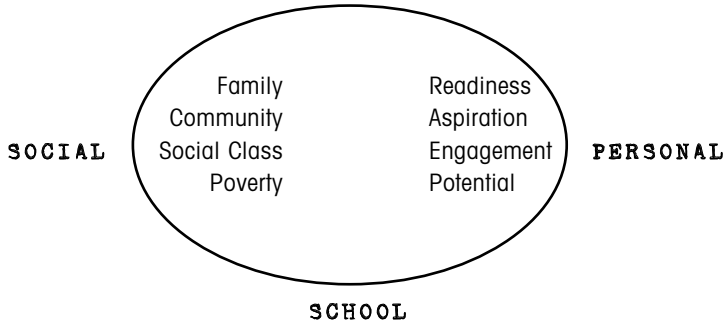


Fig. 1. The variables influencing academic success and wellbeing

Academic success and personal wellbeing are the result of the complex interplay of the variables shown in the diagram. Most policy initiatives have tended to concentrate on the school, but the evidence suggests that it would be more appropriate to focus on the social and personal factors. According to Silins & Mulford:

> *Most school effectiveness studies show that 80 per cent or more of student achievement can be explained by student background rather than schools.* (2002, p561)

In terms of leverage and impact, it may therefore be more appropriate to focus on the social and personal factors rather than the school. Of course it is vital that the element that can be attributed directly to the school is as effective as possible. A classic example of this is the issue of in-school variation — the inconsistency that exists in some schools between teachers is a real leadership issue that is directly under the school's control. Other factors are more elusive.

Children who grow up in poverty, in less effective families, who live in dysfunctional communities and are of low social class are consistently failed by the education system in most developed countries. The converse is equally true. In fact it could be argued that schools work best for the middle classes, which is a denial of the stated aspirations of most school systems, ie equality, equity and inclusion.

While social disadvantage may not be an excuse for poor achievement in academic terms, it certainly is an explanation. As Power et al (2002) conclude in their study:

> *… (educational) outcomes in deprived areas are worse than those in non-deprived areas, whether they are measured in terms of qualification, attendance, exclusions or "staying on" rates. Inner-city areas in particular feature as having low outcomes.* (p26)

Schools in deprived areas have a great deal in common with schools in non-deprived areas — the same curriculum, assessment regimes, inspection and accountability models, etc. There are significant differences in funding, teacher supply and access to resources, but these are not consistent as causal factors. What is consistent is the impact of deprivation. Stevens et al describe the response needed to this situation:

> *Entirely new points of departure will be required in order to significantly improve the capacity of all segments of society, including enterprises and local communities, to break with the rigid and hierarchical methods of the past and embrace solutions based on greater personal accountability, internal motivation and uniqueness.* (2000, p22)

Most government policies fail to address the issues of "personal accountability, internal motivation and uniqueness". Rather, they emphasise consistency, conformity and compliance. According to Mulgan:

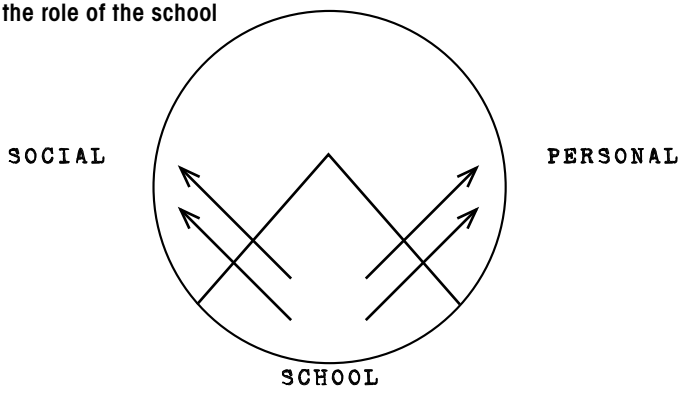
> *Too much was imposed top-down rather than involving communities themselves; too many initiatives were short-term; too many focused on one or two problems rather than tackling the cluster of related problems in the round.* (2001, p184)

For Mulgan, two of the key themes in the "emerging agenda" for learning are:

- Policies for knowledge go wider than formal education: diet, housing and poverty bear directly on cognitive development and educational performance
- Education and learning will increasingly take place beyond educational institutions (pp151–152).

If a fundamental distinction between school management and educational leadership is accepted, then a radical re-conceptualisation of the nature and purpose of such leadership is required. In essence, the shift is from institutional improvement to community transformation, ie the ways of describing effective leadership: leadership beyond the school, outward-facing leadership, systems leadership and leadership for sustainability.

Fig. 2. Rethinking the role of the school



It is very doubtful as to how much more capacity to improve there is in the school system. A football team does not improve its league position by setting its players to run faster or pass more balls. It has to score more goals; running and passing are necessary but not sufficient factors in winning matches.

Improving schools is a necessary but not sufficient component of educating a society. Figure 2 shows the nature and extent of the rethink. The school has to engage with both the wider society and with the individual learner on her or his terms. The focus on the individual learner is very much about the personalisation of learning, ie, designing the learning experience from the perspective of the learner rather than the curriculum manager or the teacher. Schools will not, and probably should not, seek to deal with issues such as poverty and social class — they are fundamental to national policy-making and social identity. However, schools have enormous potential to work with families and communities.

This raises the question of the nature of the relationship between schools and their communities. Mulford and Silins (2001) found that there was not a direct causal relationship between high community involvement and improving student outcomes:

> *On the basis of our results, and if a choice needs to be made between working with and being sensitive to the community and improving home educational environments, then the latter will have more direct and immediate "payoff" for student outcomes…* (p5)

The distinction between family and community is a valid one — the impact of the family is more direct, immediate and sustainable. However, the family is a classic manifestation of community; the status, significance and value attached to the family will often be a product of broader, community-based values. The resilience and potency of the family will be a function of generic factors, most significantly social capital. The following propositions (taken from the UK Audit Commission Report *More than the Sum*, 2007) point to a very clear causality linking community and educational outcomes:

> *Traditional school improvement activity has tended to concentrate on teaching and learning at individual school level. Critical though this is, by itself the approach is limited.*
>
> *Children's educational underachievement is linked with a wide range of deprivation factors: low parental qualifications, poor housing conditions, low family income, ill health, family problems and wider community factors such as low aspirations and unemployment.*
>
> *School improvement and renewal are inseparable issues from neighbourhood improvement and renewal, particularly in the most*

> *disadvantaged areas. While schools are profoundly affected by their neighbourhoods, they equally have a key role in promoting cohesion and building social capital.*

Social capital is a comparatively new concept in discussions about education. The concept itself is still contentious and emergent. Field defines it in the following terms:

> *The theory of social capital is, at heart, most straightforward. Its central thesis can be summed up in two words: relationships matter. … People connect through a series of networks and they tend to share common values with other members of these networks…* (2003, p1)

Furthermore:

> *… we can conclude with some confidence that there is a close relationship between people's social networks and their educational performance.* (p50)

For Putnam, there is an absolute link between levels of social capital and success in the education system:

> *States that score high on the Social Capital Index — that is, states whose residents trust other people, join organisations, volunteer, vote and socialise with friends — are the same states where children flourish. Statistically, the correlation between high social capital and positive child development is as close to perfect as social scientists ever find in data analysis of this sort.* (2000, pp296–297)

Social capital is essentially about networks, trust, engagement, communication, shared values, aspirations and interconnectedness. What is clear is that high social capital enhances academic success, personal wellbeing and social engagement. Therefore, one answer to academic under-achievement might not be just to strive to improve the efficiency of schools but rather to increase social capital across the community.

If educational success is a function of high social capital, then educational leadership has to make its development a high priority. The change required is from an emphasis on the school as an institution to the school as an agency:

> *Some forms of social capital are, by choice or necessity, inward looking and tend to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups… Other networks are outward looking and encompass people across diverse social cleavages.* (Putnam, 2000, p22)

School improvement leads to bonding, introspection and detachment. While this creates institutional integrity, it compromises engagement and networking — the basis of the creation of social capital and healthy communities.

Writing in 1915, John Dewey argued:

> *The role of the community in making the schools vital is just as important as the role of the school itself. For in a community where schools are looked upon as isolated institutions, as a necessary convention, the school will remain largely so in spite of the most skilful methods of teaching. But a community that demands something visible from its schools, that recognises the part they play in the welfare of the whole… such a community will have social schools, and whatever its resources, it will have schools that develop community spirit and interests.* (Skilbeck, 1970, p125)

"Social schools" is a very powerful image in this context, as is the notion of a school being "visible". Both reinforce the notion of schools being *of* their communities, not just *in* their communities.

These perspectives on education in the community have significant implications for our understanding of the nature of leadership. The focus has to shift from improving the school as an institution, measured by very limited criteria, to developing social capacity in the community — still measurable, but using very different criteria. It is reasonable to argue that the development of social capital would be a major factor in facilitating school improvement.

The management of an institution is specific, focused and controllable; leadership in the community is diffuse and complex. Educational leaders are very well placed to provide leadership in the community. Schools as institutions usually have very high social capital; educational leadership is fundamentally concerned with values and is essentially aspirational in nature. In many communities, schools represent the biggest single public investment and are their best-resourced organisations, yet many only function for 15 per cent of the year. Most importantly, there is a symbiotic link between schools and their communities — children. Schools need to be successful with their communities, not in spite of them.

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How School Leadership Influences Student Learning

KENNETH LEITHWOOD

SCHOOL LEADERS ARE capable of having significant positive effects on student learning and other important outcomes. Indeed, there is enough evidence to justify this claim that the focus of attention for many leadership researchers is moving on to questions about how those effects occur. Answers to these "how" questions are particularly relevant to school leaders exercising their craft in highly accountable policy contexts.

Because most of the effects of school leadership on students are indirect, answering these "how" questions means searching for the most powerful "mediators" of leadership influence on students. Mediators are the things leaders influence directly and which themselves have a direct effect on students.

However, the results of most studies to date aimed at identifying significant leadership mediators are too complex to act as ready guides to practice. So this paper describes a new conception — metaphorical in nature — of how leadership influences student learning. It is intended to be relatively comprehensive in its account of variables mediating leader effects, yet simple and compelling enough to provide practical guidance.

This new conception or model is premised on two assumptions: school leadership is about the exercise of influence; and the effects of such influence on student learning are mostly indirect. Building on these assumptions, the influence of successful school leaders is conceived as "flowing" along four distinct paths in order to reach students: these are the Rational, Emotional, Organisational and Family paths.

Each of these paths is populated by distinctly different sets of variables or conditions, having a more or less direct impact on students' experiences and learning. Such variables might include, for example, school culture, teachers' practices, teachers' emotional states or parents' attitudes. Selecting the most promising of these variables and improving their status are two of the three central challenges facing leaders intending to improve learning in their schools.

As the status of variables on each path improves through influences from leaders and other sources, the quality of students' school and classroom experiences are enriched, resulting in greater learning. Since exercising leadership influence along one path alone, or just one path at a time, has rarely resulted in demonstrable gains for students, alignment of leadership influence across paths is the third leadership challenge.

THE RATIONAL PATH

Variables on the rational path are rooted in the knowledge and skills of school staffs about curriculum, teaching and learning. In general, exercising a positive influence on these variables calls on school leaders' knowledge about the "technical core" of schooling, their problem solving capacities and their knowledge of relevant leadership practices.

The rational path includes both classroom and school-level variables. Since there is now a considerable amount of evidence available about the effects on student learning of many such variables, school leaders are able to prioritise for their attention those known to have the greatest chance of improving their students' learning.

In the classroom, Hattie's (2009) synthesis of evidence implies that school leaders carefully consider the value of focusing their efforts on improving, for example, the extent to which teachers are providing students with immediate and informative feedback, teachers' use of reciprocal teaching strategies, teacher-student relations, and the management of classrooms. Effects of these variables on student learning are among the highest reported for all classroom-level variables, whereas some variables currently the focus of considerable effort by school leaders have much less demonstrable impact (eg, individualised instruction).

THE EMOTIONAL PATH

The rational and emotional paths are much more tightly connected than many leaders believe. Considerable evidence indicates, for example, that emotions direct cognition: they structure perception, direct attention, give preferential access to certain memories, and bias judgment in ways that help individuals respond productively to their environments (Oatley, Keltner & Jenkins, 2006).

A recent review of more than 90 empirical studies of teacher emotions and their consequences for classroom practice and student learning (Leithwood, 2006; Leithwood & Beatty, 2007), unambiguously recommends leaders' attention to variables on the emotional path as a means of improving student learning. Exercising influence on variables located along the emotional path depends fundamentally on leaders' social appraisal skills or emotional intelligence.

Our recent review pointed to a large handful of teacher emotions with significant effects on teaching and learning. These included both individual and collective teacher efficacy, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, morale, stress/burnout, engagement in the school or profession, and teacher trust in colleagues, parents and students.

THE ORGANISATIONAL PATH

Structures, culture, policies, and standard operation procedures are the types of variables to be influenced on the organisational path. Collectively, they constitute teachers' working conditions which, in turn, have a powerful influence on teachers' emotions (Leithwood & Beatty, 2007). These variables constitute both the school's infrastructure and a large proportion of its collective memory.

Like the electrical, water and road systems making up the infrastructure of a neighbourhood, variables on the organisational path are often not given much thought until they malfunction. At minimum, a school's infrastructure should not prevent staff and students from making best use of their capacities. At best, school infrastructures should magnify those capacities and make it much easier to engage in productive rather than unproductive practices. Ensuring that variables on the organisational path are working for, rather than against, the school's improvement efforts is vital to a school's ability to sustain its gains. A new instructional practice, for example, will not be sustained if it requires unusual amounts of effort for an indefinite period of time.

Sustaining gains also depends on transforming individual into collective learning. Learning first occurs in a school at the level of the individual. The challenge for organisations attempting to get smarter is how to take collective advantage of what its individual members are learning. Modifying variables on the organisational path, to reflect what individual members learn, creates the potential for that learning to shape the behaviour of many others in the organisation. This is often how promising practices move beyond initial implementation by a few people to longer-term institutionalisation by many.

Hattie's (2009) synthesis of evidence identifies more than a dozen variables located on the organisational path. Some can be found in the classroom (eg, class size, ability groupings), some are school-wide (eg, school size, multi grade/age classes, retention policies); many are typically controlled by agencies outside the school (eg, school funding, summer school).

THE FAMILY PATH

It is often claimed that improving student learning is all about improving "instruction" (Nelson & Sassi, 2005). While improving instruction is both important and necessary work in many schools, this claim, by itself, ignores all of the powerful variables found on both the emotional and organisational paths described in two of the earlier sections of the chapter. Even more critically, this claim seems to dismiss factors accounting for as much as 50 per cent of the variation in student achievement across schools (eg, Kyriakides & Creemers, 2008). These are variables located on the family path. Since best estimates suggest that everything schools do within their walls accounts for about 20 per cent of the variation in students' achievement, influencing variables on the family path is a "high leverage" option for school leaders.

Treating as many variables as possible on the family path as alterable rather than given was considered to be the new work of leaders more than 15 years ago. By now, there is considerable evidence about what these variables might be. For example, Hattie's (2009) synthesis of evidence points to seven family-related variables with widely varying effect sizes. At least four of these variables are open to influence from the school including home environment, parent involvement in school, time spent watching television, and visits to the home by school personnel.

ALIGNMENT OF LEADERSHIP INFLUENCE ACROSS PATHS

While variables associated with each of the four paths are distinct, they also interact with variables on the other paths. Typically, failure to take such interaction into account severely limits school leaders' influence. This means, for example, that if a school leader decides to improve parent involvement in school (a variable on the family path), she will also need to consider what her teachers' feelings will be in response.

The leader will need to ensure that her teachers begin to feel, for example, efficacious about their role in working more closely with parents (a variable on the emotional path). Such nurturing of teacher efficacy may take the form of establishing a teacher work team with responsibility for planning how to improve working relations with parents (the organisational path). Participation on such a work team will provide teachers with opportunities to design strategies for improving interactions with parents which they consider to be realistic. It may also provide them with the chance to think through their parents' reactions to this initiative and how best to build parent support for it.

The need for alignment across paths initially seems to hugely complicate leaders' work. But, as our parent engagement example illustrates, picking only one or two powerful variables on a path, and planning for the most likely interactions makes the leadership task much more manageable. This way of thinking about the leadership task, however, does add weight to the argument that leaders' success will typically depends on devoting one's attention to a small number for priorities.

CONCLUSION

This conception of how leaders influence student learning expands the types of evidence to be used in leaders' school improvement decisions beyond evidence about student achievement alone. While evidence of such achievement is an essential starting point for school improvement, it actually has almost nothing to say about what to do about those areas of achievement in need of the school's attention. This new conception encourages leaders to expand the evidence they use to those increasingly robust bodies of evidence about variables that improve student learning.

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Principals and Black Lagoons:

Reflections from England on headteachers and power

PAT THOMSON

I COLLECT CHILDREN'S books about schools. I'm particularly interested in those which feature school principals. It's because I've not only long been fascinated by the way that people see the principal's job, but also how the view from outside often differs from how it seems on the inside. (Arguably, having been out of a school for 14 years, I'm as much of an outsider as everyone else, but I like to think that I can still summon up my inner principal when I want to.)

I've just picked up another school story from a second-hand bookshop. It caught my eye because the front cover features an office door with a small and obviously scared little boy hovering outside. The door bears the single word: "Principal".

The book, *The Principal from the Black Lagoon* (Thaler & Lee, 1993), described on its back cover blurb as a "silly story", features Hubie, who is sent to the principal's office on his third day at school for accidentally knocking off his teacher's wig while sweeping the floor. So it clearly is a silly story!

The narrative revolves around Hubie's nonsensical fears about what the principal does to children who are sent to see her.

I hear the principal, Mrs Green, is a real monster.

Kids go to her office and never come back. The waiting room is supposed to be filled with bones and skeletons.

Doris Foodle was sent there for chewing gum. They say her skeleton still has a bubble in its mouth.

I walk in. I take a seat. The rug is red. That's so the blood won't show.

After running through a litany of possible tortures, Hubie finds the reality is somewhat different from the imagined event, although this takes a while to sink in.

The door slowly opens.

There's a pretty woman standing there. She's a master of disguise.

Mrs Green suggests that Hubie apologise to his teacher, and sends him on his way. However as the child-hero leaves the office, he returns to his narrative of fear — *I was sent into her cave and I have returned without the ears of a rabbit* — but this time Hubie is drawn with a knowing smile on his face rather than an anxious expression. We readers understand that he too will now perpetuate scary stories about what happens in the principal's office.

The book's narrative relies on the child reader's understanding that the principal is someone to be afraid of. This is because of the power that the principal has. Many children's books take up variations on this theme, showing the power inherent in the position not the person. Some principal characters always remain remote authority figures represented as office doors and barking PA systems. Others abuse their power and then get their come-uppance, or are somewhat inept and need children to help them do their job properly. A minority, like Mrs Green, is shown to exercise their power ethically and fairly.

I find these books interesting. Most readers recognise the account of power from the standpoint of children. However, from the standpoint of most serving principals today, the reality is a power paradox. Principals are able to exercise considerable power through the autonomy that a devolved education system allows. But they also experience a loss of power in the face of increasingly tightly framed, centralised accountability systems. This power paradox is particularly acute in England, where strong educational accountability systems, marketisation and privatisation have arguably gone further than in most other jurisdictions. The power paradox can make the job feel like the best and the worst in the world all at the same time.

I want to spend a little time exploring this paradoxical situation.

DEVOLUTION AND SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT

Australia moved relatively early to embrace the *idea* of "devolution", defined by (possibly its most prolific) advocates as "significant and consistent delegation to the school level authority to make decisions related to the allocation of resources (knowledge, technology, power, material, people, time and finance)" (Caldwell & Spinks, 1988, p *vii*).

Caldwell and Spinks, key proponents of devolution, have argued that school-based management provided the basis for a new professionalism and new forms of educational innovation (curriculum and school restructure) that would offer children and young people an education fit for the future (see also Beare & Slaughter, 1993).

Similar arguments were made in other places, albeit with local variations. Australia's immediate neighbour, New Zealand, energetically implemented a funder-purchaser-provider model, complete with purchase agreements and local charters (Thrupp, 1999; Wylie, 1999). The 1988 Education Act in the UK saw English schools move to self-managing status, while some school districts in the US began to experiment with forms of devolution at about the same time.

As the English school system was de- and re-centralised, devolution reforms reworked roles and accountabilities. Much curriculum decision-making was removed from the headteacher's purview and school inspection was introduced at the same time that school budgets, including responsibility for staffing and buildings, were devolved.

In the 1990s, Tony Blair's "education, education, education" New Labour Government continued on this Thatcherite track, tightening up even further on measures of "performance". English heads gained new freedoms and authorities to act within their schools, but there were also very significant down-sides (which I explain in the next section). Moves to local school management were met by opposition, critiques and debates (Smyth, 1993). The argument in each case, despite national and local variations, was that devolution would residualise some schools, meaning that in reality the state was wilfully withdrawing from its historical responsibility to ensure that a quality education was an entitlement for all citizens.

English heads, while ruing the paperwork and the redirection away from direct contact with classrooms in any significant way other than through performance management, were and remain generally enthusiastic about local management. It allows them to recruit and appoint staff who "fit" the school and its particular population and mission. They can undertake, with the consent of their governing bodies, locally developed initiatives for which they do not have to ask permission. They can have ambitious plans that are achievable over time. They can make important strategic alliances with other schools, organisations and agencies.

It's not all rampant competition either. New policies promoting federated activities have also seen the development of significant cooperative ventures across school sites and towns where all of the schools work together in the greater public interest. English heads can, if they are in the right place at the right time, take advantage of a plethora of improvement initiatives and funding streams in order to undertake important educational development work. Indeed, the sheer quantum of funding for new

school buildings, and professional development for leaders and teachers to upgrade their qualification to Masters level, are developments which make England the envy of many. I regularly go into schools that are involved in the Creative Partnerships initiative, a program which funds, at a level unprecedented anywhere else in the world, creative practitioners to work with teachers (see **www.creative-partnerships.com**) and which allows heads to offer a rich array of experiences to teachers and students alike.

Despite the bad press given to the English system, it is possible, as elsewhere, to find English schools that are redesigning learning spaces, building new approaches to the use of multimedia, engaged in important urban regeneration activities, opening schools to their communities, developing innovative pedagogies, exploring the ways in which children, young people and families can have a voice in school improvement, and working hard for social justice. These are the kinds of activities that the proponents of devolution said would be possible, and which some English heads in the right locations, and with the right staff and support, are able to initiate. These heads do feel empowered by their ability to determine the use of resources.

However, in the vast majority of localities, the capacity for English heads to make decisions is strongly framed and constrained.

ACCOUNTABILITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

English schools are subject to a policy regime that can be distinguished from its historical antecedents by a very particular quality assurance and audit-driven approach to reform. The Labour Government is driven by the view that in a "knowledge society" both the economy and a civic/civil society need a population better educated than at any other time in history. This has been translated into a policy mantra of "raising the bar and closing the gap" (Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF), 2006), whereby the point of education policy is to ensure that both the average educational level of all young people is raised, and the discrepancies in performance between social class, gender and ethnic groupings are reduced. The hope of policy-makers is that mandated interventions will ensure that the learning of those "at the bottom" of measures of attainment will be substantively and more rapidly changed than those at the top of the scale.

The bar-gap policy discourse requires student attainment to be made explicit and amenable and open to scrutiny via:

- *Standards* — measures in the form of tests, profiles, examination results, attendance and retention data based on the *standardisation* of knowledge achieved through a common curriculum with uniform elements of content, timing and lesson structure
- *Audit* — where those designated with the responsibility for local organisations and decisions about them are deemed responsible for the quality of outputs. They must demonstrate that they are making a difference to outputs, and inspections, the continuous production of data available for public scrutiny, and ranked tables are used to ensure that this happens.

The English system is also often characterised (see Ball, 2008) as being governed by:

- *Performativity* — that is, it is a system where everyone is required to show that they continuously act in ways that will produce the designated outcomes and in which the need to perform frames all activities
- *Marketisation* — in which the publication of aggregated achievement data in league tables stimulates residential and school enrolment choice, and further rewards or punishes those who are deemed successful or not
- *Privatisation* — the whole-scale contracting out of many government services. This has created opportunities for a minority of entrepreneurial headteachers, but has also changed the ways in which budgets are managed at the local level, and services provided (Ball, 2007).

English policy-makers have opted for a strong reward and punishment regime, which allows those who are deemed successful more flexibility and autonomy, while those who are judged to be less successful, or at risk of failing to improve quickly enough, are subject to intense scrutiny and tighter control/less autonomy and responsibility. Many heads in the schools that serve the most economically disadvantaged communities find themselves struggling within this system.

Many argue that there are more sticks than carrots in the English system. The trend to "name and shame" and summarily dismiss allegedly "failing" headteachers arouses considerable professional anguish, deters many from applying for any position that appears to be high-risk, and has led to much criticism of the "off-with-their-heads" approach (Hargreaves, 2004; Thomson, 2009).

Change pundit Michael Fullan (2009) is now very public in saying that systemic change is not achieved through such an approach. He advocates the provision of incentives, collective capacity-building and the development of trusting relationships between layers and sectors of the education system. Only then, he says, is it possible to intervene strongly in any sites where "under-performance" still remains.

This combination of devolved autonomy and centralised high-stakes accountability creates a veritable swamp in which many English heads feel themselves to be marooned.

On the one hand, heads appear to have a lot of autonomy and the capacity to generate fresh ideas and new practices. On the other, they can only do this if they meet tightly defined, centrally prescribed standards, some of which are in significant tension, if not outright contradiction, with the kinds of changes that they would like to implement.

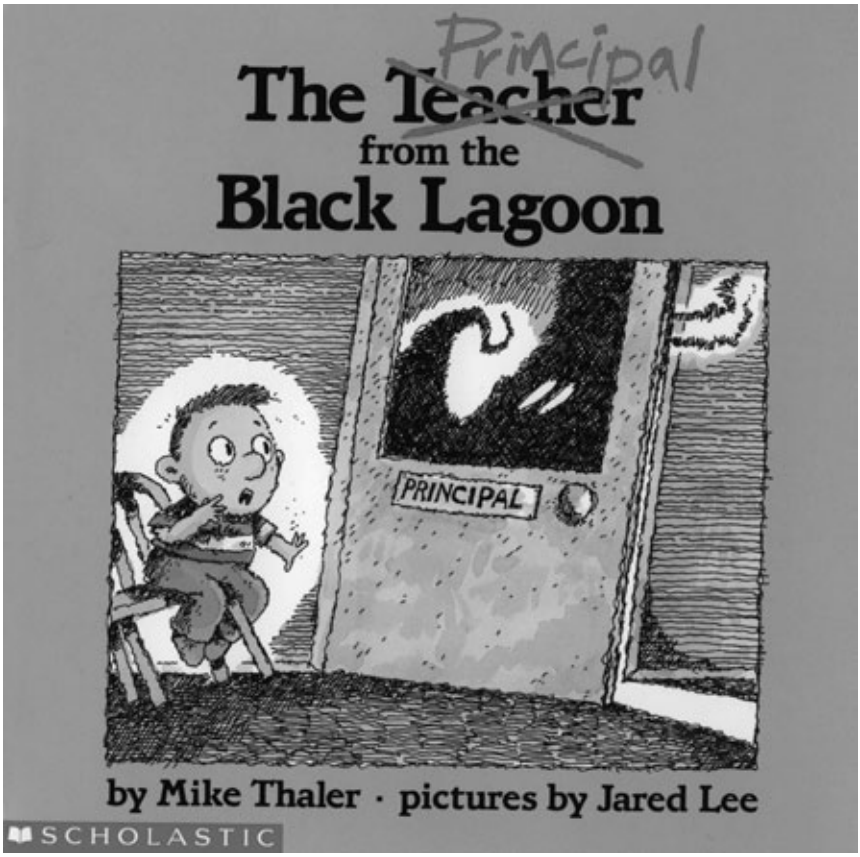
Many of the headteachers of Creative Partnerships schools, for example, talk openly about the problems of developing creative pedagogies while also teaching to the test (Thomson & Sanders, 2009); of giving teachers permission to take risks at the same time as using reductive performance management systems required by the inspection system; and of inviting students to be partners in curriculum reform at the same time as having to use culturally exclusive texts and approaches (Thomson, Jones & Hall, 2009). The power to do right for students, their families and communities, which English heads recognise and value, comes for very many at the same time as a serious lack of power to influence, lead and manage those areas

on which much change and improvement depends — curriculum and assessment, shared decision making and school organisation.

This power/lack of power is indeed a paradox.

THE POWER PARADOX AND THE BLACK LAGOON

To return to the children's book with which I began this article, my inner principal notes that the illustration on the front cover is highly prescient.



Above the single word "Principal" on the door is a glass window. All that can be seen through the glass is a black wave out of which appear two round eyes. The Black Lagoon is inside the principal's office! Perhaps the lagoon is a representation of the paradox of power. Perhaps the eyes are really a way of saying and showing that many principals feel up to their eyeballs in the work of managing the paradox of power. And perhaps it is no accident that the notion of the lagoon and the big wave summons up the image of the principal keeping on swimming, rather than going under and drowning.

Pre-retirement Leaders – an Opportunity Lost?

BILL MULFORD

AUSTRALIA, LIKE OTHER western countries, is facing the imminent retirement of a large proportion of principals and other school leaders from the post-war "baby boomer" generation. There is evidence of the reluctance of experienced teachers to apply for leadership positions and a reduced (due to low population growth) cohort of teachers from which to select future leaders. These factors represent a major challenge in identifying and developing the next generation of school leaders.

To further complicate the issue, in some states, due to the particular incentives built into superannuation schemes and difficulties in transferring the schemes from one state to another, there are financial incentives for school leaders to retire at around 55 years of age, further reducing the cohort of available candidates for principalships (Anderson et al, 2007).

Aspirations to principalship are not high and are diminishing. For example, in Lacey's (2003) survey of over 1,300 Victorian government teachers and principals, only 12 per cent of respondents aspired to be principals and a further 12 per cent aspired to be assistant principals. Explanations for the recruitment difficulties included principal continuing incumbency, perceptions of the arduousness of appointment and selection process, and perceptions of principal intensification of work, accountabilities, stress and disengagement from their school. Work intensification relates specifically

to such factors as devolved school management and standards-based accountability frameworks.

School leadership, like teaching, can be "greedy" work (Gronn, 2003). There is rarely a time when leaders feel their work is finished.

> *Alongside the never-endingness of their tasks goes the fact that the work also involves emotional labour. The work is highly interpersonal, requiring empathy and sensitivity towards others. [Principals] report that staffing issues and dealing with individuals figure large … dealing with negative members of staff came high on [principals'] list of least rewarding factors. Senior leaders' work is often concerned with caring for and protecting vulnerable children and young people.* (NCSL, 2007, p10)

Boris-Schacter found principals' lives in the United States of America were a balancing act in which they perpetually weighed the relative importance of three pairs of tensions:

- Instruction and management
- Work and personal lives
- Society/community expectations and individual priorities.

The Australian teacher cohort currently in its early 40s is very small numerically, due to the low recruitment of the 1990s. As the generation of prospective principals, the members of this "younger" cohort will become precious, but will have good prospects of becoming educational leaders. On the other hand, their elevation to the principalship means they will be in the role for an extended period of time which could be a considerable burden to have them carry. The time it takes to become a principal is now too long for the "bulge" in the teacher population to be ready to take up the vacancies anticipated in coming years (NCSL, 2007). This situation calls for urgent attention to be paid to school leadership succession planning. It may be that there needs to be more fast-tracking of those with leadership potential. This will require early identification of talent, with mentoring and coaching of these individuals; providing them with many more opportunities to lead — in their own and other schools — to broaden their knowledge of school contexts and types and to increase the number of principal role models they can draw on (NCSL, 2007).

Succession planning is not simply a quantitative issue. It is vital that education systems ensure there is a supply and flow of high-quality candidates for school leadership positions. Attending to quality also means tracking over time so that there is the right mix of leaders (for example, based on gender and ethnicity) and that the recruitment and appointment procedures improve.

Succession planning also means being aware of the career planning challenges created by the appointment of a large proportion of young school leaders who, if current career structures were to be retained, would be likely to be in leadership for a very long time. It may be that the evolving shared and rotating leadership models need to be examined sooner rather than later.

While nationally there needs to be a campaign to "talk up" principalship (the

overwhelming majority of principals are very positive about their work), there is also a local dimension to be recognised. The UK's National College for School Leadership has found (NCSL, 2007) that this national challenge will be best dealt with by local solutions developed by groups of schools taking responsibility for developing their talent pools and career paths. These local solutions could include maximising the benefits of using principals who are close to retirement in a range of different supporting roles.

Watson (2007) has explored the dimensions of the crisis in school leadership in Australia and concludes that it is an indicative rather than a definitive shortage and that the level of interest in the job varies between schools, especially for rural schools and schools with lower levels of student achievement.

Continuing quantitative research from the Successful School Principals' Project (SSPP), including surveys of Tasmanian government school principals and their teachers (Ewington et al, in press; Mulford, 2007; Mulford et al, in press a, b, c), confirms other state and national cohort demographic trends which indicate the large proportion of principals in the later stages of their career, with 18 per cent aged 55 years or over and another 30 per cent being aged 50 to 54 years. Also consistent with the national data is the high proportion (73 per cent) of pre-retirement principals who are male and the small cohort (17 per cent of all teachers) from which the next generation of principals are likely be chosen.

Figures concerning pre-retirement principals can be seen as a threat or an opportunity. The numbers serve to underline the need for much greater attention to be paid to the growing and future shortages of principals and their replacements. This is a significant opportunity for education systems to consider the skills, accountability frameworks and support structures necessary for school leadership in the future. One aspect of this shortage, but one not well developed in the research literature or in policy, centres on the pre-retirement principals themselves. Who are they? Do they continue to make a positive contribution to their schools? How can they best be used in the final years of their career?

The continuing SSPP research makes a start at responding to such questions. Results (Mulford et al, in press a) confirm that pre-retirement principals feel ambiguity, conflict and stress in the role more acutely than other principals. For example, it was found that the pre-retirement principals were more likely to feel the tensions when compared to other principals in relation to the perceived lack of support from their employer when making changes in their work. Despite these tensions and dilemmas, and consistent with the Queensland findings from Cranston and Ehrich (2002) and the Victorian Department of Education and Training (2004), most principals have "never" considered resigning.

The continuing SSPP study (Mulford et al, in press b) results also suggest that pre-retirement principals, when compared with other principals, are less likely to:

- Believe they make a difference
- Act as a role model
- Facilitate communication

- Have high expectations
- Be self-reflective.

Given the more positive results detailed below by Mulford et al (in press c), the reasons for these findings are difficult to explain. It may be that the outcomes of previous research, which suggest pre-retirement principals are more likely than other principals to be confident, mature, calm, and "wise" and that they are less likely to be bound by constraints, result from a more modest or realistic appraisal of their effects on others and their schools.

Some support for this explanation can be found in the smaller differences between principal and teacher mean scores for pre-retirement principals when compared to other principals on items having to do with "making a difference", "acting as a role model", "high expectations" and "being self-reflective".

Further support for this "non-self-promoting" explanation can be found in the open-ended part of the principal survey where principals were asked to respond to the item "What conditions do you know about in your school that you do not talk about but if you did might lead to school improvement?" As the following two representative replies indicate, the pre-retirement principals were very open and honest about what was occurring in their schools:

> *I do not know of anything that might lead to school improvement that I would not share with my staff and parent community.*
>
> *I would talk about any issue that I thought would lead to school improvement.*
>
> (Mulford et al, in press a)

Another possible explanation for the findings that pre-retirement principals scored lower than other principals on items to do with initiating action (make a difference, role model, facilitate communication) is that the pre-retirement principals may be more likely than other principals to realise that success involves the whole staff not just the principal (that is, they responded with "we" rather than "I"). This position is congruent with the finding, reported below, that pre-retirement principals are more likely to distribute leadership than other principals.

Further, the continuing SSPP analysis (Mulford et al, in press b) suggests that pre-retirement principals, when compared with other principals, are no different in terms of their:

- Willingness to change
- Promoting the school and initiating new projects
- Being committed, passionate, determined, courageous, optimistic
- Being collaborative and empowering
- Adoption of evaluation and accountability strategies.

These results contradict findings from other research (Macmillan, 1998) which indicated that pre-retirement principals, when compared to other principals, are more

likely to be rigid and autocratic, disenchanted with and withdrawn from work, and "tired and trapped". This research suggests the stereotype is no more than that.

Finally, the ongoing SSPP findings (Mulford et al, in press b) suggest that pre-retirement principals, when compared with other principals, are more likely to:

- Distribute leadership
- Not feel the tension between the need to be present at school and to participate outside the school
- Believe students are both in a safe environment at school and are more able to solve conflicts through negotiation.

These findings confirm other research indicating that pre-retirement principals, when compared to other principals, are more likely to have a strong work ethic, to consult widely and to have a strong social consciousness.

Taken together, the Mulford et al (in press a) results confirm that the pre-retirement principals continue to be a committed and valuable resource. Given this finding, it may be that more needs to be done for (and with) principals, in terms of the planning of their career paths, not just at the time of transition to retirement. Is it wise career planning that once appointed to a principalship a person will always be a principal? The traditional and hierarchical approach to educational careers may need to be challenged, with people more able to move in and out of positions at the classroom, school and system levels (Brooker & Mulford, 1989). Shared principalships, possibly combined with mentoring roles would appear to be obvious concepts to be explored by schools and systems (NCSL, 2006e).

The current focus in the UK on system leadership provides another example of being able to move in and out of schools. System leadership focuses on the school principal working in full service schools in areas such as childcare, parenting support and other services (for example, speech therapy, mental health services), in federations or clusters of schools and/or outside the traditional school networking with a range of other agencies and institutions (NCSL, 2006a, b, c, & d; PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2007). But it is too soon to know whether these developments can provide no more than just another higher position in the traditional career hierarchy or whether they will be taken up as a real opportunity for career flexibility by existing and potential principals.

At a time of a large and increasing proportion of principals in late career, it would make for more sensible human resource practice, both for the principals themselves and for their education systems, to give greater research and policy attention to the issue. The "work to 55, dead at 60" belief among some principals needs to be challenged. Superannuation schemes need to be restructured and made more cooperative so that flexible career options can be put in place. With education systems undergoing major and continuing change, while at the same time suffering potential shortages of effective school leaders, it is time to re-examine educational career structures, especially for those principals approaching retirement.

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Crafting a Vision for Leadership in Early Childhood

MAX GRAROCK

WE FACE A time of near unprecedented upheaval in early childhood education. A confluence of research pointing to the importance of the early years has gained government attention and those things that practitioners "knew" for decades have finally been acknowledged and backed up by policy action. Making sure the flurry of activity delivers outcomes consistent with this research requires us, as early childhood teachers, to show strong educational leadership. In short, leadership at a service, community and professional level are all required in order to make sure the upheaval produces the best services for children, families and the community.

However, leadership in early childhood is a difficult issue. In many ways it involves a break with the way things have been done in the past, has a relatively shallow research base, and the structure of early childhood workplaces sometimes leaves teachers without formal leadership authority. If we are to grasp this opportunity, early childhood teachers need to overcome these barriers and put ourselves out there to become the leaders we are increasingly being asked to be.

Cahir (2007) sums up the reasons for the policy attention directed to early childhood. She identifies the two major strands of research showing the importance of the early years. Firstly, neuroscience has uncovered just how malleable the brain is in the early years of life and how high quality early childhood environments have a positive

impact on the way the brain develops. Importantly, intervention any later than the early years has been shown to be more difficult, more costly and less effective (p3).

The second major argument comes from the field of economics. Cahir explains that economic evidence shows that high quality early childhood environments increase the likelihood of successful school experiences. They also have a positive impact on later health and employment opportunities. They decrease negative social phenomenon by lessening an individual's likelihood of social security usage or involvement with the criminal justice system (p4).

Crucially, these benefits are seen only in "high quality" programs. Research has clearly shown that the most important aspects of "high quality" early childhood education take place in the interaction between teacher and child and the environment, both physical and social, that the teacher crafts. However, as the expert advisory panel on Quality Early Childhood Education and Care noted in 2009, these things are "difficult to define and regulate" (p22). Therefore educational research (the third of our research domains highlighting the importance of the early years) has concentrated on what secondary factors help create "high quality" programs.

Here the expert advisory panel points to an "iron triangle" of well-qualified staff, low staff-to-child ratios and small group sizes. It is important that these facts don't get lost in the reform maze of national frameworks, streamlined accreditation, teacher registration and regulatory overhaul. Simply, if a reform directly or indirectly lessens the conditions of the "iron triangle", it is a reform that needs to be called into question.

So, in one sense, early childhood teachers need to show leadership by standing up and saying at a local level, "The structure of this program needs to be changed"; at a state level, "Child:staff ratios in this state do not support quality programs"; at a national level, "The evidence is clear: quality programs matter for children now and in the future"; and crucially, at a professional level, "Qualifications in early childhood matter". Our leadership as advocates for change where it matters and defenders of the "iron triangle" is crucial to seeing this period deliver real and lasting quality reform.

Whilst mentioned almost incidentally in the "iron triangle", another factor that research has consistently shown to be a major driver in quality provision of early childhood programs is the qualification of the leader or manager of the service. The Effective Provision of Preschool Education project found evidence of manager qualification impacting upon the quality of a whole service (Sammons et al 2002). They noted that "centre managers' qualifications are significantly associated with the observed quality profiles of centres" and that "centres where managers reported they had Level 5 qualification (eg, trained teachers) exhibited higher quality" (p. viii).

Although qualified early childhood teachers working in sessional, stand-alone kindergartens would exercise much of the leadership of the service (and almost certainly pedagogical leadership), the same cannot always be said for the growing number of qualified (often graduate) teachers being engaged in long-daycare settings. Only by showing effective leadership in mentoring these teachers through their difficult first years can more experienced early childhood teachers support them in taking the leadership role required to improve quality within their settings.

With so many different qualifications and roles in the early childhood workforce, why is it so important that teachers take up the mantle of leadership? Cahir explains it best:

> *Early childhood pedagogical leadership is what sets a service apart in terms of outcomes for children. The evidence is in on this.*
>
> *You cannot provide clear and informed leadership in any environment if you do not understand what needs to be done and why…*
>
> *Leadership here means clarity of focus, a deep understanding (of) what is being done, a capacity to deliver professional leadership and provide intentional and informed support to practitioners across an organisation.* (p5)

I don't for a minute believe viewing ourselves, and being viewed by others, as leaders is something that is going to happen quickly or easily. There is a range of factors standing in the way of this change.

Firstly, leadership can be a difficult topic in early childhood settings. Hard (2006) identifies an expectation among staff that early childhood workplaces be characterised by non-hierarchical structures, and that "a discourse of niceness" (pp 44–45) provides strong road bocks to the provision of effective leadership. Perhaps even more alarmingly, she identifies a pattern of "horizontal violence" (a term borrowed from nursing literature suggesting, among other things, the application of negative social pressures) used against those who attempt to break free of these limitations.

Whilst this is a huge issue to overcome, I strongly believe the first step to overcoming it is to acknowledge the existence of "the discourse of niceness" and "horizontal violence". By bringing out into the open and giving names to two potentially debilitating characteristics, we are better able to identify and dismiss them.

The other major issue for early childhood leadership is a lack of serious research on the topic. Although there are a number of specialised texts on the topic of early childhood leadership, these often concentrate on identifying the issues and attempting to reconcile them with standard early childhood theories around inclusive practice, parent engagement and working respectfully with colleagues.

There is a noted lack of quality research into leadership in early childhood education. Muijs et al (2004) put it this way:

> *…Research on leadership in the early years sector is limited and dominated by a relatively small number of researchers. … Much of the literature on leadership in the early childhood field is anecdotal, and in some cases does not transcend the "tips for leaders" style. This finding is all the more remarkable given the extensive research literature on leadership that exists in the school sector.* (p 158)

Muijs et al end their summary of the research literature in early childhood leadership with an acknowledgement that, while there is a need for specific research and training in early childhood leadership, there is also a lot that can be imported from mainstream education leadership theory. Specifically they point to "distributed leadership" — the concept of empowering other teachers/staff to make decisions or hold responsibility for specific areas of the organisation (p167).

To that I'd like to add the related notion of teacher leadership (argued particularly strongly by Crowther et al 2002), and also encourage an understanding that notions of community and parent engagement, as well as that of political activism, are shared in both streams of leadership theory.

Early childhood leadership at this time is crucial. Crucial to ensure the huge reform agenda at all levels of government delivers what research has shown it can deliver for children and families; crucial to ensure the professional recognition of early childhood teachers and their important role in supporting quality practice, extended into long-day-care settings; and crucial in ensuring those elements that support quality practice are not compromised.

Finally, I notice with a great deal of hope that the Victorian Government's Bastow Institute for Educational Leadership has began advertising two early childhood leadership development programs on their website (DEECD 2009). The recognition from the department that leadership at this level of education is just as important as the leadership offered in schools is a welcome advance and one that deserves applause.

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The Critical Importance of Teacher Leadership in Successful School Capacity-Building: New insights

FRANK CROWTHER

WHILE THE CONSTRUCT of "distributed leadership" is now widely accepted as fundamental to school success, the nature of the principal–teacher leader relationship in processes of school improvement remains relatively unexplored. Recent research in Victorian IDEAS Project schools[1], however, has gone some way to redressing this situation. The outcomes of the research in question provide the basis for this paper.

THE IDEAS PROJECT FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL REVITALISATION

The 22 schools that completed the IDEAS Project in Victoria in 2004–07 comprised 17 schools that were part of the Victorian "Targeted Schools Improvement" initiative — meaning that they had been assessed by system authorities as "at risk" — and five schools that opted to engage in the project for a variety of other reasons.

During the three to four years of formal implementation of IDEAS, the 22 schools experienced the five distinctive components of IDEAS, working closely with materials, advice and problem-solving strategies provided through the IDEAS Project consultancy team.

The five distinctive IDEAS components are:

COMPONENT 1: THE IDEAS PROCESS

Resources and consultative support for the five IDEAS school development stages of:

- *Initiating (stage 1)* — Establishment of project management procedures, including IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT) and facilitator roles (Year 1)
- *Discovering (stage 2)* — Identification of most successful/least successful practices and the level of internal school alignment (Year 1)
- *Envisioning (stage 3)* — Creation of a futuristic school vision and school-wide pedagogical framework (SWP) (Year 2)
- *Actioning (stage 4)* — Implementation of the SWP in classrooms and school-wide evaluation of short-term classroom effects (Years 2–3)
- *Sustaining (stage 5)* — Implementation of leadership and professional learning strategies to sustain priority outcomes and improvements and ascertain long-term effects (Years 3–4).

COMPONENT 2: THE IDEAS PROTOCOLS OF PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

The five protocols are reiterated throughout the IDEAS process, ie:

- No blame
- Teachers are the key
- Professional learning is the key to professional revitalisation
- Success breeds success
- Alignment of school processes is a collective school responsibility.

COMPONENT 3: ORGANISATIONAL ALIGNMENT

The five organisational elements of a successful educational organisation — strategic foundations, cohesive communities, school-wide pedagogy, infrastructural designs and professional learning — are assessed through a diagnostic inventory (in Stage 1 of the process) and subsequently developed and brought into philosophical and practical alignment (Stages 2, 3 and 4).

COMPONENT 4: DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

The IDEAS Project asserts the educational integrity of the constructs of parallel leadership and teacher leadership in enhancing school success:

- Parallel leadership is a process whereby teacher leaders and their principals engage in collective action for purposes of schoolwide development and revitalisation to enhance the school's capacity. Parallel leadership is underpinned by three values: mutual respect; a sense of shared purpose; and allowance for individual expression.
- Teacher leadership is essential to the creation of sustained success in schools. It comprises six elements: convictions about a better world; facilitating communities of learning; striving for pedagogical excellence; confronting

barriers to students' wellbeing; managing school-wide projects; nurturing a culture of success.

Each IDEAS Project school establishes an IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT), comprising volunteer teachers and the principal, to manage the project in conjunction with the external IDEAS consultancy team. The ISMT is encouraged to accept the principles of parallel leadership and teacher leadership and is assisted to operationalise them, particularly in the work of school-based IDEAS facilitators.

COMPONENT 5: THREE-DIMENSIONAL PEDAGOGY

Pedagogy in the IDEAS Project is defined as encompassing three dimensions: a personal dimension (PP), a school-wide dimension (SWP), and an authoritative dimension. In the IDEAS Project, teacher leaders are encouraged to become 3-D professionals.

THE RESEARCH PROJECT, PHASE 1: THE FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL CAPACITY-BUILDING

In 2008, a systematic evaluation of achievements in the 22 Victorian IDEAS Project schools was undertaken by a national research team[2].

Three schools were found to have abandoned IDEAS as a result of a principal's decision. In the remaining 19 schools, improvements in State School Opinion Survey (SOS) and Student Attitudes to School (SAS) were found to be (a) statistically significant across the 2004–07 timeframe; and (b) superior to improvements for Victorian primary and secondary school generally across the 2004–07 timeframe.

Five schools were then identified for in-depth case study analysis. In addition to the 2004–07 SOS and SAS attitudinal improvements, the five schools were found to have sustained the relevant improvements in 2008, to have achieved specific improvements relating to pedagogical practices and student engagement, and to have taken steps to "embed" proven pedagogical strategies and student achievement gains.

Based on documented evidence of the educational successes of the five schools, the researchers concluded that each had enhanced its "educational capacity". The following definition resulted:

> *Capacity-building is a generative school development process that inspires the creation of a vibrant professional learning community and facilitates the sustainability of enhanced school outcomes.*

A six-dynamic framework for successful school capacity-building emerged from the Victorian aspect of the research. The six dynamics are defined as follows:

- **Committing to school-wide revitalisation** involves a dedicated effort, both intellectually and emotionally, to a process of school improvement that will enable the school to examine its effectiveness and create appropriate strategies to facilitate the achievement of priority goals.

- **Searching for school-wide coherence** involves philosophical and operational alignment of the school's five organisational elements.
- **Exploring lofty aspirations** involves creating a projection of the future that is grounded in a sense of confidence and hope. This projection manifests in two forms — as a vision statement that directs processes of strategic planning; and as a school-wide pedagogical framework that engenders passion and collaboration in the work of the school's professional learning community.
- **Pedagogical deepening** involves school-wide implementation of agreed pedagogical principles; professional sharing of associated classroom experiences; and refinement of the school's pedagogical principles in order to enhance the ongoing effectiveness of teachers' work.
- **Sharing and refining new knowledge** involves critique and dissemination of the school's pedagogical developments through internal and external networks.
- **Embedding success** involves setting in place leadership strategies and professional learning processes to ensure that, with changes in teaching and administration staff, the school's professional learning community can continue to enrich what has been developed.

It was concluded from the IDEAS Project Phase 1 research that, when all six dynamics are in evidence as part of a process of school development, the school has the potential to achieve and sustain enhanced capacity.

PHASE 2: LEADERSHIP FOR SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL CAPACITY-BUILDING

A second research phase, focusing on school-based leadership practices in building the six capacity-building dynamics, was then undertaken by the research team (May–October 2009). In this phase, 13 schools where the IDEAS Project was known to have been implemented very successfully were identified for investigation in terms of their leadership processes.

Four guiding questions were employed by the research team in their inquiries at each school:

- What is the evidence of enhanced school success in conjunction with implementation of the IDEAS Project?
- What were the key events in achieving each of Dynamics 1–6?
- Who did what that mattered in achieving each of Dynamics 1–6?
- What extraneous factors, if any, influenced the development of each of Dynamics 1–6?

The Phase 2 research provided a comprehensive database of leadership practices associated with the six capacity-building dynamics. The following insights were deduced by the research team.

LEADERSHIP FOR DYNAMIC 1 – COMMITTING:

The principal was the key leader in all 13 case study schools in relation to the Committing Dynamic. Principals' motivation in committing to IDEAS was characterised

by (a) a serious concern for concerted school development; (b) an interest in schoolwide leadership constructs associated with IDEAS, ie teacher leadership, parallel leadership; (c) strong support for one or more IDEAS educational construct, eg schoolwide pedagogy, protocols of professional engagement, organisational alignment.

LEADERSHIP FOR DYNAMIC 2 - COHERENCE:
IDEAS Project schools were not for the most part required to demonstrate leadership-related initiative regarding the Coherence Dynamic because accomplishment of the dynamic involved technical implementation of resources (survey instruments, analytical tools and spreadsheets) made available to schools by the IDEAS consultancy team.

This point notwithstanding, the ISMT was the key managerial agency in undertaking Coherence activities, in association with the IDEAS Project consultancy team, and in some schools, future teacher leaders began at this time to assume school-wide facilitation responsibilities.

LEADERSHIP FOR DYNAMIC 3 - ASPIRING:
Comprehensive initiatives to develop school visions and school-wide pedagogical frameworks were undertaken, frequently encompassing two to three semesters of professional development work. Principals were upfront in 12 of the 13 schools in visioning activities, as can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Observed leader behaviours for visioning activities	
Principal-directed	1
Principal–directed with teacher leader involvement	4
Principal-directed with ISMT involvement	7
Teacher leader-directed with ISMT involvement	1

Leadership of schoolwide pedagogical development activities was different, centring on teacher leaders in 12 of the 13 schools.

Table 2: Observed leader behaviours for SWP activities	
Individual teacher leader-directed	3
Teacher leader-directed with ISMT involvement	2
Teacher leader-directed with principal involvement	7
Principal-directed	1

It was concluded from the research that the second aspect of the Aspiring Dynamic — the creation of a schoolwide pedagogical framework — marked the emergence of teacher leadership as a recognised force in most of the 13 schools.

LEADERSHIP FOR DYNAMIC 4 – PEDAGOGICAL DEEPENING:
The challenge of leadership for pedagogical deepening was substantial in all schools. It involved motivating staff to undertake personal pedagogical critique and subsequently share pedagogical practices and preferences; organising pedagogical development workshops and synthesising outcomes for school-wide application; and integrating schoolwide pedagogical principles with systemic curriculum, teaching and assessment priorities.

In undertaking Pedagogical Deepening activities successfully across a timeframe of a year or more, teacher leadership was a decisive factor in all 13 schools. However, there was no consistent pattern regarding the nature of teacher leadership forms.

Table 3: Observed leader behaviours for Pedagogical Deepening activities	
Led by the ISMT as team of equals (ranging from 2–10 in size)	2
Co-led by the ISMT and one or more heads of departments	2
Co-led by project facilitators with full staff and principal endorsement	4
Co-led by the project facilitators with ISMT support	2
Co-led by the ISMT and principal	3
Co-led by the project facilitators with ISMT support	2

Overall, the principal was actively involved in Pedagogical Deepening in about 50% of cases, and relatively uninvolved in the remaining cases.

LEADERSHIP FOR DYNAMIC 5 – SHARING AND REFINING:
Leadership of IDEAS Project activities associated with the Sharing and Refining Dynamic was multifaceted, as is indicated in Table 4.

Table 4: Observed leader behaviours for Sharing and Refining activities	
Deputy principals and HODs established school-wide implementation and accountability systems to critique SWP principles and extend them into classroom routines and students' school experiences	8
ISMTs, led by one or more teacher leaders, prepared materials for presentation at external forums and synthesised feedback; encouraged the development of student IDEAS initiatives; developed publicity materials; oriented new staff, including principals to IDEAS; and re-administered the diagnostic inventory to ascertain changes in internal alignment	10
Principals advocated for IDEAS in their systems; shared IDEAS Project progress at forums and conferences; prepared symbolic IDEAS materials (brochures, letterheads, placemats, etc) and distributed them	9

LEADERSHIP FOR DYNAMIC 6 – EMBEDDING:
Embedding activities were undertaken for the most part through two forms of leadership initiative.

The principal was the key leadership agent in the "embedding" of IDEAS Project achievements (ie, vision, values, school-wide pedagogical principles, teacher leadership) in strategic planning documents. Principals were also instrumental in initiatives in over half of the schools to embed the ISMT as a permanent school decision-making agency.

The ISMT was the key "transition" agent in orienting new staff (teachers and principals) to the nature and achievements of the IDEAS Project in the school. In some cases, the ISMT was replaced at this stage by a whole-school decision-making forum and, in some instances, deputy principals played a major role, in conjunction with the ISMT, in transition activities.

IMPORTANT IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTISING SCHOOL LEADERS
The 2009 Victorian research project has enabled the identification of a Framework for Successful School Capacity-Building that can be used by school leaders to assess the potential of their developmental processes to achieve and sustain their enhanced capacity.

The framework is inseparable from the constructs of parallel leadership and teacher leadership. Four leadership factors are particularly important in considering the framework's implications for school use:

- *The variability factor* — The leadership functions of principals and teacher leaders in successful school capacity-building vary in accordance with the distinctive demands of the individual capacity-building dynamics.
- *The elasticity factor* — Teacher leadership changes form as a developmental project unfolds. In the IDEAS Project, it was at times undertaken by individual teachers, at times by two or three collaborative colleagues, and at times by a management team of variable size. Only in a minority of instances did one teacher leader retain the IDEAS facilitator role throughout the 3 to 4-year process.
- *The intermediary factor* — Middle managers (deputy principals, heads of department) are critical to the success of teacher leaders. Three middle manager roles were observable in the IDEAS Project schools:
  1. Deputy principals and heads of department — as model teacher leaders in the early stages of IDEAS, and as nurturers of other teacher leaders in subsequent stages
  2. Deputy principals — acting on behalf of the principal in a range of strategic areas (and as de-facto principal in one instance)
  3. Heads of department — as critical friends to the process, providing inbuilt checks and balances (particularly in pedagogical deepening developmental work).
- *The maturation factor* — Teacher leadership was observed to grow in recognition and importance as the IDEAS Project unfolded. Upon completion of

IDEAS, the concepts of parallel leadership and teacher leadership, including principals, were regarded by the staff in all 13 schools as essential to the outcomes they had achieved and as having observable impacts on teachers' professionalism. In all 13 cases principals espoused support for the concept of teacher leadership and encouraged selected staff to undertake concrete leadership development, using IDEAS Project resources, and to assume school-wide leadership functions.

In conclusion, the research on which this paper is based illuminates links between parallel leadership and successful school capacity-building. At a time when Australian school leaders are under pressure to enhance the effectiveness of their schools, the insights that emerge from the research regarding both the importance of teacher leaders and the achievability of enhanced school success should be interpreted as a good news story.

NOTES

(1) Full details of the IDEAS Project, and of the Victorian 2004–08 research, are available from Associate Professor Dorothy Andrews, Director of the Leadership Research Institute at the University of Southern Queensland: **andrewsd@usq.edu.au**.

(2) The membership of the research team comprised seven academic staff from the University of Southern Queensland and Professor Bill Mulford as external research advisor and critical friend.

Andy Hargreaves and The Fourth Way

INTERVIEW BY JOHN GRAHAM

ANDY HARGREAVES IS ONE OF THE UK'S LEADING EDUCATIONALISTS.

IN THIS FIRST PART OF A TWO-PART INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY EMAIL IN APRIL, HE SETS OUT HIS IDEAS FOR THE NEXT WAVE OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM.

JG: In your book, The Fourth Way*, you analyse educational policy over the past 40 years or so in terms of three different waves (or "ways") before calling for a new policy direction — a "fourth way".*

Can you summarise the first and second ways and describe their perceived limitations?

AH: In the First Way, the welfare state defined the status quo from the end of the Second World War to the mid-1970s. Economist John Maynard Keynes and his followers presented investment in state services and welfare safety nets not just as a social good but also as a benefit for

the economy as it developed the pools of talent that would fuel future prosperity. There was enormous confidence in the state's ability to solve social problems, fuelled by a booming economy and spurred by the rising Baby Boomer population.

In the latter years of this age, these structural changes brought forth a cultural revolution. Social movements such as women's liberation, civil rights and anti-war protests provided avenues for historically marginalised groups to push their freedoms. This rebellious and creative spirit of the times entered public schools, albeit unevenly, in the form of experimentation, innovation, and child-centred or progressive teaching in primary schools especially. Teachers and other state professionals had great autonomy in the First Way. They enjoyed high levels of passive trust from an increasingly prosperous public and were left alone to get on with the job.

Yet the First Way also suffered from huge variations in focus and quality. For every teacher who understood and brilliantly engaged the whole child and his/her interests, many later converts to the cause implemented them superficially or badly, and more than a few high school teachers had no interest in them at all. Teaching was improved largely intuitively and individually, through improvisation, on the job.

The First Way could start innovation and spread it among a few enthusiasts. However, there was little leadership development or professional development to create widespread diffusion or consistency of impact or effort.

After an intermediary period running into the 1980s, a Second Way followed of markets and standardisation. With rising oil prices and economic recession, coupled with a labour force in teaching that was now maturing and becoming more expensive, politicians, business-people and the public began to question whether the state was still the answer. Driven by Ronald Reagan in the US and Margaret Thatcher in Britain, many Anglo-American nations placed schools in competitive systems of market choice for students and their parents. The state of Victoria was perhaps the clearest example in Australia. The currency of this market was more-and-more detailed standards, linked to high stakes tests that were widely publicised in league tables of performance and often combined with weakened levels of resourcing, as well as impossibly accelerated timelines for implementation.

Some benefits of this Second Way of force, competition and conflict were evident in the emergence of clearer focus, greater consistency, and a stronger sense of urgency. But the negative effects were considerable. The passive trust of the First Way was replaced by active mistrust between teachers and the public in the Second. Standards raised the bar but shortfalls of professional support did not help children reach it. The costs to the calibre of teachers and leaders the profession could recruit and retain were considerable

In the Second Way, leadership renewal also became problematic because the leadership itself was seen as increasingly overloaded, unattractive and excessively exposed in the context of punitive accountability. Leadership had turned into line management.

JG: The phrase "the third way" has been associated with Tony Blair's social and educational policy reforms in the UK and has been take up by Australian governments (both state and federal) over the past 10 years. What are the characteristics of the educational third way?

AH: The Third Way was politically invented and embraced by Clinton's America, Blair's New Labour and Schroeder's Germany. The intellectual firepower came from leading public intellectual Anthony Giddens, a guru for Blair and an author of several texts on the Third Way. Britain's New Labour government wanted to broaden its base beyond the old working class and the unions. It sought to govern between and beyond the state and the market. The Third Way emphasised responsibilities as well as rights, being tough on crime as well as the causes of it, maintaining social cohesion while stimulating a dynamic economy, putting public and private sectors in partnership instead of pitting them against each other, and providing stronger support for state professionals at the same time as demanding more accountability from them. The Third Way was about developing the economy, but not only that. It was also about renewing the community and the social fabric of society.

In education, it was evident in the provision of more resources, training and materials from the bottom-up. There was more talking up of teachers and the profession of teaching. Laterally, there was support for more interaction among teachers, especially in terms of building professional learning communities where teachers could talk about student achievement together. Accountability remained strong in the Third Way, though, with test-score data driving improvement, national targets becoming more detailed and more insistent, and transparency in competitive tables of performance outdoing even those of the Second Way.

JG: What are the limitations of the third way and why is there a need to move on from these policy settings?

AH: There are three limitations of the Third Way: autocracy, technocracy and effervescence. Firstly, Third Way governments are as autocratic and controlling if not more so than their Second Way predecessors. They define the goals, set the targets, monitor and micro-manage the professionals, all from a distance, as a way to secure leverage over their work. The targets are often arbitrary, manipulated and capriciously redefined as soon as schools and other organisations look in danger of meeting them. Organisations often resort to doing daft things to meet the targets — fiddling the figures,

redefining what counts as a crime or an educational failure, excluding clients (elderly patients, behaviourally disturbed children) who may threaten their performance numbers, wheeling patients into the corridor so they don't exceed the targeted waiting time in casualty, and so on.

Second, Third Way governments, elevate measurable data above all other kinds of professional evidence and judgment. In combination with professionally effervescent interaction, teachers and leaders find themselves in hurried meetings, devising swift solutions to just-in-time data about student performance on measurable test results — rather than also engaging in deeper dialogue about how to transform teaching and learning so it engages with students and their culture. Instead of driving the data and analysis themselves, educators become data driven to distraction, rushing around to comply with political performance targets with no time or thought for the issues that are central to their professional work.

Interestingly, in his endorsement of our book, the Third Way's intellectual creator, Anthony Giddens, now says "Third Way politics have been pushed as far as they can go. It is high time for a new Fourth Way of social and educational reform."

JG: How does what you call the "fourth way" differ from the third way?

AH: The Fourth Way begins with an inspiring and inclusive dream or vision of what a country or a school wants to be, not a vague embracing of "World Class Standards" (just a synonym for being "top") or a limiting of our sights to increases in test scores. The teaching and learning of the Fourth Way are deep and mindful, and so is the learning of professionals. It is not all quick and slick. Rather, it addresses the deep structures of disciplines, the lasting metaphors and legacies of different cultural traditions, the compelling questions and concerns of our times, the interests that learners pursue in their individual and community lives and the creativity that is vital to our future.

Fourth Way schools act urgently in the present in order to protect and sustain the future. Their short-term targets are connected to long-term commitments. And the targets are shared and owned by them, not politically imposed from elsewhere. As with the Finns, responsibility precedes accountability. Accountability remains but not through a census of everyone. Effective industries only test-drive samples of their products. Exactly the same should be true of educators.

The Fourth Way doesn't merely deliver services to the poor and their communities as if they were low-cost consumers, but develops community with them in relationships of active and engaged trust through extended school days, paid community appointments, and the kind of robust community organising that Barack Obama has made famous.

In the Fourth way as in the Third, teachers and schools work together,

but teachers work in thoughtful, evidence-informed communities that value both hard data and soft judgment, applied to deep and compelling questions of professional practice and innovation. They do not just hurl themselves into hurried meetings to produce just-in-time reactions to streams of test score data. And schools do not merely network with distant partners. They also collaborate rather than compete with immediate neighbours, across private and public boundaries, in pursuit of a higher common good in a culture and a shared community where the strong help the weak.

Leadership here is not individual or idiosyncratic but systemic. Effective leaders help other schools within their common community. The system provides resources to replace their time when they and their key leaders assist their peers in this way. This distributes leadership around them and develops successors behind them. In the Fourth Way, leadership is not merely fleetingly successful. It is also profoundly sustainable.

JG: How would you describe a "good school" in terms of the fourth way?

AH: A good school in the Fourth Way is a school that has a vision of what kind of learning it wants, knows what that learning is for and engages all students in achieving successfully at it. A good school puts learning first, pursues achievement subsequently and uses assessment to diagnose, track and monitor that learning. It then mobilises all its resources to make that learning happen — knowing the children, their cultures and capacities well so that learning can be connected to where they are and move them on from that point; bringing teachers together for animated and challenging discussions about students and their learning and how to improve it; setting ambitious professionally shared targets for improvement together so it is clear when progress is being achieved; involving parents and the community in paid jobs working alongside teachers as administrative assistants and with children as learning mentors; connecting with other schools in relationships of learning and assistance; and using assessment data wisely and prudently in a purposeful effort to improve learning and achievement, not as a panic-driven response to external accountability. A good school is like a good classroom — a place where you can make demands on people you know well and who trust you to do the best for them.

JG: You write about the educational system in Finland as a model for other countries. What do you see as the positive characteristics of school education there? Is there a link between these characteristics and their high levels of achievement in international testing?

AH: Finland is one clear example and I have co-authored one of the major reports on this country's success and the reasons for it for OECD. It

is not the only example, though. Alberta ranks just behind Finland on the international PISA tests of creative and applied achievement, yet displays some stark contrasts. Just a few months ago, we studied the remarkable Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) that spends 2 per cent of the education budget on involving more than 90 per cent of the province's schools in designing their own innovations.

Finland is generally seen as a society that is a Scandinavian social state with high taxes and cooperative social values, yet according to the IMF it ranks Number 1 on economic competitiveness. Alberta has had 39 continuous years of Conservative government yet strongly supports innovation so it does not become an energy dependent economy. The minister has even announced to his schools in their innovation project that more innovations should fail if they are truly innovations!

Both jurisdictions have a strong sense of who they are and where they are going — Finland became a highly successful knowledge economy after its economic collapse of 1992; Alberta is currently "rebooting" the province. Both value innovation, creativity and considerable autonomy for teachers, and not just in maths, science and technology. Both have strong investment in and high commitment to public education. Teachers have high status in both places with strong support for their work, respect for their professional judgment, and pay that is sufficient though not spectacular. Even in the most remote parts of Alberta, schools are populated with highly capable teachers and in Finland, teaching is so well regarded that applicants have a less than 10% chance of being accepted.

In both places, teachers and their unions may be in dispute with government on some issues, but know how to work with it on others. In Alberta, for instance, teachers are highly involved in developing the provincial testing process and AISI is a joint government-union initiative. Both jurisdictions promote strong professional collaboration and in Finland, cooperation, trust and responsibility are keywords throughout the system. There is no excessive centralisation of curriculum in either place and the influence of testing is in decline — in Finland it is only used on a sample basis for monitoring purposes whereas Alberta has just abolished its Accountability Branch and is also trimming back its testing (as have some other Canadian provinces as well as Wales and England).

Finally, both systems have high political stability — they are not driven to reform education for political purposes of short-term electoral gain but for economic and social as well as purely educational purposes with a longer-term perspective in mind.

NEXT ISSUE: The problem with high stakes testing and the threat to teachers and principals in pursuing the Fourth Way.

NOTES on contributors

FRANK CROWTHER HAS won several significant awards for his contributions to the teaching profession. In 2005 he was awarded the Order of Australia medal (AM) for his services to research into school-based leadership in Australia and internationally. In 1997 the Australian Council for Educational Administration awarded him its Gold Medal for "outstanding leadership in Canada, Australia and the Asian region over a period of three decades in furthering the integrity of the profession of educational leadership". He was recognised by *The Bulletin* magazine as one of the 100 smart Australians of 2004, and one of Australia's 10 leading contemporary educators. Professor Crowther has published eight books, including *Developing Teacher Leaders*, a bestseller in the United States in 2004-2005. He retired in 2006 from the position of Dean, Faculty of Education of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Regional Engagement & Social Justice) Leadership Research Institute, University of Southern Queensland.

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BILL MULFORD IS an internationally recognised educator with an extensive research and publication record in educational leadership, educational change and school effectiveness and improvement. His most recent book is *The Leadership Challenge: Improving learning in schools* (ACER) and he is the editor for the Leadership and Management Section of the 2010 edition of *International Encyclopaedia of Education* (Elsevier, Oxford). A former teacher, principal, assistant director of education, faculty dean, and chair of a university academic senate, he has also been adviser to numerous state and national departments of education and a consultant to international organisations such as OECD and UNESCO. He is currently a member of the International Successful School Principals Research Project, and the International Leadership in Education Research Network, a group of 20 leading researchers in the area.

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JOHN WEST-BURNHAM IS a writer, teacher and consultant in education leadership with a particular interest in leadership learning and development and learning in schools and communities. He has been a school teacher, teacher trainer, education officer and held posts in five universities. He is Professor of Educational Leadership at St Mary's University College, Twickenham, UK. John is the author or editor of 24 books and he has worked in 24 countries.

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