Educational Leadership

Emerging Issues and Successful Practices

‘This book offers a thoughtful and thought-provoking examination and re-imagining of current views of educational leadership. Beginning with a series of broad-based, theoretical discussions of educational leadership and concluding with three practical case studies of non-traditional leadership, the book’s contributors make a compelling case for effective educational leadership that is both transformative and contextualized. In so doing, they provide a challenging but necessary argument for a new kind of educational leadership in a book that should be read not only by educational leaders but by those who teach them.’

Professor Robert Mundhenk
President, Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education

‘A very valuable set of chapters on educational leadership. Equally strong on theory and practice we are treated to a diverse and thorough coverage of the most important and new issues in school leadership. A special strength is the international array of scholars so that we get a strong international perspective.’

Professor Michael Fullan
Professor Emeritus, OISE/University of Toronto

‘Educators at all levels will find this collection invaluable, drawing as it does on broad theoretical reflection and fascinating local case-studies. The contributors probe the key dimensions of educational leadership: how do we develop leaders able to be both consultative and decisive? How may leaders be both sensitive to cultural specificities and also attuned to national development needs? How best do they motivate their colleagues to be committed to positive, sustainable change?’

Professor Peter McPhee
Former Provost, University of Melbourne

Educational Leadership

Emerging Issues and Successful Practices

Edited by

Govinda Ishwar Lingam

The University of the South Pacific
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Foreword

There is a compelling need for a book like this that has a strong theoretical base but is firmly grounded in the practice of leadership within specific contexts. Too often, books on leadership attempt to be all things to all people but this book is clearly focused on improving practice within the island Pacific area. Overall, the book provides a strong research and literature framework for the consideration of specific contextualised educational leadership challenges in educational systems and schools in the island nations of the South Pacific. But, of course, there are lessons here for us all, wherever we are.

The twelve varied but extremely engaging chapters range from the general and theoretical aspects of leadership to practical applications of many of the key concepts covered in the opening three chapters, as well as reports of significant and exemplary case-study research on educational leadership from within the region. The inclusion of a special focus on gender issues in leadership is commendable.

While I cannot do justice in a Foreword to all the rich veins of experience and insights into leadership that are presented expertly by the authors in this book, I will highlight a few. The naming of significant issues and problems related to the impact of leadership on school improvement and effectiveness will provide both educational policy makers at system level and practitioners at school level with much food for thought as well as with stimulating ideas for change and improvement. I applaud the recognition of relationships, collegiality and teamwork as necessary ingredients for successful leadership in contemporary educational systems and schools. The building of sustainable collective leadership, especially within schools, is one of the challenging dimensions of our times (Duignan & Cannon, 2011).

Few books on educational leadership have the courage to confront the unpleasant necessity of 'weeding out' incompetent leaders in our systems and schools. This book does not baulk at the challenge. Rather, it meets it head on, not by adopting a negative stance but simply by reminding us all that if we want the best possible leaders in our systems and schools (including teachers), we have to tackle the problem of incompetency wherever we find it.

The book also administers a strong reminder that a school leader's primary responsibility is to enhance children's learning outcomes and that this is

best achieved by leadership that is characterised by enthusiasm, participant empowerment, collegiality and commitment. This advice is wisely tempered by considerations of cultural imperatives and sensitivities, contextual realities and personal needs. The example of the participatory approach to school improvement planning in the Marshall Islands paints a clear picture of the benefits of the power of collective and community thinking and action. The case study from Solomon Islands equally highlights that, with regard to women in leadership, conservative patriarchal attitudes still form almost insurmountable barriers to their progress.

The need for appropriate training and development for educational leaders is another area highlighted. This is seen as essential if the quality of educational provision is to be enhanced, especially in some of the smaller island states. However, it is essential to recognise and accept that such developmental support is required for all educational leaders whatever the setting or career stage.

I am particularly pleased that the book finishes with a strong appeal for long-term sustainable leadership in a developing context. There is a clarion call for the transformation of leadership practices to focus more on the quality of learning and teaching and on the improvement of school outcomes. This, I believe, constitutes a most demanding challenge for system and school leaders in the Pacific region. The many gems of wisdom and the practical advice given in this book can assist in overcoming it and help achieve long-term sustainable leadership and enhanced school improvement.

I would respectfully request readers of this book to dig deep and extract the particular gems that can help them contribute to this better future for the children of the Pacific region and, indeed, the children in all our schools.

Congratulations to the authors for creating a timely and influential book.

Reference

Duignan, P. & Cannon, H. (2011). *The power of many: Building sustainable collective leadership in schools.* Melbourne: ACER Press.

Patrick Duignan
Emeritus Professor
Director, Leading to Inspire
Gold Coast, Australia

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Portraits of the Contributors

Richard Bates

Richard Bates is Professor of Education (Social and Administrative Studies) in the Faculty of Education at Deakin University in Victoria, Australia. His scholarly work has been concerned with the Sociology of Education (where he contributed to the debate over the 'new sociology of education in Britain in the 1970s) and Educational Administration (where he contributed to the emergence of an alternative 'critical' theory during the 1980s). His work as Dean (1986–2000) drew him into debates over teacher education and his Presidency of the Victorian and Australian Councils of Deans of Education led him to contest official views regarding teacher supply and demand and challenge the marginalisation of teacher education programmes. He is past President of the Australian Teacher Education Association, a past President of the Australian Association for Researchers in Education, a Fellow of the Australian College of Education, of the Australian Council for Educational Administration and the Australian Teacher Education Association.

He has recently written about morals and markets, public education, ethics and administration, the impact of educational research, social justice and education, aesthetics and educational administration, leadership and civil society, as well as teacher education. His current preoccupation is with the development of international schools.

Bhagwanji K. Bhindi

Bhagwanji is a lecturer at the Fiji National University in the Department of Communication, Language and Literature. He has been actively engaged with Fiji's Ministry of Education for 32 years in a variety of roles and – for various schools for 23 years – as Principal, retiring in 2007 as the principal of Mahatma Gandhi Memorial High School in Suva.

His academic record includes an MA, a Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Education, a Diploma in Educational Administration and a Diploma in Educational Evaluation. Bhagwanji has been the recipient of several Ministry of Education awards including the Distinction Certificate to the Teaching Profession, the Certificate Teachers Quality Award for Excellent and Outstanding Performance and the Teacher Service Excellence Award. In 2004, the Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace conferred on him the Ambassador for Peace title. His interest in and passion for values-based education and values-based leadership in schools is profound and genuine. His philosophy of life is: 'You are what your deep driving desire is. As your desire is, so is your will. As your will is, so is your deed. As your deed is, so is your destiny.'

Narottam Bhindi

Narottam Bhindi is Associate Professor in Educational Leadership and Director of the Australian Centre for Educational Leadership at the University of Wollongong, and Adjunct Professor in Strategic Leadership at the University of Fiji. His more than two decades of work in the area of school leadership straddles experience in the professional development of school leaders in Australia, Brunei, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Kiribati. Narottam has expertise in school principalship, managing and developing leaders in different organisational settings, and mentoring. Dr Bhindi's interests reflect the range of his academic training: PhD (University of Queensland), Master of Educational Administration (University of New England), BA (Hons) (Bombay University) and Postgraduate Diploma in Psychology (University of the South Pacific). He is Fellow of the Australian Council for Educational Administration, the Australian College of Educators and the Queensland Institute of Educational Administration, and was recognised with the Nganakarrawa Award by the Australian Council for Educational Leaders. His current interest is in investigating the shadow side of educational leadership. Narottam Bhindi is Associate Editor of the *Journal of Educational Administration.*

Stanley Houma

Stanley Houma comes from South Malaita, Solomon Islands. He received his primary education at Rota and Pawa primary schools. He then went on to Selwyn College and King George VI High School (affectionately known as KGVI) to do his secondary education. Stanley proceeded to university studies at USP, where he obtained a BA and a Graduate Certificate in Education. Later he undertook postgraduate studies at Waikato University, New Zealand, obtaining a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership (1st class honours). Back in Solomon Islands, he taught at Selwyn College for 4 years before joining Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE) for 10 years to train teachers for junior secondary schools. While at SICHE he became a Senior Lecturer in Social Studies Education and was later appointed Head of the Diploma in Teaching (Secondary) programme.

Stanley joined USP in 2002 and in January 2006 was appointed to a substantive post as lecturer in Educational Leadership. He is currently serving as lecturer and coordinator of the education studies programme at the USP Solomon Islands Campus in Honiara. His areas of academic interest are in leadership in education, educational development issues in the Pacific and teacher education.

Charles Kivunja

Following 25 years' teaching and leadership in several secondary schools in New South Wales, Australia, Dr Charles Kivunja studied aspects of Organisational Dynamics for his PhD from the University of Western Sydney, completed in 2006. He lectured at the Australian Catholic University (Strathfield Campus) before taking up a permanent position as Lecturer in Leadership and School Pedagogy in the School of Education at the University of New England in Armidale, NSW. He specialises in Leadership, Teaching and Learning and coordinates the doctoral unit on Leadership in the Workplace, as well as the unit on Introduction to Learning and Teaching. He is also

the Project Officer for the development and functionality of qualitative data *Leximancer* software at UNE. He has presented products of his research internationally in New Zealand, Singapore and South Africa.

Govinda Ishwar Lingam

Govinda Ishwar Lingam is a Senior Lecturer in Education at the University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji. Previous experience includes secondary school teaching in Fiji, rising to the position of Head of Department for Mathematics, before serving at the Lautoka Teachers' College (now part of the Fiji National University) for ten years as Senior Lecturer in Education and later as Head of the School for Education. He obtained his Bachelor and Master's degrees from the University of the South Pacific and his Doctoral degree from Griffith University, Brisbane, Queensland. He teaches both undergraduate and postgraduate courses at the USP and co-ordinates the Bachelor of Education (Primary) In-service degree programme. Also, he is the Division Head for Leadership, Management and Financing Education. His research interests include issues relating to social justice in education, professional development of teachers, educational leadership, values education and teacher education.

Narsamma Lingam

Narsamma Lingam is currently studying at the University of Otago towards her Master of Education degree. She holds a Certificate in Counselling and Guidance, Diploma in Education, Bachelor of Education and a Postgraduate Diploma in Psychology from the University of the South Pacific. Prior to enrolling for her studies at the University of Otago, she taught at various secondary schools in Fiji. As well as teaching, she also served in a middle management position as a professional counsellor in many secondary schools.

Her research interests are in the areas of counselling and student achievement, as well as school leadership and management training and development, with particular attention to their professional practice. As part of her research for Master of Education she explored the perceptions of a selected group of principals from Fiji on the leadership and training programme and its effects on their professional practice.

Ross Notman

Dr Ross Notman is the foundation Director of the Centre for Educational Leadership and Administration at the University of Otago. He has been involved in New Zealand education for 35 years as a teacher, deputy principal, school management advisor, teacher educator and educational leadership researcher. Ross has worked extensively in leadership coaching and in principal support networks. His publications include commentary on professional issues in educational leadership journals; he also presents at international conferences.

Currently, Ross is the New Zealand director of an international successful school principalship project that includes 14 other countries. He is also the recipient of a Fulbright Scholarship to study innovative leadership programmes for rural principals.

Lauren Pallotta

Lauren Pallotta is currently studying at the University of the South Pacific towards a Master's degree in Education. She is a Language Arts Specialist and Teacher Trainer at the Ministry of Education in the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI). In addition to her current position, she has worked with education stakeholders in the Marshall Islands in various capacities since 2003, first as a teacher on the remote outer island of Ailinglaplap, next as the WorldTeach RMI Field Director, and finally as a Bilingual Specialist for Marshallese migrant students and communities in Spokane, Washington, USA.

Throughout her time in the Marshalls, creativity has been her greatest asset. She is a painter and graphic designer who is one of the founding members of the Jambo Arts group in Majuro and her work was showcased in the first ever Majuro art exhibition – Arts ilo Majol – held in December 2010. Moreover, she learned to plait pandanus from her host mother, one of the nation's few remaining master weavers. As such, her research interests include educational leadership and integrated curriculum with an emphasis on arts and culture, including the investigation of best practices for teaching literacy in the vernacular.

Helen Tavola

Dr Helen Tavola works as an independent social development consultant in the Pacific region. She worked as Social Policy Adviser for the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat from 2002 to 2009 and organised six Forum Education Ministers Meetings and liaised closely with Pacific heads of education during this time. She has taught at The Open University and the London School of Economics and in secondary schools in Fiji. Dr Tavola holds a PhD from the London School of Economics; MSc in Social Planning in Developing Countries also from the London School of Economics, and BA from Massey University, New Zealand. She lives in Suva, Fiji.

Introduction

Govinda Ishwar Lingam

In recent years, educational leadership has attracted considerable attention in terms of research endeavours and school improvement efforts. Important research projects have been conducted in various jurisdictions to find out more about the impact of leadership on school development and improvement, as well as school effectiveness. Research, for example by Sergiovanni (1995) quite quickly came to the conclusion that leadership is crucial in making schools more effective and in turn, in improving children's educational outcomes. At the same time, however, Sergiovanni cautioned that the mere physical presence of people filling leadership posts will not contribute much towards school effectiveness unless they display *suitable* leadership. As Owens (2004: 259) rightly points out, effective leaders 'intentionally seek to influence the behaviour of other people' towards desired goals. They need to do this in a diplomatic and tactful way and not by way of command or by dictatorial means. In this regard, leadership *relationships* are of the utmost importance in having things done. In Dinham's (2005: 340) words:

> Recent research has shown that rather than being strong and decisive, effective leadership is intensely interpersonal, involving working with individuals and teams to transform teaching and learning. Leaders' relationships with their followers have thus assumed greater importance than the more technical aspects of administration, management and decision-making.

In the contemporary context, recognition is growing that much more can be achieved through collegiality and team work rather than with rules and regulations. This may explain why Fullan (2001) stresses that leadership is about three Rs: Relationship, Relationship and Relationship. As such, favourable interpersonal relationships can influence *all* staff to work together effectively and contribute positively towards school effectiveness. The idea of distributed leadership and other notions of school leadership can, if school leaders use them effectively, certainly enable successes and achievements

(Dinham, 2005). Likewise, Loke (2001) points out that an effective leader can enhance staff productivity and commitment, and at the same time increase job satisfaction for staff.

For Australia, the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education (2003) concludes that leadership is the crucial ingredient in creating a positive ethos and fostering a high quality of teaching and learning. Through effective leadership, all these and other functions can be realised and achieved. At the same time, in some contexts change in school leadership has led to a downward spiral of some schools, if the new incumbents proved to be ineffective (Hargreaves & Fink, 2004). This clearly demonstrates that the enterprise of improving education requires effective leaders in all schools and education systems. Incompetent school leaders must be weeded out as their effects on the operations and functions of the education system are highly likely to be adverse. Allowing such leaders to continue to lead and manage at different levels of the system virtually guarantees that the impact on the system will be negative (Lipman-Blumen, 2005: Sinclair, 2007).

At all levels of education, effective educational leaders are necessary if there is to be any hope of improvement in educational provision. Not only academic success but also all-round improvement of schools can be expected, provided schools and other levels of the education system have effective leaders. Accordingly, parents and other stakeholders will benefit greatly from investing in children's education. To reciprocate, parents and other stakeholders may then be inclined to give more support, as they will have more trust and faith in schools.

This book

The importance attached to school leadership in the contemporary context, around the world and more importantly, for the Pacific region, underlines the pressing need for a book on leadership. This book specifically draws attention to educational leadership not only at the school level but also at other levels of the education system. The book is divided into twelve chapters. It weaves together international and local literature on leadership, as well as context-specific research endeavours, in a bid to make stakeholders aware of the major determinant of school successes and achievements—school leadership. Drawing also on literature from contexts beyond the island Pacific region, the book fuses those ideas with styles and examples of leadership

derived from local cultural contexts, to enhance the achievement of schools' visions and missions. In fact, it is not possible for this or any other single book to cover all aspects relating to educational leadership, so varied are the dimensions the term encapsulates. Given this, the following themes were chosen as applicable starting points in the contemporary Pacific region for the purpose of effecting ongoing improvement in educational provision, a prerequisite for national development efforts:

- the new leadership dimension
- reflective practice for sustaining leadership quality
- the role of leadership in generating a learning community
- values-based leadership
- instructional leadership and its impact on children's learning outcomes
- collegiate leadership style
- multi-skills of educational leaders in micro-states
- leadership training
- school development planning
- gender issues in school leadership
- leadership for academic success
- sustainable leadership.

Nevertheless, this book will not, on its own, make much difference unless *all* who have a vested interest in education keep the discussion alive on matters associated with educational leadership. More thought and discussion on matters pertaining to educational leadership at all levels will be a productive way forward in terms of improving our respective education systems within the Pacific region as well as beyond. It must also be recognised that context-specific research is vital for a better understanding of leadership in a particular sociocultural context. As pointed out by the National College for School Leadership (2003: 7) 'leadership should be viewed as a contextualised activity'. If this approach is adopted, research findings will further contribute to the amassing of a local literature on leadership, which could then be used effectively for bringing about positive transformations in existing and aspiring educational leaders in the particular local context(s). Apart from this, it is envisaged that readers will identify other appropriate ways and means through which effective leadership is prepared and developed. This book therefore, will act as a catalyst for extending our understanding of educational leadership.

It is anticipated that the essays collected here will be of interest to those who have a vested interest in educational leadership issues in particular and education in general, especially though not exclusively in this region. At the school level, those who work in positions where they act in particular contexts as leaders for others—principals, head teachers, deputy principals, deputy head teachers, department heads, and teachers themselves—will benefit from thinking about the issues raised. Even educational leaders at other levels in education ministries will find the book useful as they plan for, administer and oversee the work of the ministry and teachers. Dinham (2005: 341) aptly remarks: 'There has been a realisation that leadership has both formal and distributive aspects, with every teacher a potential leader'. In this regard, exposing all teachers to some knowledge, skills and discussion pertaining to leadership holds promise both for their performance in their present roles and for their prospects of moving confidently into higher leadership positions in the future. Aspiring leaders and postgraduate students specialising in the educational leadership strand will find much stimulating and insightful material between the covers of this book. Thus a flow of benefits to a wide cross-section of education workers is envisaged.

Overview of chapters

The book opens with three chapters that are more theoretical in their origins and general in their application. They present aspects of thought and opinion about leadership in schools, its nature and effects, and its development over time. None of these papers is context-specific: what they have to say can be considered in relation to schools wherever they are. Richard Bates sets the ball rolling, providing an interesting account of the shift in thinking about where the emphasis should be placed in educational organisation. Developments in the field of education and the growing complexity of educational organisations over the years have contributed directly to the emergence of new ways of viewing educational leadership in contemporary times. The gradual shift has been from *management* of education to *educational administration* and more recently, to *leadership in education*. Another major emphasis in Bates's paper is his insistence on the significance of context and contextualisation in the emergence of leadership appropriate to particular situations. It is futile to search for the one size that fits all. As later chapters will demonstrate, such change does not occur uniformly, in every location, at the same pace and the

same time. In this region, there is a fairly good chance that the changes will be trailing behind those elsewhere, and within the region, even within a single country, particularities will be such that the field will be spread. Thus a sturdy self-reliance of leadership has all the more to recommend it, though some ministries of education find letting go of the controlling reins very difficult.

In the following chapter, Ross Notman, drawing on such concepts as self-knowledge and values, considers how to develop and maintain levels of personal sustainability within school leaders. First, he examines school leaders' capacity for critical self-reflection and their understanding of self, as common characteristics of successful school leadership. He moves on to an exploration of the concept of school leaders' understanding and implementation of their personal and professional values in relation to their leadership behaviours. The role of values and belief systems will be linked to associated concepts of resiliency, emotional intelligence and relational connectedness with members of the wider school community.

If schools are to become vibrant, relevant and versatile, Narottam Bhindi argues in the third chapter, then better alternative teaching and learning strategies, leadership approaches and management practices have to be generated. Towards that end he canvasses the transformation of the school as a learning community, led by a values-based, enabling and empowering leadership.

In the fourth chapter, Bhagwanji Bhindi neatly bridges the gulf between such idealistic and theoretical discussion and how it can be (and has been) applied in an urban Pacific context. He argues strongly and persuasively for values-based leadership that relies on literature research, personal experiences and critical self-reflection. (The compatibility with the thinking of Notman is obvious.) Exploring the concept of values-based leadership in a school, he shows how it can be nurtured and urges the need to cherish and strengthen this style of leadership to promote and consolidate values-based education. The returns in staff collegiality, enrichment of teaching–learning processes and overall school improvement speak for themselves. The chapter suggests that a values-based type of leadership needs to be encouraged for it offers tremendous potential and power to provide the holistic education that today's students need to counteract the perils and temptations of the contemporary world and the rapid pace of change.

Narsamma Lingam uses chapter 5 to consider school leadership—particularly the instructional role of school leaders—and how it affects student learning outcomes. She derives five leadership dimensions from a review of the literature, emphasising how a leader can employ them effectively in

trying to optimise children's learning. The school leader's role in enhancing children's learning outcomes and in turn, school effectiveness, is crucial. Although the discussion is largely literature-based, it is also grounded in the author's experience and there is a great deal of scope for Pacific practitioners to make the necessary connections to their own situations.

Sometimes major policy changes can set in train structural and other changes that provide good 'laboratory' situations for observation of effects. Such an opportunity presented itself in New South Wales when an experimental restructuring of 37 schools into 11 units known as collegiates was put in place. Charles Kivunja's chapter 6 reports on the emergence of new leadership styles in these case study schools as well as the marked shift in the range of outcomes effected for students, teachers and parents. He concludes that the principals' leadership and synergies of the critical mass created as a result of a collegiate structure represent new structural–cultural dynamics that can lead to schooling improvement and effectiveness, especially resulting in improved student outcomes, more collaborative principalship and greater community engagement. Kivunja demonstrates, as do so many other of the authors in this book, that critical factors in effective leadership in schools include involvement, enthusiasm, participant empowerment, collegiality and commitment—from the 'top leader' down through all levels. Nowhere in the Pacific do we have school situations exactly like the ones Kivunja describes, but it is easy to 'translate' what he is saying to our own diverse contexts.

To this point, chapters have turned the spotlight on the central leadership roles *within* schools. Helen Tavola, all the while maintaining a local focus, steps out of the schools and into the realms of the policy makers and bureaucrats for education systems. She provides some incisive analysis of leadership problems at the higher levels within Pacific ministries of education. Too little inquiry, she writes, has focused on the severe challenges faced by those who head these ministries. Tensions between different stakeholders at the national level—politicians, teachers, parents, community, churches—are inevitable. The international community of development partners imposes a different set of tensions, exacerbated by their tendency to insist on externally prescribed goals and targets for countries to achieve. Educational leaders must also balance cultural influences against such other demands, which are largely a product of the external forces of globalisation and the givers' tendency to 'call the tune' with little reference to the recipients' own perception of their needs. In small countries, policy and administrative leaders must be multi-skilled and often have to cope with capacity and capability constraints,

and crisis management (of crises over which they have no control) all of which eats into the time that can be spent on strategic planning and visionary leadership. Pacific leaders of education systems need an extraordinary set of skills and if these are lacking, the effects on the education system, not always robust to start with, may be dire indeed.

The discussion of leadership in the book thus far has paid little attention to how the necessary qualities are acquired, apart from Bhagwanji Bhindi's suggestions for various kinds of workshops and other exposure. In the eighth chapter, Govinda Ishwar Lingam homes in on this matter of training and development of leaders. He advocates adequate preparation of school leaders as the first essential for improving the quality of educational provision, especially in developing contexts where qualitative growth in education can be painfully slow. Drawing on international literature on school leadership, his chapter highlights the sad state of affairs in some of the small island states of the Pacific region. Lingam suggests that one means by which these countries may now prepare their school leaders is the recently initiated Diploma in Educational Leadership and Change program offered by the School of Education of the University of the South Pacific. The program is custom-designed specifically to meet the work demands facing educational leaders in the region the university serves.

Whether or not 'Small is Beautiful', in research and writing on educational topics attention tends to go to the 'Larger'—larger countries, larger educational systems, larger population centres, larger schools, more personnel, more elaborate or showy solutions. The island Pacific region, though, is archetypically characterised by smallness (of everything except EEZs) and diversity (of all kinds). Pacific users of this book are therefore required to exercise a good deal of scaling down or bending sideways or translating into more relevant shapes and contexts. The pearls of wisdom are here, but they may require painstaking excavation before their relevance to particular local situations becomes apparent. Our next three chapters, then, deliberately diverge from the general to look more closely at three particularised situations in our region and some of their attendant problems in the area of school leadership.

First, Lauren Pallotta and Govinda Ishwar Lingam point out that in recent decades, the work of school leaders has intensified, especially where western models are more closely followed. In the case of the Marshall Islands, the Ministry of Education has adopted the use of School Improvement Plans to enable community stakeholders to take ownership of their schools. This participatory approach has been employed to give communities the power and confidence to take action and facilitate change at the grassroots level.

Moreover, it allows schools to design projects suited to their unique needs and available resources, and for community stakeholders to be the decision-makers. In this bottom-up approach, it is the parents, teachers, community members and students who determine the specific areas in which to make a commitment to improve, as well as the contributions they can make both individually and collectively once the plan is put into action. Without professional leaders at the school level, however, it will prove difficult to respond effectively to these needs.

Secondly, Stanley Houma presents a case study he conducted in Solomon Islands relating to women leadership. He was able to interview two experienced and well respected women school leaders. Houma concludes on this basis that in the Solomon Islands education system, traditional conservative patriarchal attitudes are very much alive in the culture and exert a strong influence on the work of women school leaders. In this system, female teachers with potential leadership ability may be lucky enough to have good support from their family but they will still face problems that would not arise for male leaders and teachers and they can all too easily be forgotten and sidelined. School leadership in Solomon Islands is still very much a male dominated profession.

The final case study in this group counterpoints Bhagwanji Bhindi's experiences in a large urban secondary school in Suva. Govinda Ishwar Lingam presents a case study to illuminate how a newly appointed educational leader made a positive impact on all aspects of a small rural secondary school in Fiji. This man's case is all the more interesting because he had only just reached the end of his university studies preparing him for such a job possibility; he did not yet have leadership experience as one of his qualifications; and his appointment flouted the conventional ethnicity- and culture-matching of school with school leader. Lingam reports that this leader's daily functions of planning, motivating, developing and supporting teachers have led to increased school efficiency and in turn, overall school effectiveness. The case demonstrates that a good school leader, whatever school is chosen for his leadership arena, can have a positive effect in all dimensions of the organisation by encouraging all the participants to give their best in whatever they do inside or outside the classroom.

With the final chapter, attention returns the topic and the region to the bigger game board. But whereas chapters 1–11 speak of improving educational leadership in the past, the present and the short-term future, chapter 12 'wraps it up' for the long-term sustainability of improvements, local *and* global. Govinda Ishwar Lingam rounds off the collection with a thought provoking

study on sustainable leadership in a developing context. Lingam argues that to sustain all the good things happening at school, adoption of sustainable leadership practices is crucial. Literature illustrates that the absence of sustainable practices is likely to have adverse impacts on all spheres of the school and more so, school improvement efforts. More importantly, how the day to day affairs of the school are managed and led will make a difference in terms of achieving overall success for the school. The study he conducted with a small sample of teachers in the Fiji context suggested, unfortunately, only minimal adherence in Fiji schools to the principles of sustainable leadership. This calls for transformation of leadership practices, not just for the present but to ensure continuity of best practices in all dimensions of the school in order to meet the current as well as the future demands of work in the schools. Thus *sustainable* leadership practices, as Lingam stresses, become an area deserving considerable attention for the long-term benefit of the schools and their local and national communities.

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1

The new leadership in education

Richard Bates

Current concerns over educational *leadership* are of quite recent vintage. The contemporary preoccupation with educational leadership was preceded by concerns during the latter part of the last century with the *management* of education; before that, the emphasis was on educational *administration*. These shifts are indicated by name changes—the British Educational Administration Society in the nineteen seventies to the British Educational Management and *Administration* Society in the nineteen eighties and to the British Educational *Management,* Administration and *Leadership* Society more recently (Bates, 2010a).

Moreover, while these transitions were taking place, the dominance of the field by business administration, management and leadership theories (especially in the United States) was supplemented, if not replaced, by a new emphasis on leading for learning: that is, an *educational* emphasis replaced the earlier separation of administrative and educational concerns that so bedevilled the field (Bates, 1983; Lingard et al., 2003).

Again, the (largely American) quest for a science of educational administration that strongly characterised the field in the middle of the last century has been replaced by the recognition that leadership is a social construction, dependent on context and culture for its various forms and effectiveness (Bates, 2006a & b; 2010b).

This relatively new view contrasts markedly with previous ideas of educational administration as an apolitical science of implementation, through bureaucracy, of ideals and procedures determined elsewhere. What seems to be happening, however, is that these new ideas lie alongside continued attempts to 'manage' education through definitions of educational leadership that are confined and shaped by policies articulated by politicians committed to control through 'deliverology' (Barber, Moffit & Kihn, 2010).

It also seems to be the case that the fragmentation and privatisation of education systems have been matched by attempts to increase central control over curriculum, assessment and teacher education through new definitions of leadership (Ball, 2007; Ellis, 2010).

Part of this new managerialism redefines educational leadership through concerns over school effectiveness and improvement interpreted as an increase in pupil outcomes (Townsend, 2007). Measures of such outcomes are frequently set within assessments of performance against both national and international comparisons and result in increasingly competitive behaviour between schools but apparently without the increase in performance that such competition is supposed to stimulate (Waslander, Pater & van der Weide, 2010).

Much of the official literature (or what Bernstein (2000) calls the context of official discourse) is directed towards greater efficiency in the application of educational resources to the ‘problem’ of pupil performance. However, as Bernstein notes, the official discourse is always recontextualised by the pedagogical discourse of the school. Several difficulties arise here as schools are caught between the demands of policy and the needs of pupils and their communities, or, as Ball (1997) argues, between the pursuit of efficiency and the pursuit of social justice. Indeed, concerns over issues of social justice have become increasingly important in the literature over the past decade as determined attempts to overcome educational inequality have come to the fore (Bates, 2006b; Normore, 2008; Theoharis, 2007; Wrigley, 2003).

Such moves towards putting social justice at the heart of educational endeavour have a long history in education—especially in the tradition—stretching through Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Montessori, Hume, Mill, Smith, Arnold, Marx and Dewey—that emphasises the role of education in fostering autonomy and emancipation (see Bates, 2010c).

Supporting such a perspective is a renewed interest in the ethical foundations of educational administration. Here, the emerging literature serves to recontextualise the idea of ethical behaviour, drawing attention away from a concentration on interpersonal behaviour towards a broader understanding of ethical behaviour as a social and organisational issue (Samier, 2003; Starratt, 2004). Moreover, emphasis on social justice and ethical concerns leads to a wider concern with social issues outside the school, at both community (Starratt, 2003) and global (Bottery, 2004) levels.

Such concerns are not, however, disconnected from the central issues of schooling: curriculum, pedagogy and assessment (Bernstein, 1975). Bottery (2004) for instance, places concerns over productivity, democracy, welfare, social relations, social values, epistemology, personal development and environmental concerns at the heart of his theory of educational leadership and at the heart of the school curriculum. Starratt (2004) puts the cultivation of meaning, community and responsibility at the heart of his. Lingard and associates (2003) argue, in their advocacy of the role of principals as those who are 'leading learning', that leadership should be seen as pedagogy. Starratt (2004) argues that human development is at the centre of the school's responsibility and that, indeed, the work of schools can be seen as primarily that of fostering human development through learning.

Moreover, as curriculum, pedagogy and assessment are everyone's business, leadership within schools is increasingly seen as a shared responsibility, with the development of teacher leaders being a primary responsibility of principals (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009).

Currently, therefore, we have two contrasting views of leadership vying for acceptance. The first, 'official', view is that leaders' primary responsibility is to ensure that official policy directives are faithfully implemented in their schools. In pursuit of this objective, 'standards' for school leadership are developed and training programs for prospective leaders established that direct behaviour in particular ways, resulting in what Gronn argues is a new 'method of producing leaders to design specifications' (2003: 7). Part of the design of such leadership behaviours is to enhance the ability of trainees to ensure compliance with official policies on the part of teachers according to new systems of performance and accountability through 'distributed practice' (Gronn, 2003: 27). The result is what Gronn, following Coser (1974) calls increasingly 'greedy' work where leaders are totally consumed by the demands of the job, succumbing to the demands to be 'totally reliable servants of power' (Gronn, 2003: 147). The 'disciplining' of principals through such demands is argued to be characteristic of the new forms of control exercised over principals (Niesche, 2011).

The result of these demands is disengagement (Gronn, 2003; Samier & Lumby, 2010) where the demands of the job exceed the willingness of potential leaders to submit to such greedy work. Disengagement is to be seen in the increasing difficulty of recruiting teachers into leadership positions—especially the principalship (Thomson & Blackmore, 2006).

Such a direct program of principal training in 'what works' is inevitably a partial and incomplete preparation for educational leaders for it inevitably sets up and privileges a particular paradigm of leadership, management and administration. Here the definition of leadership is restricted to one that serves the particular interests of whatever group is currently in control of the governance of education. As Gunter (2001: 8) suggests, 'leadership in educational studies can be seen as the process and product by which powerful groups are able to control and sustain their interests'. However, rather than see the field of educational leadership simply as such a uni-dimensional assertion of particular interests through the exercise of power, Gunter goes on to argue, following Bourdieu, that leadership is more complex than this. In reality, educational leadership is a field of discourse and practice, 'a competitive arena in which struggles are not just about material gain but also about symbolic capital, or authority, prestige and celebrity status' (Gunter, 2001: 13).

In opposition to the official view of leadership is one that sees the educational role of leaders as one of sustaining community through responding to the needs of students through relevant learning (Starratt, 2004). This view takes the position that little learning is likely to occur if schools teach subjects whose content and 'delivery' are disconnected from the lives that students lead in particular communities. As Alain Touraine (2000) suggests, schools teach subjects while their students want to make sense of their lives. As many of their lives, particularly in marginalised or disadvantaged or migrant communities, are disorganised (by transitions, discrimination, linguistic and cultural difference, lack of access to resources, work and services) the school's presentation of subjects and society as organised systems may be discontinuous with their pupils' experience (Touraine, 2000).[1]

The alternative leadership response to such situations is to take a cultural approach to learning—one that sees the culture of the school as central to the facilitation of learning. Moreover, the view of culture here is that of Willard Waller (1932) who saw the school as the nexus of intersecting cultures where the multiplicity of possible relationships shapes a school culture that is achieved through negotiation rather than imposition (Bates, 2006b, 2010c; Waller, 1932). The result is what Wrigley (2003) calls 'Schools of Hope' driven by constructivist views of curriculum and pedagogy, ideas of schools as communities of learning and a commitment to citizenship and social justice. Beckett in his interviews with successful school heads shows what effects result from this rejection of official discourse and its recontextualisation

within the idea of schools as learning communities driven by emotional as well as functional intelligence (Beckett, 2010).

The importance of context

Clearly the preceding discussion gives some idea of the conflicts that characterise the field of educational leadership. The complexity of these conflicts produces struggles at all levels of educational leadership: struggles that take particular forms in specific contexts. But this is the point: learning is always a situated activity. Context makes all the difference.

But schools face pressures from a variety of contexts. On the one hand, as noted, there is the official context of specifications, requirements, performance appraisal, rewards and punishments: the formal system of curriculum and its accompanying discipline system—assessment. There is the community context with its needs for relevance, citizenship and belonging: the informal system of adaptation and negotiation and its associated variety in curriculum, pedagogy and its intrinsic forms of evaluation. The demands of each of these contexts (and other religious, ethnic, class and gendered contexts and demands) lay claim to particular views of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. They invariably conflict as they rub up against each other and make the need for cultural negotiation a central concern for successful leaders.

This makes the micropolitics of schools a major issue for school leaders. Schools are typically 'complex organisations where struggles are the norm for scarce resources, control and power' (Caffyn, 2011). While much of this struggle is over access—to physical, financial and staff resources; to the power to influence, access or deny—it is also frequently a struggle over ideas. These ideas will cluster around the three message systems of the school: curriculum, pedagogy and assessment (Bernstein, 1975). Passionate commitment to the 'official' versions of these message systems is pitted against attempts to adapt or subvert the official discourse in order to meet the needs of various communities in the school and its contexts. Such commitments lead to clashes over ideas of what and whom education is for as well as how it should be constructed. This clash of ideas is central to the work of teachers and leaders and involves considerable emotional labour (Caffyn, 2011; Samier, 2009).

Such emotional labour may well be situated within commitments to tradition (maintaining the cultural traditions of particular communities, religious or ethnic groups) on the one hand and modernisation and transition

(new technologies, civil rights, personal identities) on the other. Such disagreements are often to the fore where dispersed populations attempt to adapt to their new context while maintaining intellectual, emotional and cultural allegiances to their families and their homelands (Saunders, 2010). Some of the complexities faced by members of such diasporas are evident in the backward longing for communities that no longer exist in the remembered form and for the high tech means of communication that now allow such diasporas to establish and maintain themselves on a global scale (Dufoix, 2008).[2]

As a consequence, the terrain on which such divergent views compete is no longer local nor even national, but becomes global in its scope. Competing ideologies operate on this terrain. Much official discourse in most nation states focuses upon 'world class' standards and the drive towards 'maintaining global competiveness' so as to ensure economic success. Such a position demands that curriculum, pedagogy and assessment practices model themselves on 'international best practice' that is always directed towards the functional 'needs' of the economy. On the other hand, as communities globalise and organise through new communications media, issues of universal concern become articulated around such matters as social justice, civil rights, environmental change, the redress of poverty and access to education. Some of these are expressed through official non-economic international organisations and are exemplified by the Millennium Development Goals (United Nations, 2006).

So at a global level there is debate about whether the message systems of schools should be centred upon competitive economic development or more general social, cultural and environmental issues.

This debate is seen by theorists such as Jürgen Habermas and Alain Touraine as a conflict between *interests* (economic, political, financial, industrial) and *values* (community, social, cultural). Here, they say, we are sandwiched between markets and organisations (which articulate interests through system development) and communities and cultures (which express themselves in interactions within the 'life-world' of everyday communication and activity). The medium of markets is money, of organisations is power, of communities is belonging and of cultures is belief (Bates, 2010d).

The school is, therefore, at the nexus of competing claims over economic benefit (markets/money), organisational interests (bureaucracy/power), traditions (communities/belonging) and cultures (values/beliefs). Moreover, these competing claims can be articulated at various levels (personal, local,

regional, state, global) at which differing compromises may be reached. Schools are pressed by top-down and bottom-up demands and how these are articulated within particular contexts is a major determinant of what is possible or desirable for school leaders. 'Think global; act local' is an increasingly pressing issue for those who lead schools. Moreover, schools differ crucially in their location within contexts that are oriented towards one or more of these particular pressures. For instance, well established elite communities may well demand of their (largely private) schools that their children are equipped with both skills and attitudes that fit them to become part of what Lesley Sklair (2001) calls the 'transnational, corporate elite'. Emerging cadres of middle-class parents in developing countries may well demand access to functional/creative 'Western' education for their children while attempting at the same time to maintain traditional patriarchal, authoritarian cultural and religious practices (Theresa, 2008). Schools in transitional areas where significant migrant communities are situated may well be required to equip pupils with linguistic, economic and cultural skills that allow them to become effective members of the host nations (Touraine, 2000). Schools in rust-belt areas where the economic base has collapsed may well be required to provide therapeutic support for communities that have become disorganised and disoriented (Thomson, 2002).[3]

Leadership and negotiation

As contexts change, so too do the demands on the school and on school leaders. This being so, leadership can no longer be thought of as simply the implementation of directives received from elsewhere. Rather, it must necessarily be involved in the negotiation of appropriate constructions of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment practices that meet the needs of particular situations.

This does not mean that educational leaders should meekly submit to the particular demands of officials or communities in their articulation of the mission of the school and its development of the school's message systems, for if the school is to serve the needs of its pupils it must defend some degree of autonomy from the various demands. Touraine (2000) points out that it may well be as dysfunctional for schools to submit to the demands of specific communities as it is for them to become simply an administrative device. This is because one of the functions of the school is to develop in its students the strength and autonomy to make their own choices and determine their own futures, navigating their way between the demands of markets and

organisations, communities and cultures in ways that allow them to choose the selves they wish to become. This may mean relinquishing values, beliefs and memberships of communities of their past as well as resisting or choosing between the demands made by markets and organisations. It may also mean, as Armatya Sen has pointed out, that the individual may—quite probably will—accumulate multiple identities as a result of experience and education. In his own case (Sen, 2006: 19):

> I can be, at the same time, an Asian, an Indian citizen, a Bengali with Bangladeshi ancestry, an American or British resident, an economist, a dabbler in philosophy, an author in Sanskrit, a strong believer in secularism and democracy, a man, a feminist, a heterosexual, a strong defender of gay and lesbian rights, with a non-religious lifestyle, from a Hindu background, a non-Brahmin, and a non-believer in an afterlife (and also, in case the question is asked, a non-believer in a 'before life' as well).

The role of the school leader in the contemporary world is to help devise curriculum, pedagogy and assessment systems within the school that facilitate the development of autonomy, based upon a recognition that the role of the school is not simply to teach subjects, but to help students make sense of their lives, to provide them with sources of the self (Taylor, 1989) from which they can fashion the selves they wish to become and to do so with confidence and hope.

Notes

[1] [Although Bates writes with a different context in mind, namely that of such communities in countries like Australia, reflection will quickly indicate that these comments are applicable also in the Pacific Islands region, where urbanisation and temporary and permanent migration are prominent contemporary features. The educational dimensions of this population mobility have been all too little explored. Ed.]

[2] [Again, readers are encouraged to contextualise these comments, in terms of pacific mobility, not only with respect to schooling but also to a regional instituion such as the University of the South Pacific. Ed.]

[3] [While the concept of 'rust-belt areas' is perhaps not context-specific to this region, the idea of depopulated and marginalised rural areas is certainly not alien in many parts of it. Ed.]

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2

Personal pathways through the leadership maze

A New Zealand perspective on the sustainable development of school leaders

Ross Notman

Recent literature on leadership effectiveness has rightly linked professional elements of school leadership to raising learning achievement levels of students (Day et al., 2009; Mulford, Silins & Leithwood, 2004; Robinson, 2007; Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009). This chapter argues that attention should also be directed to antecedents of effective school leadership and, in particular, the personal learning and development of school principals and how that might sustain them in a job of increasing complexity.

The concept of sustainable leadership has been variously described as leadership with an inherent moral purpose, underpinned by leaders' values, and resilient in the face of complex educational and social change (Fullan, Cuttress & Kilcher, 2005; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). Similarly, this perspective of the personal nature of school leadership is borne out by an OECD report on competencies for educational leadership in New Zealand. This study found that the competencies fell into five categories, one of which was Self-efficacy, described as:

> the ability to know oneself, manage own behaviour and deal with a range of challenging or stressful situations requiring competencies of self-management and self-assurance. (OECD, 2006: 33)

This chapter draws on concepts such as self-knowledge and values in considering how to develop and maintain levels of personal sustainability within school leaders. It begins with an examination of school leaders' capacity for critical self-reflection and understanding of self, as common characteristics of successful school leadership. Secondly, it explores the concept of school leaders' understanding and implementation of their

personal and professional values in relation to their leadership behaviours. The role of values and belief systems will be linked to associated concepts of resiliency, emotional intelligence and relational connectedness with members of the wider school community.

In order to support these concepts and their relationship to leadership development, research-based evidence from the context of New Zealand schools is outlined. This includes the implementation of a critically reflective model of values-based personal development for school leaders, and research findings from a sample of New Zealand primary and secondary school case studies of successful principalships (Notman & Henry, 2009). Finally, it is argued that the personal and professional development of school leaders can, and should, be viewed as complementary processes as principals strive to improve student learning outcomes and, at the same time, sustain themselves while they perform the multiplicity of leadership roles and responsibilities that fall to them.

A conceptual framework for leadership development

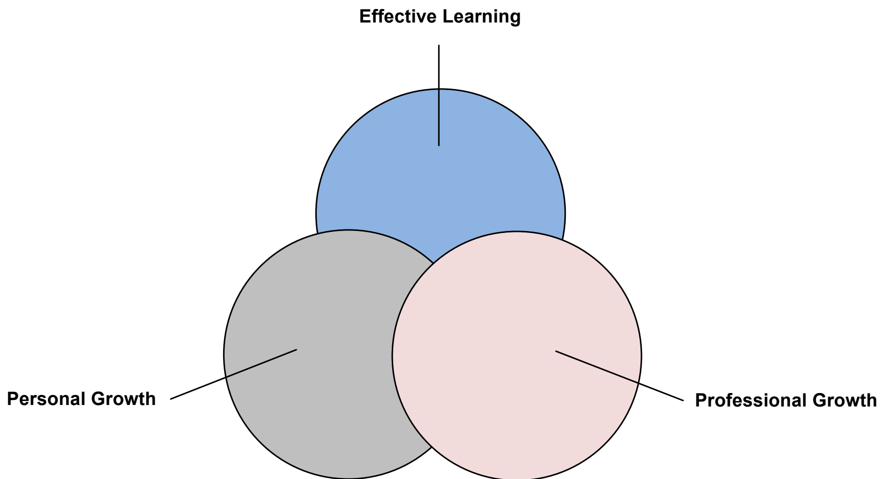
Following on from a 2007–2008 survey questionnaire and some follow-up interviews of 500 headteachers of primary, secondary and special schools in England, all of whom had been assessed by Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) as outstanding in leadership and management, West-Burnham (2009) formulated an abbreviated conceptual framework for the development of outstanding school leaders. This framework, he believed, represents a symbiotic relationship between a leader's personal growth, professional growth and effective learning practices, and

> confirms the view of school leadership as essentially a human and values-driven activity and of the pivotal relationship between growth and development, and confidence and capability as a learner. (West-Burnham, 2009: 10)

This integral relationship is outlined in figure 1. The notion of a school leader's personal growth through self-knowledge and self-awareness is gaining momentum from a body of research within the educational leadership and management literature. For example, recently published research studies from Australia (Drysdale, Goode & Gurr, 2008) and from New Zealand (Notman, 2008; Notman & Henry, 2009), together with West-Burnham's (2009) large-scale study at the National College for School Leadership,

identified principals' intrapersonal understanding of their personal philosophy and values systems as a key feature in a successful school principalship. These findings underline West-Burnham's integrated framework and emphasise the need to avoid the disjuncture of the personal self from the professional self in the overall development of our school leaders.

Figure 1 Developing outstanding leaders



Source West-Burnham, 2009.

Capacity for critical self-reflection

An important precursor to enhancing the personal growth of school leaders is their capacity and willingness to engage in the process of critical self-reflection, leading to an increased understanding of self and one's role in the educative enterprise. This is highlighted by Senge and co-authors who stress the aspirational impact of one's humanity in leadership and of one's self-understanding:

> If you want to be a leader, you have to be a real human being. You must realise the true meaning of life before you can become a great leader. You must understand yourself first. (Senge et al., 2004: 186)

This reflective capacity can be examined in terms of leaders' self-understanding, their levels of emotional intelligence and the role of reflection in practice.

Sense of self in leadership

Self-knowledge and self-management are leitmotifs that operate within the personal domains of school leadership. Sergiovanni (2001: 52) set the scene by describing the management of the self as:

> . . . the ability of heads to know who they are, what they believe, and why they do the things they do. When a head's behaviour can be defended in such a way that others at least understand and at least respect that behaviour, then self-knowledge has been achieved. The management of self is a sleeper of sorts.

However, it is useful to note that the concept of principal self-development should not be confused with principal self-management: that ability to manage oneself in stressful situations and to sustain high levels of school leadership effectiveness. The practices and critical self-reflection inherent in self-development are a forerunner to effective self-management and to any atomised lists of self-management competencies such as flexibility, persistence and independence.

In a broader sense, the centrality of self-development and understanding does extend beyond school boundaries to more universal applications. Gardner (1983), in his seminal work on the nature of human intelligences, drew attention to cognitive thought processes in his description of seven dimensions of intelligence. One dimension he termed *intrapersonal intelligence:* the ability to access and understand one's inner self and idiosyncratic personal emotions, feelings and aspirations.

Palmer later also took up the wider meaning and related it to teachers and teaching. At a deeper level, he referred to the voice of the teacher within, 'the voice that invites me to honor the nature of my true self' (Palmer, 1998: 29). He insists, however, that the teacher within is not the voice of conscience but of identity and integrity:

> It speaks not of what ought to be but of what is real for us, of what is true. It says things like, 'This is what fits you and this is what doesn't'; 'This is who you are and this is who you are not'; 'This is what gives you life and this is what kills your spirit—or makes you wish you were dead'. (ibid.: 30–31)

Earlier educational literature makes some reference to the professional self displayed by teachers and principals. As an example, Kelchtermans and Vandenberghe (1994) distinguished several aspects of the professional self to be self-image, self-esteem, job motivation, job satisfaction and task perception. Their research would strongly suggest an extended view that the personal self is very much in operation in the daily work lives of school leaders. Duffy's (1999: 106) recollection of early days in her headship in England reiterates this notion of the role of self and one's personal needs, even at the beginning of a professional career:

> Running under the intellectual excitement and confidence, then, was a deeper current of personal need—what I believed 'schools' needed was being variously complemented and coloured by what I, personally, needed in order to fulfil myself, to use my talents, to be true to myself, to be happy.

Emotional intelligence

An awareness developing in the literature of the leadership self, particularly in the area of emotional intelligence, has been referred to variously as 'emotional geography' (Hargreaves, 1999) and 'emotional literacy' (Day, 2004). In his synthesis of research, Goleman (1995: 34) defines emotional intelligence as, 'the ability to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one's moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathize and hope'. He then identifies five domains of emotional intelligence: knowing one's emotions; managing emotions; motivating oneself; recognising emotion in others; and handling relationships.

Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002) later reduce these emotional intelligence domains to four aspects and associated competencies. The first domain refers to 'self-awareness', which includes an ability to read one's own emotions, know one's strengths and limitations and gain a sense of self-worth. Secondly, the domain of 'self-management' includes competencies of emotional self-control, trustworthiness, adaptability, the drive to meet inner standards of excellence, taking initiative and maintaining a sense of optimism. The third, the domain of 'social awareness', includes social competencies of empathy, organisational awareness and service to others. The fourth domain, of 'relationship management' includes competencies of motivational leadership, developing others through feedback and guidance, change and conflict management, and collaborative relationships.

Day (2004) relates the application of emotional intelligence to the school setting, where teachers and leaders are enabled to understand and manage their own and others' emotions as a central part of their work. He also notes other aspects of the operation of emotional intelligence in the context of a school:

> It is also important to recognise, first, that emotional intelligence is not something teachers or students possess or do not possess; second, it is not isolated from the social context—cultures of collaboration, for example, are likely to nurture emotional intelligence; third, it may be affected by personal change contexts; and fourth, it can be learned. Regular engagement in forms of reflection, for instance, can assist in growth of one's emotional as well as cognitive self. (Day, 2004: 98)

The role of reflective practitioner

In discussions about reflection, Dewey is often quoted in his definition of reflection as 'active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends' (1933:9). Despite the demanding and, at times, stressful nature of the principal's job, it would seem important that principals take time to reflect on decisions and implications of actions and experiences as well as their own intrapersonal understandings.

Underlying this concept of principal self-reflection is the need for such reflection to be critical in nature. Fink (2005: 12) views the interrogative function as a significant part of a leader's job, where critical thinking enables them 'to act as a gatekeeper, to ask the right questions, to know what initiatives to support, what to oppose and what to subvert'. Building on the work of Freire (1972, 1997), Smyth (2001: 191) moves beyond conventional labels to describe four pedagogical moments in the stages of critical self-reflection: 1) Describe . . . what do I do? 2) Inform . . . what does this mean? 3) Confront . . . how did I come to be like this? 4) Reconstruct . . . how might I do things differently?.

Like teachers, principals must be able to describe the principles or drivers that inform their leadership practice by accessing what Elliot (1987: 151) previously referred to as the 'knowledge, beliefs and purposes that [they] employ in both characterising that practice and deciding what should be done'. The second stage of critical reflection would enable principals to develop short-range theories or explanatory principles about their leadership actions. Then follows a subjection of such theories and principles to 'a form

of interrogation and questioning that establishes something about their legitimacy' (Smyth, 2001: 193) and a final stage of reconstruction wherein principals reflect on alternative courses of action.

In a recent qualitative research study of six successful New Zealand primary and secondary school principals as part of the International Successful School Principal Project (ISSPP) (Notman & Henry, 2009) several factors emerged in relation to reflective leadership practices. First, all the principals viewed reflection on professional issues as vital to the quality of decisions made. They made it a scheduled part of their time each week. The push for higher productivity, more demands placed on schools, and the changing nature of communities could lead to making decisions based on what has worked in the past or what can be decided immediately. With reflection as part of each principal's focus, there is time given to it and that time commitment is honoured. The implication for principals who are aspirants, newly appointed or those who wish to improve their own capacity to lead is, therefore, the importance of finding space for reflection. Space alone will not create greater reflection. Skills and applications to Schon's (1983, 1987) reflective action capabilities deepen the understanding and the leadership effect.

Second, the case study principals underlined the importance of authentic leadership practices in establishing a successful school through their personal self-reflection and philosophical stances—a mark of experienced principals who recognise the need to maintain high levels of self-awareness and of intellectual understandings about school leadership (Notman & Slowley, 2004). Begley (2006) for example, promotes this theme of authentic leadership in his proposal of three prerequisites for authentic leadership by school principals: self-knowledge, a capacity for moral reasoning and sensitivity to the orientations of others. He contends that the achievement of these prerequisites can be best won in professional settings through strategies of personal reflective practice, and sustained dialogue on moral issues and on the ethical dilemmas of educational practice.

This New Zealand case-study research highlights a consideration to move beyond the notion of school leaders as critical thinkers of external actions, exemplified by Schon's foundational concepts of reflection-to-action, reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, to a **reflection-on-self**. Typically, leadership reflection comes as a result of reaction to external factors or events. It is restricted in nature by the specificity of circumstance; it is often restricted in time by the need for expedient action; and it may not

necessarily require deep-level interrogation of the self. Day's (2004: 120) description of teachers' reactive reflection illustrates this point:

> Reflection is enacted as an activity in which vagueness is normal, and values are left unexamined in the preparation for what must be done to get by today and tomorrow. Yet, this will not be enough to ensure growth, for it is limited to feedback of experience by self on self.

Thus, it is argued that there exists a need to move beyond externally-related reflection to an internal reflection-on-self and, in particular, a specific self-examination of the leader's personal and professional values systems. This argument is based on these case-study findings and continuing evidence in the literature to support the place of values and ethical considerations in reflective practice, a process Coombs (2003) referred to as developing reflective habits of mind.

Influence of personal values on leadership behaviours

During the 1970s, the Canadian educational philosopher, Christopher Hodgkinson (1978), was instrumental in promoting a values perspective as an alternative theory to prevalent scientific theoretical approaches to educational leadership and administration. Building on his concept of leadership as a values-laden activity, Leithwood and co-authors (1994: 99) defined a value as an enduring belief about the desirability of some means; and once internalised, a value also becomes a standard or criterion for guiding one's own actions and thought, for influencing the actions and thought of others and for morally judging oneself and others.

Hodgkinson then looked more broadly at implications of values theory for leadership behaviours that were informed by an underlying philosophy of leadership. He believed that the concerns of leadership proper centred on 'affect, motives, attitudes, beliefs, values, ethics, morals, will . . . ' and that 'their study is paramount because the very nature of leadership is that of practical philosophy, philosophy-in-action. Leadership is intrinsically valuational' (Hodgkinson, 1983: 202).

Hodgkinson (1996) subsequently proposed that values are derived from an individual's intrapersonal psyche as well as from interpersonal interactions. Thus, it would seem important in research to maintain a balanced perspective of the spheres of influence among a principal's personal and professional values and the values of the institution.

As noted above, the call for school leaders to examine their values systems is based on an increasing recognition in the research literature of the role of personal and professional values in determining subsequent leadership behaviours (e.g. Begley, 2006; Branson, 2004; Day & Leithwood, 2007; Duignan, 2006; Notman, 2005; West-Burnham, 2009). The commonality of this theme is summarised by Leithwood and his colleagues (2006) in a restatement of seven strong claims in respect of school leadership, whereby 'values and beliefs, and the motivational behaviours that build capacity and influence both pupils and teachers, have emerged as central to effective school leadership work' (cited in Lewis & Murphy, 2008: 9).

Two recent empirical research studies serve as examples of further evidence for this claim of values influence. In an in-depth qualitative study of two New Zealand secondary principals over a three-year period, Notman (2005) formulated the following four propositions on values-based leadership, which focused on the person of the principal and how that self might be nurtured and developed alongside the dimension of the professional self.

- There are influential links between the origins of principal values, their set of personal and professional values and specific leadership behaviours.
- Principals' integral relationships with their wider school community may be cemented through values alignment and values reinforcement.
- Dilemma management, a major challenge in the principalship, can also be conceptualised as the management of contested values.
- There is a need for principals to engage in reflection-on-self and, in particular, self-examination of one's personal and professional values system.

These outcome propositions link to developing ideas in the literature about inner leadership. For example, Waldock and Kelly-Rawat's (2004) model of the leader's internal compass provided a launching pad for the examination of self-development. In this case, self-development was centred on one's self-awareness with its essential components of values, vision, needs and behaviours. Similarly, Fairholm (2003: 39–40) contended that at the core of a definition of inner leadership was the leader's set of values and, in addition, 'it is their personal core values—their spiritual values and needs—and not just job skills that determine the character of inner leaders' relationships with others'.

Secondly, in a three-year Effective Leadership and Pupil Outcomes Project, the largest and most extensive study of contemporary school leadership in England to date, Day and others set out ten major findings

with policy and training implications. The first finding is germane to this discussion: 'Headteachers are perceived as the main source of leadership by staff, governors and parents. Their educational values; strategic intelligence; and leadership strategies shape the school and classroom processes and practices which result in improved pupil outcomes' (Day et al., 2009: xvi). Within the general framework of 'educational values', it was evident from the detailed analyses that headteachers' professional values were predicated upon their personal values system. For example, one head was raised in an urban area of economic disadvantage, and this circumstance helped form her personal belief in equal opportunities:

> 'I was seconded for a year as the race equality adviser, and that supports my personal belief of equality for all. My own personal experience of life and my family's, with regard to racist abuse, verbal and physical, supported by my own belief of ensuring that children don't suffer that way' [4HT-1]. (Day et al., 2009: 156)

The influence of a principal's personal values can also be seen in two further areas of school leadership effectiveness to emerge from the New Zealand findings of the ISSPP. First, the theme of relational connectedness between principal and school community was found to underpin all the leadership stories. Gibbs (2006: 79) describes this concept as a 'personal awareness of, and sense of harmony with oneself, one's identity, and in relationship with the world, time and place'. Relationships, connections and trust building were overwhelmingly key factors in the success of the principals studied. It was demonstrated through their 'eternal sense of optimism, reflection-on-self, strength of convictions and a belief in establishing a system that incorporates personal values such as honesty and integrity' (Notman & Henry, 2009: 47).

Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002) recognise the importance of emotional intelligence, self-awareness, the capacity to reflect on personal identity, what is sacred in our personal and professional lives, and the manner in which we connect with others in the course of our work. Could it be that successful principals, who develop trusting relationships as a priority, connect at a deeper level where their authentic values and beliefs intersect and resonate with those of others at different points in time? Without doubt, this development of trust through relational connectedness reflects a recurring theme of the human face of principalship that is evident in all the successful New Zealand leadership cases and in the extant literature (Day et al., 2009; Kutsyuruba, Walker & Noonan, 2009; Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

Secondly, the New Zealand findings confirmed earlier ISSPP data (Day & Leithwood, 2007) that all case study principals were identified as being resilient. They had the ability to form positive relationships and to retain a positive view of the future. They were well connected to the learning needs of their students and were self-reflective and self-motivated in their leadership roles. These elements, coupled with an ability to re-evaluate one's educational beliefs and values, job and life satisfaction, and professional currency enhanced the levels of resiliency within the six principals. The principals all had the 'ability to bounce back from adversity, learn new skills, develop creative ways of coping, and become stronger' (Milstein & Henry, 2008: 7).

Personal learning in school leader development

This chapter has argued for greater attention to be accorded the personal development of school leaders in addition to their professional development activities. A movement in the field of principal education—away from prescribed traditional approaches that were content-led and standards-driven, toward more recent approaches that are more personalised, process-rich and context-based—is sympathetic to this focus (Bush et al., 2007). However, there still exist doubts in the literature about the understanding and efficacy of school leaders' personal learning, as Macpherson (2009: 101) acknowledges:

> It is interesting that a systematic review of theories of personal learning related to leadership (Beatty, 2008) identified the need for an expressive discourse to challenge the 'pervasive silence' concerning the deeply troubling inner experience of leadership, and the limits of the personal frameworks used to make sense of practice.

Herein lies the challenge: how to translate the internal processes of critical self-reflection and acquiring self-knowledge into effective, explicit processes that principals can use in situ. Some educational leadership researchers have called for a paradigm shift in principal and school administrator training from a dominant technical model to one that takes more account of the human development of individual principals. Day (2000), for example, has argued for a 'formation' approach to principal development that, like the values-based contingency model of leadership, encourages self-reflection and personal understanding of one's values to reveal the inner motives of the principal.

In this regard, a values-based model of personal leadership development is offered for consideration (Notman, 2005). This model builds on a body of

literature and New Zealand research findings and underpins the sustainable development of the person of the principal. It follows suggestions from the research evidence that critical reflection on one's personal values needs attention. The model proposes four values areas in relation to the self:

- interrogation of values, which involves strategies for making values and their origins explicit and open to critical evaluation
- values connectedness in a school context
- management of contested values
- development of a personal philosophy of principalship that encourages linkages to be made between personal values, professional values and subsequent leadership behaviours.

Interrogation of values

Australasian research studies (Branson, 2004; Drysdale et al., 2008; Notman, 2005; Notman & Henry, 2009) have drawn attention to links that might be made between principals' specific leadership behaviours and motivating influences contained within their professional, and ultimately their personal, values. Therefore, it is incumbent upon school leaders to find the time and effective strategies for self-reflection and introspective practice in order to understand, in greater depth, causal possibilities for their educational leadership actions and critical decision-making.

It is proposed that this reflection-on-self be initiated by a baseline values inventory that would enable principals to identify, first, their core personal values and then, their set of professional values. This 'audit' of a principal's values may be achieved through administration of the Rokeach Values Survey (Rokeach, 1973) that was used to help identify principals' core values in Notman's (2005) research study, followed by reciprocal discussion and critical interpretation with an external person on the reasons behind values prioritisation. Similar but less comprehensive values assessment methodology can be found in Senge's (1994) checklist for leaders' personal values in The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook, and in Kouzes and Posner's (2003) Leadership Practices Inventory, which employs a 30-point self-analysis of scenarios in a leadership setting.

Values connectedness

The second focus area, values connectedness, looks at the principals' values alignment with others. Here, principals are encouraged to consider their

values match or alignment with those core values supported within the school and by the community at large. In this way, principals might use the extent of their values alignment as a gauge, and predictor, of potential outcomes from their decision-making processes, particularly in the area of dilemma management. As demonstrated by the two target secondary principals in the research study (Notman, 2005), critical decisions are not taken in isolation but are very much part of what Hallinger (2003: 346) described as a 'mutual influence process'. These decisions taken by the principal can be shaped and mediated by values, whether reinforcing or conflicting ones, held by a variety of constituents within and outside of the school environment.

Management of contested values

Notman's (2005) research study also supported a move beyond values relativism, inherent in the concept of a principal's values alignment, to a re-conceptualisation of dilemma management as the management of contested values. In particular, the study demonstrated how the disconnection of values between the principal and others might affect the manner in which a principal manages dilemmas and how principals reconcile their own values and interpretations of ethical principles with those of students, staff and parents, as well as within themselves.

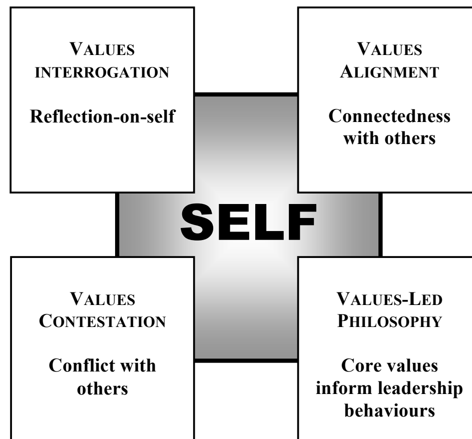
Thus, there is consideration of both interpersonal and intrapersonal conflict of values. In the latter instance, principals need to be aware that their own deeply-held convictions or values may be superseded by more legitimate values claims of others. The more difficult values dilemmas to resolve, of course, are those moral situations in which there are no definitive right or wrong responses and where competing core values can be seen to have equal legitimacy.

A personal philosophy of principalship

The culminating phase of the values-based model lies in the development of a personal philosophy of principalship that seeks to link together connecting threads of influence of personal values, professional values and principal leadership behaviours. In large measure, this process of self-awareness is built on one's ability to 'analyse your own personal beliefs and values as components of a clear philosophy of education' (Daresh, 2002: 19).

In summary, the interlocking features of the values-based personal development model can be represented diagrammatically in figure 2:

Figure 2 Values-based model of personal development



The implementation of the model is based on three features that principals can use as tools for critical self-analysis. The first involves the process of examining one's personal and professional values and how they have an impact on school leadership, as described above. Secondly, an external agent in the form of a critical friend or coach (Robertson, 2005) may perform an interpretive function as the principal seeks to access inner values and beliefs. Such a friend may also undertake an interrogative function in which bodies of knowledge and belief systems are examined critically in order for the principal to explore outside of his or her existing paradigm. This emphasises that the person of the principal is about ongoing development of the self, one that does not assume closure on values but rather encourages an openness to critical analysis and justification of what the principal believes and why.

A third tool for critical self-analysis lies in the principal's access to a critical literature that interrogates assumptions underlying current and alternative educational and management theories, practices and research. This offers principals the potential to see things 'anew' through different lenses and, by engaging with other bodies of knowledge and belief systems, to benchmark their own values positions. This examination of the critical literature would assist principals to challenge, affirm or make changes to previously held values stances.

Conclusion

This chapter has drawn on the educational leadership literature and research to offer a New Zealand perspective on possible pathways for sustaining school leaders in their personal development. It began with a consideration of the concepts of self-knowledge and self-understanding on the part of school leaders. It then explored the influential role of personal values in relation to leadership behaviours and proposed a values-based model of personal development using a framework of critical self-reflection.

Within the personal domain of principalship, it is necessary to balance the personal and professional growth needs of our school leaders. In relation to the wider context of personal factors behind the work of successful principals, West-Burnham (2009: 14) concludes that 'much leadership is influenced by personal values, aspirations and relationships and these have to be seen as primary factors in terms of motivation to lead and sustaining that desire to lead'.

The view taken in this chapter is that greater recognition ought to be given to the influence of personal elements at work within each principalship and how we can provide more explicit strategies to assist the personal and sustainable development of our principals. A useful starting point in this process would be to identify and build further on those inextricable links between the personal self and the professional self of a successful school leader, and to acknowledge that leadership is not merely a series of proven competencies but a much more holistic proposition altogether.

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3

Enacting learning schools

A case for enabling, empowering leadership

Narottam Bhindi

The fundamental purpose of the school is the provision of holistic, fulfilling education through high quality teaching and learning in a physically and psychologically safe and pedagogically stimulating environment. Schools, however, do not exist in a vacuum. External environment and internal dynamics have an impact on their direction, and affect their health and success. Competent and committed staff, caring and enlightened leadership, collegial structures, and a culture of innovation and adaptation are often cited as critical success factors for high performing, quality schools.

School systems, in the western world, are confronted with a tsunami of knowledge and technological change and public demand for choice, transparency and information, and debates about curriculum design, content and relevance abound. Scrutiny of the quality of teachers, teaching and learning, and management structures, in the midst of obsession with outcomes and fiscal bottom lines, is constant.

In such dynamic environments, the way schools are structured, managed and led is being questioned increasingly.

This chapter argues that if schools are to become vibrant, relevant and versatile, then the generation of alternative teaching and learning strategies, leadership approaches and management practices has to be better. Toward that end, the chapter advocates the transformation of the school as a learning community, led by a value-based, enabling and empowering leadership.

Learning or muddling through? Why learning schools are critical

Given the relentless change and the speed of knowledge and technological obsolescence that confront us, only the learning schools—a term implying flexible proactive and adaptive schools that learn from their experience and

respond accordingly, as well as schools where significant learning takes place because they create the right environment in which this can happen—will thrive and survive (see Senge, 1990). Such schools *consciously* and continuously learn, develop, innovate and improvise. A truly learning community unfolds when teaching and learning processes of good quality are embedded as an integral value of the school culture and personal and collective work ethic of teachers and leaders. Here, teaching and learning of high quality is a deliberate, intentional goal, not an accidental outcome. It follows a systematic pathway, not an ad hoc one. The learning schools regard *status quo* as provisional and subject to transformation and challenge. They are therefore not allergic to risk taking, innovation and change.

Critical factors that determine the success of efforts to develop schools as learning communities include particular leadership challenges, as will be explored in the remainder of this chapter.

Commitment to quality teaching, high standards and student outcomes, ongoing capacity building and improvement is a call to school leaders to reassess and reframe their roles and priorities. Waters and Grubb (2005) stress that school principals need to distinguish between activities that are essential and those that are less important. How true this is. Increasingly, numerous bureaucratic and compliance accountabilities consume the principal's valuable time and attention (see Davies et al., 2005; Murphy & Schwarz, 2000; Portin et al., 2003). It stands to reason that if teaching and learning is the school's core business then the pedagogical leadership of the principal must be regarded as the higher priority. This argument can be extended a little further. In the hurly burly and the daily grind surrounding them, very few principals can perform all the responsibilities entirely on their own, without suffering stress and burnout. But because school management has become complex and demanding in today's educational environment, it is essential for school leaders to balance the competing demands of administrative, accountability and pedagogical needs.

Instructional or pedagogical leadership is about providing to students teaching and learning experiences that are of high quality and are sustained by evidence-based pedagogy, in a collegial and supportive environment with sound managerial structures and processes. The quality of teaching and learning is connected to the quality of teachers (Bhindi & Riley, 2003; MacNeill & Silcox, 2006). The situation calls for a reconceptualisation of leadership and a shift in the mindset ingrained in hierarchy, command and control, towards one shaped by a vision of greater shared pedagogical responsibility.

As a community of learning, schools must continuously learn, improvise and innovate; as a community of practice, schools must emphasise sharing of knowledge and reflective practice; as a community of engagement, schools must network with their stakeholders, involve them in meaningful ways and sustain genuine partnerships. Taken together, these imperatives construct a powerful learning environment in which learning communities can take root and flourish.

Schools are composed of disparate individuals with diverse experience, enthusiasm, expertise, morale, cultural baggage and workplace and personal allegiances. These individuals have their own entrenched theories of teaching and learning, excellence and outcomes. A key leadership challenge for the learning schools is how to meld individuals into synergistic, productive, learning teams. But learning teams are hard to build and harder (but not impossible) to sustain (Edmonson, Bohmer & Pisano, 2001). Adele Ferguson (1999, 14–19) identifies two key problems in managing 'dream teams': personal agendas vs team expectations; and individual credit vs team reward.

In summary, those who work in schools have a choice: muddling through individually or learning, working and growing together. Effective leadership entails providing incentives for collaborative work. But as Kohm and Nance (2009: 68) note, school leaders must set the example and the pace:

> Principals who drive collaborative cultures shift from being the person who sets the goal to being the person who sets up conditions that allow others to establish goals.

In this regard, those who lead or manage professionals would do well to understand the nature and mission of their organisations, the kind of people who work therein, the values they espouse, their compulsions and hang-ups and the nature of the work they do (see for example, Winsborough & Marshall, 2000).

Collegiality goes hand in hand with collaboration. Although collegiality is often cited as the main plank of professionals such as teachers, it does not occur naturally and cannot be taken for granted, especially in the context of latent competition. Barth (2006) argues that good schools assiduously work towards building a culture of collegiality that breaks down the cells of professional isolation but as Sinclair (1995) points out, professionals tend to override structures and there is constant struggle between wanting to belong and wanting to be separate. In other words, collegiality needs to be deliberately nurtured, encouraged and practised.

In learning communities, staff competence—individual and collective—is vital but it can and does change over time as external dynamics and institutional needs and priorities shift. Consequently, to invest in ongoing professional learning and development is a crucial need.

Reframing leadership: Interdependence or solo flight?

What kind of leadership is necessary to drive the transformational agenda of quality teaching and continuous learning? What kind of management structure can better serve, engage and involve teachers and students in the decisional processes?

If the learning community agenda is to advance, then the leaders must first reject the industrial, hierarchical, boss-centred leadership models in favour of people-centred ones (Bhindi, 1997; Mulford, 2005; Senge, 1990).

Recent kindred movements in education such as Distributive Leadership (see Harris, 2004; MacNeill & Silcox, 2006), Teacher Leadership (Crowther et al., 2009), Parallel Leadership (Crowther et al., 2001) and Authentic Leadership (Bhindi & Duignan, 1997; Duignan & Bhindi, 1997) stress the significance of interdependence and collaboration as their underpinning value. They question the appropriateness of the apical, heroic, authoritarian, coercive, manipulative and patriarchal leadership, which has dominated our workplaces over the years (Block, 1993; Bradford & Cohen, 1998;). Among others, distributed leadership has emerged as a serious alternative and deserves consideration. Harris (2004: 3), a prolific commentator on distributive leadership, observes:

> Distributed leadership implies a redistribution of power and a realignment of authority within the organization. It means creating the conditions in which people work together and learn together, where they construct and refine meaning leading to a shared purpose or set of goals. It implies inter-dependency rather than dependency.

However, the sustainability of a distributive leadership is connected to the commitment and willingness of leaders to distribute or share power and expertise to enable their colleagues to learn, grow and succeed as leaders. On the part of the staff, it implies a willingness to participate, readiness to contribute individual and collective effort and demonstrate personal and shared responsibility for outcomes. Notwithstanding the promise of distributed leadership, scholars such as Mulford (2008: 45) have cautioned

that the 'superficial appeal of distributed leadership lies in the ease with which it can become all things to all people' while Timperley (2005) contends that empirical study is needed on how distributed leadership works in more and less successful schools.

Another compelling leadership approach is Crowther and colleagues' (2001: 141) paradigm of parallel leadership, which acknowledges teachers as important partners and leaders in their own right.

> Parallel leadership engages teacher leaders and administrator leaders in collaborative action, while at the same time encouraging the fulfilment of their individual capabilities, aspirations and responsibilities. It leads to strengthened alignment between the school's vision and the school's teaching and learning practices. It facilitates the development of a professional learning community, culture building and schoolwide approaches to teaching and learning.

The proponents of the distributive and teacher leadership movements are agreed that no leaders or managers, no matter how competent, efficient or enthusiastic, can live in isolation and operate on their own, without the support and commitment of their colleagues to extend their institution's core mission. As Kouzes and Posner (1987: 131) point out:

> Leaders know that they cannot do it alone. It takes partners to get extraordinary things done in organizations. Leaders build teams with spirit and cohesion, teams that feel like family. They actively involve others in planning and give them discretion to make their own decisions. Leaders make others feel like owners, not hired hands.

More to the point, the reality is that no school leader has total mastery over all the complex subject or instructional areas; all must therefore rely on the advice, input and expertise of colleagues who may be more experienced and knowledgeable than the *positional* leader.

Considering the distinct features of the learning community and drawing on the central theme of the interdependence of distributed leadership and parallel leadership, I argue that structured teacher empowerment can enliven schools as learning communities. However, three questions raised by Quinn and Spreitzer (1997: 38) are pertinent:

How do people develop a sense of empowerment?
What organizational characteristics facilitate employee empowerment?
What can leaders do to facilitate empowerment?

Quinn and Spreitzer find two contrasting perspectives on empowerment, each based on different assumptions. The first perspective sees empowerment as delegation and accountability. It is a top-down, mechanistic view that emphasises control and compliance. The second perspective sees empowerment as a 'process of risk taking', and personal growth based on mutualism, tolerance and trust (see also Crowther et al., 2001).

The Quinn and Spreitzer (1997: 41) research finds four characteristics common to most empowered people.

- Empowered people have a sense of self-determination (this means that they are free to choose how to do their work; they are not micro-managed).
- Empowered people have a sense of meaning (they feel that their work is important to them; they care about what they are doing).
- Empowered people have a sense of competence (this means that they are confident about their ability to do their work well; they know they can perform).
- Finally, empowered people have a sense of impact (this means that people believe they can have influence on their work unit; others listen to their ideas).

Clearly, the credibility and reception of empowerment squarely rests on how it is fostered and implemented.

Research by Blasé and Blasé (1997) suggests that the discussion on teacher empowerment should focus on leadership strategies of principals and ways in which they have an impact on teachers' sense of empowerment. Secondly, it is important to 'capture' teachers' own perceptions of the characteristics of empowering school leaders and what being empowered means to them. Their study pointed to seven critical strategies and teacher characteristics that influence teachers' sense of empowerment: demonstrating trust in teachers; developing shared governance structures; encouraging and listening to individual input; encouraging individual teacher autonomy; encouraging innovation, creativity, and risk-taking; giving rewards; and providing support.

In a similar vein, Forrester (2000) identifies six channels to 'High Voltage Empowerment' by: enlarging the power of the empowered; being sure of what you want to do; differentiating among employees; supporting power sharers; building suitable systems; and focusing on results.

The research cited in this chapter leads to the conclusion that school leadership is critical and capable of creating optimal conditions and

structures to enact schools as empowered learning communities. Of course, the authenticity of leadership intention and action will determine the extent to which empowerment is real or a passing fad or a cynical attempt to manipulate people and fob off additional workload to others. Duignan and Bhindi (1997) contend that leadership authenticity is demonstrated by commitment to mutualism, interdependence, honesty and sincerity, ethical and moral behaviour, personal integrity and 'walking the talk'. Authentic leaders nurture and nourish others through personal example and mentoring, while providing them with the 'space' to grow, improve, and renew their confidence, competence and capability. Their authenticity is conveyed through their stewardship and service. In the words of Kouzes and Posner (1993: xvii), such leaders:

> hold to an ethic of service and are genuinely respectful of the intelligence and contributions of their constituents. They want leaders who will put principles ahead of politics, and other people before self-interest.

Kouzes and Posner (1993: 187) further stress:

> Leaders must make certain that other people's highest priority needs are being taken care of first. They must ask whether those being served are growing—becoming healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more capable—and are more likely themselves to become servant leaders. The service of leaders is the basis of their credibility.

The people-centred, values-driven platform leaders stand on influences their leadership behaviour and work ethics and defines their commitment to 'strengthening others'. Describing such leadership, Bhindi (2003: 20) has observed:

> People must learn to return respect and uphold the dignity of others. They need authentic leaders: compassionate, trustworthy, inspiring leaders who are people-centred and people-builders: the horse whisperers and rag pickers, not ratbags and cowboys. School leaders can practise authenticity by upholding interdependence, building self-esteem among teachers and pupils, and growing new leaders. However, being people-centred is not a code for being 'touchy feely'. Nor is it a pretext for accepting shoddy or pedestrian performance. Creative leaders find ways of actively engaging the underperformers and artful dodgers to ensure that they also do their fair share of work.

The success of learning communities depends on how genuinely the school leadership fosters interdependence, mutual respect, collaboration

and collective and individual responsibility. These leaders invest in ongoing professional learning and capacity building; create structures that synergise efforts and outcomes; model authenticity, compassion and excellence; encourage and ensure resources for innovation and change; and support institutional and individual renewal and resilience.

Conclusion

In his influential book, *How to Get Your School Moving and Improving,* Dinham (2008: 205) argues that 'the failure to address the "how" aspects of establishing and maintaining learning communities' is a key weakness in the learning community movement. Drawing on common principles from four research studies, he nominates a range of critical determinants of successful learning communities: teaching and learning; individual and collective view and support; emphasis on problem solving; high professional expectations and accountability; and leadership and outside influence. We can incorporate this list into a useful action template beginning first with the following steps:

1. *Conducting critical dialogue.* What are we currently doing? How is what we are proposing better than and different from the status quo? Who else has done it with what success?

2. *Enlisting significant champions* to help design the blueprint for transformation.

3. *Agreeing on critical success factors,* in particular
   - vision and values underpinning the proposed learning community
   - intended pedagogical objectives and strategies
   - shared leadership
   - stakeholder participation in decision-making
   - collaborative and collegial management structures
   - quality assurance mechanisms
   - resource provision
   - staff professional learning and development.

4. *Implementation,* evaluation of evidence and further action.

In my opinion, the biggest challenge likely to be faced in the transformation of schools as learning communities is moving the entrenched

culture, removing deep-rooted learning disabilities and defensive behaviours and breaking resistance to change. Unless these attitudes and behaviours are unlearnt, there is little prospect of transiting to new learning. MacBeath (2006) reports eight top organisational learning disabilities, which may also be relevant to schools.

- An inability to profit from past experience.
- A resistance to exploiting available technology and novel tactics.
- An aversion to reconnaissance, coupled with a dislike of intelligence (in both senses of the word).
- An apparent imperviousness to loss of life and human suffering amongst the rank and file.
- A tendency to lay the blame on others.
- A love of bull, smartness, precision and strict preservation of the military pecking order.
- A high regard for tradition and other aspects of conservatism.
- A lack of creativity, improvisation, inventiveness and open-mindedness.

Invariably, transformative initiatives such as the learning community will demand reculturing and restructuring where status quo, old habits, complacency and existing mindsets and power plays will be disturbed, challenged and threatened. Since resistance is a multidimensional dynamic, multiple resistance-breaking strategies will have to be mustered. In particular, leaders as change agents need tact and diplomacy to 'sell the learning idea' and assuage doubts and apprehensions. They will need pedagogical credibility to sustain the momentum of ongoing adaptation, reform and innovation. Importantly, the breaking down of self-imposed teacher isolation in their classrooms can be assisted when a professional culture of collaborative learning, critical professional dialogue and collegiality takes hold and permeates throughout the school (Dinham, 2008).

It follows then that the teachers must also be convinced about the merit of learning schools; they must be au fait with the underlying principles of the approach, and they must be prepared to engage in reflective practice and their own ongoing professional learning and improvement.

Thus, in the context of significant change, leaders will have to hone and demonstrate resistance-breaking skills as a part of their role as culture builders.

Finally, if we accept the arguments proposed in Dinham and Bhindi then

the selection, recruitment and preparation of values-based, enabling and empowering leadership is critical to the success of learning schools. A matter of concern is the quality of many existing leadership programs, which are based on outdated assumptions. These often lack currency, research evidence and cultural and contextual relevance and are conducted by individuals or institutions with little credibility. A complete overhaul of the off-the-shelf, one-size-fits-all leadership development strategy is therefore inevitable and overdue (Dinham & Bhindi, 2005; Mulford, 2008).

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4

Values-based leadership in schools

Bhagwanji K. Bhindi

> *If you want to move people, it has to be toward a vision that is positive for them, that taps important values, that gets them something they desire, it has to be presented in a compelling way, that they feel inspired to follow.*
>
> Martin Luther King, Jr

This paper explores the power of values-based leadership in creating a positive, congenial and vibrant values-based education in schools. It draws on literature research, personal experiences (as head of educational schools, spanning more than thirty years) and critical self-reflection. It emphasises that values-based leadership, if nurtured and moulded with 'values' and 'ethics', can lead to the establishment and promotion of values-based education in schools. In addition, it examines how values-based leadership could enhance a shared vision of the school, its mission and its core values as a learning organisation.

Because the subject of values-based leadership is multidimensional and complex, a single short paper clearly cannot be comprehensive. This study, then, endeavours to unfurl the following aspects of values-based leadership in schools:

- the meaning and implications of values-based leadership
- the need to foster values-based leadership
- outstanding qualities of values-based leadership
- comparison with other leadership styles
- methods of inculcating and nurturing values-based leadership
- my experiments and experiences as head of various schools.

Meaning and implications of values-based leadership

Organisations live and perish by their leadership. Ultimately, it is the leader's effectiveness in articulating the vision for the desired future and establishing an appropriate values-driven culture that determines and pursues organisational goals. Values determine behaviour and behaviour determines performance. Values-based leaders effectively engage, motivate, inspire and develop their colleagues. They establish a culture that enables transformational sustainable change, resulting in effective implementation, innovation and outstanding performance.

According to Hughes and is co-authors (2006) leaders face dilemmas that require choices between competing sets of values and priorities, and *best* leaders recognise and face them with a commitment to doing what is right and not what is merely expedient.

Gardner (1990) and Burns (1978) strongly emphasise the centrality and importance of the moral dimension of leadership. Gardner argues that leaders ultimately must be judged on the basis of a framework of values, not just in terms of their effectiveness. Leaders should always treat others as ends in themselves and not as objects or mere means to the leader's ends. Burns maintains that leaders who do not behave ethically do not demonstrate true leadership.

Without focusing on personal gains, values-based leadership as a leadership philosophy brings value to the school and its students, teachers, parents and guardians, and stakeholders. When leaders embrace values-based leadership, then, and only then, can they realise personal fulfilment and lasting significance. Through this selfless pursuit of worthy goals, individual leaders will make an indelible imprint. Taylor (2010) describes it eloquently: 'When leaders value integrity, it leads to the belief that being honest and authentic is important and makes a positive difference in working with others'. Leadership is the lifting of man's vision and spirit to higher levels.

Bennis and Goldsmith (1997) describe four qualities of leadership that engender trust: vision, empathy, consistency and integrity. Followers tend to trust leaders who create a compelling vision. A leader should inspire his team to pull together on the basis of shared beliefs and a common sense of organisational purpose and belonging.

Values-based leadership is different from other modes in that it includes effectiveness, morality and time. Effectiveness measures the achievement of

the objectives and morality measures how change affects students, teachers, parents and guardians, and stakeholders. Time measures the desirability of any goal over the long term. Values-based leadership is not simply about style, how-to, following some recipe or formula, or even energising followers to pursue a goal that they had never thought possible. In practical terms, it is about creating conditions under which all followers can, independently and effectively, perform a single objective.

Leadership is a function of character: for leadership to be great, character needs to be great as well. The ability to lead is built on character and ethics. Leadership is a lifelong pursuit in which time and experience matter greatly. It is fraught with pain and exhilaration; despair and hope; adversity and prosperity, ruin and fortune. A values-based leader works and walks the talk despite odds.

A smart values-based leader faces reality with equanimity and focuses on the future. Moreover, he or she, seeing change as an opportunity, creates a positive self-image of the organisation and its members, displays integrity and learning ability, lives the values, and above all helps people and organisations become more creative, innovative and joyful.

Genuine leadership comes from the quality of the vision the leader embraces and the ability to spark others to extraordinary performance. Values-based vision can be very powerful in leading colleagues, in the collegial spirit, to the desired goal(s).

Leadership is personal, a combination of a leader's inherent and learned behaviours born of personal value sets. While personal qualities are important, they are beyond control or development by a leader. Traits become a precondition and a foundation for leaders to build upon in the form of behaviours, actions and values (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991).

According to Bennis and Goldsmith (1997: 5) 'Leaders are made, not born and made by themselves rather than by any external means. Second, no leader sets out to be a leader per se, but rather to express himself freely and fully'. Ultimately, the leadership style one radiates springs from one's core ideas, feelings and above all values embedded in the nature of man.

Morris (2005) expresses the opinion that 90% of each individual's core values are locked-in by age ten. During the teen years, imprinted values are tested and confirmed. These are the values that are used to judge other people, interrelationships and events throughout the individual's life. Only a significant emotional event will alter those values during adulthood. According to Massey, since all interrelationships and interactions with the

world are filtered through the lens of personal values, it is hypocritical not to consider values as an integral part of leadership.

These thoughts seem to suggest that to be an effective leader an individual should adopt a leadership model that aligns with the individual's own personal values and personality. DePree (1992) presented this a little differently: a leader's behaviour *expresses* a personal set of values, whether they are articulated or not.

O'Toole (1996) observed that values-based and effective leaders illuminate their followers' better side, revealing what is good in them and thus ultimately giving them hope. In the end, the leader's vision becomes their vision too, because it is built on the foundation of their needs and aspirations. Values-based leadership, he proposed, must demonstrate the following characteristics: • integrity; • vision; • trust; • listening; • respect for followers; • clear thinking; and • inclusion.

The need to foster values-based leadership

Contemporary society may, according to many commentators, currently be characterised by violent activities, behavioural disorders, increasing rates of drug and substance abuse, truancy, invidious peer pressure, corruption, child abuse, sexual abuse, harassment, and a general lack of respect for elders, schools, teachers and authorities. In the face of this scenario it appears absolutely essential to have values-based leaders to provide stewardship and values-based education to students. In recent years, for instance, Fiji has witnessed an upsurge in these negative values, which alarmists aver are imposing their negative effects on the people in general and young people in particular. It seems imperative, therefore, to develop values-based leaders to lead schools so that they can provide leadership that promotes enduring and universal values, such as love, peace, cooperation, unity in diversity, responsibility, sharing and caring, compassion and other similar values. There is a need to promote and consolidate those values that transcend racial, religious, social, political and cultural boundaries. The climate of change and diversity in the Pacific region is throwing up crucial issues that leaders in schools will have to tackle in a philosophical, sociological, psychological, spiritual and values-based way.

A further argument for values-based leadership is that development along western economic models is rapidly changing roles of parents, who are becoming so preoccupied with their work and personal advancement

that they are, increasingly, unable to spend enough 'quality time' with their children, and thus are not able to instil cardinal values of respect, caring and sharing, honesty, handling peer pressure, cooperation and the like, which would help their children to deal with everyday situations. Here the school may of necessity be left to take on the 'saviour' role, so to say.

With the accelerated pace of change affecting various facets of our life, it is necessary to reflect and react so that the changes are not absorbed hook, line and sinker. Students ought to be trained to be selective and discriminating in accepting change(s) so that what they internalise will be beneficial and worthwhile. We all need to be mindful to imbibe only those changes that are worthwhile and meaningful not only to us, but also to our families, communities, society and the nation. Here again the critical role of values-based leadership counts so much in terms of moulding and unfolding the minds of students. In this endeavour values-based teachers play a phenomenal role. I would call it a symbiotic combination of the leader and teachers to work toward nurturing values-enthused students.

Values-based leadership in the context of Fiji

For Fiji, a multiracial, multicultural, multireligious and multilingual country, it is essential to have values-based leaders who are sensitive to the diversity of values and people. Thus a values-based leadership style would be appropriate to foster shared values where people can live together peacefully, inclusively and sustainably, while observing human rights and respecting diversity. It is enriching and meaningful to celebrate diversity rather than to seek to deny it or see it as a threat.

Fiji joins the rest of the world in going through a period of dramatic changes in different fields; for example, communication is revolutionised as a result of internet connections, online education and technological advancement, to the point where we are now talking of a borderless world. Coupled with this, there are other negative forces that have gripped Fiji, such as a rapid erosion of cultural, social and spiritual values, and a concomitant build-up of violent, abusive or disordered behaviours of various kinds, as we have noted earlier. In the face of the escalation of negative forces among young and old, values-based leadership must be considered carefully as an essential strategy for managing the situation in society and more importantly, in schools.

Here in Fiji, to curb the growing problems of drugs and substance abuse, the Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of basic Education (PRIDE) Project at the University of the South Pacific provided funding of FJD$40,000 to run a series of workshops (Lingam, 2004). These workshops are aimed at raising awareness of the dangers and risks associated with drugs (see Natau et al., 2010). This implies that there is a striking need to develop values-based leadership at school level.

Leadership is the most used and multifaceted word in educational circles yet the current scenario in Fiji is such that the Government's 2010 decree reducing the retirement age of professional educators from 60 years to 55 years has left an unfortunate vacuum at leadership levels. Leadership roles have been thrust upon those professionals who were one step below those that were asked to retire. This has caused a crisis situation at the leadership level because those that have taken over had not been adequately prepared for such a critical and crucial role. The call to develop values-based leadership and general leadership training is all the more urgent.

Qualities of values-based leadership

Values-based leadership emphasises shared vision, mission, goals and core values. Such a leader is values-driven to achieve shared dreams. A leader of this mental makeup spreads the fragrance of belongingness, identity and ownership in leading a school.

Values-based leadership is about understanding the different and often conflicting needs of colleagues, energising them to pursue a goal that they had never thought possible. In practical terms, it is about creating conditions under which all colleagues can perform independently and effectively toward a single agreed objective.

Values-based leaders should have the potential, influence, faith and courage to foster and sustain shared values, vision, mission and goals to bring about desired positive change(s) in their colleagues through shared critical and reflective thinking. It is vital for a leader to respect differences in views and perspectives. It is true to say that the vision and mission of a school, or for that matter any organisation, become vibrantly alive only when they are shared. There is profound power in shared vision for it helps to take the institution forward in achieving its set goals. The beauty of shared vision lies in the philosophy that the stakeholders who are connected with that vision tend to own and identify with it. Therefore, they make every effort

to achieve it. In short, values-based leaders actively engage in instilling and embedding shared values in their colleagues.

A values-based leader is one who is a perpetual learner. Learning is the essential 'fuel' for the leader; the source of high-octane energy that keeps up the momentum by continually sparking new understanding, new ideas and new challenges. If the leader is seen as an active learner from the environment, others will emulate that model; much as a child emulates a parent, so a student emulates a teacher.

A values-based leader has the capacity to unite the students, teachers, parents, guardians and stakeholders into a 'responsible community' to take responsibility for the success of the school and its long-term survival. He or she goes even beyond in instilling the element of 'family virtues' in the colleagues, students, parents and guardians so as to keep them united as members of the school family. Of course, the endeavours to foster this may come up against a few 'rebels', dissenters and detractors in the so called family, but an enlightened values-based leader would be able to visualise it and work assiduously towards overcoming negative forces in a positive and energy enthused way.

For a values-based leader the means used to achieve the goal are just as important as the goal itself. The means chosen need to be values-based and ethical; there must be no resort to the principle that 'the end justifies the means'.

Values-based leaders infuse collectives or organisations, and work with ideological values by articulating an ideological vision, a vision of a better future to which colleagues are claimed to have a moral right. By claiming that colleagues have this need to strive right, the values articulated in the vision are rendered ideological—expressions of what is morally right and good or acceptable. Ideological values are usually, if not always, end values that are intrinsically satisfying in their own right. Examples include independence, dignity, equality, the right to education and self-determination, beauty, a world of peace and order. According to values-based leadership theory, the visions articulated by this genre of leaders are consistent with the collective identity of the colleagues, and are emotionally and motivationally arousing.

A values-based leader sets an uncompromising example, demonstrating integrity; selflessly serving and raising others in genuine humility; showing compassion by caring for others and developing their potential; being purpose driven, aligning with school vision, mission and core values; demonstrating courage and persevering to do the right thing; being self-disciplined,

holding her or himself and others accountable; and showing gratitude and appreciation, acknowledging the contributions of others.

Goldring and Rallis (1993) assert that teachers need reflective and prudent guidance from their leaders in a shared decision-making process. School leaders must endeavour to encourage shared responsibility for school decision-making, which works for the best interests of the entire school community (Sergiovanni, 1996). The process entails leaders in sharing power with school members and extending cooperation to the school community, engaging in problem finding and problem solving (Goldring & Sullivan, 1996; Hallinger & Hausman, 1994). Mulford and his colleagues (1997) suggest that team work occupies centre stage to the life of a collaborative school, with teachers being given the drive to be leaders where collegiality is valued as an important component of a professional learning community.

Leadership styles in schools

Let us have a glimpse of different types of leadership styles in order to arrive at a better understanding and appreciation of values-based leadership. 'Leadership is communicating to people their worth and potential so clearly that they come to see it in themselves' (Covey, 2005: 98). This definition implies the essence of leadership that has an impact and truly endures, for the quality of this leadership lies especially in the ability to make other people aware of their worth and potential with such clarity, power and consistency that they really come to see it in themselves; in this way, leaders set in motion the processes of seeing, doing and becoming.

Different leaders exhibit different leadership styles depending on the kind of organisation, the organisational culture and given set of situations. An effective leader uses an appropriate leadership style according to the situation.

In the context of school, various types of leadership have been encouraged to address the needs of students and the overall needs of education. Educational leadership has been studied over years to address and analyse long-standing concerns of students, educators, parents and guardians and society as a whole. As the need to understand which types of leadership style in schools will work best, alone or in combination, it is important to understand these types individually in regard to their method and what they offer.

With an eye to reform, many educationists have either supported or criticised certain leadership styles; which style suits and works best is always

subject to opinion. It is true that there is no single way to lead and inspire in the field of education. Each educator, and no doubt each school, views leadership strategies differently, as situations, features and actions seem far more favourable than others at different levels and times. The range of styles leadership in schools includes the following.

Hierarchical. The traditional methods of education tended to favour a hierarchical structure reinforcing a top-down approach. In such systems, all courses of action are asserted and carried out with formal authority, which allows little scope for participatory analysis by other members of the staff even in the limited amount of responsibility assigned to them. The administrative head, the principal, shoulders all duties of planning, supervision, analysis, resource allocation and other related responsibilities. The role of subordinates at various levels is restricted to carrying out and policing policies decided at the top.

Authoritarian. In this mode, usually scarcely separable from a hierarchical system, the leader informs the teachers of what they should do and how they should accomplish the target. It is essentially the use of power over people. The leader does not take the advice of the teachers while giving orders. This kind of style has no place in a friendly working environment and particularly in a school environment.

Bureaucratic. Here the leader works by leaning on the help of a book. The book contains all the rules and regulations that the teachers and members of the school community must follow. In a school situation the leader has to be discreet when using this style and look at the situation critically. The major weakness of this style, though, is that no matter how good the book and how closely it is followed, there is unlikely ever to be perfect fit between the book, the people and the situations: a high degree of flexibility, adaptability and judgment will always be called for.

Transformational. This style is based on the concept of working together to put in place a mechanism that will reap immediate and future benefits. It opens the door for intellectual excitement, motivation through values and a shared vision by encouraging participation in leadership activities. A leader who employs transformational leadership fosters a sense of purpose and meaning to unite the staff behind a shared cause and vision.

Facilitative. This style is very similar to the strategies used in the transformational style, but is even more democratic as well as interactive in practice. A facilitative leader works with the entire management and teachers, offering them partnership in preparing for the future. This is achieved through enhancement of collective ideas and by inculcating—in leader and all staff—the sense of being part of the team, rather than placing at the centre the leader without whom nothing could happen. Empowering the entire school system is the main goal of the leader practising a facilitative leadership style.

The main purpose of introducing these different leadership styles is to view the values-based leadership approach from a new standpoint and appreciate its features much more deeply. What works best for which institution and how it needs to be is based on careful strategic planning and consideration of each institution's individualised vision. Ideally, a leader should use strategies and options flexibly to balance both short- and long-term goals, and above all, to serve the institutional values.

Developing values-based leadership

It is important to consider ways of developing values-based leadership. This cannot happen overnight for it needs to be nurtured, keeping in mind the personality and nature of the person and her or his attitude to learning.

Workshops and seminars. School administrators and potential leaders need to be encouraged to participate actively in workshops and seminars that concentrate on leadership development. In such workshops and seminars participants build a learning community with others where they discover the quintessence of leadership practices. They can learn a practical model for integrating values into leadership practice. Participants are also awakened to the potential fulfilment that awaits them as they live in harmony with their deepest values. Seminars and workshops can specialise in their focus: direction setting—vision, purpose and values; communication—helping leaders to know and develop a capacity for effective communication; conflict management—managing by values; and problem-solving and values-based decision making.

One-on-one coaching for values-based leaders. Coaching for values-based leaders helps individuals to call upon their own depths of being in order to exert a positive influence in the school of which they are part. Experts

in leadership and in particular, values-based leadership, can be invited to provide training to leaders at different levels in the school. Of course, the initiative, enthusiasm, and genuineness of the participants are vital for the overall success of the organisation. Coaching is a powerful skill and value. It helps one to turn ordinary conversations with staff into opportunities. Additional beneficial effects flow on to their motivation and the leader's relationship with them, including leadership credibility.

Attachment of leaders to another school. An effective way of training school principals is by attaching them to schools with a proven record. The Ministry of Education can play an influential role in facilitating the program. A principal of one school, for example, can be attached to another school principal for a term (14 weeks). Here he or she will gain a deeper understanding of how another school is managed in terms of academic performance, day to day management of various activities, monitoring and assessment of teachers' performance , school climate and ethos, decision making processes, and above all, promotion and integration of values at all levels of school activities. When he or she returns to continue the leadership role in the 'home' school, then he or she will be in an enlightened position to lead.

Reading literature on values-based leadership. Reading, research and application will enhance a leader's performance as a values-driven leader. This will depend on how much the leader is motivated and has the strong desire to deepen the knowledge of the role he or she is playing. A leader needs to be open-minded, genuine, research oriented and above all, conscience-driven.

Retreat. With the support and collaboration of school management, a school can schedule a two-day retreat, for example on values-based leadership, for the deputy principal, heads of department and teachers. This will enable not only leaders, but also teachers and school management members to achieve higher levels of performance. Furthermore, people will be committed to the organisation's direction and vision, and they will feel a sense of personal empowerment in achieving better results.

In these ways and others, values-based leadership can be cultivated and nurtured.

My experiments and experiences as a head of school

Presented here as an illustration of values-based leadership are some of the experiments and experiences I initiated at a Suva secondary school where I spent 13 years as principal, Mahatma Gandhi Memorial (MGM) High School. This school is a co-educational, multiracial and multicultural school, named after a noble soul, Mahatma Gandhi, whose philosophy of love, non-violence, truth, justice, forgiveness and humility is well documented and attested in books, films, journals and research studies.

In consultation and collaboration with and supported by teachers, parents and guardians, and school management, we drew up a list of shared and acceptable values that the school would attempt to instil and nurture in its students. Some of the agreed values were: a shared vision and mission for the school, compassion and kindness, faith and courage, ethics and morality, respect and obedience, duty and responsibility, humility and strength, happiness and prosperity, appearance and reality, non-violence and peace, honesty and truth, punctuality and time management—in truth, an ambitious and noble list. The principal and teachers, backed by the school management, launched the Human and Moral Values program in the assembly where members of the school community were present. It was launched with great enthusiasm and the students' reception of the program was encouraging. The rationale and philosophy, including the modus operandi of the program, were explained to them. This marked a milestone for the school. The vision, mission and theme of the school were explicitly and openly shared with students.

Vision

Nurturing the whole person through the head, the heart and the hands

Mission

To achieve academic excellence and to nurture learning for life
through integration of enduring values
so that students become worthy and caring citizens of Fiji

Theme

Discovering the treasure within

The infusion of values in the vision, mission and theme is evident and this set the positive and congenial tone and ethos to commence the Human and Moral Values program for the school. It has now become an integral part of the school curriculum.

The parents and guardians were excited that the school was embarking on teaching and learning of Human and Moral Values education and their interest and support were overwhelming. In this case the role of the principal in promoting and consolidating values education through collaboration of stakeholders was crucial, especially in the actual implementation of the program. This program confirmed my belief that values-based leadership is vital and influential in achieving shared goals.

The values-based theme ‘Discovering the treasure within’ proved exciting and meaningful. This theme is based on the premise that students’ and teachers’ hidden talents manifest when they are given the opportunity. The school endeavoured to provide a wide range of opportunities to students and teachers, such as intra- and inter-form debates, oratory, sports activities, a beautification program, role plays, drama, creative writing and reading, and morning talk on burning issues. The beautification program was aimed at making the MGM environment attractive and meaningful and helping both teachers and students recognise and appreciate aesthetic values. In short, it helped them in re-establishing some links with the natural environment even in the midst of the man-made one.

Values-based leadership components enabled the principal to convince everyone, in a genuine manner, to undertake the project.

In producing the school newsletter, ‘Reachout’, the principal ensured that the content was values-based. The principal’s message to parents, guardians and students began with values-based statements such as, ‘Let’s walk and talk together to achieve excellence’, ‘Let’s team up to achieve our shared dreams’, ‘Together we achieve more’ and ‘Striving towards peace and understanding through non-violence and love’.

These values-based and values-driven newsletters to students, parents and guardians created a close bond between them and the school. This was made possible through the values-based leadership style of the principal. It became evident that values-based leadership practice bore sweet fruits and the students’ feedback came in the form of the refrain, ‘Values and values-based knowledge learnt at the school is helping me/us to cope with the challenges of life’.

On critical reflection, I realised an important gap in this exercise: the failure to include the students in formulating the values-based themes for the school. Since students were the target population it would have been thoughtful and prudent to include them as part of the team. Their contribution would have added meaning and strength to the project of instilling and nurturing human and moral values education at the school. Students are a very powerful force that can help drive the school in achieving shared goals. Their inclusion will add strength, meaning and grandeur to school activities.

Conclusion

My experiences show that school leaders display different leadership styles, depending on the nature of the situation, their values system imbibed over the years, their trials and tribulations, the kind of leaders they have experienced and their intellectual capacity and social, moral, ethical and spiritual bent of mind. A values-based leader is conscience-driven, vision- driven, knowledge-driven, values-driven, humility-driven, dream-driven and respect-driven.

Leaders who have well-developed people skills, to manage the complex human interactions that take place between people and to ensure they get the best out of them, recognise that to achieve success they need the knack of involving other people. Their good conceptual skills and values-based judgment enable them to see opportunities where others cannot.

It is also important to have mechanisms in place to ensure that the values in a school community are continually kept alive. It is very easy to allow values to fade away into the background, especially when times are hard or schools are experiencing times of stress. To this end, continually updating practices in line with the values helps to keep them fresh, and building annual themes around specific values can assist in embedding them in the school.

To ensure values really are ‘lived’, they need to be turned into measurable practices. Measuring practices helps focus staff attention on what is important; it guides their behaviour and the future direction. Values-based leadership is about authenticity, it is about being genuine and sincere. It is about a dual focus on motivating people and on achieving results. In addition, it is about the very attributes that inspire and motivate teachers, students and the school community to produce sustainable results and outstanding returns on investment. A values-based leader promotes shared vision, mission, culture, ethos and outcomes of the organisation. Visions are created to inspire and

stimulate people into action. Therefore, for a values-based leader:

'Purpose' covers 'What are we here for?'
'Vision' handles 'Where are we going?'
'Values' answers 'What behaviours will guide us on our journey?'

Values are the life blood of the school and as a result it is important that they are 'lived' on a daily basis. It is essential that they are widely understood and practised so that they can guide staff behaviour in appropriate ways. Leadership with values shows the direction and culture of the progress of a school. It helps in building a foundation in the school that guides and directs how people behave with each other, what is important and where resources should be focused. This is possible when school leaders generate collegiality. It is the capability to lead that must be coupled with the practical skills that leaders need to have to manage their day-to-day affairs. It can be considered to be a special type of power, which can command and focus resources to achieve a particular vision, change or goals. By living the values they share with the school, their collegiality can transform the school into a vibrant, conducive and meaningful learning organisation.

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5

School leadership and student learning outcomes

Narsamma Lingam

This chapter discusses school leadership, particularly the instructional role of school leaders and the impact this has on student learning outcomes. Each of the five leadership dimensions derived from the literature is explained in the following sections, emphasising how these dimensions influence student learning outcomes.

Leadership behaviours that have a direct influence on the school and classroom conditions ultimately have a direct impact on student learning outcomes. Reviews of research literature suggest that successful school leadership influences student learning outcomes in several ways (Cotton, 2003; Hallinger, 2005; Leithwood et al., 2004; Robinson et al., 2009). School leaders do not normally work directly with students; the question is, then, how does the instructional leadership role of the school leader influence student learning outcomes? Recent research on the instructional leadership role of school leaders indicates its direct impact on student learning outcomes. Investigations have uncovered five dimensions that contribute towards this improved student learning:

- setting educational goals
- allocating resources
- promoting professional development opportunities
- monitoring and evaluating learning and teaching
- creating a safe and pleasant learning environment.

The following sections discuss each of these dimensions together with how school leaders could play their part to influence better student learning outcomes.

Setting educational goals

The term 'educational goal' in school organisation refers to the achievement gap between the current status and the desired outcomes (Hallinger, 2003). It is something that one wants to accomplish or attain within a given timeframe. For example, school goals may describe the desired outcome a school wants to achieve at the end of the year in relation to student learning outcomes. It seems plain that measurable goals, expressed in relation to a timeline, are more likely to be achieved (Hallinger, 2003).

In a study conducted on principals of elementary schools in the USA, Brewer (1993) found that those who set high academic goals reaped high student academic gains. Conversely, low student academic achievements were returned to principals who set low academic goals. School leaders play an important role in setting academic goals for their schools. Hallinger (2005: 5), commenting on a study relating to the instructional role of school leaders, expressed a similar view:

> Instructional leaders are goal-oriented, focusing on the improvement of student academic outcomes. Given the dire straits in which they find their schools, these principals focus on a narrower mission than many of their peers.

On this basis, one can conclude that setting high educational goals directly related to the particular school context can lead to improved academic performance of the students (Hallinger, 2005).

Additionally, Leithwood and his colleagues (2004) found that students learn more and better when school leaders set group goals, model the desired behaviour, and stimulate and provide individual support to the teaching staff. Effective school leaders exert their influence by developing positive interpersonal relationships and by structuring how teachers carry out their professional work. Establishing such a relationship is a vital part of the school leader's role, for the purposes of communicating goals and setting high expectations of teachers and students (Leithwood & Riehl, 2005; Robinson et al., 2009). Setting and communicating goals frequently to the students, teachers and even to the parents emphasises the importance of school goals that guide the overall operations and functions of the school.

Policy makers, practitioners and researchers often rely solely on examination results to assess the performance of schools. In the case of Fiji, for instance, school leaders analyse the external exam results and set school goals for the following year. This data also provides teachers with feedback

on their performance and assists them in formulating their own goals. School leaders need to articulate school goals around data, as well as using the data to provide feedback to the teachers on the learning and teaching process. In a study on models of successful school leaders involving Australian schools, Gurr, Drysdale and Mulford (2006) identified high achievement goals as the key focus of schools. The authors characterise these schools as 'academic oriented' and high standards and expectations were set even for the school community.

Likewise, Cheng and Cheng (2002) stress the role of school leaders in goal development and argue that school leaders should be goal developers. School leaders who tend to be goal oriented take a leading role in developing the appropriate school mission and goals and lead teachers to plan and implement programs in order to achieve the school goals. Schools can have more than one goal; the diverse goals of schools emanate from the different structure of the organisation (Bush, 2003). In schools, for example, a crucial goal refers to the development of the full potential of all students. On the other hand, a department goal may relate to the attainment of a particular level of competence in a particular subject area, while individual goals reflect students' personal career ambition. Despite the recognition that goals may exist at different levels (Bush, 2003), there is a clear implication that these goals are aligned with the school's official goal and in turn with the ministry of education's overall goal.

The literature illustrates that people are 'motivated by goals that they find personally compelling and challenging but achievable' (Leithwood et al., 2004: 10). One of the major roles of school leaders is to set challenging and at the same time realistic goals that emphasise student learning achievement. Setting challenging and realistic goals will help motivate teachers to become more productive and in turn raise students' performance. Therefore, a school leader has to set high the school's expectations for learning and teaching, which in turn requires the leader to engage in many facilitative roles in the context of the school environment (Blase & Blase, 2003). The manner in which the leader creates the learning environment will be dependent on the leader's use of leadership perspectives, skills and dispositions. Moreover, school effectiveness research indicates that a school climate permeated with high expectations has a positive bearing on student learning outcomes (Cotton, 2003).

Upon studying the behaviours of school leaders of successful schools in Australia, Gurr and his colleagues (2006: 12) concluded that:

> Continuous improvement is emphasised . . . we will continually set goals to improve. It is now part of the culture of the school. Teachers now come with new goals, because we have changed our view of students and believe that they have the capacity to learn. We will need to continually 'up the bar' [aim higher]. It also comes with a philosophy that kids are giant sponges and a school can continually improve the way it delivers its curriculum.

Furthermore, school leaders who emphasise their instructional leadership role develop a 'systematic process of planning' and setting goals, with the ultimate mission of improving the learning outcomes of all students (Cotton, 2003). In seeking for improvement these leaders continuously change goals aligned with student learning. School leaders influence student learning indirectly by developing a school mission that provides an instructional focus and this creates a school environment that facilitates learning and teaching (Gaziel, 2007). Previous research studies have found that school principals' strong focus on academic achievement is an important determinant of student achievement (Cotton, 2003). It is apparent from Cotton's study that school leaders who have an academic focus take ownership in establishing the importance of educational goals. In addition, gathering evidence from the student performance data enables the leaders to identify any discrepancies, which then become the driving force for setting goals for improvement of student learning outcomes.

The literature suggests that school leaders who concentrate on the instructional dimension of their roles have a clear vision of goals and are strongly focused on it. Such leaders according to Robinson and associates (2009) are visionary leaders and can articulate an overall multifaceted vision of the school. Thus, to develop school goals, school leaders must have a vision of what, where and how they want to be at specified times in the future. Researchers frequently emphasise the instructional leader's critical role in establishing unambiguous and reasonable goals. Evidence suggests that school leaders fail to reach their goals because their goals are not specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (SMART) (Cotton, 2003; Hallinger, 2005). In relation to SMART goals, Robinson and associates (2009) have identified three key activities that contribute towards positive student learning: meaningful teamwork; clear and measurable goals; and regular collection and analysis of student performance data.

Educational goals are viewed as instrumental agents used by instructional leaders to focus the attention of staff, students and other stakeholders on a limited range of school activities. Instructional leaders who have such a focus

emphasise frequently to all staff, students and other stakeholders that learning is the most important objective of schooling and all concerned must reach out to help and support this important goal of the school. Perhaps the most important way for the school leader to exert effective instructional leadership is to use many different means and opportunities to communicate goals. One of the more frequently used methods is through school staff meetings and departmental meetings. As a result, teachers are encouraged to use more reflective practices and modify their classroom instruction to address the diverse learning needs of all children, simultaneously improving the learning outcomes of all children. Finally, it is the instructional leader's responsibility to provide resources and professional development opportunities that help staff to achieve the established educational goals.

Allocating resources

In their meta-analysis of research on the impact of the instructional leadership role on student learning outcomes Robinson and his associates (2009) found a small relationship between the ability of instructional leadership to marshal resources and student learning outcomes. But in an earlier study in the USA on the relationship between resource allocation and student performance in comparison of low and high performing schools, Pan, Zena and Hansen (2003) found that resource allocation strategies aligned with school improvement activities help in supporting student achievement. This accords with the notion that students with more resources typically have more learning opportunities and rely on them to perform better academically.

Based on empirical studies on the relationship between the instructional leadership role of the principal and students' success and academic achievement, Quinn (2002) reported that the role of instructional leadership in providing resources and instructional support were positively related to teacher engagement and student learning outcomes. This positive relationship reflects also that the scarcity of appropriate teaching resources impedes student learning outcomes. Obtaining and allocating the teaching and learning resources necessary for improving classroom instruction need to be aligned strategically with the people who have the expertise for their effective use. Such expertise may already exist in the school (Robinson et al., 2009). However, an important role of the school leaders is to identify the teachers with such skills so that resource use can be maximised. In working collaboratively with teachers, school leaders will be able to identify

and develop various appropriate learning and teaching resources as well as ensuring their availability and optimal use. To this end, school leaders at all levels of the school organisation have an important role to play in terms of allocating appropriate learning and teaching resources such as human, material and instructional time.

Human resource

The most important resource that school leaders manage is teachers, as the quality of their teaching has probably the strongest influence on the student learning achievement (Robinson et al., 2009). Crum and Sherman (2008) concur that teachers are the most important resource in the teaching service. For example, a report of principals from their study mentioned that the most important part of the hiring process is to make sure that the teachers selected fit well into the school community and culture. It is extremely important to select the best teacher to enter the teaching profession as student learning rests on the quality of teaching.

From a study on successful school principals in Australian schools, Mulford, Kendall, Ewington and Edmunds (2008) reported that according to the principals, the most important factor related to school improvement was the issue of quality staffing. Similarly, Quinn (2002) pointed out that the most important leadership practice that characterises the dimension of allocating human resources is the recruitment of quality teaching staff, since the quality of instruction has a significant impact on student academic achievement. The qualities of teachers that affect student learning have led researchers to debate whether teaching should be provided by professionals or left open to people without formal teacher qualifications (Darling-Hammond & Young, 2002). Nevertheless, significant contributions made by teachers on student learning both in the classrooms and as members of professional learning communities are well documented and well known internationally (Leithwood et al., 2004), who suggest further that teacher capacities account for significant amounts of variation in student learning. Included in these capacities are: basic literacy skills, subject content knowledge, pedagogical skills, pedagogical content knowledge and classroom experience.

In order to improve the quality of teaching, it is extremely important that school leaders select teachers who have these qualities and are able to exploit these skills in the learning and teaching process. Student academic achievement is greater in schools where school leaders have the opportunity

to ‘hand pick’ the majority of their staff, compared to otherwise similar schools where school leaders appointed a smaller percentage of their teaching staff (Nettles & Herrington, 2007). This is particularly true, however, where school principals ranked academic goals as their top priority. In contrast, the best resource materials are of little use if teachers cannot turn them to advantage in framing tasks related to classroom instruction. Similarly, surplus school budgets can have no constructive effect on student learning if they are not used to appoint good quality teachers and enable them to work effectively (Cohen, Raudenbush & Ball, 2003). Teacher quality is indicated by teachers’ knowledge (Cohen et al., 2003) and their ability to make effective pedagogical use of educational resource materials (Robinson et al., 2009) to foster student learning. Importantly, teachers who know their subject content well and know how to relate it to the students are more likely to make good use of the resources, with productive outcomes. Conversely, teachers who do not know the subject matter well will have difficulty in making optimal use of resources and in turn may adversely affect classroom learning and teaching.

Therefore, finding teachers with interest and capacity to further the school’s efforts in improving school performance and in turn, the learning outcomes of students is an essential role of instructional leaders. Thus, their primary task is recruiting and retaining quality teachers to lead schools in challenging circumstances.

Material resources

Changes to school infrastructure and resources serve to empower school professionals and also support them to make positive changes to classroom instruction. Classroom instruction that boosts student academic achievement requires material resources such as high-quality curricula, books and other instructional materials, laboratory equipment, computers and workspace. The importance of material resources is also emphasised by educators in Fiji:

> The work of schools and ethos of schools are affected by the condition of school buildings, facilities, and infrastructure and teaching resources. There is a strong link between the availability of quality resources and student achievement. It is therefore vital to ensure that all students are adequately provided with good educational resources and facilities. (Fiji Islands Education Commission, 2000: 472)

To enhance the quality of education it is essential to improve the basic teaching materials and general school environment. Consequently, teachers cannot teach effectively and children cannot study well in poor-quality buildings that are possibly also unsafe. This is particularly true for rural schools in Fiji. According to the the Fiji Islands Education Commission report (2000) the provision of basic resources, particularly for rural schools run by local school management committees, was simply inadequate, in areas such as toilet facilities, classroom condition and poor furniture. In addition, text books were either outdated or not available in sufficient numbers in some rural schools. Students with outdated text books have limited access to substantial up-to-date subject content in comparison with their counterparts with more advanced and the most recent published textbooks (Cohen, Raudenbush & Ball, 2003). School leaders have the authority to influence stakeholders into helping to provide adequate material resources to raise the school capacity in positive ways that can have a direct impact on student learning outcomes

Protecting instructional time

Allocation of time is what is really important in school organisation. Effective school leaders facilitate the development of school and departmental calendars devoted to school improvement activities, with an allocation of time that informs the teachers and stakeholders what is valued by the school.

Principals of high performing schools pay careful attention to allocating and protecting instructional time. Research shows that in many schools considerable instructional time is lost to excessive announcements and other administrative intrusions, too-frequent assemblies, school gatherings and other elements that the school leader has the ability to control (Cotton, 2003). Such losses in time are reflected in lower performing schools. On the other hand, instructional leaders of effective schools take the necessary precautions in protecting the instructional time. Such leaders also make arrangements for additional instructional time outside regular school time when their staff need it. One way to improve a school's performance is to increase the amount of time devoted to instruction. Studies show that the amount of time devoted to tasks is highly related to achievement (Johnson & Asera, 1999). Johnson and Asera's (1999: 3) research reports a time related strategy school principals used to improve student achievement in an urban minority group in Canada:

> School leaders created additional time for instruction. In some cases, efforts focused on creating additional time for attention to critical instructional issues during the school day. In other cases, efforts focused on creating additional time beyond the regular school day.

For example, from my many years of teaching experience in Fiji secondary schools I have observed that to make up for time lost in various ways, most schools extend the teaching time in the afternoon, and use Saturdays or even school holidays for normal teaching. Teachers are not forced to teach extended hours but they are driven by their own intrinsic motivation and the instructional leaders' constant emphasis on student achievement (Cotton, 2003). According to research (Quinn, 2002), the length of instruction offered by schools stands out as a strong predictor of student achievement. Even though the length of instruction in schools is bounded by available resources, yet efficient use of instructional time in classrooms is more determined by the management practices of teachers. The length of time students spend studying has a strong impact on learning and achievement. Not surprisingly, research indicates that students who spend more time in school tend to learn more. They also develop a greater interest in subjects and build a positive attitude towards learning when they maximise time spent on schoolwork.

In contrast, Weber (1989) argues that simply providing maximum time for curriculum instruction probably may not increase student performance. In order to increase student achievement, quality time on instructional tasks must also increase. In high performing schools, instructional leaders are seen to be respectful and supportive of instructional time by minimising interruptions and interference during teaching periods (Robinson et al., 2009). This contributes to building a pleasant learning climate that motivates both teachers and students to be actively involved in the learning and teaching activities.

Promoting professional development opportunities

Continuous professional growth of teachers is positively related to student achievement, so providing opportunities for professional development activities where staff can learn from one another will increase student performance and ultimately, be conducive to overall school improvement. Professional development has been found to influence change in instructional practice and teachers' knowledge, skills and attitudes. Robinson and her colleagues (2009) in a recent review of evidence (Best Evidence Synthesis)

concerning pedagogical leadership found that for school principals to promote the participation of staff in professional development opportunities is the most influential set of leadership behaviours. High quality professional development activities for teachers are vital for the purpose of educational improvement. No education system can rely solely on the initial professional preparation of teachers because of the changing demands of teachers' work. Teachers must have opportunities to acquire new skills, more knowledge and a great variety of pedagogical strategies to cater for the diverse needs of the learners. School leaders who give a high priority to improving student achievement lead and motivate their teachers, who are then more likely to engage in the task. If these leaders go further by offering teachers opportunities to learn how to improve learning outcomes of students through continuous professional development, it is more probable that teachers will become more knowledgeable and skilful and use a more constructivist approach in improving student academic performance (Cotton, 2003).

Timperley (2003) believes that when teachers upgrade their professional knowledge and skills within the context of an organised school-wide system, teaching practice improves. Teachers through either their own effort or team effort focus on the goal of increasing student achievement. Using in-depth research on effectiveness of professional development on literacy development of five and six year olds in seven schools in New Zealand, Timperley (2003) found that two schools with intensive professional development programs continued to make significant improvements in reading levels. As a result of professional development, teachers raised their expectations of students' achievement levels and constantly modified their teaching methods in efforts to encourage their students to perform at higher levels. In order to achieve improvement in instructional practices and increased student performance, teachers need to be engaged in meaningful professional development activities. Improvement in teaching is most likely to occur when there are opportunities for teachers to work together and learn from other teachers (Harris & Lambert, 2003).

As instructional leaders, school leaders should provide opportunities for teachers to work together on the basis of needs linked to classroom observations. Study groups, learning clusters and mentors are some of the informal mechanisms through which teachers can be encouraged to work together. A high quality mentoring through collaboration with experienced colleagues promotes professional growth. Mentoring allows experienced teachers to coach junior teachers and help them in the development of

their knowledge and skills related to teachers' world of work. Effective instructional leaders have the ability to create a culture of professional learning community in which all members of the community including teachers and students are actively involved in learning.

Monitoring and evaluating learning and teaching

Both Hallinger (2005) and Marzano and his colleagues (2005), in researching instructional leadership, identified the importance of monitoring and evaluating learning and teaching practices, which was found to include: supervising and evaluating instruction; coordinating the curriculum; providing resources in support of curriculum; and monitoring student progress. In their review of literature on the impact of instructional leadership on student achievement, Marzano and colleagues (2005) found leaders' knowledge of curriculum, assessment and instruction to be powerful predictors of student achievement. Leaders' personal involvement in planning, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating teaching and the curriculum have a significant direct impact on student achievement (Robinson et al., 2009).

Monitoring student progress

Schools are being held accountable and publicly compared on the basis of standardised test scores (Robinson et al., 2009). As a result, schools the world over are now under increasing pressure to raise the achievement levels of students. Clearly stated academic goals will lose their potential to drive the efforts of teachers if no effort is made to collect and analyse student achievement data reflective of those goals. School leaders of high performing schools place a high priority on improving academic achievement and in ensuring that teachers systematically monitor and measure student progress by using a variety of assessment procedures (Heck, 2000). Transforming the school into a professional learning community means that school leaders must put in mechanisms for reviewing the effectiveness of curriculum in terms of children's learning outcomes (Timperley, 2003). Her research claims that a critical factor in determining the success of schools was through the use of student progress data.

Frequent monitoring of student assessments also allows teachers to monitor and assess their curriculum delivery. Schools that constantly monitor students' progress through assessment activities use the results of these assessments to adjust their instructional strategies to ensure greater

student achievement. Achievement data is another tool that effective schools use to improve learning and teaching (Whitaker, 2004). Effective school leaders know how to interpret and analyse student achievement data and use it as a basis for plans for improvement in curriculum or instruction strategy to maximise student performance (Cotton, 2003). School leaders with a strong focus on student achievement also use achievement data to determine professional development opportunities and activities to strengthen teaching skills (Cotton, 2003). By examining student assessment results, teachers can identify their own strengths and weaknesses as remedial measures. Teachers who consistently monitor student progress and adjust their teaching help increase the learning outcomes of all students. School leaders of high performing schools not only keep student data for the school's own use but establish procedures to disseminate the results to the parents and the local community, through such means as newsletters, school reports, student reports, the media, parent conferences and annual meetings.

However, monitoring student progress and interpreting student achievement data are not only for addressing student performance. Organisations can use student achievement data to identify and acknowledge, praise and reward teachers and students (Johnson & Asera, 1999). School leaders of high performing schools take initiatives in recognising achievement and improvement on the part of the students. When formalised, such recognition is a symbolic ritual that enhances affiliation of staff, students and parents with the school (Cotton, 2003). For example, recognising students for their accomplishments and teachers for their success during a school's annual awards day is one of the 'greatest motivators available' to all school leaders (Cotton, 2003: 41). Providing incentives to teachers is a strategy used by school leaders to motivate teachers to improve their instructional practice. School leaders who provide incentives such as giving formal awards in public or school assemblies and praising teachers in front of their colleagues can be effective and encourage improvement by all teachers. Recognising teachers' efforts in classroom instruction provides incentives for further instructional innovation and professional growth.

Providing instructional support

This set of leadership behaviours providing instructional support is included in research on effective instructional leadership as reported by Cotton (2003), Hallinger (2003), Marzano et al. (2005) and more recently,

in Robinson et al. (2009). Activities encapsulated within the set include coordinating the curriculum, supervising and evaluating instruction and providing the resources aligned with curriculum, instruction and assessment activity. One important responsibility of instructional leaders is to maintain a school-wide focus on instructional matters. Research on school principals in high performing schools found that they are more involved in teachers' instructional practices compared to school principals in lower performing schools (Cotton, 2003). In high performing schools, school leaders were more concerned about classroom instruction and communicated their views by frequently observing classroom instruction. School leaders in high performing schools create opportunities to plan and work together with teachers on instructional issues. By working together, these leaders facilitate discussion on instructional issues, thus creating a culture of learning for all.

Instructional supervision is an important tool that school leaders use to assess curriculum and classroom instruction. Researchers have identified a link between instructional supervision of teachers and academic performance of students (Blase & Blase, 2003; Cotton, 2003). On a similar note, Heck (1992) found that the amount of time spent by school leaders in classroom supervision is an important predictor of student performance. An important characteristic of instructional leaders is instructional supervision aligned with classroom observation and professional development of teachers (Blase & Blase, 2003). The main purpose of instructional supervision and evaluation is to improve the academic achievement of students via improving the quality of learning and teaching in a school (Murphy, 1990). Effective school leaders use supervision and evaluation systems to reach their set school goals. Murphy (1990) asserts that when supervisors and teachers work together to review and improve the instruction strategies or to develop new ones, this collegial interaction has a direct effect on student learning, which Marks and Printy (2003) describe as shared instructional leadership.

Leaders' supervision of teachers' performance can contribute positively towards teachers' pedagogical knowledge and practices. Instructional leaders can use classroom visits and informal visits to evaluate instructional strategies used by teachers and assess their effectiveness. However, to be an effective supervisor of teachers, one must be familiar with, and sensitive to, the teachers he or she supervises (Weber, 1989). Many instructional supervisors simply observe the curriculum delivery of the teachers and then tell them what they ought to do differently. This simple approach overlooks the reality of aligning school goals with teachers' capacity and the instructional leaders'

intentions for what they should be doing to move towards progress in school performance. It is, therefore, important for instructional leaders to have a school-wide goal that is common to both the instructional leaders and the teachers in that organisation.

Although school leaders may not have specific knowledge of every curricular area taught in the school, their knowledge should at least embrace the general trends in each subject area. The effective school leader must have sufficient knowledge to understand and evaluate curricular innovations and be familiar with effective teaching methods associated with improved learning outcomes. When school leaders know the basics of teaching and learning, they can facilitate improvement in instructional strategies regardless of subject matter. Teachers in high schools specialise in the subject content they teach. Principals also specialise in content area, based on what they taught, but when they are supervising teachers from different content areas, they are generalists (Cotton, 2003). Strong principals know what good instruction entails, regardless of the content being taught. However, teachers may not be as willing to listen to principals in regard to instructional practices that may not be content specific. Moreover, teachers may rely on what they have learned from colleagues, departmental heads, students, experience, or professional development for help with content specific strategies.

However, Hallinger's (2003: 333–334) review of evidence concluded that gains are much better in small school organisations than larger school organisations:

> Relatively few studies find a relationship between the principal's hands-on supervision of classroom instruction, teacher effectiveness, and student achievement. Where effects have been identified, it has generally been at the elementary school level and could possibly be explained by school size.

The amount of influence instructional leaders have on instructional matters may depend on the level of the school (Cotton, 2003; Hallinger, 2003; Robinson et al., 2009). Their studies on instructional leaders conclude that elementary school principals spend more time on instructional issues than secondary school principals. Elementary schools are smaller organisations where school leaders who have a wide knowledge of the curriculum content are more directly involved in the instructional process compared to more complex secondary schools. The greater size, complex structure and the specialised subject matter of secondary schools places the school leaders in a difficult situation for direct supervision of classroom instruction (Robinson et al., 2009). Instead, the principals' effects on classroom instruction operate

through the school's culture and by modelling their behaviour rather than through direct supervision and evaluation of teaching (Hallinger, 2005). It may be impossible for secondary school principals to be expert in all instructional areas included in the curricula and this demands that the instructional leader's role is shared by heads of departments. When these leaders visit classrooms frequently, they provide information on teachers' efforts and improvement in instructional practice. School leaders in high performing schools are more likely to visit classrooms regularly and provide subsequent feedback on instructional methods. To gain knowledge of what is occurring inside the classrooms and how the resource materials are being used, effective instructional leaders frequently observe instructional methods used by teachers.

In-depth studies on the leadership dimension that influences classroom instruction have concluded that the behaviour associated with instructional leadership has a powerful influence on classroom instruction (Blase & Blase, 2000; Hallinger, 2005; Robinson et al., 2009). Their studies indicate that when instructional leaders coordinate, monitor and provide effective feedback to teachers, this results in increased teacher reflection, giving rise to implementation of new ideas and a greater variety in teaching strategies responding to the needs of student diversity. Consequently, teachers plan and prepare their lessons with more care and focus on the instructional process. This gives them greater motivation, satisfaction and confidence in the instructional process, culminating in increased student achievement.

In practice, instructional leaders do not spend much time on working directly on instructional supervision (Weber, 1989) due to time constraints. Considering the time instructional leaders must devote to teacher observation and the impact of feedback to the teachers, it is not surprising that in some schools instructional supervision is done infrequently. By working directly with teachers on instruction matters may reduce the instructional leaders' time devoted to other administrative tasks. However, there are other sources of information that instructional leaders can focus on when dealing with instructional issues.

Given the complex nature of instructional programs in schools, especially in secondary schools, planned supervision and review processes should not rely on a primary source of information. Murphy (1990), however, claims that effective instructional leaders use multiple sources of information to assess the appropriateness of curriculum material and the quality of instructional practice. For example, in the Fijian context, school leaders supervise and

evaluate instructional programs using teachers' workbooks that show a planned diary of work for the week, weekly lesson notes, examining samples of student's work, reviewing test and assessment information and class and school level performance and progress. This is consistent with the suggestions advanced in the literature (Southworth, 2002). Multiple sources of information provide more useful feedback to the teachers on their instructional program and strategies for improvement.

Creating a safe and pleasant learning environment

Another way school leaders can directly influence student academic achievement is by creating a safe and orderly environment that enhances learning and teaching (Nettles & Herrington, 2007). By creating a supportive environment teachers will continue to grow and improve their professional practice and this is an area where instructional leaders can have a significant influence on student learning. Marzano (2003: 5) states, 'If students and teachers do not feel safe, they will not have the necessary psychological energy for teaching and learning'.. Teaching and learning is enhanced when there is a supportive and positive learning environment and when student behaviour is under control. Instructional leaders establish a safe and orderly environment that promotes learning while reducing inappropriate student behaviours and ensuring safety of the students. To this end, a safe and orderly environment ensures that students learn in an environment free of distractions. In an effective school, there is an environment that ensures student safety. For example, in recent years Fiji schools operate strictly under occupational, health and safety laws, and each school elects a committee that oversees the safety issues in the school. It can be argued that many parents are more concerned with the safety of their children than with the curriculum instruction. Therefore, all members of the school community need to accept that they are on duty at all times in the school and help to ensure a safe and orderly environment for all. School rules must be enforced throughout the school and consistently followed by all, including students. A lack of consistency may destroy the safe and orderly environment as students may lose focus, tending to be distracted by extraneous factors.

Moreover, teachers thrive when schools value their safety and the safety of the students. Silins and Mulford (2002) argue that teachers cannot create and sustain conditions for productive learning and development of students if these conditions do not exist for teachers. If schools are to provide a

better learning environment for their students, then they must also empower teachers by providing them with opportunities to innovate, develop and learn together (Silins & Mulford, 2002). Instructional leaders' primary objective is to motivate teachers by creating conditions under which teachers' wants and needs are met. Thus when the atmosphere of the school makes learning exciting and when teachers and students are being supported and rewarded for their achievements, lifelong learning takes place (Cotton, 2003). Effective school leaders help create this excitement, provide incentives and channel the energy of teachers and students in productive directions.

Conclusion

The chapter has illustrated that school leaders have a powerful influence on student learning outcomes. The synthesis of research literature reviewed confirms that school leaders can make a significant difference to student learning achievement. Various research findings show that school leaders who emphasise a strong instructional role are a key component of schools that embrace high levels of student academic achievement. More recent research has incorporated a spectrum of leadership behaviours that have direct effects on student learning outcomes. The findings of this literature-based study show that instructional leadership has direct effects on student learning outcomes by establishing valuable educational goals, allocating resources, promoting professional opportunities, and creating a safe and pleasant learning environment. On the basis of this literature-based study school leaders can take cognisance of developing in their own context suitable leadership behaviours that can enhance the school's performance and in turn, children's learning outcomes. Conversely, those school leaders who are ineffective in their instructional role are likely to contribute towards underperformance of their schools.

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6

New school structures and leadership styles

Their impacts on teaching and learning

Charles Kivunja

In the late 1990s, the New South Wales Minister of Education undertook school structural reforms resulting in new school structures that the Minister codenamed 'The Collegiate Model' (DET, 1999). The management of these schools has led to the emergence of new leadership styles practised by the principals charged with the responsibility of running them.

The essence of the model was to restructure several neighbouring secondary (years 7–12) schools that were underperforming into middle schools (years 7–10) and then create one senior campus into which the amalgamated middle schools would feed their year 10 graduates. This created educative partnerships intended to be the basis for providing secondary schooling in a new way. Improved outcomes in secondary schooling were regarded as an essential means of improving the public image of secondary schooling in NSW (DET, 1998) and to this end, the new partnerships would enjoy collegial collaboration and economies of scale resulting in improved students' outcomes and overall schooling improvement and effectiveness.

Since the model was a novelty in New South Wales, it is helpful to explain its design briefly. The model was given its first trial at Quakers Hill, where four neighbouring secondary high schools were integrated in an educative partnership called the Nirimba Education Collegiate. The Collegiate was structured as follows:

a) Three secondary (years 7–12) schools within a radius of five to ten kilometres of each other were reconfigured into three middle (years 7–10) school campuses.
b) A dedicated senior campus, consisting of only years 11 and 12, was built in close proximity to the three middle schools.
c) The four campuses were to function as one school—the Nirimba Collegiate.

This partnership was then extended to include a campus of NSW TAFE (Technical and Further Education) as well as the University of Western Sydney. The resulting quadruple educative partnership, crossing traditional educational boundaries, was named the Western Sydney Education Precinct.

These changes in school structures necessitated some change in leadership styles. All of the principals surrendered their autonomy. New collaborative roles and areas of cooperation were defined. Above all, there emerged a new principalship role—that of a 'Super Principal' whose role was to lead and coordinate the four schools in the collegiate. The 'Super Principal' was not given line management authority over the other principals. Rather, his role was to lead a partnership of equals. Clearly, this was a new role, hitherto unknown in NSW secondary school leadership styles.

Following a successful launching of the Nirimba Collegiate in January 1998, the Department of Education and Training (DET) moved quickly to introduce similar partnerships in other school districts. As partnerships were developed in other areas, their organisational structures were made to reflect local circumstances. This led to the emergence of a variety of cohort configurations and styles of principal leadership, which will be discussed later. Consequently, the number of schools integrated into a collegiate model varied from two in rural areas such as Moree, to five in the more densely populated urban areas such as North Sydney. Despite the locational differences, in the main a collegiate educative partnership exhibited the six features summarised in table 1.

Because the collegiate model targeted students' academic outcomes, its primary focus was on school improvement and effectiveness tied to performance of the partners. This was to be judged by HSC (Higher School Certificate) results, year 10 School Certificate, literacy tests (English Language and Literacy Assessment – ELLA) in year 7 and numeracy tests (Secondary Numeracy Assessment Program – SNAP) in year 8. As a result, the collegiate model aimed to improve the overall schooling and effectiveness of secondary schools, right across the years 7–12 continuum, but within a new and radical organisational structure and with leadership styles built on collaborative partnerships in selected locales.

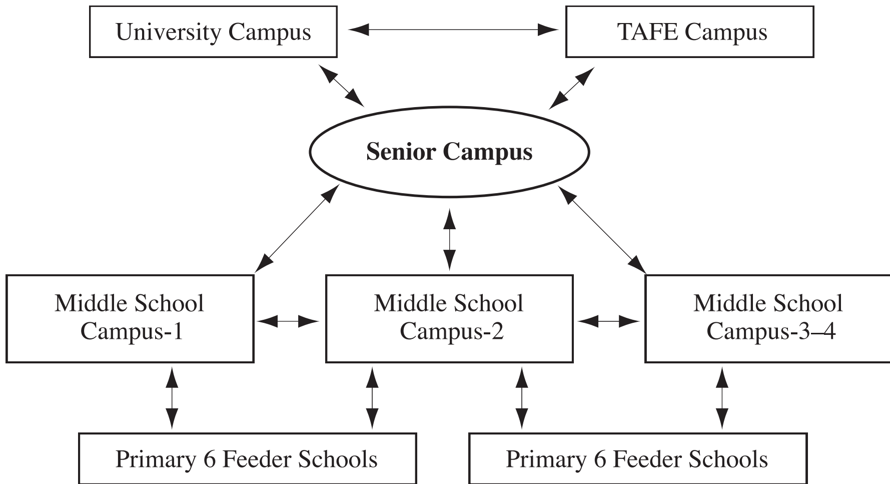
Table 1 New school structures of the collegiate model in NSW DET secondary schools

Collegiate Feature	Collegiate Educative Partnership
1	Two to five comprehensive high schools (years 7–12) amalgamated into one collegiate educative partnership called a 'multi-campus college'.
2	A dedicated senior campus set up to service the collegiate educative partnership across individual school boundaries.
3	The senior campus of the collegiate establishes new and specialised linkages with TAFE.
4	The senior campus establishes specialised quality couplings with the local university.
5	Middle schools (years 7–10) of the collegiate develop protocols for good quality transition for students from local primary 6 schools into the collegiate partnership.
6	School principals surrender their autonomy and embrace collegial collaboration.

Because of the strong emphasis on improving school effectiveness as measured by the HSC, each collegiate was set up with a dedicated senior campus. The central role of the senior campus in school improvement and effectiveness is illustrated in figure 1.

As figure 1 demonstrates, the senior campus occupies a focal position within a collegiate partnership. Not only does it have forward vertical integration with university and TAFE but it also enjoys a privileged position as the receiving school for two to four feeder middle schools (Campuses 1–4 in figure 1). It is interesting to note, in the bottom row of figure 1, that the synergies emerging from the educative partnerships of the collegiate model trickle down through the middle schools into the surrounding primary schools. It is also noteworthy that principals in the middle schools and the senior campus substitute collegial collaborative leadership for the principalship autonomy that they previously exercised.

Figure 1 Collaboration across educative partnerships in the NSW secondary school collegiate model



Most of the middle schools were configured with years 7–10 cohorts. Their year 10 graduates were guaranteed a ‘gold pass’ entry into the prestigious, new senior campus, which consisted of only years 11 and 12 in most partnerships (The Minister, Hon. J. Aquilina, in an interview on modernisation of secondary comprehensive education: The Nirimba Collegiate Plan, given on 18 May 2005).

Consideration was given to differences in local demographic and social dynamics. Apart from the differences in numbers of schools in partnerships, this led to the establishment of configurations of middle schools consisting of years 7–9 and a senior campus of years 10–12. This was the case, for instance, in small country towns such as Brisbane Water, Dubbo and Moree. As a result, by 2004, a total of 37 secondary schools had become active members of the NSW collegiate model. Table 2 summarises all the DET schools that became restructured into these new educative partnerships.

From table 2, it is interesting to note that a wide variety of structural designs was used in setting up the collegiate model in the different areas. That reflected the Minister’s view, expressed in the same interview discussion (Hon. J. Aquilina, in an interview given 18 May 2005) that:

> we wanted individuals to decide what model design was best for them. I didn’t want to sort of put a strait-jacket on all of them. Each school is different in its own way.

Table 2 Schools restructured into NSW Collegiate Educative Model (listed by chronological order of establishment)

Year	Collegiate partnership established	Schools participating in the partnership and how restructured	Student enrolment 2004
1998	Nirimba College	Quakers Hill High School, Years 7–10 Riverstone High School, Years 7–10 Seven Hills High School, Years 7–10 Wyndham College, Years 11–12	2435
1999	Chifley College	Bidwill Campus Years 7–12 Dunheved Campus, Years 7–10 Mount Druitt Campus, Years 7–10 Shalvey Campus, Years 7–10 Whalan Campus, Years 11–12	2529
2000	Dubbo College	Delroy Campus, Years 7–9 South Campus, Years 7–9 Senior Campus, Years 10–12	1969
2000	Northern Beaches Secondary College	Balgowlah Boys Campus, Years 7–12 Cromer Campus, Years 7–12 Mackellar Girls Campus, Years 7–12 Manly Campus, Years 7–12 Freshwater Campus, Years 11–12	3477
2000	Callaghan College	Wallsend Campus, Years 7–10 Waratah Technology Campus, years 7–10 Jesmond Campus, Years 11–12	2275
2001	Georges River College	Hurstville Boys Campus, Years 7–10 Peakhurst Campus, Years 7–10 Penshurst Girls Campus, Years 7–10 Oatley Campus, Years 11–12	2723
2001	Brisbane Water Secondary College	Umina Campus, Years 7–9 Woy Woy Campus, Years 10–12	1723
2001	Sydney Secondary College	Balmain Campus, Years 7–10 Leichhardt Campus, Years 7–10 Glebe: Blackwattle Bay Campus, Years 11–12	1711
2002	Tuggerah Lakes Secondary College	Berkeley Vale Campus, Years 7–10 The Entrance Campus, Years 11–12 Tumbi Umbi Campus, Years 7–10	2666
2003	Great Lakes College	Forster High School, Years 7–10 Tuncurry High School, Years 11–12 Tuncurry Junior Campus 7–10	1506
2004	Moree Secondary College	Carol Avenue Campus, Years 7–9 Albert Street Campus, Years 10–12	525
		Critical mass of total student enrolment	**23, 530**

The Minister's view derived from his understanding that 'there is no one best way' (Donaldson, 1996: 61) in organisational structural design. The implementation of this understanding was significant because it challenged the hitherto well-established tenet that the Wyndham (1957) comprehensive high school model, which used a one-size-fits-all-contexts approach to locate all cohorts of senior years (now years 7–12 though initially 5–6) on one site.

Thus set up, each collegiate comprised a cluster of several middle schools and one senior campus. The two to five members of the educative partnership were set up in different locales, but were to function as one educational entity, under the governance of a single School Council or Board (DET, 1998). As can be seen in table 2, those partners who relinquished the year 11–12 cohorts to the senior campus made a considerable sacrifice. So, it was inevitable that there would be some resistance to the establishment of these partnerships. The main areas of concern arose from five aspects, namely:

- Parents felt that their comprehensive high schools were being partly closed.
- Parents with children in year 10 were challenged with the logistics of moving them to another school in their years 11 and 12.
- Students were apprehensive about transferring to another school for years 11 and 12.
- Teachers too were anxious. For example, those that had taught years 11 and 12 were now to be 'boxed' into years 7–10 middle school campuses. Similarly, those who had been happy to teach across the years 7–12 continuum were now to be restricted to *either* middle school years *or* senior cohorts only.
- Principals who had operated autonomously were instructed that they had to integrate and learn to collaborate as equal partners in a 'collegiate'.

Notwithstanding some local opposition, however, the collegiate model became established very quickly. By 2004, of the 305,199 secondary school students enrolled full-time in all NSW government secondary schools, nearly 8% were in collegiate partnerships (ABS, 2004: 13). Schools integrated into collegiates represented 10% of all DET secondary schools in NSW (DET, 2004). The collegiate model had an average apparent retention rate for years 7–12 that was 44.12% higher than the state average.[1] These collegiate partnerships meant that the secondary schools that had operated autonomously were now part of a joint venture—a new partnership engaged

in the delivery of secondary schooling across educative partnerships in structures popularly referred to in NSW educational literature (DET, 1998–2004) as ‘multi-campus colleges’.

Within the collegiates, the autonomy of individual secondary schools was replaced by educative coalitions of amalgams of schools, integrated across individual school frontiers and in different sites. In this way, not only were new organisational structures and human interactions created, but also new synergies, within and across the educative partnerships, were activated. In particular, with the new organisational structures emerged new principalship leadership styles characterised by collegial, cooperative collaboration and less autonomy.

However, despite the ample evidence in the literature pointing to the importance of good leadership practice for the success of schools, and in spite of the proffered significant statistics about the success of the NSW collegiates, there is a gap in the information on the relationship between structure and leadership across the individual boundaries in those NSW collegiates. There is also little understanding of how and how much the leadership styles and the synergies within the collegiate partnerships have an impact on students’ outcomes, teachers’ outcomes and school community outcomes as a whole. This chapter aims to help bridge this gap by using the latest qualitative data software called *Leximancer* (Grimbeek, 2007) to analyse data collected from across all the 37 schools integrated in NSW’s collegiate partnerships so as to investigate the efficacy of leadership and of these partnerships in improving schooling effectiveness. The analysis also employs Kivunja’s New Dynamics Paradigm for analysing educational reform (Kivunja & Power, 2006) as a cognitive lens to enable our cognition of the leadership styles emerging from the synergies of NSW collegiate partnerships.

Supporting leadership

It is not surprising that changes in the organisational structure of schools would lead to changes in their culture. There is ample literature supporting this hypothesis. Thus, the experience with the NSW Collegiate Model is well situated at the intersection of literature on organisational dynamics (e.g. Pace, 2002) with that on impacts of structural change on human behaviour in educational contexts (e.g. Fullan, 2000; 2001a and b). Pace’s (2002) organisational dynamics model makes it clear that any structural change is only worthwhile if its aim is to improve organisational performance. Several

other leaders in this field agree. For example, Fullan (2000: 4 and 2003: 11) says that 'the moral purpose of educational change is to make a positive difference to the lives of students'. Silins and Mulford (2002: 431) concur when they add that 'improved student learning' ought to be the primary motive for educational reform. Dinham (1995: 70) was of the same opinion when he suggested that 'facilitating pupil achievement (was) the acid test of successful school reform'.

Bolman and Deal (2003) suggest that restructuring initiatives, such as those that were introduced by DET to establish the collegiate model, change not only the organisational structure of the participating schools but also the practices that constitute the synergies in the human interactions and students' outcomes in the schools that become involved in the new way of delivering secondary schooling. For example, in answer to the question 'How does structure influence what happens in the workplace?' these leaders in the field say:

> Essentially, it is a blueprint for formal expectations and exchanges among internal players (executives, managers, employees) and external constituencies (such as customers and clients). Like an animal's skeleton or a building's framework, structural form both enhances and constrains what an organisation can accomplish. (For example), formal structure enhances morale if it helps us get our work done. It has a negative impact if it gets in our way, buries us in red tape, or makes it easier for management to control us. (Bolman & Deal, 2003: 46–47)

Similarly, Senge (1999: 43) highlights the inextricable interconnectedness between structural change and human behaviour when he says that 'the underlying structures shape individual actions and create the conditions where types of events become likely.' This explains why Likert (1961) suggested in his Contingency Theory, that in order to promote coherence and synergies when designing the structural organisation of educative partnerships, there is a need to consider carefully both the particular conditions of the micro-context factors that are contingent to each partner's situation and the relevant external macro-context. Likert (1961) further explained that organisations create internal environments, which influence synergies within people's behaviour and a business's internal environment is itself influenced by the external environment around it. This reinforces the view that coherence across the boundaries of a collegiate partnership and synergies within the collegiate will be enhanced only if the inextricable interlinkages between structure and human interactions are considered simultaneously and well coordinated. Mintzberg (1979) also strongly endorses coordination as the

basis for successful coherence across organisational partnerships. This coordination, according to Bolman and Deal (2003), Evans (1996) and Schein (2005) is a direct function of leadership. No wonder then, that new school structures in NSW were associated with new kinds of principalship leadership.

Marks and co-authors (2000) also emphasised the significance of structure in reframing schools as learning organisations, finding school structure to be 'one of the six dimensions which determine a school's capacity for organisational learning' (Silins & Mulford, 2002: 428). Silins and Mulford (2001: 7) also explained that the existence of the appropriate structure was important because it is one of the factors that give the school favourable conditions for the creation of synergies and opportunities to share information, knowledge and commitment of organisational members to collaborative learning.

Although Fullan (2001a: 44) warns that changing structure 'is not the main point in achieving success' in implementing change, he agrees with these authors when he says that 'structure does make a difference'. Stanford (2005: 5) concurs, writing that: 'changing the structure impacts on each of the other aspects of the organisation'. This is supported by Poole and Van de Ven (2004) who say that although structure is not the central determinant of organisational effectiveness, it is instrumental because it creates opportunities for synergies in human interactions. They point out (Poole & Van de Ven, 2004: 161):

> One role of structure is to contain and channel individuals' actions to serve broader goals of the organisation. Formal structures have symbolic as well as action-generating properties. In other words, structures can become invested with socially shared meanings, and thus, in addition to their objective functions, can serve to communicate information about the organisation to both internal and external audiences.

This view is shared widely among modern organisational theorists such as Louis and Miles (1990), Evans (1996) and Fullan (2001b), who propose that changing the structure inevitably means interfering with established patterns of behaviour. For this reason, altering the structure of schools to establish collegiates meant that the meaning emerging out of the synergies in the human interactions in the new contexts inevitably led to a change in the leadership. It is also well documented (e.g. Mulford, Silins & Leithwood, 2004) that in preparation for school reform, the primary stakeholders in

those schools must be involved, including students, teachers, principals and parents. This is extremely important because, as Mulford, Silins and Leithwood (2004: 3) warn:

> Reforms for schools, no matter how well conceptualised, powerfully sponsored, brilliantly structured, or closely audited are likely to fail in the face of cultural resistance from those in schools. By their actions, or inactions, students . . . teachers . . . middle managers . . . and principals help determine the fate of what happens in schools, including attempts at reform.

This further explains why change in the principalship leadership in the new structures was necessary if the collegiate model were to succeed. This is consistent with numerous studies that 'have affirmed the pivotal role of the school leader as a key factor in school effectiveness' (Brundrett & Crawford, 2008: 1) a view shared by other leaders in the field including Teddlie and Stringfield (1993), Leithwood and Jantzi (1990), Reynolds (1996) and Shields (2004). Shields, (2004: 109) for example, says that principals as:

> (e)ducational leaders are expected to develop learning communities, build the professional capacity of teachers, take advice from parents, engage in collaborative and consultative discussion making, resolve conflicts, engage in educative instructional leadership, and attend respectfully, immediately, and appropriately to the needs and requests of families with diverse cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

From such assertions it becomes easier to understand why new organisational structures in NSW created opportunity for the emergence of new cultural dynamics founded upon new principalship leadership styles within the collegiate model.

The insights drawn from this synoptic literature review are clear. The physical and human infrastructure existing in the comprehensive high schools proposed for reframing into a collegiate need to be well understood and coordinated if positive synergies are to be realised across the new educative partnerships. Changing the structure of the participating partners is important but it is not the only consideration. For positive synergies to emerge among the partnerships so as to improve teaching and learning outcomes, it is essential to have leadership that will not only *re*-structure but also coordinate the human interactions across the partnerships so as to *re-culture* the values, beliefs, norms and practices of the participants in the educative partnership. This, as illustrated by the quotation from Shields (2004: 109) is the role of the school principal.

Methodology and empirical study

Grounded theory methodology—'that is, theory that follows from data rather than preceding them' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 204)— involving inductive and verification techniques (Schwandt, 1997: 60) was found to be well suited to the analysis of data on leadership and synergies among the human interactions in the collegiates in NSW. The data were analysed within the analytical framework of Kivunja's Dynamics Paradigm (Kivunja & Power, 2006) which was designed using data collected from all collegiate schools in NSW. The model, codenamed the New Dynamics Paradigm for analysing educational change, is consistent with grounded theory techniques because it emerged 'from the data systematically obtained from social research into social phenomena' (Glaser & Strauss, 1999: 2) in the collegiate schools studied. As these fathers of grounded theory advise, such theory 'fits the situation being researched, and works when put to use' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967: 3).

The Dynamics Paradigm was applied to an investigation into the relationship between structure and cultural dynamics in selected collegiates in NSW and was well validated (see Kivunja (2006) for data and details of the study design, methodology and major findings).[2] The data, which included information on the 37 secondary schools that were reconfigured and integrated into the 11 collegiate partnerships in NSW, were gathered from a variety of sources including DET publications (DET, 1998–2004), ministerial releases and individual school publications. Included also were data gathered through interviews with the relevant Minister of Education, district superintendents, 14 principals, 40 deputy principals, 232 students in years 7–12 cohorts in 14 out of the 37 schools within the collegiate sites, and 101 parents. The decision to case study 14 out of the 37 partners was based on three criteria: longevity, typicality and rural or urban location (for details see Kivunja, 2006: 162). On the basis of these criteria a 'multi-case sampling strategy' (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 29) was followed so that 8 urban and 6 rural based collegiates were studied. Participants were selected randomly from the list of individuals who had agreed to be involved in the study: within each partnership, participation was voluntary.

Consistent with the grounded theory techniques involving open coding, axial coding and selective coding, as discussed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Glaser and Strauss (1999), contextual data obtained from DET (1998–2004) and from individual collegiates

were analysed using the qualitative software package called *Leximancer* (Grimbeek, 2007).

Once the interview transcripts were converted into digital format and read into the program, *Leximancer* coded nodes in the data and processed them into primary themes that were occurring in the data from within and across the collegiates, presenting them in graphic displays, which also illustrated the key concepts in each theme. The interconnectedness among the themes and concepts, as well as their significance rankings, were also displayed graphically. Careful examination of the themes and concepts investigated for co-occurrence. By digitally changing the sizes of the themes, deep investigation of the concepts inside each theme became possible. Electronic management of the co-occurrence of concepts enabled a deep analysis of the relationships among the key concepts. The themes and concepts were profiled and investigated using inductive and verification techniques (Schwandt, 1997: 80) and relational qualitative data analysis as recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985: 202–203) and Miles and Huberman (1994: 56).

From the concept maps displayed by *Leximancer* emerged five 'conceptual categories whose conceptual properties' (Glaser & Strauss, 1999: 35)) comprise the variables that enable researchers to extend an understanding of leadership and its impacts on teaching and learning in a collegiate. These categories were interpreted using Kivunja's New Dynamics Paradigm. Because of the relative novelty of the Paradigm, its 30 variables and five elements are illustrated in table 3. The table also illustrates the questions that were used to investigate leadership and its impacts on teaching and learning and community outcomes in each collegiate. In this way, *Leximancer* and the Dynamics Paradigm facilitated the analysis and interpretation of the leadership styles and the synergies among human interactions in the collegiates. The following outline is provided to help an understanding of how the Dynamics Paradigm was used in the analysis of data for this chapter.

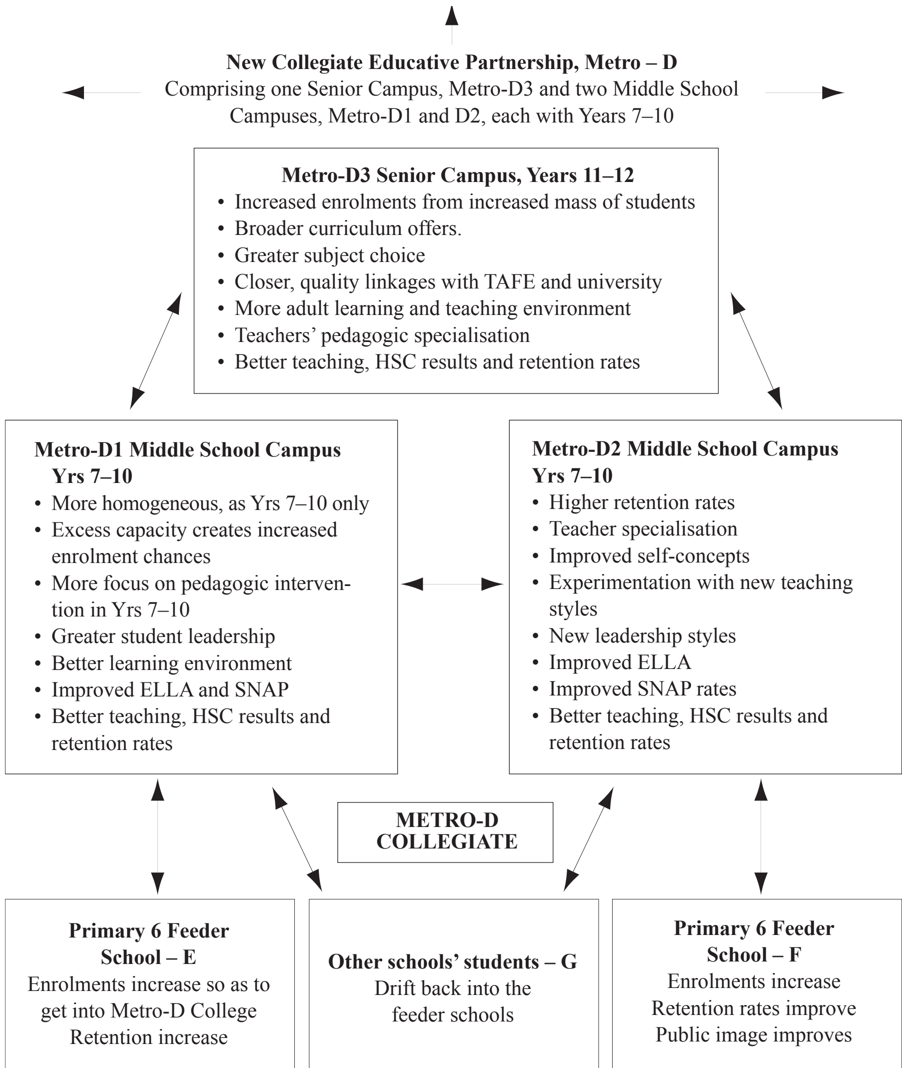
Table 3 Summary of variables comprising the New Dynamics Paradigm used to analyse impacts of leadership on teaching and learning in NSW collegiate partnerships

Dynamics Paradigm Element	Variables	Examples of questions that targeted the variables
Element I The human and physical infrastructure	1) Leadership and vision data 2) Background and historical data. 3) Public perception data 4) Model design and variety	• What role did leadership play? • What factors influenced the decision to restructure the schools? • What was the origin of the decision? • How was the decision shared? • What models were considered?
Element II The human interactions	5) Leadership and decision-making 6) Enrolments and retention rates 7) Curriculum breadth and subject choice 8) Learning environment 9) Teaching environment 10) Gender considerations	• What role is leadership playing in the new human interactions? • What changes are emerging in the new structures with regard to students' enrolments, retention rates and curriculum on offer? Why are those changes taking place? • How has integration impacted on teaching styles, and the quality of the teaching and learning environment? • How does decision-making occur across the integrated campuses? • How are the human interactions shaping leadership?
Element III The search for excellence	11) Leadership and supply of resources and their utilisation 12) ICT access and utilisation 13) Linkages with TAFE and university 14) Access to extra-curricular activities	• How did leadership improve the way resources, including ICT, were allocated? • How are resources being used to impact quality teaching and learning? • What linkages are emerging with TAFE and university? • How are these linkages impacting on pedagogy?
Element IV The results of human enterprise	15) Leadership expectations 16) Students' outcomes 17) Teachers' outcomes 18) Community perceptions 19) Community involvement 20) Comparisons of new school model to old model	• What role did principals play in the restructure? • What is the emerging role of leadership? • What are the emerging leadership styles? • How is leadership impacting on teaching and learning? • What improvements are evident in students' outcomes?
Element v The feedback	21) Stakeholder satisfaction with leadership and new model 22) Vision realisation 23) Appreciation of the model 24) Quality assurance 25) Strategic goals 26) Academic outcomes 27) Non-academic outcomes 28) Sustainability of reforms 29) Community perceptions 30) Community comparisons	• How do stakeholders evaluate the new leadership in relation to educational and non-educational outcomes? • What is their understanding of how the model is impacting on quality teaching and learning? • What is their assessment of suitability of this model? • What are the long term prospects of the new model? • How does this model compare with the old model?

Results: Leadership and synergetic outcomes of the critical mass in a collegiate

The impacts of leadership and synergies among the critical mass of participants in a collegiate educative partnership are, in a very simple way, displayed diagrammatically in figure 2.

Figure 2 Leadership and synergies within a collegiate educative partnership



In figure 2, the double-line outer circle embodies the total human and physical infrastructure of a collegiate. In this analysis, the partnership was given the pseudonym Metro – D. As shown in the top zone of the figure, Metro – D comprises one senior campus, Metro-D3, and two middle school campuses named Metro-D1 and Metro-D2 respectively. The central role of the senior campus in a collegiate partnership is well emphasised in this graphic. The arrows across the frontiers of each campus represent the leadership coordination and synergies that cross-fertilise each other among the human interactions within the Metro – D collegiate partnership. Inside each campus circle are summarised examples of the leadership impacts and synergies that go on within the partnership. For succinctness, table 4 synthesises the leadership strategies, and synergies that emerge within each collegiate partner site and across the campuses. These are discussed below in greater detail.

As summarised in table 4, the findings in the Human and Physical Infrastructure (element I) converge on the conclusion that the leadership that provided the vision for the restructuring of schools to establish collegiates originated with the Minister of Education. The DET then identified, on the basis of pedagogical, economic and political considerations, which schools were to be restructured. The DET gave instructions to the superintendents concerned to take responsibility for implementing the reforms. New leadership styles were required. The principals were to play a key leadership role in setting up the partnerships.

The synthesis in table 4, and as illustrated in figure 2, shows that leadership of the critical mass of the physical and human infrastructure brought together in a collegiate such as Metro – D creates opportunities for new leadership styles and synergies to emerge. These have potential for improvement of teaching and learning. For example, the analysis of data in the human interactions (element II) found that the collaborative leadership that emerged in the collegiates had enabled positive synergies, which had resulted in significant positive impacts on students' enrolments, retention rates and curriculum on offer—all of which had increased or improved significantly. Time series data on enrolments showed that on average, enrolments had increased by 22.5% between 1998 and 2004. Apparent retention rates (as defined in DET, 2004) were 44.12% higher than the state average. The increases had occurred in both the senior campuses and the middle school sites of the collegiate partnerships.

Table 4 A synthesis of the key findings on leadership, teaching and learning outcomes in a collegiate educative partnership

Dynamics Paradigm Element	Synthesis of the analysis of the key findings on leadership and its impacts on teaching and learning in a collegiate
Impacts of leadership in: Element I *the human and physical infrastructure*	• Improvement of pedagogy,and learning was the key consideration of the Minister and the DET. Other factors were: – Locational opportunity creation, contextual contingency and economic factors – The emergence of new leadership styles—interdependence rather than autonomy – The integration of schools into a multi-campus college, seen as providing new human and physical infrastructure that creates synergies for new leadership, pedagogy, teaching and culture to emerge – Principals provided vision and 'coordinating glue'
Impacts of leadership in: Element II *the human interactions*	• Leadership integration of human interactions results in a critical mass that creates synergies for pedagogic intervention and for new learning relationships to emerge. The synergies involve: – The creation and utilisation of greater enrolment capacity – New and higher quality relationships between the schools, TAFE and university – Higher enrolments and retention rates, broader and deeper curriculum and greater subject choices – Improved transition from P6 to Year 7 – An improved and more mature learning environment – Dynamism in responsibility for learning and reflection in teaching styles, leading and parenting. – New teaching styles as teachers refine their skills as 'specialists' in middle school and senior school pedagogies
Impacts of leadership in: Element III *the search for excellence*	• Leadership makes maximal use of human, physical and technological economies of scale at school level. • Coordination and more abundant supply of better ICT and modern equipment • DET achieves economies of scale • Structural couplings with TAFE, TVET and university, diversifying curriculum • Diversity in capacity to meet more diverse students' interests, abilities and pathways • Interface with TAFE and university to provide access to superior ICT • Win–win primary outcomes for colleges, DET, public education and parents • Broader and more diversified extra-curricular activities
Impacts of leadership in: Element IV *the results of human enterprise*	• Centrality of principals' leadership in new model design and its success • Increased coordination, interdependence and collegiality create opportunity for better quality teaching and students' outcomes • A more adult and improved learning environment • Improved academic and non-academic outcomes in both the middle schools and the senior campus • Augmented student engagement and governance • A rise in Aboriginal students' engagement, participation, retention and success rates • Parents have been won over and find the new model an improvement
Impacts of leadership in: Element V the feedback	• Multiplied beneficial effects emerge in leadership at primary feeder school level, middle school, high school and community • Stakeholders express and demonstrate their preference for the new model • Ministerial, DET and other theoretical speculations are validated • Leadership vision is realised • Teachers challenged in new contexts.

These improvements were emerging, first and foremost, because of the cooperation provided by the new leadership styles. For example, there was consensus that the principals were now working together such that the success of one was seen as the success of all members of the collegiate. Neighbouring schools were no longer competing against each other but working together for a common purpose.

Principals were organising for the sharing of resources, including teachers and learning spaces, such as assembly halls. One principal clearly articulated this new leadership style when she said:

> the amount of time savings we have made is unbelievable. And the knowledge that now you have a peer to check with as you make important decisions is invaluable. The level of mateship among three or four equals is unprecedented in NSW Principalship domains. We are all discovering that we can learn from each other and work much better together.

The second reason for the emergence of improvements was the synergy of the critical mass of the larger numbers that resulted from the mergers of the schools. For example, as illustrated in figure 3, Metro-D1 and -D2 both send their year 10 graduates to Metro-D3. This boosts the enrolments in the senior campus, Metro-D3. Thirdly, the schools had become more attractive to parents and students in the areas on the realisation that the schools could now offer a wider curriculum and a broader subject choice for the HSC. This is represented in figure 3 by the arrows linking the primary schools E, F and G to the middle school campuses Metro-D1 and -D2.

Fourthly, the learning environment had also improved in several ways. For instance, there was consensus among all interviewees that the senior cohorts now learnt in a more mature environment, which was also more academic because it focused more on the HSC. In the middle school campuses, there was agreement among all interviewees that 'younger students had "matured" by taking on the leadership roles that were normally carried out by year 12'. Principals said they now encouraged younger students to be leaders and were pleasantly surprised by how well the younger students coped with leadership roles.

As summarised in table 4, a large majority of the teachers interviewed said their pedagogic intervention had improved. They explained that quality of teaching had improved because the principals had allowed 'many teachers to develop skills as "specialist senior teachers" or middle school "specialists" who honed their teaching skills in the delivery of the relevant pedagogy rather than teach as generalists across the years 7–12 continuum'. Eighty

per cent of the teachers said that this had led to improved teaching and better students' outcomes. As shown in figure 3 for Metro-D1 and -D2, there was evidence that literacy results (ELLA) as well as numeracy results (SNAP) had improved significantly. Additionally, judged by the number of students who achieved marks in the top bands, both School Certificate results and HSC results had improved. Apart from commenting positively on academic outcomes, all students interviewed said that studying in a co-educational campus was better for them than a single sex campus because it prepared them for the real life experience in the workplace where men and women work together.

As shown in table 4, the analysis of data in the search for excellence (element III) found that all interviewees said that their teaching and learning environment had improved because their schools had been supplied with additional or newer resources as a result of the restructuring. Schools gave examples of economies of scale and efficiencies gained through not only leadership coordination of joint use of facilities among the cluster schools but also integration with TAFE and university. Economies of scale were exemplified, for instance, by the larger class sizes (e.g. 24 in Physics and 28 in Economics) compared to classes of 6 in Physics and 10 in Economics before the restructuring. In particular, all interviewees said that their schools were now better-equipped with information and communications technology. Over 95% of the interviewees claimed that the synergies arising out of the interfacing between relatively young HSC students with older university students gave HSC students stimulus for an early commencement of their undergraduate studies.

The synthesis of the analysis of data in the results of human enterprise (element IV) given in table 4 revealed that although the decision was initially top-down and driven by the DET, in each site the principal's leadership had played a key role in the coordination and implementation of the new partnerships. The analysis also showed that although in all collegiates new leadership styles had emerged and led to increased coordination and collaboration, which encouraged closer interdependence and collegiality among collegiate partnerships, two distinctive leadership styles were emerging. The metropolitan based colleges exercised leadership that showed 'Unity without Uniformity' (Young & Hester, 2004: 1). Following this approach each campus tends to run its own daily activities independently of the other campuses. However, there is coordination such that the partners agree on those activities that they need to combine. In contrast, the rural

based collegiates operated a leadership style that was more interdependent. To facilitate such closer interdependence in the day to day activities, the latter had an overarching co-principal who coordinates the partnership. Some interviewees referred to him as the 'super principal'. He was seen as the essential synergy for the partnership. These synergies are illustrated in figure 3 by the arrows that traverse the boundaries of Metro-D1 and -D2. These differences, which interviewees partly attributed to local contingencies, in a sense reflect the freedom that the DET gave to the principals to determine their leadership style and collegiality.

Ninety-five per cent of the teachers interviewed said that they were experiencing a new kind of leadership in which the principals of the participating collegiate members reflected team-spirit that they never witnessed while each school was autonomous. They referred to rivalry that was no longer operational. They said that in the main, their schools were delivering better quality leadership, teaching and learning than under the old model. The reasons they gave for these improvements within the collegiate partnership are synthesised in table 4. They included:

- new leadership styles that were cooperative and collegial
- access to more and better resources, including ICT, due to greater supply and better coordination by leadership
- the skilling of teachers as 'specialists' in either middle schooling or senior schooling pedagogies, planned for by leadership. There was development of 'expert' teachers and professional/collegial teams
- sharpened focus on middle school curriculum, in the absence of HSC pressures
- greater opportunity for experimentation and innovation, especially with middle-school years
- more student choice for subjects of study and hence increased interest and motivation
- greater student ownership of campus, engagement and governance in middle schools
- improved self-belief, self-concept and appraisal due to increased positive identity
- more adult, more responsible and better learning and teaching environments
- more homogeneous teaching and learning contexts.

In consideration of these reasons, 75% of the teachers indicated that they preferred working in the new partnerships to teaching in the old model.

The beneficial impacts that a collegiate's contexts and its leadership had on teaching, learning and non-academic outcomes were well understood by students in both the middle schools and senior campuses. In the middle schools, for example, all students interviewed said that they preferred the new model because it gave them the opportunity to be the focus of all teaching in their school since there was no year 11 or 12 for teachers to prioritise. They said that now they had the opportunity to meet with the principal as 'leaders' whereas previously, they were in the shadows of year 12s. Students said that as a result of this context, they believed they were getting the best possible teaching from their teachers. They said, for instance, 'now we don't feel like we are considered after year 11 and 12 HSC kids have been taught. Teachers give us all the attention'. While there is no suggestion that in a years 7–12 school the non-HSC years are neglected, there was a strong understanding that teachers who do not have to plan, prepare, teach and mark work for HSC students, but instead spend an equal amount of effort on coordinating and preparing work for middle school years, have opportunity to deliver improved pedagogies and more effective learning to their students.

Moreover, apart from students' understanding of improved pedagogic intervention, there was a belief among students in the middle schools that the new partnerships were better for them for non-academic education. For example, all students interviewed in the middle schools said that they preferred the new model because it gave them, or their peers, the opportunity to be school captains whereas in the old model, only year 12 were the student leaders. This is not to say that every middle school student aspires to be a leader in his or her school. However, the significance of this finding is that the human interactions emerging in the new contexts of a collegiate create synergies that enable students to embrace responsibility for leadership and governance of their school at a younger age.

Another finding that was particularly heartening was that there was an understanding among parents with students in the collegiates that the synergies emerging from the contexts of their partnerships transcend pedagogic improvements to include a variety of other educational outcomes. For example, 98% of all parents interviewed confessed that whereas they had initially opposed the restructuring of their schools, they were now 'converted' and 'amazed' at how much better their collegiate was delivering improved teaching and learning when compared to the old model. They all

gave credit to the new styles of leadership based on what they characterised as ‘cooperative co-existence rather than rivalry and competition’.

Overall, the analysis in the feedback (element V) led the study to conclude that leadership and the synergies in the interplay of the human interactions among members of the collegiate partnerships studied had led to improvements and effectiveness in teaching and learning within those colleges, in both the middle school years and the senior cohorts. Stakeholders were satisfied with the collegiate partnerships because of the cooperative leaderships among the principals and particularly because the new leaderships and contexts create synergies for cumulative gains in enrolments, retention rates, curriculum breadth, subject choice, learning and teaching environments. The new leadership styles and structural–cultural changes lead to improved opportunities for effective teaching and learning, thereby providing pedagogic intervention that results in improved teaching and learning outcomes.

Conclusion

Thus, the analysis of leadership and synergies in the human interactions in New South Wales collegiate partnerships converges on the understanding that a collegiate partnership is not just another secondary school but an entity entire in its structural and cultural dynamics. Based on the principals’ leadership among the collegiate partnerships, these dynamics create synergies of opportunities for pedagogic interventions that can lead to improved teaching and quality learning outcomes. The collegiate model thus represents a new way of secondary schooling delivery, which, given the correct principalship leadership, offers a lot of promise for successful pedagogic practices.

The results of the analysis also lead to the conclusion that Kivunja’s New Dynamics Paradigm designed using a grounded theory approach is a tool complex enough to provide a cognitive lens for investigation into leadership and synergism in the human interactions in a collegiate partnership and how these interactions manage the pedagogical challenges created by the new relationships among the collegiate partnerships. The 30 variables of the Dynamics Paradigm are intimately linked to the data from which they were derived. Consequently, this grounded theory methodology creates opportunity for this New Dynamics Paradigm to be highly versatile and therefore adaptable to data from other contexts in which the meaning emerging from leadership and new educational contexts needs to be investigated.

Notes

[1] Apparent retention rates are based on the total number of students progressing from year to year, including those who join the cohorts any time during the year (DET, 2004: 285).

[2] The data were tested in a PhD research project (Kivunja, 2006). Because the steps followed in deriving the Dynamics Paradigm and all its variables are well documented elsewhere (Kivunja, 2005; Kivunja & Power, 2006) there is no need to repeat them here. Rather, this section discusses how the paradigms were used as the theoretical framework in the analysis of the data for this chapter.

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7

Leadership in Pacific ministries of education
Visionaries or fire-fighters?

Helen Tavola

Very little has been written on the peculiar challenges faced by those in leadership roles in Pacific Island ministries of education. The small size of most Pacific Island Countries (PICs) creates a particular context for educational governance; the complex and challenging geographical and social structures characteristic of Pacific states provide further challenges.[1]

Too high a proportion of people in positions of educational leadership are thrust into the role with little preparation or training for facing the myriad of tasks before them. They are expected to balance many, often conflicting, demands while maintaining a sound education system.

In all PICs, the education sector is the largest government sector, in terms of both numbers employed and its share of the national budget. The quality of system governance is thus of prime importance and the efficiency and effectiveness of delivering education is critical.

In an ideal world, the head of a Pacific ministry of education is an experienced professional who is also visionary, with a team of supportive professionals to whom s/he could delegate specific tasks; an adequate budget; and time to spend on strategic planning, policy development and management. The reality is often different and many challenges, constraints and conflicting interests abound.

This chapter examines the tensions and potential conflicts facing Pacific heads of education systems. Drawing on examples from Pacific Island Countries and from Pacific research, it looks at the demands placed upon heads of education systems and questions whether there is a Pacific style of leadership in ministries of education or whether education is dominated by international influences.

Searching the literature

Multi-lateral development partners such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the Commonwealth Secretariat have been active in advocating greater effectiveness of governments generally, in order to reduce costs and improve efficiency. The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, in particular, have long been critics of PICs for having large public services that are relatively inefficient. Due to this pressure to reduce their public services, some PICs, notably the Cook Islands, Samoa and Tonga, have undertaken quite draconian reforms in down-sizing their public services, including the education sector. While many PICs have semi-corporatised aspects of government services such as telecommunications, governments as the largest employer in small countries have been reluctant to enforce huge public service redundancies. In the education sector, the World Bank has advocated that the state should provide basic education as one of its core functions but should seek public–private partnerships where possible for higher levels of education. Typical of their rhetoric, in 1998, the World Bank (1998: 15) stated:

> In the education sector, the challenge for most of the Pacific Member Countries is to greatly improve the quantity and quality of education within budgetary constraints. The Government should provide quality universal primary education using the most cost-effective combination—possibly a mix of private and independence as a practical way of private and public education.

Some ten years later, the World Bank was giving more specific advice on improving management in Pacific education, linking management directly with educational outcomes, noting that ministries of education have responsibility for management activities that can improve education outcomes. These include better alignment of resources and priorities, better tracking mechanisms, and reforms related to teacher development and standards and curriculum (World Bank, 2007).

Not much has been written specifically about educational leadership at the level of ministries of education in the Pacific Islands. Most literature on educational leadership focuses on school leadership. There has been some research on small island states generally; on educational administration; on leadership; and on the need to contextualise education in a more culturally appropriate manner; a sample of such research is briefly reviewed here.

A considerable body of work was developed in the late 1980s and early 1990s under a Commonwealth Secretariat project on the organisation and management of ministries of education in small states, which included some PICs. Although two decades old, the findings are still apposite. This built on earlier work on the sociology of small states that concluded that small states are not merely scaled-down versions of large states, but they have a particular ecology of their own. The project found that there are significant common features, both positive and negative, among small states from different parts of the world. An interesting observation by Bray (1992: 68), relevant to the Pacific, is:

> A feature of small state realities concerns the traditional western view that bureaucracies should be politically neutral. According to this view, administrators should be separated from politicians, and the role of the administrators is merely to implement the policies determined by politicians . . . [I]t is especially questionable in small states, which have an inevitable overlap of political and bureaucratic activity.

Some notable Pacific academics have interrogated education paradigms for the western values that they maintain and have written about the importance of maintaining Pacific cultural values in education systems. Konai Helu Thaman is a well-known advocate of the need to embrace Pacific cultures to guide education, in terms of educational philosophies, values, and teaching and learning methodologies. She maintains that: ‘Formal education has established systems and forms of governance that engender attitudes in institutional practices which determine what counts as worthwhile knowledge, skills and values’ (Thaman, 2002: 3).

Seu‘ula Johansson Fua has researched educational management and states that ‘it is essential to recognise that in any effort to align organisational values with societal values, the very process of value transfer should be reflective of Pacific epistemologies’ (Fua, 2005: 114). Johansson Fua is critical of the omission of leadership as a benchmark for planning under the PRIDE Project: ‘I would argue that leadership is the essential criterion for the achievement of the plan’ (ibid., 116). She notes the many conflicting influences on education leaders: from parents’ and community expectations as well as from the international agenda. Her view is that leadership practice is fundamentally about relationships between stakeholders.

Kabini Sanga has spearheaded work on leadership generally, both in his home country of Solomon Islands and in the broader Pacific region.

Following the national unrest in Solomon Islands, he felt that there was a real lack of ethical leadership at different levels: community, village, province and national government. He has examined leadership in the cultural context of Solomon Islands. He believes that good leadership must be taught rather than being regarded as innate (Sanga & Walker, 2005).

Kabini Sanga has also studied the cultural power imbalance in aid relationships in the education sector in the Pacific (see for instance Sanga, 2001) and notes that education has been viewed historically as 'a technical administrative process, a universal blueprint for education development' (Sanga, 2005: 36). He advocates more equal relationships with more meaningful participation by recipient countries. He cites the Rethinking Pacific Education Initiative as an innovative donor-funded project that was controlled by Pacific educators, thus shifting the power balance and asserting the capable leadership of Pacific people.

The 2000 Fiji Education Commission undertook an analysis of the administration and management of the Fiji Ministry of Education, noting that 'Good management practices are essential for the efficient administration of schools and other educational institutions' (Government of Fiji, 2000: 369). The analysis did not, however, mention the leadership dimension of management.

What the limited literature demonstrates is that ministries of education (MOE) in Pacific Island Countries do not exist as isolated bureaucracies but are embedded in the social and political contexts of their countries. Smallness creates both opportunities and challenges. This chapter looks at how leaders in Pacific ministries of education cope with the conflicting demands and changing practices in education.

The role of Pacific education leaders

The key task of a Pacific chief professional officer is to provide up-to-date professional policy advice to his or her minister so that the best possible decisions are made regarding the country's educational direction. He or she needs to be able to translate political directives into effective operational plans and policies and delegate staff to fulfil these roles.

Contemporary management discourse has spread into education. Strategic planning is now the norm and it is becoming so common that heads of education are assessed on their performance against the implementation of strategic plans. Leading the development of high-level strategic plans and programs is a major task of a head of education.

Strategic planning has developed considerably in PICs in recent years, due partly to the regional PRIDE Project and also due to the support of development partners.[2] At the start of the PRIDE Project in 2004, nine participating PICs had strategic plans. By 2009, all PICs (including the four states of the Federated States of Micronesia) had strategic plans in place. A 2010 study commissioned by PRIDE on how these plans are used by MOEs revealed that the vast majority refer to their plans regularly as a guiding document and most responded that the plans well reflect the situation on the ground (Tavola, 2010: 11).

Robust strategic plans are an essential requirement for engaging with donors and the standards required are becoming more demanding. There is an increasing requirement for plans to be fully costed and also to contain monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks. Currently, only six plans contain full financial costing and six have M&E components. M&E is a demanding and complex activity and MOEs often lack the capacity to develop this area of work.

Ministries must not only be able to develop sound strategic plans but must have the capability to implement them effectively and also to communicate the plans to the wider community. Ultimately MOEs are judged more on implementation than on the planning documents themselves.

Policy development has typically been weak in PICs. This results in ad hoc decision making that is subject to whim or political influence. Policies on the different parts of the education system take considerable time to develop in a participatory and consultative way but are necessary for providing clear guidelines to all stakeholders and for garnering ownership of the education system by the wider community. Since policies should be based on evidence, the maintenance of a sound educational management information system (EMIS) that captures relevant data is vital.

Strong leaders will be at the forefront of proactive planning and policy development and will constantly review policies and practices and modify or discard them as appropriate. Policies need to be coordinated overall, which is the task of a visionary leader.

Planning, budgeting and implementing involve negotiating a myriad of competing priorities: primary, secondary, early childhood, technical and vocational, and special needs, to name a few. In addition, schools in remote areas have specific infrastructure needs such as transport, water, electricity and telecommunications. The processes also involve fostering and building sound relationships with all stakeholders including teachers, parents, students, church and community.

Tensions inevitably arise but Pacific Islanders are adept at avoiding overt conflict. Rather than boldly assert disagreement and risk confrontation, a common approach is simply to ignore a directive that is not agreed with. It has been said in jest that Pacific Islanders invented passive resistance!

Staffing

Post-colonial government systems generally have markedly hierarchical structures. The person at the top has usually been in government service for many years and has worked his or her way to the most senior position of educational governance. The position itself has respect, but the post-holder must also earn collegial respect. In small countries, individuals can make a big difference. Good leaders are long remembered for their contributions. Equally, ineffective leaders can stunt progress and negatively affect morale.

The level of staff just below the head of education is critical: the head should have a competent team that he or she can rely upon. Where this is lacking, an extra burden falls upon the head to undertake a wide range of tasks. Heads of education must also have confidence and trust to be able to delegate substantive tasks to other officers in order to build their capacity and share the load. Managing other officers should move from a supervisory role to a mentoring role so that staff are empowered to perform to the best of their ability. This approach also fosters teamwork and promotes an enabling environment.

Hierarchical systems tend to be very bureaucratic and much of the day-to-day work of education officials is routine. This allows very little opportunity for innovative thinking and keeping abreast with current practice. The 2000 Fiji Education Commission (Government of Fiji, 2000: 369) observed that:

> The MOE is the hub of educational administration in Fiji. The competence and speed with which it operates affect the efficiency of educational institutions. Teachers, head-teachers/principals and members of school management committees have often criticised the Ministry for its bureaucratic approach and its delays in dealing with issues under consideration. Many stakeholders in education consider it to be the most bureaucratic government ministry in Fiji. There is a clear need for it to be streamlined in order to provide effective leadership and improved managerial efficiency in the delivery of its services.

A 2008 Review of the Forum Basic Education Action Plan commissioned by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat found that there are significant gaps in capacity and capability in Pacific education ministries.

> These capacity gaps include ability and skills to efficiently manage sector resources (at national, state, provincial and school level) including donor provided resources, ability to develop and analyse policies at sectoral and sub-sectoral level, ability to develop, manage and modify education management information systems (EMIS), ability to develop and nurture stakeholder relationships with other government departments, civil society, and other education authorities and lack of fully institutionalised M&E systems to track sector performance. (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2009: 23)

When capacity is lacking, use may be made of expatriate officers or consultants. While such short-term staff can fill essential gaps, they also have to be managed. The recently concluded AusAID funded Fiji Education Sector Programme relied on a series of short-term consultants who spent short terms in Fiji and who dispensed advice and training in short doses. This required considerable management from the MOE and took up much valuable time.

PICs tend to have high staff turnover in the senior echelons of education ministries for a number of reasons. High level administrators are sought after in government to lead other ministries and may be transferred. In some PICs, notably Kiribati and Tuvalu, the job of Education Secretary is seen as administrative and is not necessarily held by a person with an education background. Retirement ages are relatively low in PICs, for example 50 in Kiribati and 55 in Fiji. Political factors can intervene and cause the sudden removal of a head of ministry. Natural attrition such as illness, death and changing jobs are also reasons. Some former heads of MOEs have become politicians and in some cases have returned as Minister of Education, as in Tonga, Nauru and Solomon Islands. Some leave to join regional or international organisations.

At the other extreme are PICs where the head of education remains in place for a very long time. While this may bring about stability and continuity, there is also a risk of stultifying progress and innovation.

Financial decision-making

As noted above, ministries of education invariably take the largest share of the recurrent budget of PICs. Within these budgets, up to 90% is used on personnel emoluments, which leaves little for areas such as professional development for teachers, curriculum development and operating expenses. Managing resources and securing a sustainable source of finance for education are challenges for all PICs.

The global economic crisis in 2008–2010 has forced many PICs to reduce government expenditure and the education sector has not been spared. A 2010 conference on the effects if the global economic crisis in PICs was told of the impact of the crisis on teachers in the region. Some of the policies that countries are adopting are having a negative impact on teachers, for example: down-sizing or 'right-sizing' the public sector, including the teaching service; early retirement; redundancy packages; freezing recruitment; hiring at the lowest levels; forgoing or reducing staff privileges such as in-service training; terminating all unfilled posts and vacancies; devolving financial responsibility to schools and communities; and reducing funding for operations and support services (Taufe'ulungaki, 2010).

In addition to the impact on teachers, education ministries have typically had to make reductions in capital expenditure and budgets for equipment and items such as books and stationery. Making such tough financial decisions does not make one popular and in a small society, there is likely to be strong lobbying not to make reductions in various areas.

Dancing to the donor tune

All PICs rely to some extent on external sources of funding. A strong leader can be effective in capturing donor resources and making effective use of them. Courting donors, however, requires patience and diplomacy. Meeting the agenda of donors is a time-consuming task for many MOEs and heads of education systems. Donors want to meet the heads of MOEs and can schedule lengthy and frequent meetings. The cost of aid is the requirement of substantial resource commitment from the recipient country, as well as the overload of extra work on staff, often taking them away from their core duties. Reporting and acquitting to donors takes time and resources, yet is an essential requirement.

The constantly changing donor landscape means that different issues gain prominence at different times. Until the late twentieth century, donors funded discrete projects within MOEs. Now the move is towards a programmatic response, with an increasing number of PICs adopting Sector Wide Approaches or SWAps. SWAps take up much time and resources of key education officials but it is generally agreed that the benefits outweigh the costs as, theoretically at least, assistance is given according to country-driven priorities. A paper for the 2007 Forum Education Ministers meeting noted that in Tonga, the key problems for the SWAp were on relationships between

different parties, including donors; management of technical assistance; and capacity. It commented:

> The meetings and reviews take a lot of time and resources to organise—and put pressure on key staff, that also have to do their 'day job'. It is only through constant dialogue with development partners and in addressing the capacity issues that the 'relationship' issues are resolved. For example, at the technical review mission in September 2007, it was agreed that instead of 4 missions a year, there would be two missions. (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2007: 9)

The same paper also noted the challenges of dealing with international consultants:

> Managing international advisors is a big part of the TESP. One of the challenges is the presence of international consultants who have had some Pacific experiences and who have worked in other donor funded programs. Because they already have a relationship with donors in addition to their Pacific experience, they can push their own views and methods of operation making it difficult for local staff to develop the right capacity and leadership to lead the changes, as intended by the SWAp. (ibid.)

The Tonga MOE also found that it had grossly overestimated its own capacity to implement the SWAp. The demands on senior staff, but particularly on heads of education, under a SWAp can be extremely draining. Managing relationships between donor partners and MOE staff can be delicate and needs to be carefully managed.

Donor priorities also change over time; for example there is currently a strong emphasis on M&E, not only of strategic plans but of the whole education sector. As with other areas, M&E requires specific skills that are not always available at the national level. While heads of education may understand the value of M&E, they may not be able to allocate the human resources to undertake the task on a long-term basis so do not give it a high priority, to the frustration of development partners.

Meeting regional and international expectations

The international development community has imposed many frameworks on developing countries and then expected them to be integrated and absorbed and goals and targets met without question. Notable among these are the Education for All initiative (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). At the regional level, ministers of education and their senior

officials are expected to participate in ministerial meetings and the University of the South Pacific Council. PICs have also been engaged with the PRIDE Project and have been required to attend meetings and workshops run by PRIDE. Some PICs are also members of the Commonwealth or of PREL[3], each requiring attendance at meetings.

International frameworks are taken very seriously by donors. NZAID, for example. premises its education development work around achievement of the EFA goals and the MDG.

> NZAID Education policy released in 2003 signalled a new approach to working with development partners in the education sector. NZAID is committed to using a sector wide approach (SWAp), wherever possible, to support countries with education, especially the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and Education for All (EFA) Goals on the access and completion of universal primary (basic) education. NZAID prioritises its education support for countries most unlikely to achieve the MDG/EFA goals. (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2007: 4)

PICs are required to report on EFA and MDG commitments and while some countries report that EFA in particular helped in self-assessing the education systems and provided impetus to improving neglected areas such as early childhood education, the overall burden of reporting can be onerous. However, if international obligations are built into work plans, they can be managed and benefits can be gained. There is relatively less commitment to regional education frameworks, reflecting perhaps that education is very nationally driven.

Political pressures

Education is an intensely political topic as it affects everyone in some way or another. Issues surrounding education are often used in election campaigns and decisions, such as criteria for scholarships, can bring down governments. In PICs, communities, churches and non-governmental organisations are closely engaged with schools, highlighting the multiple stakeholders involved in the education system.

Heads of education need to tread a fine line between advising their Ministers and reacting to policies and decisions that may not make the best educational sense. Some political decisions are made with little consideration to budget provision. In Fiji in 2009–2010, for example, political decisions were made to provide free bus fares to school students and then to provide

free textbooks. Resources had to be reallocated to find funds for these extra unbudgeted costs.

Political pressures also come in less direct forms. The inter-connectedness of people in small countries and the multiple affiliations that individuals hold, such as community, church and other interest groups, can exert pressure on senior education managers. For example, in PICs where places in highly sought after and secondary schools scarce, there may be pressure imposed to admit the children of prominent people or relatives. Close personal relationships can have advantages but can also increase the pressure on senior officials. Approaching a relative who works in the MOE to gain entry for a son or daughter into a particular school may be seen as quite acceptable in a traditional context but could be interpreted as minor corruption in a bureaucratic setting where transparency is valued. This typifies the tensions that education officials regularly face, especially where school places are limited and schools have highly selective admission policies.

The special situation of very small PICs

Although all PICs are small on a global scale, very small PICs, commonly referred to as Smaller Island States (SIS)[4], are in a different situation as they cannot possibly have a full complement of specialist staff, yet ministries of education have to perform the same functions as in relatively larger countries: teacher recruitment; professional development; curriculum development; examinations and assessment to name a few areas. Multi-skilling is thus a necessity in small PICs. Farrugia (2002: 14) commented on this necessity thus:

> Small states attempt, indeed they are compelled, to extend their resources and lower per capita costs by requiring senior officials to act in multi-functional roles, to the extent that one senior official becomes responsible for several sectors which in larger countries are catered for by separate units and different groups of officials. They do not enjoy the luxury of concentrating on one responsibility or a specific cluster of concerns.

Small PICs also have a limited absorptive capacity and sometimes cannot effectively utilise donor funds or development assistance. It is sometimes not a lack of a quantum of funding per se, but rather the ability to use it that causes difficulties.

Obligatory travel to attend regional and international meetings and workshops takes key staff away from their desks. The effect of such absences is more marked in small MOEs. Due to flight schedules to and from SIS, it

is not unusual for officials to be absent for weeks in a row, thus potentially undermining their capacity rather than enhancing it.

Crisis management

Crisis management, or 'fighting fires', is part and parcel of everyday life in MOEs. Natural disasters are not uncommon. Pacific schools suffer damage from cyclones, floods and other extreme weather events. In Solomon Islands, many schools suffered damage from the tsunami in 2007, as did schools in Samoa in 2009. Cyclones struck schools in the Cook Islands in 2010 and schools in Fiji suffered from floods and later a number of schools faced damage from termite infestation.

Teachers throughout the region are fairly well organised into unions and do occasionally go on strike. This poses a huge issue for MOEs as they need to get schools back to normal quickly while addressing the demands of teachers. Managing relationships and consulting well could help to avert industrial action by teachers.

In Fiji, almost all schools are owned by community or religious groups while receiving considerable support from government. The committees that manage schools do not always agree with postings of head-teachers or principals, or teachers, and there are occasional 'lock-outs' that cause school closures. The MOE is always the broker that needs to resolve such crises.

The challenge for educational administrators is to prevent fire-fighting from overtaking more strategic and long-term work. Crises will always emerge and the skills of a good leader will be tested in handling them well.

What happens when there is poor leadership?

Poor leadership does occur. There have been heads of education in the region who have not delivered effectively. There are stereotyped images of senior officials who arrive late to work; are frequently absent as they take all international travel opportunities for themselves and extend their travel as long as possible; and whose over indulgence in alcohol and kava causes hangovers and sluggish performance.

MOEs do not function well with such leadership as a poor example set at the top tends to trickle down. The lack of respect held for senior management manifests itself in low levels of motivation and a lack of innovation among officials. However, if an education system is relatively robust with sound processes in place, it may be able to survive weak leadership in the short

term. A fragile system will inevitably be more vulnerable to inadequate leadership.

Ideally with more stringent monitoring and evaluation and use of key performance indicators, poor leadership is not tolerated. Unfortunately, in some small countries, there are not enough suitably qualified people to take leadership positions so the poor performers survive and a culture of mediocrity becomes the norm.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the need for strong leadership in the Pacific education sector, as elsewhere in the world, is increasing. Much of the pressure for effective leadership is driven by the international agenda for improvements in educational planning and management. There is domestic pressure as well from a range of stakeholders to deliver a sound education system to the nation.

Education systems do not exist in a vacuum and the social and cultural context imposes a value system that cannot be ignored. This context prescribes relationships, yet can be at odds with the supposedly neutral western model of bureaucracy. The full extent and role of the Pacific epistemologies advocated by Pacific academics such as Thaman, Fua and Sanga in educational administration are yet to be determined and further research needs to be undertaken in this area. What is evident is that current education strategic plans acknowledge the importance of national cultures as part of the vision of each country's education strategic plans. Initiatives such as the Rethinking Pacific Education Initiative have given Pacific educators the confidence to defend their cultures and, to some extent, to stand up to outside influences.

There are numerous tensions that education leaders have to deal with in small PICs and a skilled leader must handle relationships with care.

Globalisation is a potent force that has to be reckoned with. Pacific Islanders have proved themselves to be remarkably adept at compromising and selecting the positive aspects. One can only hope that current and future educational leaders will be able to continue to take on the best of the world while steadfastly owning their local cultural heritages.

Notes

[1] The term Pacific Island Countries (PIC) in this article is restricted to the 14 Island member states of the Pacific Islands Forum: Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands (RMI), Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. (Tokelau, although not an independent state, was also included in the PRIDE Project.)
[2] PRIDE is an acronym for Pacific Regional Initiatives in the Delivery of basic Education, a project funded by the European Union and NZAID, and implemented by the Institute of Education of the University of the South Pacific.
[3] PREL = Pacific Resources in Education and Learning, based in Honolulu..
[4] This term is used by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and includes Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau and Tuvalu.

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8

Training and development for school leaders

The case of small island states of the Pacific

Govinda Ishwar Lingam

Many factors contribute to improving the quality of education; for example, well-prepared and motivated teachers, relevant curriculum, educational resources, physical facilities and parental involvement. While the contribution of each of these factors to school improvement and effectiveness is vital, it is the school leader who makes the most significant difference. An abundance of research literature demonstrates the centrality of the school leader's role in achieving qualitative growth in education (Duignan, 2004; Duignan, & Bhindi. 1997; Loke, 2001; OECD, 2006; Sanders, 2006) because they occupy a strategic position in the school organisation (Stein, 1991). School leaders, whether principals or head teachers, are ultimately responsible for organising and managing the school organisation. In this regard, they must have the professional competence for the job, that is, the knowledge and skills, together with desired attitudes and values, in order to provide sound direction to the school.

This, however, does not appear to be the case in a number of educational settings in countries in the South Pacific region. As a result, concern is rising about the way schools are led and managed in certain jurisdictions (Bhindi & Duignan, 1997; Lipman-Blumen, 2005; Sinclair, 2007). Ultimately the effectiveness and efficiency of the school organisation depends on the quality of the people working in it, particularly the school leader. In fact, school leadership is crucial for school improvement and development and in turn for qualitative growth in education (Loke, 2001).

This chapter is in three parts. The first part draws on relevant international literature on school leadership, based on research findings in developed countries. The second looks at the situation of school leadership in some of the small island states of the Pacific region. The third part outlines the program for preparing educational leaders that the University of the South Pacific's School of Education has initiated.

Research studies

The focal position of the leader

Leadership has been consistently identified as an important area in a school's performance (Mortimore et al., 1988). As far back as the 1970s, the Department of Education and Science in England stated that, 'Without exception the most important single factor in the success of those [ten good] schools is the quality of leadership of the head' (DES, 1977: 36, cited in Northhouse, 2001: 68). Whether for the purpose of school effectiveness or school improvement, leadership is a vital ingredient (Clark et al., 1989). Likewise, Coleman (1994) emphasised the strong connection between leadership and the effective school and school improvement. School leadership has a strong influence on teacher performance and retention by creating a stimulating and supportive school culture, as well as helping to buffer teachers against pressures from different stakeholders such as parents and education authorities (Mulford, 2003). Skilled and talented school leaders can make a substantial difference to various aspects of school organisation, such as in terms of ownership and purpose in the way teachers handle their professional responsibilities, developing shared leadership and building collegiality, providing professional autonomy and professional development and helping teachers achieve job satisfaction. For all this to happen, school leaders must be professionally prepared for the job.

Work intensification

Over the years, school organisations have grown and at the same time increased in complexity and this has placed extra burdens on those in leadership positions, which are now seen as encompassing leaders and managements as well as traditional responsibilities of head teachers and principals (OECD, 2006). School leaders' roles and responsibilities are becoming more and more demanding as they are now expected to create a collaborative work ethos, acquire and allocate resources, promote teacher professional development, improve students' performance, build effective community partnerships and manage innovation and reform (Drake & Roe, 2003; Pierce, 2000). It is apparent that without training and development of school leaders for leadership positions at either the system level or the school level, it will be difficult to achieve school improvement and effectiveness.

As it is, teachers who are promoted to leadership positions were,

before their elevation, subject specialists (at the secondary school level) or generalist teachers (at the primary school level). They were not trained as leaders and or managers. However, in the current turbulent and complex educational environment with varying demands and reforms placed upon schools, attention to training of school leaders is warranted (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992). Support has grown for the idea that leadership is a process that can be learned (Northhouse, 2001). The view that leaders are born and not made, that is, the *great man theory*, does not hold water any longer in these rapidly changing times (Coleman, 1994; Earley & Weindling, 2005). If leaders are born, then it carries the implication that stringent measures need to be put in place in the *selection* of the best leaders. Yet while it may be that some people are born with certain characteristics that fit them to become successful in leadership positions, a more realistic approach is to assume that appropriate training and development of leaders can and must be given to ensure improvement in schools and in turn, the quality of educational provision afforded to the children.

Effective school leaders can create a pleasant school climate that supports high expectations for learning, collegial relationships among all and commitment to school improvement (Odden, 1987). Similarly, Edmonds (1979) found that school leaders play a crucial role in the area of teaching and learning. Cox (1983) considers that school improvement is engineered by school heads; it does not just happen. Thus school heads play a key role in school improvement. Fullan (1992) and Mortimore and co-authors (1988) also claim that school leaders can aid school improvement. In recent years, with the exponential intensification of external pressures emanating from different stakeholders demanding that schools perform better, the roles, functions and responsibilities of school leaders are becoming greater and more challenging (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992). Schools are being asked to do more with limited resources such as funds and educational resource materials. Those who now take up the positions of school leaders are expected not only to be competent in their work but also to display ethical standards—not least, integrity, character, commitment and trustworthiness—in their behaviour. Duignan and Bhindi (1997) refer to this type of leadership as authentic. Authenticity in leadership is now gaining momentum as it is recognised as an emerging facet in school leadership in all contexts. The ethical dimension should be at the core of any effective school leadership. However, in some school settings the actions of school leaders fail to meet ethical standards in their dealings with school children (Sharma, 2005). Therefore, if we want to

improve our schools and if we are serious about improving the quality of the education our children are receiving, we must ensure that our principals and head teachers are genuine about leading and managing our schools.

Similarly, Weindling and Earley (1987) for example, found in their study that newly appointed school heads faced considerable difficulties in introducing any changes directed at improving their school. This could be seen as implying that the new heads of schools lack self-confidence and appear to be happy and therefore prefer to continue with the maintenance type of school management. However, school leaders are not only responsible for maintaining the day-to-day running of the school; they should also act as change agents (Glatter, 1988).

Professional preparation

It is, therefore, widely recognised that efforts are necessary to train and develop school leaders. A study conducted by Jones (1987) to identify the training needs of school heads found that all needed leadership training followed by the establishment of a school ethos receptive to change. With proper training and development, school leaders can better organise, manage and lead their schools. Glatter (1987) suggested the training and development program should consist of: an adequate period of time for learning; scope for reflective learning; a focus on concrete situations; and application of learning in collaboration with colleagues.

The last two aspects of learning are based on the workplace and this provides relevant opportunities for heads to implement new knowledge and skills gained from the training and development programs. In addition, Glatter (1987) further suggests that development should be ongoing, that is, it should be a career-long training process. This is a valid suggestion as various changes that occur with the passage of time may require leaders to acquire new knowledge and skills. As suggested by Southworth (1993: 85):

> As leaders in school cope with all the educational and organisational changes which recent legislation has created, they may also need to contemplate changing the way they lead.

This is true as times are changing and calls emerge for changes in the way leaders lead and manage their schools. In the same vein, Murgatroyd and Gay (1984: 47–8) provide some useful tips about the leaders' training programs:

> Finally, training for leadership cannot be normative, prescriptive, skill-based or problem-centred. Instead it needs to focus upon the personal and interpersonal qualities of the person. It needs to develop and sustain openness, empathy and warmth and to encourage exchange, acceptance and exploration. Though the aims may be pursued by means of studying specific problems or issues or by exploring key concepts and research, such training needs to be person-centred.

Such a training program will then surely empower the leaders as they will find the program meaningful in terms of their professional development and in turn, the context specific nature of the work expected of them, The program developed for the training should therefore be consistent with needs of the context.

With reference to the Scottish education system, Harvard (1992) reported a nationwide management training program for all school leaders in the 1990s. The program consisted of eight management training modules: the principles of management, personnel management, managing the curriculum, management of resources, financial management, monitoring school effectiveness, the school and the community, and education and the law. All aspects are important for all teachers newly promoted to school leadership positions. As a further example, England also has a number of programs for the development of school leaders, such as the Headship Induction Program, the creation of the National Professional Qualifications for Headship, and the establishment of the National College for School Leadership (OECD, 2006). Likewise, Australia established the National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership. Interestingly, Sweden has a different, more robust mechanism in place: recruitment of those who *want* to become school leaders; induction for those newly appointed; a national professional development program after two years on the job; and ongoing career development, such as university courses and extensive support from professional associations of school leaders (Johansson, 2002). For the United States, Goldstein (2001) reports training programs in place for prospective principals. The programs in each of these countries emphasise certain aspects of leadership based on the requirements for the position in the specific national educational context. In developed countries for instance, such as the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom and New Zealand, a strong emphasis in training is on financial management.

The majority of the studies cited in educational leadership studies have documented the experiences of school leaders from developed countries such as the USA, Canada, Great Britain and Australia. The review of literature

demonstrates that in developed countries, opportunities are available—and most importantly, readily available—for the professional development and training of school leaders through programs that are, characteristically, context specific.

School leaders in the Pacific region

This section provides some snapshots of the school leadership situation in three selected countries in the Pacific region. A recent study conducted by Aleta (2010) on school leaders in Tokelau found several barriers to effective execution of their duties and responsibilities. Aleta (2010: 157) states that:

> The principals in the case study schools lack the capacity to effectively fulfil their duties and roles due to the lack of pre-preparation and training for principalship. The lack of pre-preparation is often overlooked in the appointment of principals in Tokelau.

In such a situation, the lack of training and preparation for school leadership positions could become a major hindrance to the development of a better quality education in the country. Tokelau consists of three atolls, place of residence for about 1600 people (though many times more Tokelauans now live in New Zealand). Each atoll has its own school and everywhere, natural resources are limited. All factors combine to make the needs–resources trade-off particularly problematic. In this context, the issue of leadership training deserves even greater attention in order to improve the quality of educational provision.

In the case of Solomon Islands, the need for improved school leadership is as problematic as Tokelau's, despite the difference in size and population between the two countries. The situation is so bad that those who are selected to lead schools in Solomon Islands generally do not even meet the advertised qualifications. As far back as the 1990s, Sanga (1992) reported that such appointments were normal. Generally speaking, Sanga (1992: 4) pointed out, in Solomon Islands:

> The responsibility of developing principals or potential principals professionally has never been an issue to question. No one had the resources to talk or do anything about it. One's own staff development used to be one's own responsibility.

The years of conflict and crisis since that time have meant a continuation of this saddening state of affairs. Evidently, the main stakeholder is seemingly complacent about the situation or in reality, powerless to counteract it; as a

result, schools continue to be managed by leaders without any professional preparation. Sanga already pointed to the range of duties expected of school leaders in the Solomon Islands context two decades ago and the situation is still much the same, with the addition of the expanding role responsibilities already noted as occurring generally in the region and beyond:

> Being a Secondary Principal in the Solomons requires much more than just being the administrative head of a school. Because our schools are mostly boarding and co-educational, principals often play the roles of Community Chief, Government Agent, Community Adviser, Pastor and a 'big man'. (Sanga, 1992: 4).

This shows the importance of the context in determining the range of work demands on school leaders. Without adequate preparation for the job the incumbent is likely to be faced with a lot of challenges in effectively managing the school. Recent studies on school leadership by two Solomon Islanders, Malasa (2007) and Ruqebatu (2008), confirm that the situation reported by Sanga (1992) persists and they both urge the need to introduce strategies for leadership development.

More recently, a positive development has taken place. The Solomon Islands Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD) secured funds from the New Zealand Government for the professional preparation of school leaders. The School of Education of the University of the South Pacific (USP) has been contracted to provide training leading to the award of the Diploma in Educational Leadership and Change. Hopes are high that the project, commenced in July 2009, will prove to be a good move, enabling MEHRD to use the funding sought for the professional development of most of the current school leaders for the positions they hold.

In the case of Fiji, it has been identified that poor leadership means that schools are not geared towards improving the quality of education. For example, Bacchus (2000) reporting on the situation in Fiji emphasised the need to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of the school system. He identified the, need for improving the system of supervision and monitoring of school performance, largely with the help of better trained head teachers or principals and education officers' (Bacchus, 2000: 57). In its report, the Education Commission/Panel (quoted in Tavola, 2000: 98) also emphasises the importance of quality leadership in schools:

> [School heads] set a critical level of expectation for their teaching staff. They can motivate and inspire teachers to perform to the best of their abilities.

> Conversely, if they adopt a laissez-faire attitude and take little active interest in the school, especially if they are frequently absent, standards slide.

The report goes on to state that the problem is aggravated by the shortage of suitable candidates for the school heads position. For example:

> Many of the low-achieving schools are led by principals who lack motivation, initiative and direction and are often overwhelmed by the school situation they are confronted with. They have a defeatist attitude from the start. Unfortunately, our rural Fijian secondary schools fall into this category. (Tavola 2000: 8)

As a long term strategy for Fiji, Coxon (2000: 419–420) recommended the establishment of a Centre for Educational Leadership responsible for the professional development of heads of schools. Even though this relates to Fiji, the idea is relevant to other developing educational contexts such as the other small island states in the Pacific, which are also striving to achieve quality education. Such programs will enable school leaders to think deeply about the nature of their professional work. As in Solomon Islands, the Fiji Ministry of Education, through funding and technical assistance from AusAID, helped provide some training to serving and aspiring school leaders. This is a healthy sign as the main stakeholder has realised the importance of training not only the current school leaders but also potential school leaders. This is another positive development and such planning is vital in all developing contexts.

Nor, on the basis of my work experience in the region, does it seem to me that the remaining countries in the Pacific region are any more fully committed to the professional development and training of school leaders. One of the reasons for the ad hoc response to the school leaders' professional preparation needs is likely to be the funding constraints. Overall, the majority of the school leaders in the countries of the Pacific are untrained for the position, a probable, if partial, explanation for the mediocre performance of the school organisations.

Educational leadership program

Due to various reforms in Pacific schools, the need for professionally prepared school leaders is greater than ever before. The educational reforms of recent years—having their genesis, in the main, in world-wide educational mega-trends such as concern for 'Education for All', free education, compulsory education legislation and the demand for quality education—call for professionally prepared school leaders. This is supported by the manifold

changes that come from within a context, such as the national education plans and policies, school curricula, school governing bodies, parents, employers and others who have a vested interest in education, and the escalating social and legal accountabilities, such as the current emphasis on child protection (Brady & Kennedy, 2003). This is equally true for the Pacific region. The rapid rate of educational change requires continuous development of school heads (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991). As Leithwood (1992) emphasised, career cycle development, rather than a one-off staff development program, is one approach required in an era of continuous change in the educational environment. The absence of training programs for head teachers, principals and other educational leaders contributes to inefficiency and ineffectiveness in the schools and the entire school system. What then emerges from the foregoing exposition is that the concern for development and training for leaders of today's schools warrants due consideration.

At the University of the South Pacific a Diploma in Educational Leadership program is in place for the professional preparation of serving and aspiring school leaders, educational planners and policy makers in the Pacific region. Velayutham (1994: 78) succinctly describes the usefulness of the program:

> [Through this programme it is envisaged that school leaders'] attitude, work practices and world views . . . based on conceptual understandings, reflective practice, and research-based knowledge can significantly influence organisational behaviour and in turn further enhance the achievement of quality education.

The program aims to extend knowledge on contemporary leadership practices in the region through theory, research and practice. The program sets out to develop knowledge and skills in a range of spheres of school organisation including managing the school organisation, planning, supervision, problem-solving, fostering accountability, managing change and encouraging community partnership in education.

The Diploma in Educational Leadership program consists of eight courses:

ED191 Educational Decision-making and Problem Solving
ED192 Educational Project Planning
ED255 Introduction to Curriculum Development
ED291School Organisation and Management
ED292 Educational Planning and Development

ED359 Educational Research
ED391 Educational Leadership and Supervision
ED392 Issues in Educational Administration in the South Pacific.

The inclusion of two of the courses—a course in curriculum (ED255) and another in research (ED359)—is to give breadth of professional development and training (Velayutham, 1994). The course ED255 would enhance the school leader's role as an instructional leader. In the same vein, the course ED359 is vital in terms of contributing towards reflective practice, which in turn will help in the process of ongoing development of the school. Since USP has the leadership program in place, the regional countries could take advantage of the program by sponsoring their serving and aspiring educational leaders for professional preparation. The program can be taken as in-country projects.

Concluding remarks

Apart from international literature, various local observers, researchers, academics and commentators of education have highlighted the need for capable and competent school leaders in the education system (Bacchus, 2000; Chandra, 2004; Lingam, 2010; Malasa; 2007; Ruqebatu, 2008; Sanga, 1992; Sharma, 2005). All have quite rightly commented that resources, facilities and curriculum, for example, no matter how good they are, will not achieve desired results unless school leaders are competent and capable in their job. Other ingredients are vital but they are not sufficient in terms of making a huge difference in school improvement. This particularly applies to leaders at the school level, which is where the actual educational policies and plans are translated into action. It is the school leader who is responsible for the overall organisation and management of the various ingredients such as the human resources, material resources and facilities, which together contribute to school improvement.

My observations and work experience show that in the past, countries in the Pacific region paid scant attention to the development and training of school leaders. Only recently have some recognised the value of professional preparation for this group. In almost all Pacific Island countries of the region, a great deal needs to be done and learning from developed countries is essential and a way forward. The rapid pace of change in the education systems in the Pacific countries magnifies the need for professional preparation of school

leaders. Adequate professional preparation would equip school leaders better for dealing with the challenges of running and further developing their school organisations. They would also be responsive to the needs of the communities and in turn the nation they serve. Above all, school leaders would be in a better position to face the challenges and the realities of the 21st century and at the same time forge ahead in school improvement efforts for the benefit of the children's education.

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9

Coping with changes

The need for professional school leaders for School Improvement Planning

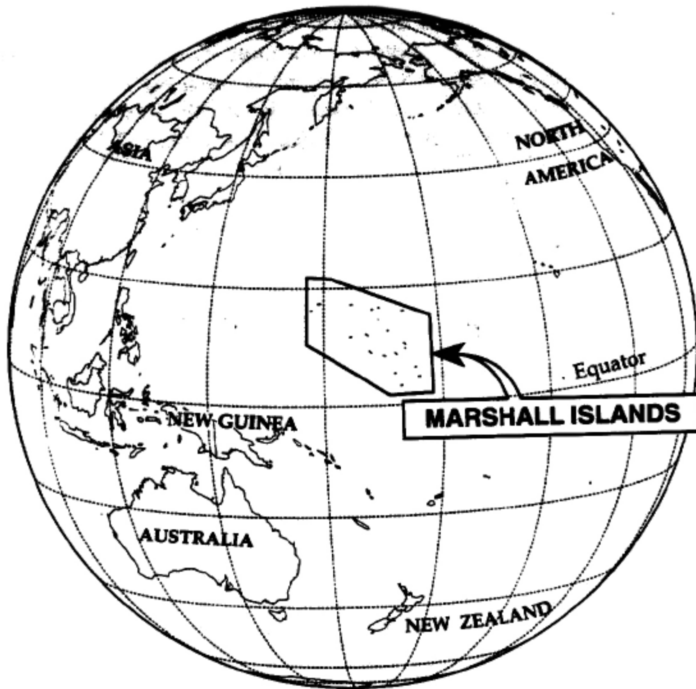
Lauren Pallotta and Govinda Ishwar Lingam

In recent decades, many changes have been taking place in the education systems of the Pacific Island countries due to contemporary demands arising from both internal and external sources. In the case of the Marshall Islands, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has adopted the use of School Improvement Plans, to lure community stakeholders into taking ownership of their school, concentrating particularly on the areas in which they can contribute for the advancement of education. This participatory approach has been employed to empower communities to take action and facilitate change at the grassroots level. Moreover, it allows schools to design projects suited to their unique needs, and community stakeholders to be the decision-makers. In this bottom-up approach, it is the parents, teachers, community members and students who determine the specific areas in which to make a commitment to improve, as well as the contributions they can make both individually and collectively once the plan is put into action. In the face of manifold changes, rising expectations and the growing complexity of school work, effective response to these pressures would prove difficult without professional leaders at the school level.

Background

Educational provision in the context of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) faces many challenges (figure 1). The central MOE formulates policies and undertakes planning for a country of very diverse schools and unique environments in which to implement educational praxes. In the Marshall Islands there exist three types of schools categorised by their location: Majuro schools, Kwajalein schools, and outer island schools (figure 2). Within this last category are two ‘sub-centres’, Wotje and Jaluit, each of which has

Figure 1 Location of the Republic of the Marshall Islands

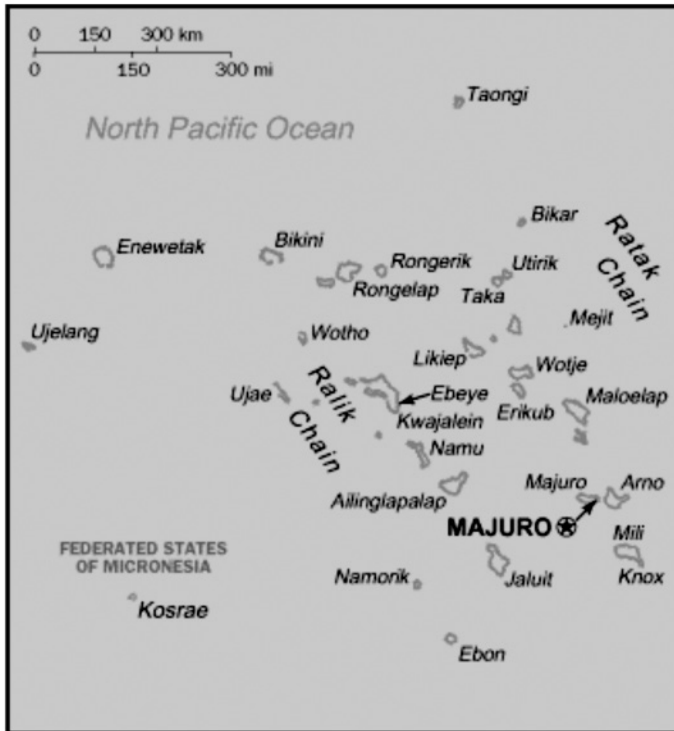


access to electricity and the Internet, hosts a boarding high school, and receives fairly frequent transportation. Nonetheless, much of the attention is focused on the first two categories, which are considered 'urban'. The MOE is based in Majuro and can therefore more effectively monitor schools there; similarly, Kwajalein schools—which have high enrolment rates as a result of their proximity to the US military base—have a decentralised budget and an Assistant Secretary of Education responsible for those schools in regard to educational planning.

The outer islands, however, are a collection of small, far-flung schools with limited access to resources and support. They are subject to the same planning as urban schools despite being situated in a very different environment facing a very different reality. Outer island elementary schools in the public sector cater for students in grades K–8; they are typically small, with student population sizes averaging about 70, though many schools have fewer than 30 and a few have over 100. At these schools, there are, consequently, small student-to-teacher ratios, but teachers are responsible for

teaching multiple grades at the same time. (The urban schools, in contrast, have overcrowded classrooms in which one teacher is responsible for 35 or more students of the same grade.)

Figure 2 The Republic of the Marshall Islands



Outer island schools also have limited access to resources. Despite the effort in recent years to install solar panels on the outer islands, most schools still lack power. They rely on sunshine to illuminate the classrooms, which can be problematic on rainy days, even to the point of providing reason to cancel school. Furthermore, the teachers and principals at these schools travel by boat or plane to Majuro for the summer, returning just in time to their schools; they are often on their own for the rest of the year with limited or no access to support or school materials. Indeed, 'the far and isolated schools often operate independently, almost in a stand-alone existence, with little support from and communication with the MOE' (Joseph, 2010). The

MOE does its best to visit these schools but is often limited by financial resources, transportation and other logistical problems. Moreover, when visits do happen, they are often for only a week and do not allow adequate time to follow up on all areas in which schools need support. For example, MOE staff may go out to a school or atoll to conduct training but then not have enough time to observe teachers and provide feedback. They may meet with a school community and realise the problems the school is facing, but have limited means for addressing needs in an effective, efficient way. As a result, school support is not equitable, and these remote schools are, in effect, marginalised. In such circumstances, school leaders play a crucial role at the school level to ensure improvement in all aspects of the school organisation.

School Support

The background points to a number of pertinent issues about support at the school level, disparities in educational opportunities and impact of differential support services and resources to schools. However, we suggest that the background also raises issues concerning school leadership, for when this is professional, it can still make positive contributions in all spheres of school and education generally, despite the manifold changes introduced in the education system. However, lack of training and mentoring programs for school leaders can be a hindrance to effective implementation of any educational change.

In a country with such scattered ringlets of land, perhaps the greatest challenge in terms of supporting schools from the MOE headquarters in Majuro is the access to continuous communication and technology. All schools use short-wave radio to report data and enable parents to communicate with their children at boarding high schools. However, little or no time is reserved for school matters such as ongoing staff and human resources development, though this would be critical in allowing principals, head teachers, teachers and parents easy access to educational support services. Provision of professional support is limited by the country's geography. This exacerbates the problem of understanding the implementation of educational plans at the institutional, classroom or community level and in turn, does not really ensure good quality outcomes such as in the area of School Improvement Planning. Taking this into consideration, it seems necessary, pragmatic and logical that school improvement planning should be an insular activity for communities instead of one that relies predominantly on directives and visits from the MOE.

School Improvement Plans

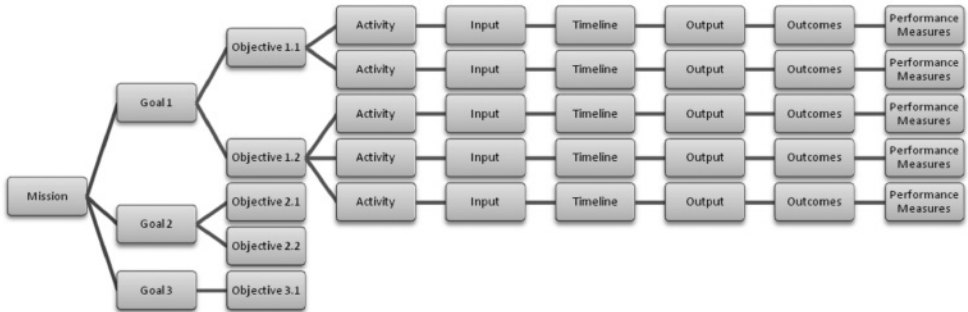
In the Marshall Islands, school staff and communities are currently guided by a School Improvement Plan (SIP) and principals, in partnership with the School Improvement Team (SIT[1]) are responsible for facilitating the SIP's implementation. In 2008, the Parental Informational Resource Center (PIRC) within the Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) office worked with the MOE office of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment (CIA) to begin training principals, teachers and communities in developing an SIP through a pilot study that assessed needs solely regarding instructional goal setting. The pilot's success in 2008 encouraged PREL and MOE to expand the SIP initiative in 2009 with the development of more goals and school culture-based endeavours.

Tokai (2005) stresses the importance of top management and the inclusion of stakeholders in planning as two key factors in being successful. In the Marshall Islands, the lack of these very two features was listed as a factor that directly affected the quality of learning. As a result 'involving the community in their children's education through partnerships seemed to offer promise' (Joseph, 2010). From there, the PIRC-funded cluster model of PTA participation was devised for use in the Marshall Islands, and the SIP was to be developed and utilised alongside it: cluster 1 is grades K–3; cluster 2 is grades 4–6; cluster 3 is grades 7–8. Each cluster would take ownership of its contribution to the overall SIP, with the cluster chairperson, vice chairperson (both of whom are parents) and cluster lead teacher representing that cluster in SIT meetings.

In many ways, this has been an important step MOE and PREL have taken, in that it is organising communities to plan 'from the bottom up' through a participatory approach (Joseph, 2010; Tokai, 2005). The MOE and PREL offices are providing the organisational framework, but the school and communities are making the decisions. Furthermore, the SIP is meant to be inclusive of informal and non-formal education, given its link to family partnerships and its involvement of parents.

In 2010, PREL hosted the first three days of the annual week-long Principals' Institute, in which they revisited these plans and required principals to finish them after having had a year to organise and plan with parents and community members. Figure 3 presents a diagram of the SIP framework.

Figure 3 Strategic SIP framework for Marshall Islands



Each school has a mission statement[2], which is supported by several goals[3]. Each goal has a number of objectives[4] necessary for the attainment of that goal. Similarly, each objective has a number of activities[5] (with accompanying inputs[6], timelines[7], outputs[8], outcomes[9] and performance measures[10]) designed to contribute to reaching that objective. The number of goals and related objectives and activities varies according to each school's needs and consequent plan. Each goal is organised on a planning matrix (Figure 4).

Figure 4 School improvement planning matrix

School Improvement Planning Matrix

School Mission:..

Goal 1: ....

Objective 1: ....

Activity 1	Input	Timeline	Output	Outcome	Performance Measures
Activity 2	Input	Timeline	Output	Outcome	Performance Measures

Significance

SIPs are an integral part of the advancement of education in the Marshall Islands. CIA staff members visit schools to conduct training sessions and help guide educators to achieving their goals in the classroom. An added facet of their role now will be to assist schools with realising their SIPs and provide assistance with facilitating activities or discussions in order to reach the goals envisioned by the schools' stakeholders. SIPs put planning into action by having a written commitment to activities that facilitate learning; simultaneously, they hold stakeholders accountable for implementing the plans they devise.

Critical Reflection

While SIPs are an important and necessary measure, there are still some principals, schools and community leaders who are finding difficulty with developing their own SIPs and furthermore, with putting them into action. The framework provided by the MOE and PREL is specific and strategic yet the schools' decision-makers are struggling with what each piece means and therefore how to make it a purposeful process instead of tedious paperwork that sits on a shelf. Moreover, not all communities have necessarily 'bought into' the idea of school improvement planning, so despite the inclusive model being used that allows stakeholders to assume the role of decision-makers, questions are still raised regarding its value in the greater scheme of education. Seemingly, there need to be more conversations about the value of a community's SIP and the implications it will have for increased student performance and overall educational progress. Communities claim to want and value education but struggle with understanding the roles people must assume in order to make progress. Nor is it only the community that struggles with the implications; the school leaders also have difficulties understanding the change as well as the MOE educational jargon in its current management-speak dress.

Critical Analysis

Observations at the 2010 Principals' Institute organised by PREL and MOE suggest that in some communities, the value and creation of SIP paperwork was not explained effectively. This summer (2011), after a year of supposedly developing their plans, principals were still unclear about what the different

aspects of the SIP were and how they were interconnected. This would explain why plans failed to materialise; their value was lost in esoteric MOE jargon. As a result, it has been difficult for school leaders to mobilise communities for this purpose. It is assumed that SIP would improve the effectiveness and efficiency of schools and the entire education system but unless appropriate development of school leaders is undertaken, managing and coping with any change will continue to be challenging. Such deficiencies are likely to lead to dilution of educational services in certain geographical areas of the country and in turn, children will be the ones ultimately affected. Thus, mediocre or worse school leadership, in the case of the Marshall Islands, can be one of the greatest impediments to school-level planning and development. The administrative capacity of the school leaders appears at present to be inadequate for coping confidently with school improvement planning.

Of course, the MOE and PREL offices are understaffed and there are certain limitations to plans given the reality of this nation's geography. It is financially and logistically impossible to visit every school often enough and for long enough during the school year to train communities effectively in something so critical as school improvement planning. It seems that concentrating the effort school by school over the course of a few years, rather than trying to get them all done in one year in one fell swoop, would offer greater hope of success.

The MOE cannot mandate the development of SIP without first building trust and understanding in the targeted community. Personal relationships in the Pacific are indeed the underpinning forces of productivity (Thaman, 2006) and for this, school leaders need to foster suitable interpersonal skills. Therefore, once in situ, facilitators can call a community meeting to ask stakeholders to identify the areas in which they hope to improve, and then help them organise their ideas to establish their prioritised needs. Only *after* that discussion could the notion of school improvement *planning* be introduced, as a necessary first step before ways of turning their ideas into action can be sought. From there, facilitators could contextualise those aspects of the plan by relating them to Marshallese culture—like planning for a *kemem*[11]—since school improvement planning does involve a lot of MOE jargon that communities do not typically use. 'The challenge is to engage the community, especially parents, in school decision-making processes, sharing learning goals and holding all stakeholders accountable for the learning that takes place in the schools' (Joseph, 2010: 17). Once communities feel comfortable and motivated to create their own plans, only then can facilitators establish

timelines of communication to monitor and evaluate the SIPs' progress and implementation. As Tokai (2005: 22) argues, 'the plan's success is dependent upon the actions of key stakeholders . . . They are more likely to support and contribute to its implementation if they are involved with planning from the earliest stages and believe it will have a positive impact on the organisation'. As earlier analyses of indicators of negative impacts on Marshallese students' performance suggest, it is impossible for isolated Pacific schools to have effective learning environments if parents are not actively involved in the education process (Joseph, 2010).

Implications for education leadership

Educational planning in developing countries requires significant training of the education leaders at all levels, including especially those at the school level. This is the level at which educational policies and plans are translated into action: the need for professional leaders at the school level is therefore obvious. School improvement planning is no exception and the nature of the SIP is such that it requires school leaders to act as the lynch pin between the MOE and the local community to ensure success. In the RMI, stakeholders are developing SIPs for their respective schools in order to improve the performance of students; but the effort is vain unless teachers and parents in their roles as educators are also being built into the plan. The challenge now is for MOE to continue monitoring and evaluating these plans through continuous and sustained communication with the communities, and providing training and assistance where necessary to ensure proper understanding, creation and implementation of SIPs. Even though the approach to school improvement planning is commended on the grounds that it would contribute towards greater participation of people at the grass roots level, the lack of capacity of school leaders to take on board this change may further hinder the equalisation of educational opportunities in a country like Marshall Islands with ringlets of small islands. As such, mentoring and training of school leaders would ensure that they are better equipped to manage change such as the introduction of SIP or any other planned educational change and development.

Notes

[1] SIT members include the President (principal), the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of each cluster, the lead teacher of each cluster, as well as (but not limited to) a local government member, a cultural/traditional leader, a church group member, and a community business representative.
[2] Mission statement: a declaration of a school's commitment to students, their achievement and development.
[3] Goal: a focus area of improvement for schools to achieve what is stated in the mission statement.
[4] Objective: a focus area within the goal.
[5] Activity: a specific project that the school stakeholders undertake in order to reach the related objective.
[6] Input: the contributing personnel, resources, space needed and frequency of meetings for activity completion.
[7] Timeline: the duration of the project (days, weeks, months, etc.)
[8] Output: the attending personnel, completed tasks, or resource materials created.
[9] Outcome: the change in attitudes, motivation, or stakeholder performance (parents, students, teachers, etc.)
[10] Performance measures: tools used to measure effectiveness of project outcomes.
[11] *kemem*: traditional first birthday party where families on each parcel of land are responsible for bringing a *kilok*, or large basket of food containing contributions to the overall feast.

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10

Leadership challenges and management strategies of women school leaders

A case study from Solomon Islands

Stanley Houma

In Solomon Islands, as in many other Pacific Island countries, the early church missionaries were responsible for the introduction of schools and formal schooling. As institutions of teaching and learning, schools have made an incalculable contribution to the improvement of people's livelihood. For many rural people schools have provided an option for making their way out of village life. Yet schools in Solomon Islands are far from effective and efficient. Literacy and numeracy skills, for instance, continue to be low in many schools. Absenteeism is increasingly unchecked in many schools. A major factor contributing to this situation is the absence or weakness of school leadership. Many of those in leadership positions have been identified from amongst teachers but are untrained in the areas of school leadership, management and administration. Those who are successful are the innovative, reflective and self-motivated leaders.

The leadership and management of schools is overwhelmingly dominated by male leaders (93.2%) although women make up a substantial proportion of the teacher numbers in the country. According to the teaching service staff establishment 2007, in the community high schools (CHS) only eight school leadership positions were filled by women, out of a hundred and seventy-two CHS leaders. This represented a mere 4.7% of all current CHS leaders or principals. This case study looks at two of the women school leaders in two community high schools in Solomon Islands, focusing on their leadership challenges and the management strategies they use to deal with them.

Genesis of the study

My personal interest in this study began when I was running a course for school leaders and noticed only two women leaders among a group of thirty enrolled for the course. It was then that I started asking questions. Why is the opportunity not provided for women teachers to become school leaders? What are the experiences of current women school leaders? What are their challenges and how do they manage these challenges?

Setting

The research was carried out in June and July 2007 at two community high schools in Solomon Islands, one in Honiara and one in Western Province (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 Map of Solomon Islands

The two schools were selected because the current school principals were women: in the context of Solomon Islands, a woman leading a secondary school is still a fairly rare occurrence. Also these two women received verbal recommendations from their colleagues, both school leaders and teachers, as fairly active, efficient and innovative women school leaders.

The school in Honiara is coded CHS 01and in Western Province, it is CHS 02. Table 1 presents a summary of the two schools based on the teaching service staff establishment figures for 2007.

Table 1 Profile of the two schools

School	Location	Education Authority	Classes	Students	Number of Teachers
CHS 01	West Honiara	Honiara City Council	Forms 1–5 Classes 1–6	595	At Post – 26. **Secondary** – 12 Males – 3 Females – 9 **Primary** – 14 Males – 5 Females – 9
CHS 02	Western Province	Western Province Education Board	Forms 1–5 Classes 1–6	731	At Post – 24. **Secondary** – 7 Males – 2 Females – 5 **Primary** – 17 Males – 5 Females – 12

Source Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 2007.

Two features of community high schools account for their special nature and distinguish them from other secondary schools in Solomon Islands. First, they include classes for both primary and secondary schooling. In some cases, they even extend to cover early childhood classes. Secondly, in the administrative set up, community high schools have two deputy principals. One is deputy secondary whilst the other is deputy primary.

Research methodology

For this study, the case study methodology was adopted, because it provides an opportunity to look in-depth into the leadership challenges and management strategies of women leaders in each of the two case schools. A basic questionnaire was designed to elicit written information from the two principals. This was administered face-to-face for the Honiara principal and by email to the principal in Western Province. For the Honiara school leader, a face-to-face semi-structured interview and *tok stori* (talanoa) were also used to obtain greater detail of the woman's experiences. Such 'favouring' of cases in central parts of the system is typical of research in the region and exemplifies the tendency to gloss over or marginalise the particular problems faced by outer areas in having their special situations addressed. No one-size-fits-all model will ever meet the diversity of needs experienced in the diverse world of Oceania.

In observance of cultural protocol, permission for the case studies was obtained not only from the participant school leaders, but from their spouses as well. Perhaps the fact that this was necessary says a good deal about the prevalent cultural attitudes towards women in Solomon Islands.

In this study, I am both an outsider and an insider. As outsider I am a Solomon Islands male investigating the work of female school leaders. I am also an outsider because although I was a school teacher and teacher educator who used to work in Solomon Islands, I now live and work outside of the country looking in. As an insider, I am a Solomon Islander who understands the education system and the desires and expectations people have of schools and education generally. I have a personal concern for the education of Solomon Islands students and children, particularly those in the rural areas. Thus, I believe the continuing capacity building and professional support of school leaders is an important and worthwhile undertaking.

Input from the literature

The role of leadership has been researched in various contexts and from different perspectives over the years. This level of interest in the concept is at least partly explained by the fact that leadership can either contribute to the development and progress of an organisation or society, or assist in its collapse and eventual demise.

The concept of leadership has been defined differently by different people, depending on time and location and what their particular focus

or agenda might be. Northhouse (2001) for instance, sees leadership as a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. Rost (1991) on the other hand offers a definition focusing on intended change that brings about mutual benefit. He perceives leadership in terms of influence relationships among leaders and followers who intend real change that reflects their mutual purposes.

Sanga (2000) extends Rost's definition but focuses on ethical leadership, with emphasis on the need for deliberate attention to the declining image and performance of leadership in the Pacific. He defines leadership as purposeful and deliberate influential relationships between leaders and followers working towards ethically shared goals.

As in other organisations, leadership in Solomon Islands—and indeed in Pacific schools generally—has captured attention in recent years, perhaps more for wrong than good reasons. Lack of care for facilities and equipment, abuse of school funds and unmonitored teacher absenteeism are some of the weaknesses highlighted in images of current leadership in schools. Yet there are many leaders working in various organisations, institutions, schools and other levels of society who continue to put out their best performance regardless of the many and varied challenges they may face. Such is the case of the two women school leaders in this case study.

Challenges are part and parcel of daily life. People in all walks of life, including leaders in whatever situation or at whatever level, face challenges every day. This is a reality for everyone, despite one's socioeconomic landscape, culture, age, religion or gender. These variables, however, may affect or even determine the nature of the challenges people face and how they manage or deal with them. The following extract demonstrates how Sanga and Walker (2005: 15) perceive challenges:

> A challenge refers to a difficult situation that one faces. A challenge is not necessarily a problem; however, it may be an obstacle or hard situation that leaders and followers face. As often as possible it should be seen as an opportunity for something better to be created from a difficult situation.

They go on to argue that challenges engage two types of people—the spectators and the courageous—and that such situations demand the time, energy and skill of leaders. Dealing with challenges requires dedication, determination and diligence on the part of leaders as decision makers. It is therefore vital that leaders understand what the challenges are and what impacts these can have on their leadership . Challenges that leaders are likely

to encounter can arise at the village, institutional, organisational and national levels. They could cover challenges of relationships, choices, resources, justice, economic realities, ideology, diversity and leadership.

A particularly challenging problem in the Pacific Islands is the status of women, which continues to be an area of debate. In many of the regional countries, women are still perceived in terms of their traditional roles of 'child educators, food producers and resource managers' (UNICEF, 1993: 53). Pollard (2000: 5) adds a pertinent rider:

> In the traditional arena women lack formal positions of authority, although they may often wield considerable personal influence behind the scenes.

In some Pacific cultures, there are matrilineal practices that give women some authority over land and enable them to exercise some degree of influence within the clan group. Yet even in such cases, influence is exerted through male members of the clan, usually ones who are mother's brother or brother to the women in question. According to UNICEF (1993), in Solomon Islands matrilineal cultural practices are found on Guadalcanal, Nggela, Savo, Isabel, the Shortlands, Vellalavella and other parts of Western Province.

Generally, the status of women has improved markedly in the last decade. Yet, 'despite advances in education, more liberal attitudes among young people, an increasing number of women in monetised employment and external pressures for equal opportunity for women' (Ward, 1995: 13), in many areas women continue to struggle against injustice and discrimination. In theory, through international commitments such as the ratification by many Pacific countries including Solomon Islands of the UN convention on the political rights of women and the elimination of discrimination against women have given due recognition to women and their struggle for gender equality. Many countries, such as Solomon Islands, have also guaranteed the rights of women through their constitutions. According to the South Pacific Forum Secretariat's published commitments of Pacific Island countries to gender equality (SPFS, 1998), the Solomon Islands Constitution guarantees the fundamental rights and freedoms of women and has provided protection against discriminatory laws and discriminatory distinction based on sex. These are provided in Article 3 of chapter II, Article 15 and Article 22 of the *Constitution of Solomon Islands 1978.*

There is further protective legislation; for instance the Solomon Islands *Labour Act* part VIII ss 76–82, provides 'specific laws regarding the employment of women'. In terms of policies, the 'Solomon Islands Aid and

development policy gives particular attention to increasing the capacity of vulnerable groups as well as women to contribute to development' (SPFS, 1998: 42).

In discussing women employment in Solomon Islands, Marion Ward (1995) highlighted three constraints to women's wider workforce participation. First, prevailing conservative attitudes, which still exist in Solomon Islands society, result in discrimination against women in the workforce and restrictions on those wanting to engage in paid work. Secondly, the marriage, childbearing and domestic responsibilities stand in the way of women's full participation. 'At the time when women are most likely to enter the workforce, reproduction and responsibilities to their partners, children and extended family are at their most demanding phase' (Ward, 1995: 13). Thirdly, in comparison to male counterparts, females lack access to formal education and this access becomes even more limited with progression up the education ladder.

Women in school leadership

Numbers

Out of the 721 school leaders at all levels from primary to national secondary schools, only 56 are women. This represents only 7.8%. At the primary school level, which shows the highest rate, 9% (47 out of 522) school leaders are women. As noted earlier, at CHS level 4.7% (8 out of 172) of school leaders are women. There is no woman leader at the provincial secondary level, while the national secondary schools include only one woman amongst the twelve school leaders.

Profile of case study principals

The two women school leaders in this study are among the eight women principals of community schools in Solomon Islands. Thus, the participants in the study represent 25% of the women school leaders at CHS. A young, qualified and experienced minority (see table 2), these women school leaders are principals of CHSs that service mainly children of urban- or semi-urban–dwelling families.

Table 2 Principals' profile for the two case study schools

Principal	School	Age	Qualifications	Years of Teaching and Principalship
Koni	CHS 01	34	BEd, MEd plus management in-service training on the job.	Teaching – 12 Principal – 5
Pati	CHS 02	40	BA plus management in-service training on the job.	Teaching – 19 Principal – 11

By Solomon Islands and Pacific standards; the two women school leaders are young at the ages of 34 and 40 years. However, in terms of teaching experience, both women have accumulated many years of teaching experience, which gives them a good basis of knowledge in terms of teaching strategies, school curriculum, resources issues and student welfare.

In terms of qualifications, the two school leaders are the most qualified principals at CHS level in Solomon Islands. With a master's degree in education, Koni, in Honiara, is among the highest qualified school leaders at any secondary school in Solomon Islands. Pati has obtained a bachelor's degree. Both women leaders have attended many in-service training opportunities in the area of school administration and management.

Their actual experience in school leadership and management varied. With eleven (11) years as a principal, Pati has stacked up a lot of experience. Furthermore, her first six years as a principal were spent at a national boarding secondary school. Koni, the younger of the two, is already into her fifth year as a school leader.

Leadership challenges and management strategies

Information shared during the interviews revealed that each of the principals identifies two things as challenging experiences they have in common: the shifting between roles that the leadership position requires of them; and the handling of professional relationships in the context of patriarchy that still prevails in Solomons society. Pati, who is stationed in Western Province, also

spoke of professional isolation as a challenge for her, though Koni, located in the capital, Honiara, did not mention this as something she has to deal with. On the other hand, Koni did specifically highlight performance and management as areas she finds challenging.

Shifting between roles

The first challenge identified is the shifting between roles demanded of women as school leaders. (This is, of course, a challenge faced by all working wives, and the more responsibility a working woman's role carries, the greater the problems posed by the role-switching necessity.) They are wives and mothers at home; simultaneously, they play the role of school leader and professional at school. Since both women in this study are married and have children, they face the challenge of having to find time for children and perform important household roles at home on top of their school responsibilities:

> *As a female leader I come home from work and there are other chores which need to be done, so quickly I set about doing these and tire myself (so much) that I do not have time for the children. (Pati, 2007: 2)*

> *Sometimes I struggle with doing double roles at school and home. On top of that I perform other roles in the wider community. (Koni, 2007: 2)*

The need to blend them creatively and shift between the roles of wife and motherhood at home and professional leader at school continually challenges both and both women also perform leadership roles in the wider community, such as in the church and the wider education community. This further complicates the shift between roles for women leaders in different leadership contexts.

Both these women leaders manage this challenge at the personal level. Both have developed personal philosophies of time management and clear demarcation between school and home responsibilities. Both leaders have made a commitment to devote time to children and the family where no school responsibility will be allowed to intrude. They are careful to set aside time when their families spend time together.

> *I developed a timetable at home which sets out time for the children. Normally this is after dinner when I try to allocate at least half an hour for each child to look at what they have done at school during the day and assist them with home work. (Pati, 2007: 2)*

They have also developed a habit of creating open dialogue with their husbands in relation to their role as school leaders.

> *I openly shared about this difficulty with my husband and he had developed an understanding to share household responsibilities. (Koni, 2007: 2)*

Since the husbands of both school leaders are also in full-time employment, both leaders have had to hire house girls to take care of most of the household chores while they are at work.

Professional relationship challenges

In most of the communities in Solomon Islands patriarchal leadership is the norm; men dominate the decision making positions in society, even in the matrilineal societies in which descent, land rights and inheritance are traced through the mother's line. According to the studied women school leaders, this culture lingers on in schools today. One of the leaders expressed it this way:

> *Being a woman leader in a male oriented environment is a huge challenge both from male teacher colleagues, parents and students. The school had always been managed by a male school leader so to have a woman is new. (Koni, 2007: 3)*

The resentment against this new experience manifests itself in male teachers' negative attitudes and lack of cooperation and commitment to the performance of their extra responsibilities at school.

> *Culturally, male teachers claim they are leaders. So many times they fail to comply with what they are delegated to do or are expected to do because they know that if the woman leader counsels or reprimands them, they are physically tough to defend and protect themselves. (Pati, 2007: 3)*

To manage this challenge, both Koni and Pati have resort to effective teacher friendly management strategies.

> *I have devised a school policy and staff manual for the school which is given out to teachers at the beginning of the school year and this serves as one of the sessions in the induction process for all teachers. (Pati, 2007: 4)*

They have also adopted a strategy of regularly communicating with teachers verbally, as a team and individually as professionals.

> *I try to adopt an open motherly communication or dialogue approach with my teachers, explaining, sharing about our common purpose and encouraging them to do their best for the school and students. (Koni 2007: 4)*

Besides induction at the beginning of each year for new teachers, sessions during the course of the year continue to provide teacher professional development. Both school leaders have stated that in order to win the support of male teachers they have demonstrated consistently the values of hard work, respect, honesty, transparency and accountability.

> *My values as demonstrated through my work, approach to people and speech will help to convince staff and win over the support of those with a negative attitude. (Koni, 2007: 4)*

Or as Pati expressed it:

> *If I work hard, respect people like teachers, practise honesty, transparency and accountability in what I say and do, staff will reciprocate that to me as leader of the school and we will work usefully as a team. (Pati, 2007: 5)*

Performance and management challenges

As a community high school, CHS 01 continues to face two major challenges: consistently being able to produce good quality academic students; and absenteeism among both students and teachers. The issue of the quality of students' academic performance is closely linked to inadequate resourcing and parental support. Community High Schools grew out of primary schools, thus when secondary classes began, secondary school facilities were limited.

> *There were inadequate secondary curriculum materials and secondary school teachers were mostly new and young so tapping into old experiences were not forthcoming. (Koni, 2007: 5)*

The situation as regards curriculum resources and facilities has greatly improved, with new classroom buildings being built and teaching materials being reprinted and supplied to CHSs.

On top of that, CHS 01 continues to face the challenge of absenteeism from school by students and teachers. Teachers give the excuse of the spiralling cost of transportation. According to Koni,

> *. . . this attitude had been practised unmonitored for some time, thus, some teachers find it difficult to change the habit. (Koni, 2007: 5)*

An initiative for managing this challenge has been the development of a school academic plan, which spells out the roles and commitments of teachers to their departments and classes. This includes

> *. . . the creation of working and learning circles for teachers in order to encourage team work and continuing teacher professional development. (Koni, 2007: 6)*

Also, under the plan parent and guardian cluster groups were created at the beginning of 2007, for each level and coordinated by the form teachers.

> *These groups are used for parents' input into the teaching process in terms of their expectations of teachers and also education of parents to support their children in supervision of home work and giving time for the children. (Koni, 2007: 6)*

A third strategy adopted is the provision of opportunity for students and teachers for counselling and sharing. This provides an opportunity for them to share their problems but also for some adults and teachers to lend a friendly ear to the pupils.

> *There was nothing like counselling of students and young teachers before, but now we have it in place and it is working well. (Koni, 2007: 6)*

Finally, all these approaches will amount to nothing if there is no principal's personal strategy of leadership by example. This is where she consistently walks the talk.

> *This is a small place and people including teachers look out for what you do as a leader. If there is mismatch between what you say and what you do, your leadership comes to nothing. (Koni, 2007: 6)*

The challenge of professional isolation

Pati specifically identified professional isolation as a challenge for her in her Western Province school. The challenge is created by the lack of a professional network for principals as school leaders that would help develop and provide advice on certain issues and leadership strategies. This is understandable, given the fact that the school is isolated from Honiara, where all tertiary and senior secondary institutions are centralised.

> *I did not have any female colleague school leader to share my challenges with and learn from her in the way she may be running her school. There is no opportunity for us as principals to share our problems, achievements and visions for education in our country. (Pati, 2007: 6)*

The teaching service staffing figures for 2007 show Pati as the only female secondary school principal in Western Province. On the basis of an earlier study Sanga and Houma (2004) stated that although there is a principals' association, there is no well established professional network for principals and teachers in Solomon Islands.

The effect of professional isolation could be profound enough on any school leader. However, in the Solomon Island context, where women school leaders are rare to come by and where on a daily basis they confront the effects of patriarchal culture or male dominance, professional isolation hits even harder on women school leaders. To deal with this challenge:

> *I used my husband's email facility in his organisation to contact past colleagues now in leadership positions and other professionals to get ideas and feedback on what I am doing at my school.' (Pati, 2007: 6)*

Also:

> *I developed an asking attitude where I ask for views and feedback from staff and educated parents in the school community. (Pati, 2007: 6)*

This is a demonstration that school leaders have to be proactive to confront their challenges head on and minimise them wherever possible.

Conclusion

From this brief study, it can be seen that traditional conservative patriarchal attitudes—still very much alive in the Solomon Islands education system—are among the challenges having negative impacts in the work and prospects of women school leaders. In this system, female teachers with potential leadership ability can all too easily be forgotten and sidelined. School leadership in Solomon Islands is still very much a male dominated professional post.

This case study has also demonstrated that where women are given the opportunity to be school leaders, they confront not only challenges that are typical of school leadership contexts of small developing countries like Solomon Islands, but they have to deal with challenges that are peculiar to females being the school leaders in culturally patriarchal cultures.

The study further shows that against the culturally held view that Solomon Islands women are generally too passive to take up leadership, the two women school leaders in this study exhibited significant strength and courage in the face of challenges. They are not mere spectators or passive respondents to challenges faced but are very much proactive and innovative and have in fact developed some of the best strategies of school leadership and management in the country.

It is therefore recommended that more women be given the opportunity to develop as school leaders and managers in Solomon Island schools and make a positive contribution to education development in the country.

Notes

[1] Solomon Islands is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women 1979 (CEDAW) as well as to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)-OP) (06 Aug 02).

[2] Precursor to the present Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS).

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11

The way educational leadership should be
Insights from Kaivata High School

Govinda Ishwar Lingam

Over the years, various concerns have been raised relating to Fijian education (Baba, 1979; Bacchus, 2000; Dakuidreketi, 1995; Puamau, 1999; Raicola, 2003; Stewart, 1983). Statistics for the years 1989 to 1997, for example, show that there is a significant difference in the average per cent pass rate between the Fijian and non-Fijian students (Tavola, 1992; Williams, 2000). The question of racial disparities in academic performance between Indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians has been an issue for decades, with the former group consistently showing somewhat lower achievement levels (Tavola, 1992). Statistics provided by Tavola (1992: 34) for an external examination demonstrate the disparities:

> [In t]he 1987 Fiji Junior Certificate Examination for example, the aggregate pass-rates were 78.3% for Fijians and 80.9% for Indo-Fijians. This is not a significant difference but the passes by grade are more revealing. 16% of all candidates obtained an 'A' grade pass as against 4% of Fijians; 30% of Indo-Fijians obtained 'B' grade passes against 27% of Fijians and 35% of Indo-Fijians passed with a 'C' grade compared to 47% of Fijians. The grades are important, especially in an examination with a high overall pass rate.

More recently, these concerns have increased since the release in 2000 of the major report on education (Fiji Islands Education Commission/Panel, 2000). Growing concern has been expressed sporadically in the Fiji media about issues relating to the performance of schools run by the Indigenous Fijian community. It is often suggested that many Indigenous Fijian educational institutions are not doing well academically (Singh, 2008a and b): they have low pass rates and this trend has continued for many years. Media reports have further suggested that all school participants, including management, staff and parents, must share some responsibility for what is presented as a calamitous state of affairs. Of these participant types, the

school administrator is instrumental in all affairs of the school. Indeed, so great is the influence of this role that one local media report recommended that a code of conduct be put in place for school administrators. These schools face considerable challenges, such as uninspiring leadership and lack of support from the very community they serve (Williams, 2000). Indigenous Fijian parents generally are punctilious about attending to village functions and commitments such as the village levy and church levy (Ravuvu, 1983; Williams, 2000). Some give higher priority to these matters than to their children's education, contributing to the significant educational gap between Indigenous Fijians and other ethnic groups.

However, in some cases where Indigenous Fijian owned and run schools have school leaders who are not Indigenous Fijian, the story appears to be different. There is great success in all areas of school life, including children's academic performance. This may be an effect of the leadership style they adopt in running the school. Without further examination, it is not possible to determine whether the school improvement is due to novelty, personality, ethnicity or some combination of factors.

Background literature

Despite the difficult context—including type of school, its circumstances, its geographical location, the local community it serves—school administrators such as principals and head teachers can still help raise the standard of their schools. As Leithwood and his colleagues (1999: 4) argued, 'outstanding leadership is exquisitely sensitive to context'. In the same vein, the National College for School Leadership (2003: 7) in the UK argues that 'leadership should be viewed as a contextualised activity'. Thus, the context in which you are affects what you do as a school leader. Research has also shown that in some contexts, change of leadership can have positive or negative impacts on the school. Hargreaves and Fink (2004) indicate that effective schools can spiral downward with the departure of an effective school leader and the converse is also true. In her study in the Fiji context, Tavola (1992) found that schools characterised by weak management and administration did not perform well compared to schools with strong management. School leadership such as an enthusiastic principal contributed to children's success in academic achievement (Tavola, 1992). Apart from other factors, school leadership could be a reason for the disparities in academic performance between schools.

The literature (Dinham, 2005; Hargreaves & Fink, 2004; Prebble & Stewart, 1985) demonstrates that a good working theory in school administration is necessary for the purpose of effectively running a school. Since all schools have special characteristics, it is vital for school principals and head teachers to adopt a theory that will help them to have a good understanding of various aspects relating to their professional work. In this regard, it is crucial that school administrators are professionally prepared for the job. Undoubtedly, application of knowledge acquired from educational administration courses in everyday work will make a difference in the school's performance. Due to the importance of leadership in securing sustainable school development, many countries have invested considerably in the professional preparation and ongoing development of school leaders (Bottery, 2004). In the context of Fiji, the recent Education Commission report recommended an establishment for a Centre for Educational Leadership (Coxon, 2000: 419–20). This demonstrates recognition of the need for high quality school leaders in Fiji schools. Such a Centre would be responsible for the professional development opportunities for both present and future school leaders.

School administrators should closely involve themselves in the primary task of the educational organisation, which is the teaching and learning process (Prebble & Stewart, 1985). In this way, they will have a feel for what is going on inside the classrooms, gained by such simple means as observing the classes at work. In any school establishment, though, it is not possible for the principal or the head teacher to carry out all administrative and supervisory responsibilities single-handedly: the idea of using middle management to carry out some of them is a sound strategy (Prebble & Stewart, 1985). The middle management then need to keep the school leader informed about all that is happening. Despite work intensification, research evidence (Day et al., 2000; Gold et al., 2003) suggests that school leaders can still uphold their ideals and values *and* work towards providing top quality education for children. School leaders and teachers are expected to fulfil public roles; that is, they are responsible for promoting children's learning. In doing so, they should at all times focus upon the best interests of the children they teach and education generally (Downie, 1990) at the same time upholding their professional work ethics.

In such a pressurised time environment as schools now experience, the achievement of distributed leadership (Bottery, 2004) wherein all members of the organisation are engaged instead of the school principal or head teacher alone undertaking all administrative roles and responsibilities is extremely difficult. Decision-making is a key factor in all of these roles so distribution

of leadership responsibilities is not to be undertaken lightly. Generally, research literature demonstrates that effective school leaders exert a strong influence over the effectiveness of the school performance (Wallace, 2002; Waters et al., 2004). Thus, the quality of school leaders matters because they motivate teachers and in turn, the quality of teaching and learning that is carried out in the classrooms (Bottery, 2004; Crowther, 2000; Day et al., 2001; Fullan, 2001; Hargreaves, 2003). Consequently, the importance of leadership in inspiring all school participants will lead to improvements not only in the teaching and learning process but also in all other facets of the school organisation (Bottery, 2004; Harris, 2003; Hopkins, 2001). Overall, principals and head teachers are the ones who determine the directions in which their school should be heading.

Leadership in a rural secondary school in Fiji

Purpose of the study

The aim of this study was to explore leadership in a remote rural secondary school. Specifically, the research was designed to investigate the strategies used by the school leader in bringing about improvements in children's academic performance. The study was guided by one key research question: 'What leadership strategies are being employed in the selected school to improve the school's academic performance?'

Rationale

There is a paucity of local research literature available on leadership in education in the Fiji context. This study, albeit on a small scale, could help contribute to the building up of knowledge in the area of educational leadership, providing insights about the use of various management practices to enhance school effectiveness. The answers obtained from the research question posed would help remind various stakeholders about their role in providing better quality education to children in all contexts. The findings may also inform the major stakeholder on issues relating to the professional preparation of school leaders. In addition, the study could act as a catalyst for further research on varying issues relating to school management in the Fiji context.

Methodology

A qualitative case study design was employed for the study. The principal of an Jndigenous Fijian educational institution was chosen as the case for the study. Data were gathered in October 2007 by means of interviews with the school staff, the school manager and the principal. Since the number of participants interviewed was only small, constituting just a single case, data analysis was carried out using a 'low-tech' method, that is, analysis was carried out manually (Vulliamy & Webb, 1992). On the basis of Rudduck's (1983) suggestion that direct quotations carry a lot of meaning in a few words, this account extracts relevant material from the data and presents it verbatim. As part of research ethics, the names of the staff, principal and school have been kept confidential.

Discussion of the results

Snapshots of the leadership situation at Kaivata High School will be presented under the following headings: appointment, meetings, morning briefings, school management meetings, professional development, learning and teaching, and school and community partnership. A brief background on Kaivata High School prefaces the discussion of the results.

Kaivata High School

Kaivata High school is located about 60 km from the main urban centre in the Northern Education Division, and is managed and run by the Indigenous Fijian village community it serves. For a number of years Kaivata High School persistently failed to demonstrate an acceptable level of academic performance. A cursory glance at past records showed that the school had not made any significant improvement despite having all the necessary facilities and resources as well as low teacher–pupil ratios; almost all the teachers were well-qualified. Yet when one looked at the academic results, they were not on par with other neighbouring secondary schools: this school and low educational achievement seemed to go hand in hand. The parents, school management and various other stakeholders were not at all happy with the school's performance, particularly in the area of the children's academic performance. The school was frequently criticised for not showing any improvement in school work. In addition, the school was continuously beset with problems of all sorts, such as discipline, teacher absenteeism and abuse of school funds.

Appointment

Because people in the local community had expressed a variety of concerns, the Ministry of Education decided to appoint a new principal. This time an Indo-Fijian was given the opportunity to lead the school, an unconventional appointment for the Ministry of Education to make to a school managed by an Indigenous Fijian community. Until that time it had been far more usual to match the ethnicity of the principal to that of the community operating the school. Here at Kaivata High School, though, the story was to be different, since a new appointment to the responsibility was necessitated by past malpractices. Because the whole affair had had such a negative impact on the overall achievement of the school, the Fijian community accepted the new appointment.

Mr Govin, who had recently been on an in-service award at the University of the South Pacific, graduated with a Bachelor of Education degree with a strand in educational administration. When he was approached by the Ministry of Education to be the next principal of Kaivata High School, Mr Govin happily acceded to the request as this meant a promotion for him, with a concomitant rise in salary. The school context did not pose any threat to him as he was fairly well versed in Fijian culture and traditions Above all, Mr Govin considered it fortunate as he wanted to ensure that his newly acquired knowledge on educational administration was successfully translated into the running of a school. Whilst undertaking his studies, he had heard and thought a lot in his educational administration lectures about such concepts as collaboration, team work, democratic practices, participatory decision-making, cooperation, partnerships, empowerment and educational supervision. The first thing that came to Mr Govin's mind was staffing. While in the capital city, Suva, he thought it would be best to get things done in person at the central office of the Ministry of Education rather than making telephone calls from Kaivata High School. On the basis of normal staffing entitlements, Mr Govin was pleased that the school was adequately staffed. He thought to himself that even though he was the head of the institution, it would be difficult to control and achieve much single-handedly, without team work with various other stakeholders. This is consistent with research literature on educational administration that he had been exposed to (for example, Day et al., 2000; Gold et al., 2003; Prebble & Stewart, 1985). He also realised that parents play an important part in children's education. Bearing all these players in mind, well before the start of the school year he mapped out some ways to gain everyone's support in children's education.

Meetings

On Mr Govin's first day at Kaivata High School, his first walk around the building gave him an unpleasant impression of the school. He made a mental note about the need to carry out a major facelift of the school environment Through personal reflections, Mr Govin knew very well about the competing priorities at school. He thought it would be wise to direct his energy in such a way as to avoid overload and burn-out. Mr Govin planned well for the first day. He started by conducting a staff meeting. At the outset he said, 'I come with the winds of change, to bring about a better, effective school where the children of this society can have their fair share of the national cake'. This was Mr Govin's message to the staff in simple and precise terms. He clearly spelled out to the staff members his main ideas about the school policies, teachers' professional responsibilities, school goals, importance of planning, and so on; and above all he said, 'We are posted here because of the children's education and we need to keep this in mind at all times. As such, we have to provide the best service possible to all our clients . . . school work is our top priority . . . our main responsibility is to create a conducive school climate where all our children can learn successfully . . . [When you] reflect at the end of the day . . . [ask yourself] did you give your best.' At the end of the meeting he reminded all about the need to work as a team and the need to follow the *General Orders*—a guide to civil servants in their professional work. Also, he drew his staff members' attention to his 'open-door' policy—that his office was always going to be open for anyone wanting advice or consultation.

School assemblies were organised every week. The teacher on duty that day conducted the assembly on that day. This was a new practice in this school. The teacher on duty was supposed to find out from the principal about any additional announcements to be made. 'Assemblies were very well conducted by my staff. This builds their confidence to speak in public,' remarked Mr Govin. A teacher commented approvingly that staff and students always received Mr Govin's presentations in the assemblies well. He 'sounds business-like . . . his voice is loud and clear,' they explained.

Morning briefings

Every morning from Monday to Friday, Mr Govin conducted briefing sessions with his staff. This kept the staff informed about the various facets of the school organisation as well as the day's program. Mr Govin was very frank

and open about things he discussed with his staff, always using a collegial approach in dealing with school matters. Instead of 'pronouncing decisions', Mr Govin discussed issues with his team before coming up with a 'best' decision. Comments by Mr Govin such as, 'Teachers, you are resourceful people, feel free to contribute your ideas, however trivial they may seem. They may just do the magic' and 'It's you who are the greatest asset to the team . . . teachers who have a heart, those who deep down are prepared to do more even in the face of difficulties' really encouraged the staff to contribute positively to the development of the school. Such comments and open discussions made all of the staff happy and at the same time encouraged staff togetherness, making them feel that they were part of the school family. A teacher remarked that the 'two-way communication . . . our views are heard . . . and we do not feel threatened' was good administrative practice. Another staff member felt that 'his talks and the power of reasoning motivate staff'. 'Briefings are very effective as it focuses on the day's work . . . this is new to me and I never experienced morning briefings before,' commented another teacher. With the passage of time the staff morale and staff participation in all affairs of the school increased considerably.

One morning when Mr Govin made a quick tour of the staff room he heard some teachers recall critically that the past principals used to impose decisions on the staff. Mr Govin, though, maintained close contact with all his staff, both teaching and ancillary. He was approachable to all staff and students alike. He cared for his teachers' welfare.

School management meetings

A school management meeting was called to welcome Mr Govin as well as to discuss important matters concerning the school. The welcome ceremony was good. It gave Mr Govin the opportunity to clarify his roles and responsibilities as well as the school management's roles and responsibilities. All professional matters concerning teachers and the education of the children were the principal's responsibility. He was very tactful jn outlining the demarcation of roles and responsibilities, pointing out that this would be in the best interest of the school organisation. He then provided them with copies of the *School Management Handbook: A Guide to the Functions and Roles of School Management in Fiji.* This handbook outlined clearly the roles of principals and head teachers and school management committees. This was the first time for most them to see such a publication, which clearly delineated the

duties of key stakeholders. ‘Now we are heading in the right direction. We were not fully aware of our roles and responsibilities . . . this will keep us on our toes,’ responded Mr Teki, the School Manager. Mr Govin agreed with the School Manager and also reminded them all to become conversant with various policy directions of school decision making, planning and financial management. ‘As a member of the school committee you hold an important position and as such it is important that you are committed to our school’s vision and mission,’ said Mr Govin. He concluded the meeting by saying, ‘It is fair to say that children need your presence more than your presents in formulating good sound character . . . [S]chools can do only so much; your part, sadly, is sometimes neglected.’

Professional development

He also reminded everybody that the school was a learning organisation in which the top priority should be for everyone to continue to learn in order to improve all facets of the school. A request came from the Curriculum Development Section of the Ministry of Education for a teacher to attend a workshop on ‘Values Education’. Mr Govin responded favourably to the invitation by sending a teacher to attend a week-long workshop. This he thought was a way to develop teachers. However, before letting Mr Manasa go, he asked him to run a session at the school when he returned, for the benefit of the remaining teachers. Towards the end of the second school term, Mr Govin received an invitation to attend the Principals’ Conference. Instead of attending himself, he requested Mr Riko, the Deputy Principal, to attend. He thought developing others is a way forward. It developed into a tradition in the school for the teachers, upon their return from short in-service programs, to share the knowledge and skills acquired with those who had not been given the opportunity to attend. Not only this, teachers also began to assist each other in school work. All staff members slowly became involved in crucial management activities of the school such as goal setting, decision making and supervision. In so doing, Mr Govin created opportunities for others in the school to prepare themselves to take up leadership. Research literature is supportive of the provision of professional opportunities to other participants in the school so that they can also develop themselves (Day et al., 2000; Gold et al., 2003; Prebble & Stewart, 1985).

Learning and teaching

One day as Mr Govin sat down at his desk, he reflected on the school's organisational pattern and thought about making some changes for the benefit of school. The question that he now asked himself was, 'How can I use this concept of supervision to help the teachers at Kaivata High School to do their job better?' He then decided to have a meeting with the department heads. This meeting was specifically to consider ways to help staff improve their performance. Before he could come up with a strategy, the department head for Language proposed the idea of in-class supervision. Everyone was happy with this arrangement. A simple form was devised for the purpose. 'You should show a genuine concern to help your colleagues to improve,' said Mr Govin. On another night, Mr Govin thought that it would be wise to delegate to the department heads responsibility for looking after the academic matters of the school, giving him some progress reports from time to time, He realised that it would be extremely difficult for him alone to carry out all the in-class supervision so small interest groups were formed to carry it out. Mr Govin also believed that empowering teachers would be another step forward. Literature demonstrates that the involvement of middle management—which in a school context means the department heads—is a good strategy (Prebble & Stewart, 1985).

Looking back, Mr Riko could see a vast improvement in all areas of school work. Working relationships among the staff, which hitherto had been very poor, improved considerably. One of the teachers made the following comment to Mr Riko: 'Govin knows about good governance . . . you see now the school is running well . . . things are well streamlined. Ha! ha! no one can play around with him . . . he knows his work'. Teachers were on time to school and even the children came to school on time. As a point of principle, Mr Govin was always the first person to arrive and the last person to depart from the school. He thought modelling the desired behaviour sets an example from which teachers and pupils can learn. After some weeks, Mr Govin saw that all the teachers made a point of arriving to school on time. Teachers became more interested in their work and some went out of their way to conduct extra classes on Saturdays. Mr Govin was also around on Saturdays to help teachers in their work He negotiated with the school management to provide lunch to the staff who volunteered to conduct extra classes on Saturdays and during the school holidays. The internal examination results reflected a good performance by all the students. The highlight was a good percentage pass in the external examinations. This was a magnificent achievement

for the school, for the first time since its establishment. ‘Our products, the students, are going to be our best advertisement. Let us continue to churn out worthy outputs!’ commented Mr Govin. Other teachers also commented on the school’s academic achievement. For example, ‘through team work our academic progress is excellent’, ‘the results are best ever for the school . . . the evening and morning prep time supervision have made the difference’. This shows that effective leaders can influence the overall success of the school (Wallace, 2002; Waters et al., 2004).

School and community partnership

As the inter-house athletics meet drew nearer, it seemed to Mr Govin that it would be the best time to win the parents’ support. While doing his studies, he had read an article about school–community metaphors such as *school as an organisation*, *the school as a learning community* and *a community-developing school*. He thought this event in the school calendar would be a grand opportunity to implement these great ideas and in particular the one relating to *a community-developing school.* He brought the matter up in a staff meeting. All the teachers unanimously agreed with the idea. They were all elated as in the past they found it difficult to control over 400 pupils. At a special school assembly Mr Govin informed everyone about the inter-house athletics meet and the invitation to all parents to support the program. The children became excited and looked exuberant, as never before had such an invitation been extended to the parents. Mr Govin provided some ideas to Mr Riko and asked him to plan the day’s program with the department head for PEMAC.

At the opening of the inter-house athletics meet, Manasa, the village headman, was the chief guest. Mr Govin had approached him several weeks previously and also briefed him on some of the things he could talk about during the opening of the program. One of the items mentioned by Mr Govin concerned school goals. Mr Manasa made an excellent presentation. Apart from English, he used the vernacular language and this made a big impact on the parents and teachers alike. Everyone came to know that one of the goals of the school was to be responsive to the concerns of the community. It was a great day. Parents, teachers and the pupils had a good time. The most exciting event of the day was the relay between the teachers and the parents. The parents won this event. Kanace, the gold medallist, made the difference. Mr Govin thanked everyone and pointed out that to make any progress, the school

needed the community and vice versa. He said, 'People make the difference'. He also quoted a statement from one of his educational administration course readings by Bottery (2004): 'In the process [we] create [an] institution which [is] alive, bustling with the thrill of learning, a joy to be in'.

Conclusion

The use of good leadership practices ensured success not only in academic performance but also in many other areas of school work. The school has gained good results in the national examinations and sports. 'This is just my second year here and we hope to maintain this glory and at the same time endeavour to continue to channel our energy towards attaining academic excellence,' a highly pleased Mr Govin reported. The students of Kaivata High School are motivated, encouraged, and assisted by the teachers to prove their worth through academic achievement. 'We have decided on these goals together, teachers, and our students are increasingly becoming aware that to succeed, we all must have tremendous perseverance and will to work extra hours,' divulged Mr Govin. He went on to say, 'The increasing demands of work and extremities in rural areas call for even greater commitment on our part as teachers to educate and prepare the rural students to those challenges, by inculcating the value of a positive attitude to hard work'. Towards these ends, our goal at Kaivata High School is 'visible and achievable through my team of dedicated staff,' claimed Mr Govin.

Kaivata High School is fortunate to have a devoted educational leader. With appropriate knowledge and skills, together with a business-like approach, the leader brought about necessary transformation in the school organisation for the good of all the participants. Practices that were yielding negative results were discarded. Mr Govin's initiative through various suitable interventions, such as better forms of school and class organisation, staff and pupil management and teaching practices, demonstrate that to diminish the inequities that exist in our education system, educational leaders in schools should streamline school operations and be committed to the job. This case is a shining example of a school leader with his team of committed teachers who have responded well to the educational needs of rural children.

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12

Teacher reflections on the principles of sustainable leadership in schools

Empirical evidence from a Fiji case

Govinda Ishwar Lingam

Inevitably, school organisations will continually face unprecedented challenges as the twenty-first century progresses. Emanating from such processes as educational reform and innovations, globalisation and modernisation, these challenges are not entirely new; they have been in existence and affecting education over the decades but in recent years the pressure of challenge has been rising at a rapid rate (Boyd, 1999). This creates a need for better prepared school leaders who align themselves constructively with sustainable leadership practices at all times to deal effectively with various eventualities for the good of the school organisation and the various clients served by the school (Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1994). The contemporary myriad of demands of work in educational organisations requires that considerable attention be paid to the leadership imperative, especially sustainable leadership, for continuous success of the school now and in the future. Even though the presence of sustainable leadership may not guarantee success, its absence could certainly lead to failure in all efforts to improve the school (Fullan, Cuttress & Kilcher, 2005). Ongoing capacity building of other members of the professional learning community both within and outside the educational organisation will enable continuous positive contribution towards school improvement and in turn, contribute to raising the quality of educational provision. An abundance of literature illustrates the impact of leadership on all aspects of educational organisation, underlining the vital importance of concerted effort directed towards supporting the principles of sustainable leadership in all educational jurisdictions. Nowhere is this truer than in developing contexts such as those in the small island states of the Pacific. Seen in this light—that is, the importance of the principles of sustainable leadership in present schools and

in their future—it is essential to explore the degree to which present school settings are in fact employing them.   .

In the literature

The changing education landscape, coupled with demands for greater accountability and scrutiny and increasing pressure from all stakeholders for schools to perform better, warrants greater efforts at sustaining leadership in all dimensions, to lead and manage schools effectively at all times (Schratz, 2003). In the Pacific Island countries, the issue of educational leadership has been a perennial concern though the issue has been addressed only superficially (Aleta, 2010; Bacchus, 2000; Lingam, 2009; Malasa, 2007; Tavola, 2000). In recent times, educational leadership literature has emphasised the centrality of the school leader's role in any school effectiveness and improvement efforts. Only through effective leadership can all operations and functions of the school be realised, optimised and sustained. As Dinham (2005) has commented, effective leaders can contribute towards achieving outstanding results for the school, such as vastly improved children's learning outcomes. Conversely, impoverished leadership can adversely affect the school organisation and in turn, break the promise of a better future for the children. This has been the case in many rural schools in Fiji, where school leaders all too often lack motivation and drive, with the result that schools perform at a low level (Bacchus, 2000; Tavola, 2000).

A major theme of this book has been the perceived importance of leadership in schools; that is, recognition of the school leader as the key person in determining the quality of the school and of the education the children receive (Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009; Tavola, 2000). Since this is so, then the notion of *sustainable* leadership is worthy of consideration and promotion. For example, on the pedagogic role, decades of research have consistently found a strong positive relationship between school leadership and student learning outcomes (Cotton, 2003; Hallinger, 2005; Robinson et al, 2009). The view that school leaders make a significant difference to student academic achievement is a reality rather than a theory (Southworth, 2002). Consequently, researchers now focus on the dimensions where leaders exercise their influence on student learning outcomes (Cotton, 2003; Marzano, Waters & McNutty, 2005).

School leadership has long been perceived to be important not only for children's academic achievement, but also for the successful functioning

of many other aspects of the school organisation (Fullan, 2001). It appears that the way school leaders go about their day-to-day work could be a contributing factor to success or failure in all aspects of the school. One of the contemporary leadership practices to be adopted at the school level is the idea of *sustainable* leadership for the purpose of successfully sustaining improvements to all facets of the school organisation (Fullan, Cuttress & Kilcher, 2005). For instance, acquiring new knowledge and skills is vital for the continuation of successful sustainable leadership practices, which in turn would enhance school effectiveness and improvement even in times of crisis. In so doing, a distributive perspective of leadership, for example, would be a way forward in providing exposure and building the experience of others in the professional learning community in order to continue to take the school forward. This will require some shift in the modes of leadership to make things possible. In fact all these boil down to school leaders' application and promotion of principles of sustainable leadership in a variety of ways. In this regard, the seven principles of sustainable leadership put forward by Hargreaves and Fink (2004) are worthy of consideration: they have promise and potential to improve educational provision in *all* contexts, but all the more so in developing country contexts, where education, as a vital part of the enterprise, deserves a great deal more attention than it receives currently.

Principles of sustainable leadership: the Hargreaves and Fink model

'Sustainable leadership', in Hargreaves and Fink's terms (2004: 8):

> ...matters, spreads and lasts. It is a shared responsibility, that does not unduly deplete human or financial resources, and that cares for and avoids exerting negative damage on the surrounding educational and community environment. Sustainable leadership has an activist engagement with the forces that affect it, and builds an educational environment of organizational diversity that promotes cross-fertilization of good ideas and successful practices in communities of shared learning and development.

The definition is comprehensive as it covers a broad range of issues concerning leadership in schools. From the definition one can deduce that sustainable leadership constitutes a broad view of leadership. It is much more than the managerial style of administration or the maintenance type of practices of just keeping a school running, a model that has outlived its relevance in contemporary times (Mitchell & Tucker, 1992; Schratz, 2003). Such a narrow

view of leadership offers no help towards responding effectively to the contemporary demands of work and at the same time achieving a progressive outlook for the school. The definition illustrates that school leaders are expected to wear many hats; just to be an administrator or manager in the school is no longer enough. What is needed is a paradigm shift for leadership to meet the demands of changing times while actively contributing towards qualitative growth in education. The shift as recommended in educational literature is from working *in* the system (management) to working *on* the system (leadership) (Brewer, 2001; Schratz, 2003; Senge, 1990). Thus, for the long-term benefit of all with a vested interest in education, practising school leaders need to adopt sustainable leadership practices that will ensure continuous improvement of the different areas of the school. Duignan and Bezzina (2006) caution against the application of those leadership practices that were developed in past centuries but are regarded by some as still appropriate for the contemporary era. A glaring example of this is the autocratic style of leadership adopted in most Fiji schools, which should have been long outgrown (Tavola, 2000). After all, times have changed greatly and school organisations have become more complex as they have grown larger. It is, therefore, no longer practical or useful to lead and manage schools in contemporary times using leadership practices developed a long time ago (Cannon, 2005). This would be like Peddiwell's (1939) famous story of the saber tooth curriculum. The message of that story is that practices such as leadership practices, no less than curriculum, must change with changing times and circumstances. This calls for a better preparation of school leaders (Clark & Clark, 1996; Tavola, 2000).

On the basis of the definition of sustainable leadership, Hargreaves and Fink (2004) go further, to derive the seven principles of sustainable leadership.

1. Sustainable leadership creates and preserves sustaining learning.

This principle refers to the provision to all children of learning that matters, of learning that prepares them for life. Broadly, this means developing children in all dimensions: intellectually, spiritually, socially and emotionally. This principle suggests that for the long-term benefit of the children, the foremost responsibility for school leaders is to sustain a high quality of learning (Stoll, Fink & Earl, 2002). Here, holistic development of the children should be

a primary commitment of the school. School leaders should be concerned with delivering high quality learning and teaching, rather than being mired in teaching narrowly to test or examination requirements (Starratt, 2004). As part of their ethic of responsibility, they must see that suitable conditions are created for authentic learning to take place, which can then make an everlasting impact on the children's lives (Duignan & Bezzina, 2006).

2. Sustainable leadership secures success over time.

Observation of the second principle means that over a period of time, hard-working and committed school leaders will certainly achieve success for their schools. Additionally, by grooming others in the professional learning community, the leader can create a team of dedicated and committed staff to keep the school moving in the desired direction. Otherwise, the school is likely to suffer should that leader retire or leave the profession altogether (Fink & Brayman, 2004; Hart, 1993). The school leader, working with the members of the school team, should focus on both short- and long-term objectives in a way that is conducive to the school's ongoing improvement. This, the literature suggests (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003) will encourage continuity, not discontinuity, through implanting a desire to preserve the momentum for further improvement and development of the school.

3. Sustainable leadership sustains the leadership of others.

This principle of sustainable leadership involves the development of others to take up leadership positions in future. Qualitatively speaking, this is rather more than just grooming someone for a leadership position. In this regard, an effective leader will encourage others to take up leadership roles and responsibilities. Active participation of staff in the governance functions of the school will give them relevant exposure and experience, which will help them later when they are promoted to leadership positions. The concept of shared leadership plays an important part here. It is to be applied and practised by the school leaders to ensure that the successors continue along the path of school improvement (Spillane, Haverson, & Drummond, 2001). In this way, members of the professional learning community will come to appreciate that they all share and have a say in school leadership. Harris (2002) and Starratt (2004) argue strongly the need for school leaders to share leadership responsibilities with other staff in the school. Sharing leadership will yield the return of a highly motivated staff more committed to school

improvement and change, raising the chances for school success (Crowther, Hann & Andrews, 2000). After all, in reality it is impossible, and probably undesirable, for the principal or head teacher to lead and manage everything in the school without seeking the assistance of other staff (Fullan, 2001).

4. Sustainable leadership addresses issues of social justice.

This principle of leadership covers issues relating to social justice on all counts. Under it, leaders need to exercise responsibility for social justice to all in the wider environment. For example, all children, irrespective of their colour, race, religion or economic background, must be given equal opportunities to attend and enjoy the benefits of school. Other examples of socially just practice for school leaders include not restricting enrolment in one's own school only to high achieving students or not seeking to entice best qualified teachers from neighbouring schools to join its staff. Such leaders' actions would be likely to have an adverse impact on the surrounding environment including the clientele and other institutions (Berreth & Berman, 1997). It is critical for school leaders to be ethically conscious of their actions and behaviours (Starratt, 1991). In fact, the leader is to do things for the common good of everyone. In educational enterprise, supporting and working collaboratively with other schools in whatever way possible is considered a good gesture (Hargreaves & Fink, 2007). That the school leader should be working in the best interests of all stakeholders in the wider school community forms part of this principle of sustainable leadership (Baker & Foote, 2003).

5. Sustainable leadership develops rather than depletes human and material resources.

The allocation and development of resources rather than their exploitation is the defining feature of this principle of sustainable leadership. School leaders are expected to be effective in their management of both human and material resources. Leaders need to know how to make best use of the resources during difficult times, to avoid burn-out and exploitation, and at the same time find better ways and means to develop the human and material resources for the benefit of the school (Byrne, 1994). In so far as the human resource is concerned, school leaders should encourage staff to undertake professional development activities. This will help them to acquire new knowledge and skills, in the hope that their application will raise staff performance and productivity at work for the overall benefit of the school and the community

it serves (Poplin, 1992). With regard to material resources, school leaders are to look for ways to replenish and acquire suitable resources to enhance and at the same time sustain all activities of the school.

6. Sustainable leadership develops environmental diversity and capacity.

This principle involves treasuring all forms of diversity and varying abilities that exist in the environment, both social and material, at the same time facilitating continuing improvement in all spheres in and beyond the school (Capra, 1997).The task of the school leader will be to assist in whatever way possible to realise the full potential of the people. Building on the strengths of the people can help infuse new ideas and these in turn can have a positive impact on not only the school but also the entire school community. The concept of cross-fertilisation of ideas is encouraged as it can contribute to improvement in all aspects of the school organisation (Louis & Kruse, 1995). After all, education is everyone's business.

7. Sustainable leadership undertakes activist engagement with the environment.

Under this principle, school leaders are to be vigilant of outside forces and take a strong stand on issues that emerge in the environment, particularly ones that may not be helpful to the school (Oakes, Quartz & Lipton, 2000). Here, to translate the principle into practice the school leader needs to be proactive. By actively engaging with the social and natural environment the school leader will have some sense of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats present in the environment; and be helped by this to act appropriately for the benefit for the school and the entire education system.

The foregoing review of literature illustrates that sustainable leadership is more than just administering or managing a school day by day. Interestingly, the seven principles of leadership operate interactively and it is difficult to compartmentalise them. As Hargreaves and Fink (2007: 52) aptly point out, '[t]hese principles are a meal, not a menu. You cannot pick and choose; they all work together'. Also, the literature shows that adopting the principles of sustainable leadership has an immediate and ongoing positive impact on all aspects of the school organisation. The literature reviewed, though drawn from different contexts, informs our practices in educational leadership, especially in the area of sustainable leadership. Clearly demonstrated is the

potential to help stakeholders in the local context determine the direction and trend in relation to educational leadership. For these reasons, it is vital to explore and determine the extent to which the seven principles of sustainable leadership practices as advanced by Hargreaves and Fink (2004) are applied in schools in the Fiji context.

Principles of sustainable leadership in Fiji schools: a preliminary study

Purpose of the research

The remainder of the paper discusses a small piece of research exploring the perceptions of a group of teachers on the seven principles of sustainable leadership proposed by Hargreaves and Fink (2004). Specifically, it explores teachers' reflections on the seven principles and the extent to which they are apparent in their respective schools. The central research question under examination was: What are your reflections on the seven principles of sustainable leadership in relation to the context of your school?

Rationale

It is evident from the literature that although some small-scale studies had been conducted on certain aspects of educational leadership in the Fiji context, none so far had addressed the area of the sustainability of leadership. This study would therefore, contribute valuable information and insights about the extent of the principles of sustainable leadership practices in Fiji schools.

Specifically, the findings of such a study would help various stakeholders, for example, to re-examine their stand on sustainable leadership issues and practices presently adopted. Also, the findings of this study could be used to introduce as well as improve leadership training and development programs mounted either in teacher education institutions or by the employer. The Ministry of Education as the principal stakeholder responsible for the education sector would benefit from this study, as the findings would better inform their practice, that is, in terms of organising suitable in-service training programs in future for the benefit of school leaders and in turn, children's futures. Even though this is a small-scale study, it has both local and international significance and, as such, the hope is that what comes to light will propel further investigations in various dimensions of educational leadership within and beyond Fiji, especially in the small island states of the Pacific.

Study context

Fiji became a Crown Colony of Britain in 1874, remaining so for nearly a century before it achieved independence in 1970. Although against the measuring stick of the industrialised world Fiji may be assessed dismissively as one of the small nations in the Pacific and economically not a very rich country, within the island region of the southwest Pacific it is among the larger and more developed ones, in land mass and population second only to Papua New Guinea. Fiji compares quite favourably with those other small nations in the Pacific region in all aspects including education. The multiracial population includes in the mix two major ethnic groups, Indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians, as well as several other smaller ones. Despite the disruption caused by four coups in the last two decades, the country is fairly stable. The school network under the general oversight of the Ministry of Education, is a complex mix of government, religious and committee schools. The government embarked on the 21st Century armed with the report presented by a commission charged with assessing the present and charting a path for the future of the country's education system. The multi-authored report, Learning together: Directions for education in Fiji Islands, emanating from the Fiji Islands Education Commission/Panel 2000, now used as a guide for future developments in education, highlights educational leadership as one of the areas needing urgent attention.

Research method

A questionnaire survey was the chosen instrument for the collection of data. The two-part survey determined teachers' reflections about each of the seven principles of sustainable leadership in relation to their respective schools. The survey sample comprised participants, all of them practising teachers, studying a postgraduate-level course on educational administration. As it encouraged participants to express their views freely, this questionnaire was considered an effective means of gathering data from the sample (Gay, 1992).

The questionnaire consisted of two items. First, the respondents were asked to rate each of the listed seven principles of sustainable leadership on a five-point Likert scale ranging from one as the lowest agreement to five the strongest agreement, in terms of how well it was reflected in their respective schools. This helped identify which principles were given adequate (or least) attention and at the same time determine the extent of recognition

of the principle in the school. The second item opened the opportunity for participants to express their views on each principle of sustainable leadership on the basis of the rating they gave.

The researcher introduced the questionnaire by explaining its purpose and how the results could assist policy makers and those who aspire to become school leaders. The researcher personally distributed and collected the completed questionnaires from the teachers and the handling of the information was such that participants' confidentiality and anonymity were protected, as they were assured would be the case. Since the questionnaire was administered to all (33) teachers taking the course, the return rate of the completed questionnaires was 100%.

All participants in the study had already completed some courses at the postgraduate level and this course on leadership was another one in which they were enrolled. Most of them (80%) had been teaching for more than fifteen years and were fairly well versed in Fiji's education system. The sample included 13 females and 20 males. Two sets of data were collected. Analysis of the quantitative data set employed the common statistical mean (Mehrens & Lehmann, 1991). The responses in the qualitative data set were grouped according to each principle of sustainable leadership. Suitable quotations are presented from the open-ended question responses, as 'some statements carry a rich density of meaning in a few words' (Ruddock, 1993: 19).

Results

The analyses of the quantitative and qualitative data are presented separately.

Quantitative data

The teachers were asked to rate each principle of sustainable leadership on a five-point scale (1 = lowest agreement to 5 = strongest agreement), that is, the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with each principle as it applied to their school context. Table 1 provides the summary of the results for the quantitative data.

Table 1 Ratings for the principles of sustainable leadership (N = 33)

Principles of Sustainable Leadership	Mean (on 5-pt scale)	Standard Deviation
Sustainable leadership creates and preserves sustaining learning.	2.6	0.34
Sustainable leadership secures success over time.	2.7	0.45
Sustainable leadership sustains the leadership of others.	2.9	0.36
Sustainable leadership addresses issues of social justice.	2.6	0.55
Sustainable leadership develops rather than depletes human and material resources	3.0	0.47
Sustainable leadership develops environmental diversity and capacity.	2.5	0.42
Sustainable leadership undertakes activist engagement with the environment.	2.3	0.38

Qualitative data

Presented here, with only a brief immediate generalisation, are some of the typical responses, both positive and negative, relating to each of the principles. The discussion section that follows elaborates further.

Sustainable leadership creates and preserves sustaining learning

> *Many times trial tests are done to prepare students for the main purpose of passing exams and this may not be sustaining as weaker students are often left out. Thus teaching a child how to read or how to tell the time is more meaningful and useful for future use.*

> *My school concentrates on quantity of passes.*

Every Monday morning the [Head teacher] talked about Fiji Eighth Year Examination targets. He sets targets and incentives for students: $20 for 100% in any subject and $100 for 100% in the total mark . . . he just looked at the brighter students and there were only one or two in the class.

My school has started DEAR program for the first 10 minutes in the morning . . . Everybody including teachers, office workers, administrators are busy reading at this time.

My school promotes and encourages children to take part in various activities throughout the year. The academic subjects is one side of the coin as the school takes keen interest in sports; namely, soccer, rugby, netball, volleyball, golf and athletics. Students take part in various art competitions, the school is part of the Nadi Green Schools, the school offers computer lessons for students from the pre-school to class eight and the school participates in quizzes and oratory. Recently the school has also formed clubs such as arts clubs, musical club, Red Cross Club, Scouts and Girl-Guides so that the different interests of the students could be harnessed and promoted.

Overall, most (60 %) of the participants' comments indicated a feeling that their school did not rate well in its application of this principle. Some of the comments were explicitly critical of the leader's over-emphasis on narrow academic results and too little concern with other dimensions a more holistic approach should address. One implication is that the offer of the carrot needs to be made frequently, i.e. that short-term benefits need repeated emphasis because they are not in themselves sustaining.

Sustainable leadership secures success over time

This is not happening in Fiji ... many leaders have suddenly retired and successors are not prepared for leadership positions.

My school had six leaders in ten years . . . our current leader is the best compared to the previous ones . . . unfortunately he was retired at the end of last year after two years at this school.

There was a big chaos after the compulsory retirement age in April 2009. The successor of the retired head teacher knew very little about school administration and she panicked a lot . . . In less than two years of her leadership, we have seen the school standard, staff relationship, students' behaviour and performance deteriorating.

> *After a very experienced principal retired in 2009 the vice principal was promoted to head the school. With the new reform driven climate like budget preparation, standards monitoring, OHS policies the new principal found it difficult to cope . . . the results of the school dropped drastically.*

Despite awarding a mean rating a little above the halfway mark, most (65%) of the participants' comments were made in ways that indicated that on reflection, they did not find that their school performed well in its evaluation against this principle. Comments often underlined a disturbing lack of continuity and an over-dependence on the accumulated experience of particular individuals, both factors that militate against longer-term sustainability.

Sustainable leadership sustains the leadership of others

> *We were delegated some responsibilities . . . I represented the head teacher in the 'Yaadein Vision' . . . I enjoyed attending and sharing a lot of experiences with the head teachers of other thirty-six schools from around Fiji who are members of the association.*

> *Gave opportunity to upgrade our qualifications, attend workshops and conduct professional development activities in the school.*

> *Gave me opportunities to act in his position many times*

> *I would say that in my school it is very hard to see this . . . our leader holds on to all responsibilities and it always creates a lot of problems and confusion for the school.*

> *The school head with the help of the assistant head teacher and the executive teachers take up all the responsibilities and make all major decisions. The administrative team, as they call themselves, make all the major decisions before the commencement of the staff meetings. In addition, there are hardly any staff development programs and the school head or his assistants and a few of the head's favourites attend workshops while other staff members are neglected.*

As far as this principle is concerned, a majority of participants (69%) was willing to award a positive rating and at a mean of 2.9, it was the second highest rating given. Feedback in the comments, too, was often positive, although there were some decidedly negative ones as well. It seems that while many school leaders have 'moved with the times' in the direction of more

collaborative approaches, perhaps even willingness to mentor and delegate in leadership roles, there remain pockets of resistance to relinquishing or sharing the 'power' of running the school. Consideration of the second principle, too, could well keep this principle in mind.

Sustainable leadership addresses issues of social justice

> *At present my school is discriminating as it only takes high achievers.*
>
> *Fijian students from neighbouring schools and villages attend our school since we are offering Fijian Vernacular language, which most schools in our zone do not offer.*
>
> *The school does not try to share ideas and resources with other neighbouring schools but tries to operate in isolation.*
>
> *The school promised to provide a special treat to the class collecting the highest amount of money. However, when it came to rewarding the students for their excellent effort, the school's administrative team with the help of school management neglected their role and did not reward the students accordingly, that is, by giving them well deserved lunch.*
>
> *In Nadi, several schools have cut-off marks for enrolment to increase results while others lobby for best soccer players and give them scholarships to maintain their soccer standards. The other secondary schools get mediocre and below average students, thus are not able to compete both academically and in sports . . . [I] hope [the] zoning system will improve this. We should try to help the whole community and not to take best students and teachers.*
>
> *The school leader is always dealing with one sector of the community and that is [the one] the school management comes from. Sponsors, well-wishers are used and disposed as if their durability has expired.*
>
> *My head of school gets in touch with social organisations to help needy children at school.*

For a country that values highly the virtues of 'caring and sharing', responses on the principle of addressing social justice issues were most disappointing. Not only was the mean barely more than the midpoint, but 50 per cent of the participants returned negative feedback. While handing out some bouquets, participants were often most pointed in comments about their school's failure to have much regard for social justice.

Sustainable leadership develops rather than depletes human and material resources

> *My school leader recognised our potential and encouraged us to upgrade our qualifications.*

> *In my school the head organises staff development programs . . . we actively participate.*

> *At my school we are allowed to attend any workshop or seminar organised by the Ministry of Education.*

> *The headship is doing very little . . . not all teachers get a chance to attend workshops and there is hardly any staff development program conducted at the school.*

On the question of the stewardship of human and material resources, school leadership performance was rated much more positively. With the highest mean rating (3.0) and the highest percentage of positive respondents (70%) this area of leadership resonates well for school leaders and their staff. Perhaps, on the grain-of-salt or -yeast principle, one approach to improving overall movement towards sustainable leadership would be to build on and improve this area, where performance is apparently already doing better, and then to move on to increasing the effort put into improving performance on the other principles. In so far as it is true that nothing succeeds like success, then finding the points where success or its beginnings are already apparent is urgent.

Sustainable leadership develops environmental diversity and capacity

> *Teachers and students are free to try out various ways and means to learn and teach in school. Teachers are encouraged to go to different classes to take different lessons. The students are also exposed to different mediums of learning such as through researching in the library, through computers, field trips, group work and from various speakers who are invited to the school to speak on various issues.*

> *At times my school organises special programs for the people with the help of service organisations.*

> *We hardly use the ideas of other people . . . community.*

Overall, 60 per cent of the participants indicated a positive reflection on their school's performance with respect to this principle though the mean remained obdurately midstream. Comments indicate that many schools do seek actively to involve members of the community beyond the school and to widen the repertoire of teaching and learning styles. Schools and their leaders who have moved in this direction should be commended and encouraged; those who have not yet made this breakthrough should also be encouraged. Schools should be in and of the immediate community, not rarefied isolates.

Sustainable leadership undertakes activist engagement with the environment

> *Most of the time my head of the school is confined to the school. He hardly goes out in the community. We even do not know most of the parents.*

> *My school leader does not worry about…he is 8 am to 4 pm person. I think the head should do more in this area.*

> *We lack network with the community…this is sad.*

> *In my ten years of teaching, this was the first year when we had two organised community visits to the neighbouring villages and settlements, where we addressed the parents on issues relating to the school and the welfare of the children. The head teacher and the staff all went to these two gatherings and the response from the parents was overwhelming . . . The head teacher has a good relationship with the community.*

> *The school head tries to keep in touch with all stakeholders and in turn these stakeholders have many times helped the school. A very good example was when the school's land lease was near expiry. Due to the good relationship with the land owning unit, the school was granted a sixty year lease for a very less amount of money.*

The final principle relates closely to the preceding one. Although selected comments suggest that some participants felt well pleased with how their school rated, it has to be pointed out that the mean rating was below the midpoint and 60 per cent of the teachers provided negative comments so there is no room for complacency. Comments also indicate, though, that there is awareness, perhaps increasing awareness, among school leaders, teachers and communities that relationships between schools and their communities can and should be close and good, for the mutual benefit of all. That education should be seen as a mutually reinforcing collaboration

among all stakeholders should be inculcated and nurtured among all stakeholders. Strong, committed, sustainable school leadership is critical to the development of this.

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to garner from the teachers insights into the principles of sustainable leadership as practised in their respective school settings. In general the two sets of data indicate the presence of the seven principles of sustainable leadership in all schools. However, there is a clear necessity for more emphasis on all the principles of sustainable leadership, because they are not rated highly. Most of the mean scores obtained are not significantly above the mean score of 2.5 (Table 1). Added to the mean, the standard deviation (Table 1) for each principle of sustainable leadership shows that there were no considerable variations in the ratings. With regard to the qualitative data, the responses to some of the principles were skewed to the left and also to the right. This illustrates that some principles were not practised vigorously in the schools. What follows is a discussion based on each principle of sustainable leadership.

The principle that *Sustainable leadership creates and preserves sustaining learning* has a rating of 2.6 but in terms of comments, 60 per cent of the teachers' comments were negative. This suggests that school leaders need to focus on the holistic development of a child. In sustaining learning, school leaders can play an important part in emphasising a well-rounded education that is meaningful, everlasting and at the same time beneficial to the children as they prepare themselves for later life and work, a value that is often expressed in the literature (Duignan & Bezzina, 2006; Stoll, Fink & Earl, 2002). However, the results from the study illustrate that Fiji school leaders tend to place more attention on narrow goals such as preparing children to pass examinations. Of course success in achieving this academic goal is necessary but passing the examination should not be the sole emphasis, lest children miss out preparation for other vital areas of life. The analysis of the data in this study indicates school leaders' greater concern with short-term gains, that is, their almost exclusive focus on the students' academic achievement (Starratt, 2004). This may change in future as the Ministry of Education proceeds with efforts to phase out external examinations and phase in continuous assessment, which could encourage holistic development of the child.

Likewise, the principle that *Sustainable leadership secures success over time* did not receive a high rating (2.7). In terms of the teachers' comments, 65 per cent were negative. The government's sudden policy change in April 2009 reducing the retirement age from 60 to 55 was brutal, especially in the area of school leadership. This could be a contributing factor in the sad state of affairs in the area of leadership in some of the schools. At that point in time the Ministry of Education had no suitable option in some cases but to promote senior teachers from the ranks to head the schools. In the event, both the employer and the then existing school leaders appear to have done little planning in terms of developing successors for the long-term benefit of the school (Fink & Brayman, 2003; Hart, 1993). They have been concerned more with the achievement of short-term goals, without realising the need for long-term planning.

The principle *Sustainable leadership sustains the leadership of others* received the second-highest rating of 2.9 and with a 69 per cent of favourable comments. From the rating one can deduce that in most schools, leaders still continue to control most matters from the centre, without sharing much of their responsibilities with other colleagues in schools. One reason for the persistence of this leadership style could be that the hierarchical structures are in place and firmly entrenched; as a consequence there is always power over the staff (Bacchus, 2000; Tavola, 2000). This implies that those leaders are not really concerned about sustaining leadership of others. The need to recognise and to unleash the potential of others in the professional learning community is crucial for sustaining school improvement (Spillane, Halverson & Drummond, 2001). The current reforms in education mean that the work of school leaders is becoming ever more demanding. Without seeking support from other colleagues from both within and outside the school, it is to all intents and purposes impossible for them to work in all areas effectively (Schratz, 2003). Opportunities for help are in abundance at the school level but it seems school leaders are not making optimal use of the opportunities and potentials available.

On the principle of *Sustainable leadership addresses issues of social justice,* the rating (2.6) is not very pleasing. Similarly, only 50 per cent of the comments were positive. The feedback shows that some schools continue to cater for high achievers and tend to close the door for the low achievers, despite children's right to education. This is not a good practice as it contravenes issues of social justice (Hargreaves & Fink, 2007). The introduction of school zoning may force schools to enrol students living nearby in the

school neighbourhood, without any regard to their marks or socioeconomic standing. Another interesting feature of Fiji's education system is that the majority of schools are owned by non-government organisations and as such, schools may be reluctant to share resources of all types with other schools.

When compared with the other principles of sustainable leadership, the principle that *Sustainable leadership develops rather than depletes human and material resources* received the most favourable of the ratings (3.0). Likewise, 70 per cent of the comments were positive. School material resources appear to be well kept, perhaps because school managements may be keeping a constant check on these. In relation to human resources, especially teaching staff, it is pleasing to note that they are encouraged to upgrade their qualifications and attend other in-service programs. Opportunities afforded for the up-skilling of teachers would ultimately provide the benefit of a higher quality of education to the children (Byrne, 1994). Thus more opportunities for staff development through various means would be a forward-looking move towards providing a better quality of education for the children.

On the principle that *Sustainable leadership develops environmental diversity and capacity,* the mean rating was 2.5 with 60 per cent of the comments being positive. This shows that not much was done in terms of creating a favourable platform where people with different capabilities can grow and develop. By taking this approach, the school would have benefited from their input in the long run. It is always wise for the school leader to consider the differences that exist and work towards strengthening them for the good of the school. It appears that school leaders were inclined to be concerned more with their traditional role of school administrator (Tavola, 2000).

Likewise, the principle that *Sustainable leadership undertakes activist engagement with the environment* was not rated at all favourably as being prominent in school practice. It received a just-under-the-middle rating of only 2.3 with a 60 per cent negative comment rate. Perhaps the current political climate inhibits school leaders from engaging actively with the environment or neighbourhood, encouraging them instead to concentrate on their work in the immediate internal environment, that is, in the school. The literature, however, suggests that school leaders have much to gain from engaging themselves professionally in the wider environment beyond the school fence (Oakes, Quartz & Lipton, 2000).

Overall, the responses obtained from the teachers through the closed and the open-ended items were lightly weighted towards a favourable picture about the pursuit of principles of sustainable leadership at the school level. This perhaps may be regarded as a hopeful starting point. However, more

could be achieved if leaders were encouraged to be more aware of the principles of sustainable leadership and their positive impact on the entire school community. The education authorities, by placing more emphasis on the principles of sustainable leadership for sustaining all operations of the school, could materially assist in bringing about positive changes in the mind-sets of school leaders. The evidence, unfortunately, suggests that most school leaders do indeed tend to be working in the system rather than on the system (Brewer, 2001; Schratz, 2003; Senge, 1990; Tavola, 2000).

Conclusion

School leaders have to keep their minds open and recognise the principles of sustainable leadership for the purpose of sustaining school improvement. The principles of sustainable leadership should form part of school leaders' day-to-day professional work to ensure optimal benefit to the school organisation, and in turn, to all stakeholders who have an interest in education. The small study reported here illustrates the need for extra effort on the part of school leaders to ensure effective implementation of sustainable leadership practices in the education system for the long-term benefit of the school, the community served by the school and, in turn, the nation. Most of the principles of sustainable leadership as suggested by Hargreaves and Fink (2004) were present but at a relatively low levels; school leaders could have done better had they vigorously pursued and demonstrated sustainable leadership practices for the overall good of the school. For example, the need to provide ample leadership opportunities to staff for the purpose of grooming them is vital for successful continuity. Leadership succession on the basis of the seven principles is professionally sound for the overall success of the school now and in the future.

It can be said on the basis of the data collected that the current school leaders could have done more in the area of sustainable leadership by effectively applying the principles that have been suggested. It is the responsibility of existing school leaders to be aware of the long-term benefits and implement the principles of sustainable leadership to enable future leaders to acquire and develop relevant skills to provide the best possible service not only to the children but also to the school community as a whole. Building the capacity of teachers in different areas of the school organisation can help them to acquire useful knowledge and skills to lead effectively and manage the school organisation in future in ways that contribute to school improvement.

At the school level, the principles of sustainable leadership practices can be effectively translated into action for the benefit of all in the professional learning community. Conversely, leadership practices that are not aligned with the seven principles of sustainable leadership will certainly lead to a downward spiral of the school, with an adverse impact on all the members of the professional learning community and in particular, the children.

As succinctly stated by Hargreaves and Fink (2003: 10), 'If change is to matter, spread and last, sustainable leadership must also be a fundamental priority of the systems in which leaders do their work'. For this to happen successfully, the employer, in Fiji's case the Ministry of Education, should put in place appropriate mechanisms to encourage leadership practices consonant with the principles of sustainable leadership at all levels of education. To achieve desired results in this critical area requires both ongoing awareness and better training programs for future school leaders. Through the effective application of the seven principles of sustainable leadership by the school leaders, more can be accomplished in all areas of the school for the benefit of all stakeholders and more so for the nation's children.

Though this was a small-scale study with a small number of respondents, there is sufficient consistency in the responses to warrant further and focused research in the area of sustainable leadership. Such a study need not be restricted to the school level only; for the benefit of all people, it could well extend also to tertiary-level institutions of all kinds. Research of this kind could open the way to ensuring sustainability in all areas and levels of education not only in Fiji institutions but also in those of other small island states of the Pacific.

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